



THE
CENTRAL ASIAN
REVOLT OF 1916

A COLLAPSING EMPIRE
IN THE AGE OF
WAR AND REVOLUTION

Edited by Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu and Alexander Morrison

The Central Asian Revolt of 1916



Manchester University Press



Resisting the Military Draft of 1916. From Bayaly Isakeev *Kirgizskoe vosstanie 1916* (1932).

The Central Asian Revolt of 1916

A collapsing empire in the age
of war and revolution

Edited by

**Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu
and Alexander Morrison**

Manchester University Press

Copyright © Manchester University Press 2020

While copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in Manchester University Press, copyright in individual chapters belongs to their respective authors, and no chapter may be reproduced wholly or in part without the express permission in writing of both author and publisher.

Published by Manchester University Press
Altrincham Street, Manchester M1 7JA
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 5261 2942 0 hardback

First published 2020

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for any external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cover image: S. Chuikov, 'The Kyrgyz rebellion against tsarism in 1916', 1934–36.
© Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts

Typeset by Newgen Publishing UK

Contents

List of maps and tables	vii
Notes on contributors	viii
Acknowledgements	xii
Note on translation, transliteration and dates	xiv
Glossary and abbreviations	xv
Editors' introduction <i>Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu and Alexander Morrison</i>	1
1 Why in Central Asia, why in 1916? The revolt as an interface of the Russian colonial crisis and the World War <i>Tomohiko Uyama</i>	27
2 The exemption of peoples of Turkestan from universal military service as an antecedent to the 1916 revolt <i>Tatiana Kotiukova</i>	45
3 The 1916 uprisings in Jizzakh: economic background and political rationales <i>Akmal Bazarbaev and Cloé Drieu</i>	71
4 The “virtual reality” of colonial Turkestan: how Russian officials viewed and represented the participation of the local population in the 1916 revolt <i>Oybek Mahmudov</i>	95
5 Fears, rumours, violence: the tsarist regime and the revolt of the nomads in Central Asia, 1916 <i>Jörn Happel</i>	126

6	When the nomads went to war: the uprising of 1916 in Semirech'e <i>Aminat Chokobaeva</i>	145
7	Scales of violence: the 1916 Central Asian uprising in the context of wars and revolutions (1914–1923) <i>Niccolò Pianciola</i>	169
8	Violent acculturation: Alexei Kuropatkin, the Central Asian Revolt, and the long shadow of conquest <i>Ian W. Campbell</i>	191
9	Refugees, resettlement and revolutionary violence in Semirech'e after the 1916 revolt <i>Alexander Morrison</i>	209
10	Links across time: Taranchis during the uprising of 1916 in Semirech'e and the "Atu" massacre of 1918 <i>Ablet Kamalov</i>	227
11	Making political rebellion "primitive": the 1916 rebellion in the Kazakh steppe in long-term perspective (c. 1840–1930) <i>Xavier Hallez and Isabelle Ohayon</i>	256
12	From rebels to refugees: memorialising the revolt of 1916 in oral poetry <i>Jipar Duishembieva</i>	289
13	A Qırghız verse narrative of rebellion and exile by Musa Chaghatay uulu <i>Daniel Prior</i>	308
14	Domesticating 1916: the evolution of Amangeldi Imanov and the creation of a foundation myth for the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (1916–1939) <i>Danielle Ross</i>	327
	Select bibliography	347
	Index	356

Maps and tables

Maps

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Russian Central Asia in 1916 | xix |
| 2 | The revolts in the district of Jizzakh | 83 |

Tables

- | | | |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | Population and revolt in the district of Jizzakh | 79 |
| 2 | Array of workers for work in the rear of the army from the district of Jizzakh | 82 |

Notes on contributors

Akmal Bazarbaev graduated with a master's degree in Central Asian Studies and Original Source Studies from Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies. In 2018, he completed his PhD thesis on property rights, land-water use and agrarian transformation in the Hungry Steppe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is currently a Junior Researcher at the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

Ian W. Campbell is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Davis. His first book, *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731–1917*, was published by Cornell University Press in 2017. He is currently working on a transregional history of borderlands violence in the Russian Empire.

