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Mikhail A. Volkhonsky  
 Cand. Sci., Assist. Prof.  
 Dep. of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia  
 Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia  
[VolkhonskyMA@yandex.ru](mailto:VolkhonskyMA@yandex.ru)

Akhmet A. Yarlykapov  
 Cand. Sci., Leading Researcher  
 Institute for International Studies  
 Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia  
[a.yarlykapov@gmail.com](mailto:a.yarlykapov@gmail.com)

## THE TRANSFER OF THE KARANOGAI PRISTAVSTVO FROM THE STAVROPOL GOVERNORATE TO THE TEREK OBLAST: REFORMING ADMINISTRATION IN THE TEREK AND KUBAN OBLASTS, 1883–1888

**Abstract.** This study examines the causes, objectives, and consequences of the administrative reform implemented by the Caucasian administration in March 1888, which entailed the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo (district) from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast. Analysis of newly identified archival sources from the Russian State Historical Archive and the State Archive of the Stavropol Krai reveals that this specific administrative change was a component of a broader initiative to reorganize the administrations of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts. The primary objective of this larger reform was to preserve the Kuban and Terek Cossacks as a distinct military estate. Consequently, the reform planned to subject all social and ethnic groups within both regions to the control of the Cossack military administration. The integration of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast under this framework was necessitated by the close economic and land-use relationship between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks. The reform, devised by the Caucasian administration under Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, entirely disregarded the interests of the Karanogai people. Its implementation in March 1888 compelled the administrations of the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast to address the division of “the total Mohammedan capital of nomads in Stavropol Governorate” into two parts. In 1889, the issue of apportioning pasturelands and delineating a precise administrative boundary between the Terek Oblast and Stavropol Governorate arose. The latter question remained unresolved until 1917. Overall, the reform proved unsuccessful. First, it exacerbated conflicts over pastures and watering places among the nomads of the Nogai Steppe – namely, the Karanogais, Edishkul and Yedisian Nogais, and Turkmens – who were divided between the two administrative units by the reform. Second, it exerted a profoundly negative influence on the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people.

**Keywords:** Caucasus region; Kuban Oblast; Terek Oblast; Stavropol Governorate; Karanogai Pristavstvo; Achikulak Pristavstvo; Karanogais; Terek Cossacks; administrative reform; Alexander III; A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov

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Исследовательская статья

Волхонский Михаил Алексеевич  
кандидат исторических наук, доцент  
Кафедра международных отношений и внешней политики России  
Московский государственный институт международных отношений (МГИМО МИД России),  
Москва, Россия  
[VolhonskyMA@yandex.ru](mailto:VolhonskyMA@yandex.ru)

Ярлыкапов Ахмет Аминович  
кандидат исторических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник  
Институт международных исследований  
Московский государственный институт международных отношений (МГИМО МИД России),  
Москва, Россия  
[a.yarlykapov@gmail.com](mailto:a.yarlykapov@gmail.com)

## ПЕРЕДАЧА КАРАНОГАЙСКОГО ПРИСТАВСТВА ИЗ СТАВРОПОЛЬСКОЙ ГУБЕРНИИ В СОСТАВ ТЕРСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ РЕФОРМЫ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ТЕРСКОЙ И КУБАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТЯМИ В 1883–1888 гг.