Aminat Chokobaeva is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Nazarbayev University. Her interests include the uprising of 1916 in Semirech'ë as well the broader issues of state-building and governance in the region. She has previously published on the Soviet historiography of the uprising of 1916 and the politics of memory in independent Kyrgyzstan.

Cloé Drieu is Research Fellow at CNRS in the Centre d'études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centrasiatiques (CETOBaC). She specialises in the history of Central Asia during the interwar period through the lens of Uzbek cinema (long-feature films); she is the author of *Fictions Nationales, Cinéma, empire et nation en Ouzbékistan* (Karthala, 2013), now translated for Indiana University Press (2019). She now works on the impact of World War I in Central Asia and, since 2014, has also been researching the Soviet soldiers who fought in Afghanistan (1979–1989). Together with colleagues at the EHESS (School of Advanced Studies in

the Social Sciences, Paris) she runs seminars on the First World War, colonial and imperial history and combatant experiences.

Jipar Duishembieva (PhD 2015, University of Washington) researches the cultural and social history of imperial and early-Soviet Central Asia. Her doctoral dissertation, *Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856–1924*, examines the transformation of Kyrgyz society and culture set in motion by the Russian imperial conquest of the mid-nineteenth century. Most recently, she has been conducting research on the revolt of 1916 in Central Asia. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the International Research and Exchanges Board, American Councils Title VIII Research Scholar Program, and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.

Xavier Hallez is associate researcher at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris. He defended his PhD thesis in 2012 on *National Communism and the Revolutionary Movement in the Orient: the Linked Biographies of three Soviet Oriental Leaders (Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, Turar Ryskulov and Elbegdorž Rinčino) through the Construction of a new Geopolitical Space 1917–1926*. He teaches a seminar in collaboration with Vincent Fourniau on the *History of Self-Discourse and Forms of Identity and Collective Representations in Central Asia (XVI–XXth Centuries)*. His current research project examines the evolution of political structures and practices in the Kazakh steppe from 1868 to 1938 through the study of local elections.

Jörn Happel is Lecturer in East European History at the University of Basel, Switzerland. His research interests include the history of Russia and the Soviet Union as well as Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including nationality policy, Soviet–American–German relations, Stalinism, the history of cognitive cards and colonial history.

Ablet Kamalov is Professor of History at Turan University in Almaty. Having graduated from Tashkent University, he studied at the Leningrad Branch of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, where he completed his *Kandidat Nauk* thesis in 1990. In 2008 he defended his doctoral dissertation at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Almaty. He is a specialist in the history of Central Asia and Xinjiang in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Tatiana Kotiukova is Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and director of its centre for the history of nineteenth–twentieth-century Central Asia. She is a

graduate of Mirza Ulughbek Tashkent State University in Uzbekistan where in 2002 she defended her *Kandidat Nauk* thesis on *The Problem of Turkestan in the Central Legal Organs of the Russian Empire, 1905–1917*. Since 2003 she has worked in the Russian Federation, where she is also a senior research fellow of the Institute of Scientific Information on the Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a senior research fellow of the state academic university of for the humanities, and director of the centre for Islamic studies of the Marjani Fund.

Oybek Mahmudov is a doctoral researcher at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. He studied for his bachelor and master's degrees in the Department of History of the National University of Uzbekistan. In 2011 he defended his MPhil thesis on *Ismailism in Central Asia: Its Nature, Peculiarities of Development and Forms of Existence (Second Half of the 19th–early 20th Century)*. From 2010 and until 2017, he was Associate Lecturer in the department of International History of the National University of Uzbekistan. He is the author of forty-five publications and co-author of two monographs. His interests include the history of the Pamirs, the colonial politics of the Russian Empire in Central Asia, Ismailism, the history of Islam and the uprising of 1916.

Alexander Morrison is Fellow and Tutor in History at New College, Oxford, and has previously worked at Nazarbayev University in Astana, and the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and is currently completing a history of the Russian conquest of Central Asia.

Isabelle Ohayon is Associate Research Professor at the French National Centre for Scientific research (CNRS), and a member of the Centre for the study of Russia, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe (CERCEC). She specialises in the history of colonial and Soviet Central Asia. Her research interests include pastoral societies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, socialist agriculture and Stalinist mass repression. She is currently working on consumption and ritual economy during the late Soviet period. She is the author of *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline* (Maisonneuve & Larose, 2006).