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена исследованию причин, целей и последствий проведенной в марте 1888 г. кавказской администрацией административной реформы по передаче Караногайского приставства из Ставропольской губернии в состав Терской области. Анализ выявленных в архивах (Российский государственный исторический архив и Государственный архив Ставропольского края) новых источников показал, что данное административное преобразование являлось частью более обширной реформы по преобразованию управления Кубанской и Терской областей. Главной целью этой реформы являлось сохранение Кубанского и Терского казачества в качестве военного сословия. Реформа предусматривала передачу под контроль казачьей военной администрации всех социальных и этнических групп населения обеих областей. Передача Караногайского приставства в состав Терской области в рамках данной реформы была обусловлена существованием тесных хозяйственных и поземельных связей караногайцев с терскими казаками. При этом разработанная кавказской администрацией кн. А.М. Дондукова-Корсакова реформа совершенно не учитывала интересы караногайцев. Проведение реформы в марте 1888 г. поставило перед администрациями Ставропольской губернии и Терской области вопрос о необходимости разделить на две части «общий магометанский капитал кочующих в Ставропольской губернии». В 1889 г. возник вопрос о размежевании пастбищных земель и проведении точной административной границы между Терской областью и Ставропольской губернией. Последний вопрос не получил окончательного решения до 1917 г. В целом реформа оказалась неудачной. Во-первых, она привела к росту конфликтов из-за пастбищ и водопоев между кочевниками Ногайской степи (караногайцами, едишкульскими и едисанскими ногайцами и туркменами), разделенных согласно реформе между двумя административными единицами. Во-вторых, реформа крайне негативно отразилась на социально-экономическом развитии караногайцев.

**Ключевые слова:** Кавказский край; Кубанская область; Терская область; Ставропольская губерния; Караногайское приставство; Ачикулакское приставство; караногайцы; терские казаки; административная реформа; Александр III; А.М. Дондуков-Корсаков

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## *Introduction*

Examining the history of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, alongside that of the four Nogai pristavstvos established in the late eighteenth century across the steppes of the North Caucasus, is essential for comprehending the broader history of the Nogais, one of Russia's indigenous peoples. Notably, the creation of these administrative structures enabled the Nogais – who endured the military confrontations between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, as well as a series of catastrophic military-political events, at the end of the eighteenth century – to survive, avoid erasure from the historical record, and preserve their ethnic and cultural identity.

Naturally, an objective assessment of the role of the pristavstvo institution in the North Caucasus in Nogai history necessitates a thorough preliminary understanding of the administrative and political history of these institutions. However, scholarly progress in this area has long stagnated. Despite the substantial body of literature on the history and culture of the North Caucasian Nogais [1–5], our understanding of the administrative and socio-economic evolution of the Nogai pristavstvos remains schematic. This stagnation in research stems from the scarcity of archival investigations yielding new historical documents on the Nogais in the nineteenth century. Among recent works that have incorporated novel archival materials, only the studies by I. V. Lidzhieva stand out [6, 7]. Consequently, the objectives and contexts of numerous administrative reforms enacted by Russian authorities in the nineteenth century with respect to the North Caucasian Nogai pristavstvos remain poorly understood. In particular, the circumstances surrounding the 1888 transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast are virtually unknown.

The first historian of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, F. I. Kapelgorodsky, described this event as follows: “On April 16, 1888, by order of the military department No. 90, the transformation of the administration of the Kuban and Terek oblasts was announced. At the same time, Karanogai, along with the entire Kizlyar district, was incorporated into the Terek Oblast. Thus, the Karanogais were separated from their kin – the Edishkuls, Yedisans, and Dzhemboyluks – who remained within the Stavropol Governorate” [8]. Soviet historiography contributed relatively little additional information to this topic. For instance, the renowned scholar I. Kh. Kalmykov observed: “In 1888, the Karanogai Pristavstvo was transferred to the Terek Oblast, but the boundary line between the oblast and the governorate was established only in 1909... The transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast occurred by decision of the Tsarist government without the knowledge of the Nogai population. The authorities were guided solely by political considerations – by evenly distributing the territory between administrative bodies, the primary focus of the administrative apparatus was to be directed toward strengthening supervision over the so-called aliens” [9]. Among contemporary historians, only I. V. Lidzhieva has noted that the reform “eliminated certain administrative inconveniences associated with the pristavstvo's remoteness from the provincial center” [6].

Nevertheless, scholars have yet to address the central question: why did the question of transferring the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast emerge in the 1880s? Drawing on newly discovered documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) and the State Archive of Stavropol Krai (GASK), this article seeks to reveal the reasons, objectives, and consequences of the administrative reform of the pristavstvo enacted in March 1888.

## *Administrative reform of Kuban and Terek Oblasts in 1883–1888*

First, it is noteworthy that the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast was executed pursuant to the “Highest Approved Statute on the Administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts and the Black Sea District,” dated March 21, 1888. This statute culminated years of efforts by the Commander-in-Chief of the Civil Administration in the Caucasus, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, to reform the governance of the Caucasian Cossack Host. Consequently, the transfer of the pristavstvo can be regarded as inextricably linked to the broader reform of the Cossack administration.

In 1882, during an inspection tour of the Caucasus, Dondukov devoted particular attention to conditions

within the Kuban and Terek Cossack Hosts. In his “Most Loyal Memorandum of the Commander of the Troops of the Caucasian Military District, 1882–1890,” the prince expressed profound concern over the marked transformation in the Cossack population’s way of life, particularly “the decline of its military makeup.” He attributed these shifts to the policies of the War Ministry in the 1870s, whose principal aim had been the abolition of the Cossacks as a distinct military estate [10]. Viewing such a policy as profoundly misguided, the prince resolved to appeal directly to Emperor Alexander III concerning the future of the Caucasian Cossacks.

In his Most Loyal “Memorandum on the Transformation of the Administration of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts in Connection with the Neighboring Alien Population,” dated April 7, 1882, Dondukov affirmed the enduring value of maintaining the Caucasian Cossacks “in the form of a military class force” and identified several factors that, in his view, had contributed to the erosion of this “force.” These included, first, the influx of aliens into the Kuban Oblast beginning in 1868; second, conflicts between the Terek Cossacks and the highlanders; and third, the introduction in 1869 of an administrative system “on the basis of a common provincial institution” in the Kuban and Terek oblasts. According to Dondukov, the latter development engendered dual authority, conflicts between civilian and Cossack administrative bodies, and the neglect of the Cossacks’ economic, administrative, and military interests. In his estimation, the principal outcome of these factors on the lives of the Terek and Kuban Cossack Hosts was the erosion of the Cossacks’ self-perception as a distinct military estate.<sup>1</sup>

In order to prevent the disappearance of the Caucasian Cossacks, Dondukov proposed to carry out a number of administrative transformations, in particular “the local population, both Cossacks and aliens, located on the territory of the Kuban and Terek Cossack Hosts, should be subordinated to the military ministry in the police-administrative sense,” and also “to unite the regional and military economic administration into one body common to each troop.”<sup>2</sup>

### *Incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast*

Concurrently, Dondukov advocated for the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast. In the same memorandum, he contended: “The eastern portion of the territory of the Stavropol Governorate, occupied by the nomadic Karanogai peoples, should be transferred, in police matters, to the administration of the Terek Cossack Host, and, in judicial matters, to the Vladikavkaz Judicial District. This measure is necessitated by the fact that the Yedisan and Edishkul Karanogais, who roam in the rear of the Cossack settlements, persistently engage in horse theft and the pilfering of livestock from Cossack farms, thereby inflicting substantial damage on Cossack agriculture. The court and principal administration of the Karanogais are presently located in Stavropol, so distant from the Terek Host – particularly the former Greben villages – that Cossacks often forgo initiating legal proceedings for restitution of stolen property, rather than expending time and funds on a journey of 400–500 versts to Stavropol for that purpose. Therefore, subordinating the Karanogais to the same administrative and judicial authorities as the Terek Cossacks would confer substantial benefits in terms of property security, and consequently, the welfare of the Cossack population, as well as curbing Karanogai theft.”<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that this excerpt from the memorandum suggests that both Dondukov and his immediate entourage evidently lacked a precise understanding of the actual conditions in the Karanogai Pristavstvo. For instance, the memorandum failed to distinguish between the Yedisan and Edishkul Nogais and the Karanogais proper. Evidently, the commander-in-chief’s office had overlooked the fact that the Edishkul Nogais had been transferred from the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Achikulak pristavstvo as early as 1862 [11]. Moreover, there was no necessity to subordinate the Karanogais to the Vladikavkaz Judicial District, as they were already under its jurisdiction.