Niccolò Pinciola is Associate Professor of History at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. His research focuses on the social and environmental history of Tsarist and Soviet Asia.

Daniel Prior is Associate Professor of History at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, USA. He received his PhD in 2002 from the Department

of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University. His research on the history of the Kirghiz epic tradition has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, IREX, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Slavic–Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University.

Danielle Ross is Assistant Professor of Asian History at Utah State University, specialising in the history of Muslims in the Russian Empire, and in particular the Tatar *‘ulama*. She has published articles on Muslim participation in the First World War and Islamic law and education in the Russian Empire. She is currently researching Muslim merchant-industrialist networks in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Russia.

Tomohiko Uyama is Professor of Central Eurasian studies at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University. He has edited *Asiatic Russia: Imperial Power in Regional and International Contexts* (Routledge, 2012), *Comparing Modern Empires: Imperial Rule and Decolonization in the Changing World Order* (Slavic Research Center, 2018), and other volumes.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank the American University of Central Asia, the Institut Français d'Étude sur l'Asie Centrale and its then director, Olivier Ferrando, for organising a conference in Bishkek on 'Rethinking the 1916 Revolt' in May 2016, where several of the chapters in this volume were first presented, and where the idea for it was first conceived. We would like to thank Professor Peter Gatrell of the University of Manchester for first suggesting that we present a proposal for Manchester University Press's series in the Cultural History of Modern War, Emma Brennan and Paul Clarke of Manchester University Press for their patience throughout the fairly lengthy process of gestation, and Victoria Chow for her exemplary copy-editing.

This volume has benefited from financial support from the Centre d'Études Turques, Ottomanes, Balkaniques et Centrasiatiques (Centre national de la recherche scientifique, École des hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) in Paris, New College, Oxford, and the REF Strategic Support Fund of the History Faculty, University of Oxford (S1440) as well as a substantial grant (0005058) from the John Fell Fund of Oxford University Press to cover the costs of translating three articles from Russian. We are grateful to Emily Justice for the accuracy and elegance of the translation from Russian into English of the contributions by Tatiana Kotiukova, Oybek Mahmudov and Ablet Kamalov; and to Delphine Pallier for the translation from French into English of the contribution by Xavier Hallez and Isabelle Ohayon.

We would also like to thank those scholars who generously gave up their time to conduct external peer review on the chapters in this volume: Sergei Abashin, David Brophy, Roberto Carmack, Masha Cerovic, Peter Holquist, Ali İğmen, Beatrice Penati, Joshua Sanborn and David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, as well as Niccolò Pianciola, Jipar Duishembieva and Daniel Prior among the contributors.



Note on translation, transliteration and dates

For the transliteration of Russian terms and proper names we have used the simplified library of Congress system without diacritics, apart from (‘) to indicate the soft sign (ь). Terms and names in Central Asian languages are generally transliterated from historic spellings in the Arabic script. With the exception of Daniel Prior’s transcription of Musa Chaghatay uulu’s poetry, where absolute accuracy was essential, we have generally favoured comprehensibility for non-specialists and ease of reading and minimised the use of diacritics and non-standard characters. Where familiar versions of a name already exist in English we have stuck with the established spelling (e.g., Samarkand not Samarqand). For the same reason we use “Kazakh” and “Kyrgyz” rather than the more correct “Qazaq” and “Qırghız”, except when referring to the language rather than the people. Where a direct English equivalent exists, technical terms have been translated, notably *oblast’* (province) and *uezd* (district). All translations are the authors’ own unless otherwise indicated.

Before 14 February 1918, the Russian Empire operated according to the Julian calendar, which was thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the rest of Europe, and now worldwide. All dates in the text and references of this volume are old style (OS) up to the point when the calendar changed, reflecting those in the sources.