On August 28, 1883, Emperor Alexander III approved the commander-in-chief’s Most Loyal Memorandum, thereby authorizing the establishment of a special commission to examine the transformation

1 Memorandum on the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts in Connection with the Neighboring Alien Population // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 272–274.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

of the administration of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts.<sup>4</sup> In December 1883, the commission commenced its deliberations in Vladikavkaz, convening in the district court building. According to the minutes of the commission's meeting dated January 12, 1884, its members were tasked with devising a plan for reforming the Cossack administration to foster conditions conducive to "maintaining the military significance of the Cossack Hosts in the sense of combat and defensive state power."<sup>5</sup>

Notably, the commission regarded the subordination of the entire population of the Terek and Kuban oblasts – encompassing both Russian nonresidents and "aliens" such as highlanders and nomads – to the Cossack military administration as the principal condition for preserving the Cossacks' military significance. The commission deemed it especially critical to place the highlanders and nomads under Cossack control, attributing to them the primary cause of the "lack of personal and property security" in the Terek Oblast. Accordingly, the commission advanced the following reform proposals: 1) the elimination of the mixed administrative system, with the transfer of control over the Kuban and Terek oblasts to the Cossack military administration; 2) a prohibition on aliens settling in Cossack villages; 3) the establishment of robust police authority over the highland population of the Terek Oblast; and 4) measures to disarm the highland population in the near term.<sup>6</sup>

Among the proposed measures, the Karanogais were not mentioned, as the matter of subordinating them to the police oversight of the Terek Cossack Host administration required negotiation with the Stavropol provincial authorities. This issue was addressed during a meeting on January 26, 1884, which featured a report from Stavropol Governor K. L. Zisserman. Notably, in presenting arguments for the transfer of the *pristavstvo*, the governor emphasized not the necessity for enhanced police control owing to purportedly frequent instances of livestock theft by nomads from Cossack holdings, but rather the extensive economic and land connections between the Karanogais and the Terek Oblast, as opposed to the Stavropol Governorate. The governor highlighted the evident administrative inconveniences of overseeing the *pristavstvo* from Stavropol, owing to the considerable distance, as well as the longstanding judicial subordination of the Karanogais to the Vladikavkaz District Court.<sup>7</sup> His report elaborated: "The said *pristavstvo* constitutes the most remote eastern corner of the Stavropol Governorate, embraced from the south and east by the lands of the Terek Cossacks; the Karanogais roam within the borders of the *pristavstvo* in summer; in winter, they all reside within the Terek Oblast, on Cossack lands along the Terek River or along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Such seasonal migration of residents from one governorate to another impedes police supervision over them, which – given the savagery of the people – is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, all the material interests of the Karanogais gravitate toward the city of Kizlyar and the Cossack villages... Thus, the Karanogai *Pristavstvo* maintains only an external connection with the Stavropol Governorate, subordinating here to the provincial authorities, and therefore all of the above indicates the need to separate it from this governorate and incorporate it into the Terek Oblast..."<sup>8</sup>

The commission members, concurring with the governor's assessment, deemed it advisable to record in the minutes that "the interests of the Cossacks would undoubtedly benefit from the subordination of the said nomads to a single police authority, as it would afford the nomads fewer opportunities to conceal cattle stolen from the Cossacks in territories under another police jurisdiction."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the cursory treatment of this matter by both the governor and the commission – coupled with their primary emphasis on the economic interdependence between the Karanogais and the Cossacks – suggests that skirmishes over cattle rustling were episodic, rather than symptomatic of any acute social conflict.

Despite the compelling arguments advanced in the report of the Stavropol Governor, the commission elected to proceed cautiously by instructing two of its members, A. I. Bakradze and S. I. Pisarev, to compile additional information on the Karanogais.<sup>10</sup> Having promptly assembled the necessary data, they presented the commission with a special memorandum on February 23, 1884, the contents of which substantiated K. L.

4 Copy of the report of the head of the Main Directorate of Cossack Hosts, Major General Narbut, to the commander-in-chief of the civilian unit in the Caucasus dated September 3, 1883 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, l. 275.

5 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 12, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 156–156.

6 Ibid.

7 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 162v–163v.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.



Zisserman's assessment of the close economic and land ties between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks, identifying this interdependence as the foremost justification for transferring the pristavstvo. In particular, the memorandum stated: "The lack of convenient places for grazing livestock and the scarcity of water in the steppe they occupy compel the Karanogais to roam on the lands of private owners, stanitsa and rural communities, and state-owned quitrent plots in the Kizlyar District, either for a special fee or under other conditions. The number of nomads in the Terek Oblast reaches 2½ thousand kubitkas; of these, only the wealthier ones migrate to the Karanogai steppes in spring to protect their livestock from gadflies and mosquitoes, while the majority remain year-round in the Terek Oblast; some are hired as laborers, herdsman, and shepherds, while others engage in cultivating gardens in Kizlyar and villages along the Terek."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the reform of the administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts, initiated in 1883 by Dondukov, was designed to safeguard the interests of the Caucasian Cossacks as a distinct military estate. Given the close economic ties between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks, the Terek Cossack administration proposed incorporating the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast. Notably, the primary impetus was not the suppression of nomad "predation," but rather the necessity of comprehensive administrative control over the Karanogais to effectively protect the broader economic interests of the Terek Cossacks in the Kizlyar District. From the Karanogais' perspective, the reform's advantages were perceived to lie in the transfer of the functions and prerogatives of the chief bailiff – tasked by law with "protecting the rights and property of aliens" – to the ataman of the Kizlyar District, who was situated proximally in Kizlyar rather than in remote Stavropol.<sup>12</sup>

The commission resolved the matter of the pristavstvo at its meeting on February 23, 1884, the minutes of which recorded: "Then, turning to the question of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, the commission, having reviewed the explanatory memorandum prepared on this subject and appended hereto, resolved to approve the incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo – as proposed in minutes No. 12 – into the administration of the Terek Cossack Host, in the manner suggested by the Stavropol Governor, with the administration of the pristavstvo assigned to the Kizlyar-Grebenskii District, the ataman of which shall be vested, with respect to the said pristavstvo, with the rights of the chief bailiff of the Muslim peoples of the Stavropol Governorate; the expenses for maintaining the said pristavstvo shall be fully allocated to the same sources as at present, and in the manner recommended by the subcommittee."<sup>13</sup>

### ***Allocation of the "common Mohammedan capital of nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate" in 1889***

The draft prepared by the commission for the transformation of the administration of the Kuban and Terek oblasts, incorporating amendments proposed by Dondukov, was reviewed by the ministries over the course of three years. Following successive approvals and revisions, the project was examined and endorsed by the State Council on November 28, 1887, and subsequently ratified by Emperor Alexander III on March 21, 1888.

The "Statute on the Administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts and the Black Sea District" addressed the Karanogai Pristavstvo as follows: "II. The Karanogai Pristavstvo shall be transferred from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast, with the aliens inhabiting it retaining, for the time being, the benefits granted to them for military service"; "XIII. The capital of the Karanogai people, after separating it from the general Mohammedan capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, shall be incorporated into the special funds of the Ministry of War, with all income derived from the monetary collection of duties levied on the Karanogai people pursuant to Article 572 of the Statute on the Administration of Alien People being converted into this capital, excluding the amount allocated to the state treasury for the maintenance of the administration of the Terek Oblast"; and "XIV. The Minister of War is permitted to submit for the consideration of the State Council: a) in agreement with the Minister of State Domains – proposals regarding the portion of the total Muslim capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate to be allocated to the capital of the Karanogai people proper" [12].