Glossary and abbreviations

Glossary

<i>Aul</i>	a nomadic encampment or winter settlement.
<i>Bai</i>	a landowner or other person of importance in Turkestan, a title of respect.
<i>Dehqan</i>	peasant, cultivator.
<i>Desyatina</i>	Russian measurement of area, equivalent to 2¾ acres or 1.09 hectares.
<i>Dungan</i>	Han Chinese Muslims, many of whom migrated to Russian Turkestan in the 1880s.
<i>Jigit</i>	a term of Tatar origin used for mounted messengers, assistants, bodyguards, etc.
<i>Kirgiz</i>	the generic term used by the Russians for both Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in Central Asia. As it is often unclear which is being referred to, we have preserved it in quotations from primary sources, while referring to Kazakhs (Qazaqs) and Kyrgyz (Qırghız) in the main body of the text.
<i>Kumis</i>	fermented mare's milk.
<i>Inorodtsy, inorodcheskii</i>	literally "those of a different birth". A term used to describe some of the non-Russian peoples of the Empire, in particular Muslims and nomadic or hunter-gatherer groups in the Caucasus, Siberia and Central Asia. As a legal category it denoted those excluded from Russian citizenship.

<i>Ishan</i>	a religious leader, whose authority could derive from personal charisma, from blood descent from a famous saint, or from having been taught by such a leader. Associated with Sufism, although not all <i>ishans</i> belonged to a Sufi order.
<i>Manap</i>	a traditional figure of authority among the Kyrgyz. Many <i>manaps</i> led the uprising in Semirech'e.
<i>Otdel</i>	an administrative division.
<i>Perevodchik</i>	translator, interpreter.
<i>Pood/Pud</i>	Russian measurement of weight, equivalent to 36 lb.
<i>Pristav</i>	local Police Chief and assistant to the District Commandant, in charge of a sub-district or <i>Uchastok</i> of 50,000–100,000 people.
<i>Pyatidesyatnik</i> or <i>Ellikbosh</i>	an elector, so called because one was chosen from each fifty households.
<i>Qazi</i>	an Islamic judge.
<i>Sart</i>	a term used by both Russians and nomads for the settled population of Central Asia.
<i>Semirech'e/Jeti-su</i>	the land of the seven rivers. A province of Russian Turkestan, now divided between southeast Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan.
<i>Sotnia</i>	a company of Cossack cavalry, usually 100–120 men.
<i>Stanitsa</i>	a Cossack settlement.
<i>Tanap/Tanab</i>	the local land measurement in Turkestan – 6–8 <i>tanaps</i> were equal to one <i>desyatina</i> .
<i>Taranchi</i>	“farmer”, the name by which the modern Uyghurs were known in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
<i>Tuzemtsy</i>	“natives”, the general term used by Russians to describe the local population.
<i>Ulama</i>	the collective term for Muslim clergy and theological scholars, plural of <i>Alim</i> .
<i>Uchastok</i>	a sub-district under the control of a <i>Pristav</i> (see above).

<i>Ürkün</i>	“exodus”, the term by which the revolt is known in modern Kyrgyzstan, referring to the flight of the Kyrgyz from Russian punitive expeditions.
<i>Volost’</i>	an administrative division, which in Central Asia usually had around 2,000 households. The largest unit to be administered by a member of the “native” administration.
<i>Zhuz (Junior, Middle and Senior)</i>	the three major tribal confederations into which which the Kazakhs were divided.

Archival abbreviations

F.	<i>Fond</i> (Fund); <i>Op.</i> – <i>Opis’</i> (Catalogue); <i>D.</i> – <i>Delo</i> (File); <i>l.</i> – <i>list’</i> (folio). Referencing system used in all post-Soviet archives.
AVPRI	<i>Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii</i> (Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, Moscow).
GAAO	<i>Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Almatinskoi Oblasti</i> (State Archive of Almaty Province, Almaty).
GARF	<i>Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii</i> (State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow).
NA	<i>The National Archives</i> (Kew, UK).
QRUGA-OGK-FRKR	<i>Qazaqstan Respublikasynyng Ulltyq Ghylım Akademiiasy – Ortalyq Ghylımi Kitapkhana – Fond redkikh knig’ i rukopisei</i> (Central Academic Library of the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences, Almaty: Rare Books and Manuscripts Division).
RF NAN KR	<i>Rukopisnyi fond National’noi Akademii Nauk Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki</i> (Manuscript Collection of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek).
RGAE	<i>Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomii</i> (Russian State Archive of the Economy, Moscow).

xviii *Glossary and abbreviations*

RGIA	<i>Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv</i> (Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg).
RGVIA	<i>Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv</i> (Russian State Military-Historical Archive, Moscow).
TsGARKaz	<i>Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan</i> (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty).
TsGAKR	<i>Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki</i> (Central State Archive of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek).
TsGARUz	<i>Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Uzbekistan</i> (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent).