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum on Nomadic Aliens of the Stavropol Governorate, Constituting the Karanogai Pristavstvo // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, l. 329.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 184–184v.

As evident from the text of the statute, the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast necessitated the allocation, from the “total Muslim capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate,” of the portion attributable directly to the Karanogais. This capital had been established in 1852 by order of the Governor-General of the Caucasus, Prince M. S. Vorontsov. According to information furnished to the Minister of War by the Ministry of State Domains, the capital had been augmented over time from the following sources: “a) 68,896 rubles 64¼ kopecks, contributed by the Kalauso-Dzhemboyluk Nogais who emigrated to Turkey, from 1848 to 1860, in lieu of their in-kind duty, which entailed the annual transportation of government provisions from the Podpolnaya pier on the Caspian Sea, in the amount of 7,280 quarters; b) the balance of 17,000 rubles due annually in the form of runs, for the transportation of 40,000 quarters of provisions for the Karanogai, Yedisan, Edishkul, and Dzhemboyluk Nogais; c) the remainder of the fee collected from all Stavropol Muslim aliens for the maintenance of the administration; d) interest on the capital as it was invested in government securities, and other minor sources.”<sup>14</sup>

Since all the nomads of the Stavropol Governorate had contributed to the formation of the capital, the representative of the Ministry of State Domains, State Secretary V. I. Veshnyakov, proposed apportioning it between the Karanogais relocating to the Terek Oblast and the Edishkul and Yedisan Nogais remaining in the Stavropol Governorate, in proportion to the number of male souls recorded in the 1886 family lists. According to these lists, there were 15,569 Karanogais, 9,724 Turkmens, and 9,451 Yedisan, Edishkul, and Dzhemboyluk Nogais. At that time, the Mohammedan public capital totaled only 282,430 rubles 37 kopecks (of which 16,917 rubles 70 kopecks were in cash, 167,950 rubles in interest-bearing securities, and 97,562 rubles 67 kopecks in loans and debts). Consequently, it was resolved to allocate to the Karanogai people from the total capital the sum of 126,632 rubles 2 kopecks.<sup>15</sup> On November 12, 1888, these calculations were approved by the Ministry of War<sup>16</sup>; they were subsequently reviewed by the State Council on February 16, 1889, and ratified by the emperor on March 22, 1889.<sup>17</sup>

### *The issue of the administrative boundary between the Karanogai and Achikulak pristavstvos, 1889–1907*

The incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast also engendered a significant problem concerning the demarcation of pastures between the Karanogai and Achikulak pristavstvos. The first to draw attention to this issue was Stavropol Governor K. L. Zisserman in January 1884. He maintained that the Edishkul people, following the separation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, should encounter no restrictions in their nomadic migrations, “remaining within the territory of the Stavropol Governorate and, if they migrate to the Terek Oblast, submitting to whatever police supervision is established there, without any payment of duties for the grazing of their livestock.”<sup>18</sup>

However, Zisserman’s proposal was not endorsed by the Terek authorities. In December 1889, the acting ataman of the Terek Cossack Host, A. M. Smekalov, wrote to the Stavropol governor, N. E. Nikiforaki, underscoring that the system of “free roaming on the lands of other peoples,” which had prevailed until 1888, was no longer viable under the new conditions. “At the present time,” he observed, “with the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo and the Karanogai people to the Terek Oblast, such difficulties arise in both governance and land use that they prompt urgent requests from the Karanogais and local administration for an immediate end to the joint roaming of the Turkmens and Yedysans with the Karanogais.”<sup>19</sup> The ataman insisted that a plan for delineating the boundary between the governorate and the oblast be drafted without delay.

In March 1892, the Commander-in-Chief of the Civil Administration and acting ataman of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts, S. A. Sheremetev, convened a “mixed commission to delimit the territory of the Stavropol

14 On the transfer to the Ministry of War of the portion of the Mohammedan capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate allotted to the Karanogais // RGIA. F. 1152, inv. 11, file 55, ll. 14–14v.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Copy of the Highest Decree on the Implementation of the Opinion of the State Council dated March 22, 1889 // RGIA. F. 1152, inv. 11, file 55, ll. 10–12v.

18 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 162v–163.

19 Letter from the Head of the Terek Oblast and Acting Ataman, Lieutenant General A. M. Smekalov, to the Stavropol Governor. December 18, 1889 // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, ll. 22–22v.

Governorate and the Terek Oblast.” The instructions he issued to the commission specified that “the commission’s main task is to establish the border between the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast in order to halt their joint nomadic migrations.” The commander urged the commission to “induce the nomads to reach a voluntary agreement,”<sup>20</sup> an objective that proved unattainable in practice. The commission’s deliberations were severely hampered by inaccurate maps and the intricate land relations prevailing in the Nogai Steppe. Consequently, in 1892, an acute conflict erupted between the authorities of the Stavropol Governorate and the Terek Oblast, precipitated by an attempt to demarcate the border directly on the ground, as the 1885 map proved unreliable in depicting old and new settlements – key landmarks for delineating the administrative boundary.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, in May 1897, the commission succeeded in drafting a plan for land distribution: 1,032,994 desiatines to the Karanogai Pristavstvo; 545,974 desiatines to the Achikulak pristavstvo; and 614,832 desiatines to the Turkmen pristavstvo. However, the chief bailiff of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, Lieutenant Colonel M. E. Konevsky, raised vehement objections to the plan in a special memorandum. He argued: “The population of the pristavstvos in question – Achikulak, Turkmen, and the former Karanogai – possesses, as indicated in the data submitted to the commission, 8,322 camels, 30,715 horses, 71,921 heads of cattle, and 257,957 sheep. In total, the Achikulak, Turkmen, and Karanogai collectively hold 368,915 head of large and small livestock, which necessitate an adequate number of watering places, particularly in the locations where nomads seek shelter for them during winter. In my view, the commission should regard these fundamental needs of the nomadic stockbreeder as one of the core economic principles guiding the distribution of lands among the individual districts of all three pristavstvos, given that nomads derive their livelihood exclusively from one form of economy – livestock husbandry. Yet, as evident from the minutes of May 10, the commission, neglecting the foregoing considerations, adopted an entirely arbitrary metric for land allocation, based on the ratio of one territory’s area to a unit area of another, and incorporated into its calculations the total number of aliens and Kalmyks residing in the Terek Oblast, thereby arriving at an erroneous conclusion that could engender an untenable living situation for the nomads.”<sup>22</sup>

Ultimately, neither the commission operating from 1892 to 1898 nor the 1903 commission succeeded in reaching a decision on the equitable distribution of land between the two pristavstvos. The reasons for this impasse were articulated with precision in a special memorandum by Stavropol Governor B. M. Yanushkevich in 1907: “The fact is that the lands utilized by the nomadic Turkmens, Edishkuls, and Karanogais, despite their vast extent, cannot, when considered in isolation by district, furnish sufficient forage and watering places for the livestock of these tribes, which represents their sole means of subsistence. ... In view of this, both the alien and provincial administrations of the Stavropol Governorate have, over the past 10–15 years, maintained the view that the establishment of any artificial border to delimit the nomadic ranges of one or another alien tribe is exceedingly perilous and cannot be justified by administrative convenience.”<sup>23</sup>

Secondary literature asserts that the administrative boundary issue was ultimately resolved in 1909 [9]. However, no legislative enactments confirming a resolution in that year or thereafter have been identified. It may be presumed that the boundary was established *de facto*, predicated on prevailing economic practices. Yet, no archival administrative acts substantiating this have thus far been located.