Map 1 Russian Central Asia in 1916

Editors' introduction

Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu and Alexander Morrison

The First World War was the inaugural catastrophe of the “short twentieth century”, with at least nineteen million civilian and military deaths, some directly as a result of industrial warfare on the major European fronts, some due to the forced displacement of populations, starvation and disease behind the lines, and some to the collapse of the Romanov, Ottoman, Habsburg and Hohenzollern Empires, each of which faced unprecedented economic and food supply crises. The First World War – and the year 1916 in particular – was also a moment of rupture for the colonies of the European empires. As Keith Jeffery put it: “The apparently insatiable needs of total war made unprecedented demands on colonial societies and economies; administrations became more interventionist, stretching the loyalties of imperial subjects further than before.”¹ The revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia was an important part of this crisis of Imperial globalisation and accelerated modernisation. In the words of one contemporary observer, it was “an earthquake which took Turkestan from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.”² Despite this, the 1916 revolt remains little-known and understudied in Anglophone and Francophone scholarship. While there is a rich legacy of Soviet-era publications on the revolt in Russian, these usually bear the strong ideological imprint of the period when they were produced. The post-Soviet period has seen a flowering of new scholarship from Central Asia itself, some of it in Central Asian languages. While much of this continues to use paradigms and terminology inherited from the Soviet period, and interprets the revolt in a series of narrow national frameworks, some of it is also making use of new types of sources, and uncovering voices that were often silent in earlier scholarship – most notably those of the rebels themselves, and the revolt’s many victims. This volume seeks to combine the best of modern scholarship – Central Asian, Russian and “Western”. This introduction will give a brief overview of the overall

course of the revolt, review the existing historiography, suggest some of the unanswered questions that remain and explore the new approaches found in the most recent publications and among the contributors to this volume. Collectively we believe the chapters that follow will allow a comprehensive rethinking of the revolts that took place in Central Asia in 1916, allowing them to take their rightful place in the history of the region, of the First World War, and of anti-colonial rebellions worldwide.

While the uprisings and rebellions that took place across Central Asia in the summer of 1916 were connected, they also had very particular local dynamics and chronologies. The fifty years of tsarist rule that preceded the outbreak of the First World War had seen very little organised, armed resistance to Russian colonialism. The only significant uprising in the region before 1916 was in 1898, when a religious leader known as Dukchi Ishan led 2,000 of his followers in an attack on the Russian garrison at Andijan in the Ferghana valley, killing some twenty soldiers. As this suggests, the rebellion was snuffed out quickly, and its main significance was as a source of Russian paranoia, and a conviction that resistance to their rule would always be motivated by Islam.³ This was perhaps one reason why the revolt that broke out in 1916 took the Russian authorities by surprise, since it had different roots. The spark which set it off was an Imperial decree of 25 June/7 July 1916, that called for the conscription of "*inorodtsy*" ("aliens") – which in Central Asia meant the local Muslim population – into labour battalions. The first disturbances came a few days later in Khujand (now in Northern Tajikistan) where there were protests outside the offices of the District Commandant, although these did not become violent. The first really serious outbreak came in Jizzakh (now in Uzbekistan) on 12 July, where the Russian District Commandant and his assistant were killed, railway stations and telegraph lines destroyed, and the town and much of the surrounding region were in open revolt for the next two weeks until troops were sent in. Unrest in Ferghana at the same time was defused without significant violence, but August 1916 saw the revolt move to the predominantly Kazakh and Kyrgyz-populated region of Semirech'e (now divided between south-eastern Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan) where tensions between incoming Russian settlers and the local population were particularly high. The worst violence was seen in the districts of Pishpek (Bishkek) and Przheval'sk (Karakol) where more than 3,000 Russian settlers were killed. The subsequent punitive expeditions drove an estimated 250,000 Kyrgyz to flee across the border to China, suffering terrible mortality in what became known as the *Ūrkiin* – "exodus". The third major centre of revolt was the Torghai region in the northern Kazakh steppe, where a much better-organised rebellion broke out in September. In October the rebels, estimated at 50,000 strong, unsuccessfully besieged the town of Torghai, and fought a prolonged guerrilla war against the substantial

forces sent against them, which had still not been suppressed by the time of the February Revolution. Beyond this there were revolts among the Turkmen in Khiva, led by Junaid Khan, and at Chikishlar on the Caspian Sea where they clashed with Russian fishermen. Thus at different times revolt affected all the peoples of Central Asia, and much of the region's vast and varied territory of steppe, desert, mountain and irrigated oasis. While we use the singular term "1916 revolt" for convenience and familiarity, it would make at least as much sense to refer to it in the plural as a series of revolts. It was never a unified movement even within specific regions, and the causes of discontent and violence varied – although the economic dislocation and increased state demands brought by the First World War were a common factor everywhere.

Soviet-era historiography on 1916

The centenary year of the 1916 revolt saw conferences in Bishkek, Moscow, Astana and Almaty,⁴ but in Europe and America the response was muted, swamped by excitement over the centenaries of the First World War and of the Russian revolutions of 1917. The one exception was in June 2016, when the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University held a forum which they entitled "Revolt in Central Asia: The Cataclysm of 1916"⁵ The centrepiece of the event was the launch of a book, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia*, by Edward Dennis Sokol.⁶ A new and groundbreaking work of scholarship, providing a fresh perspective on this understudied event? Sadly no – it was a reprint of a monograph that was first published in 1954, which more than sixty years later remains the only book-length study of the 1916 revolt in English.⁷ Sokol's work, while a decent effort in its day, is now thoroughly outdated, riddled with Sovietological assumptions and inaccuracies, but there has been little to add to it since.⁸ For decades the 1916 revolt barely featured in Western scholarship, as non-Soviet scholars were denied access to all but a small selection of published sources, and historiography was dominated by the study of the 1917 revolutions. Sokol's book was the only publication specifically dedicated to the revolt to appear in English before 1991, although there is also a brief section on it in Richard Pierce's monograph on colonial administration in Russian Turkestan.⁹

In Anglophone scholarship, the history of 1916 has nearly always been subsumed into wider narratives about the revolutionary upheavals that followed hard on its heels over the course of 1917. As crowds spread onto the streets of Petrograd, soldiers mutinied and a 300-year-old dynasty fell, what had been the Empire's major domestic crisis of 1916 receded into the background. Politicians in the metropole had bigger fish to fry – this was especially true of Alexander Kerensky, who drew on his

memories of growing up in Tashkent when excoriating the Government's handling of the revolt in the Duma in December 1916,¹⁰ but would soon find his attention diverted elsewhere. The widespread refusal of Central Asian men to be conscripted as labourers and sent to the front would be overshadowed by the mass mutiny of serving soldiers over the course of 1917; the deaths of 3,000 Russian settlers, of at least 150,000 Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, and the flight of thousands more to China, seemed minor compared to the carnage on the eastern front, while the disintegration of the Russian colonial administration in the region was dwarfed by the wider state collapse that would come the following year.¹¹ The 1916 revolt was relegated to a footnote, where it was remembered at all. In his landmark study of the eastern front, Norman Stone merely noted that after the battle of Lake Naroch General A. N. Kuropatkin "resigned in despair, to go and practise against Central Asian rebels the military talents that had been of so little service against Germans."¹² Who those rebels were, and why they were rebelling, remained unsaid.

By contrast, the 1916 revolt had considerable ideological importance to Soviet-era historians of Central Asia, as evidence of an indigenous revolutionary tradition, and of the iniquities of the tsarist regime. Many Soviet historians of the 1920s and 1930s espoused a radically anti-colonial line, denouncing tsarist imperialism at home and abroad, something seen particularly clearly in the well-known works of Mikhail Pokrovsky.¹³ Those who worked on Central Asia characterised tsarist rule as an absolute evil, cruel and exploitative. They sought the roots of the rebellion both in the land question, which had provoked conflict with settlers, and in class conflict provoked by the corrupt way in which native officials sought to implement the 25 June decree conscripting Central Asian men into labour battalions, which was the initial trigger of the revolts. The 1920s and early 1930s saw the appearance of the most important publications in Russian, by Georgii Broido, Turar Rysqulov, S. Brainin and S. Shafiro, Petr Galuzo, Sanjar Asfendiyarov and others.¹⁴ While these could descend into conspiracy theory – particularly in the case of Broido and Rysqulov's suggestion that the revolt was deliberately provoked to justify the seizure of land from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, and to establish a greater military presence in the region in preparation for further conquest in Western China¹⁵ – many of their judgements still resonate today. The archival documents which they published, notably the diary kept by General A. N. Kuropatkin in August–September 1916, were among the most important primary sources available to Western historians until 1991.¹⁶