### ***Consequences of the incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast***

Justifying the need for the reform, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov argued that incorporating the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast would curtail criminality among the nomads. In reality, the opposite

20 Instructions for the Mixed Commission on the Delimitation of the Territory of the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast and the Distribution of Lands among the Nomadic Muslim Aliens Inhabiting the Limits of the Aforesaid Governorate and Oblast // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, l. 42.

21 Report from the Administration of the Kizlyar District of the Terek Oblast to the Topographer of the Caucasian Military-Topographical Department, Major General A. Kalusovsky // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, l. 57v.

22 Opinion of the Member of the Commission, Chief Bailiff of the Nomadic Peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, Lieutenant Colonel M. E. Konevsky, on the Minutes of the Mixed Commission Held on May 9, 10, and 11, 1897 // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, ll. 142–143.

23 Memorandum of Stavropol Governor B. M. Yanushkevich on the Administrative Affiliation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo. May 23, 1907 // GASK. F. 101, inv. 4, file 3212, ll. 11v–13.



occurred. Following the reform, conflicts intensified not only between the Terek Cossacks and the Karanogais but also among the nomads themselves – the Karanogais, Yedisan and Edishkul Nogais, and Turkmens. Governor B. M. Yanushkevich explicitly highlighted this development: “The nomadic Turkmens, Nogais, and Karanogais – who had coexisted in complete harmony for two and a half centuries, bound inextricably by tribe, religion, morals, age-old customs, and even kinship..., and who regarded the steppes as a domain of common and unimpeded use – began, after the administrative secession of the Karanogais, frequently to displace one another from their shared nomadic ranges, resorting to wholly arbitrary interpretations of rights predicated on nothing deeper than the disputants’ affiliation with different provinces. On this basis, interminable disputes erupted, accompanied by the seizure of livestock from one another, the grazing of hayfields, and so forth...”<sup>24</sup>

Among the negative consequences of transferring the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast, Yanushkevich identified not only the escalation of conflicts but also the evident stagnation in the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. “Without precise official data on the state of the Karanogai people’s social economy,” the governor observed, “and relying solely on the oral accounts of neighboring Nogais, it must be acknowledged that it has not achieved the same progress as that observed in the Mohammedan steppes of the Stavropol Governorate.”<sup>25</sup> F. I. Kapelgorodsky likewise remarked on this: “The separation of the Karanogai from the Stavropol Governorate initially brought only detriment to the Karanogai people. After all, the Stavropol Governorate maintained its own specialized administration for aliens. In addition to administrative officials, there were agronomists, livestock specialists, foresters, veterinarians, hydraulic engineers, and statisticians. Life took its course. The Stavropol nomads gradually settled on the land, with active support from the administration. Artesian wells were dug in Nogai settlements, schools were built, and sand stabilization was undertaken. Fine buildings were erected at the alien camps, medical and veterinary clinics were established, breeding nurseries were set up, and gardens and parks were planted. The Karanogai had not known or experienced anything like this for a long time” [8].

Thus, it must be acknowledged that the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast constituted an error on the part of the authorities. This administrative reform formed part of a broader reorganization of the governance of the Kuban and Terek oblasts, whose principal objective was to preserve the Cossacks as a distinct military estate, while safeguarding their economic, administrative, and political interests. At the same time, the interests of the Karanogai people were largely disregarded. The primary adverse consequence of this reform was the artificial fragmentation and disruption of the integrated economic complex of the Nogai Steppe, which had hitherto been shared among all the nomadic peoples of the region. This development, in turn, precipitated, on the one hand, heightened conflicts among the nomads and, on the other, marked stagnation in the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

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