Yet, although the anti-colonial nature of the rebellion seemed obvious to Soviet historians of all stripes, the subject of the uprising was far from settled. The Soviet historiography of the native rebellion underwent significant changes following the political dictates of the Central

Government, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. The sheer number of articles devoted to the uprising – the tenth anniversary of 1916 saw the publication of at least twenty – and the often litigious rhetoric of some of its participants suggest that the debate around the rebellion was at times contentious and bitter. It opened in 1924 with the publication of Rysqulov's main theses, followed by a rush of responses. By the end of the decade, the academic wrangling over the revolt had led the *Istpart* (Commission on the History of the October Revolution and the Bolshevik Party), one of the Party's main supervisory organs, to declare the results of the debate inconclusive.

The issue that proved particularly divisive concerned the nature of the uprising itself, a longstanding debate that still has consequences nowadays. Was the uprising national or class-based? Where some historians, most notably the Kazakh Turar Rysqulov and the Kyrgyz Iusup Abdrakhmanov, embraced the openly national interpretation of the uprising,¹⁷ others focused on what they saw as instances of class struggle.¹⁸ Similarly contentious was the question of the uprising's leadership. The Soviet Government's distaste for "exploiting" classes – a broad category that included traditional elites of the country's many minorities – made the participation of native elites in the uprising a matter of disagreement. The largely elite background of the uprising's leaders was ultimately recognised, although not without a qualification that their participation in the rebellion owed more to self-interest and the fear of losing control of the "masses" than a genuine sense of solidarity with rebels.¹⁹ Another sensitive question concerned the role of Russian settlers in the dispossession of native nomads and peasants. For Rysqulov and Abdrakhmanov, as well as Galuzo, Slavic settlers formed the backbone of Imperial rule in the colony.²⁰ I. Menitskii, on the other hand, insisted on a more "differential" approach, arguing that the events of 1916 saw a class war against "native bourgeoisie" and other "exploiters," with no regard to their ethnicity.²¹

Menitskii's arguments are, of course, immediately recognisable as a part of the Soviet historiographical canon that came to dominate the field in the second half of the 1930s. Intriguingly, for a good part of the 1920s, Menitskii's views were shared by only a minority of commentators. For most Soviet historians in the 1920s, according to the mainstream anti-Russian and anti-colonial ideological trends, the revolt was "national" in the sense that it was directed against Russians in general, while the interests of the majority of settlers were aligned with those of the Imperial state. Writing in 1924, Miklashevskii, for example, judged the uprising to be "national in character."²² Similarly, Chekaninskii favoured the national explanation for the uprising, arguing that the revolt was driven by "the desire of the exploited nationality to throw off the yoke and shackles of slavery and clear the path to ... self-determination."²³

Understanding these debates is important because it allows us to see how the Soviet regime had tried to create a common historical narrative of 1916 that would unify the ethnically, religiously and culturally heterogeneous populations of Soviet Central Asia. Unlike the much-mythologised October Revolution – which in Turkestan was described as a “colonial revolution” by early Soviet historians, as the local Soviets excluded Muslims and were controlled by former settlers, soldiers and Russian workers²⁴ – the “revolts of 1916” could serve as a basis for a common founding myth that could include both the Bolsheviks in Moscow, Central Asia’s new political elites, and the supposed “toiling masses” of the region.

The debates over the uprising also reveal the ideological shifts in Soviet political culture. The case of the censored film *Before Dawn*, directed by the Uzbek Suleiman Khojaev in 1934 and devoted to the 1916 uprising in the old town of Jizzakh, offers an enlightening example of an interpretation of the revolt through a newly Uzbek national lens; it allows us to assess, through the visual arts, the changes which had occurred in the political and historiographical landscape that emerged in the 1930s, given the hostile reception of the film by the Central Moscow censorship committee.²⁵ As a historical reconstruction of the Jizzakh uprising of July 1916 and its repression by the Russian colonial authorities, the film interpreted the revolt as a struggle for national liberation, based only on local, Muslim forces without help of any kind from a revolutionary Russian guide – something that would later become an obligatory stereotype in history books and artistic productions following the imposition of socialist realism from the mid-1930s (seen clearly in the 1938 film *Amangel'dy*). Instead, Khojaev’s film celebrated a Turkestani identity similar to that one could find among the *Jadid* reformers, and was a radical denunciation of the use of violence by Russian military rulers.²⁶

Unfortunately for the film, it was completed in late 1933, at a time when rapid changes were taking place in the historiography of the Russian Empire. The deepening distrust of the borderland populations in the wake of the political and economic crisis of 1927–1928 diminished the willingness of the Soviet leadership to accommodate any real or potential expressions of national dissent. At the same time, the glorious past of the Russian fatherland was progressively extolled.²⁷ Previously the Russian Empire had been demonised and defined as a “prison for the peoples” or as an “absolute evil” (*absoliutnoe zlo*), set against the liberating and emancipating Soviet policy towards nationalities, but this now started to change. A decree dated 16 May 1934 on history teaching stipulated that it was necessary to go back to “concrete facts”, patriotism, and the role of individuals, ordering that the history books be rewritten.²⁸ In Central Asia a decree dated 23 May 1934 issued by the Central Asian Bureau – which had disappeared before the year was out – recommended that the

idea of Imperial Russia as “bourgeois and colonizing” be eradicated from the historiography.²⁹

Unsurprisingly, the film was never screened. The new ideological direction in Soviet historiography made *Before Dawn* as well as the more nationalist interpretations of the uprising inadmissible – the film was censored and Suleiman Khojaev was imprisoned and later killed during the Stalinist purges. Just how abrupt this shift was can be seen from two articles written in 1931 by Abdrakhmanov, the then chairman of the *Sovnarkom* (Soviet of People's Commissars) of the Kirgiz ASSR. Published in August 1931, the first article does not deviate from Abdrakhmanov's earlier claims that the uprising was “nationalist” insofar as it was “directed against all Russians as an exploiting nation”.³⁰ A mere month later, in September 1931, Abdrakhmanov was forced to publish a retraction, where he admitted to “pitting nations against each other and downplaying the shared class interests between the working masses of the Russian and Kirgiz peasantry”.³¹

By the end of the decade, Imperial Russia became a “lesser evil” (*naimen'shee zlo*),³² which had “saved” Central Asia from British domination. The term “conquest”, with its overtones of violence, was gradually replaced by the gentler “incorporation” or “integration”, and finally by “voluntary union” (*dobrovol'noe prisoedinenie*).³³ In 1955 one could read for example that “the historic act of accession of Central Asia was in the ‘kinship interest’ (*krovnoi interes*) of the great popular masses in the region”, and that the Russian people were “the faithful defenders of national freedom and independence”.³⁴ The anti-Russian nature of the revolt began to cause greater unease, and with rare exceptions it disappeared from the history books until Stalin's death. Apart from a patriotic narrative focused on the Torghai rebel leader Amangeldi Imanov, originally developed as propaganda for Kazakh soldiers during the Second World War,³⁵ the only publications on the uprising that appeared in the 1940s were collections of primary sources, designed mainly for professional historians.³⁶

During Khrushchev's thaw and the beginning of the Cold War, the study of the 1916 revolt and other national movements was given a new lease of life. Eager to demonstrate the success of the Soviet experience in colonial emancipation along socialist lines, the Central Government loosened the unspoken restrictions on national historiographies. Between 1953 and 1954 a series of conferences devoted to the pre-revolutionary history of the region was held in Frunze, Ashkhabad and Tashkent. A Joint Scientific Conference on the History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the pre-revolutionary period, which gathered local historians as well as academics from Moscow and Leningrad in Tashkent in 1954, devoted considerable attention to the 1916 revolt, and concluded that it could be classed as “progressive”. However, it could no longer be described as an interethnic conflict, but as a “class struggle”

in which the Central Asian peoples, assisted by their Russian “elder brothers” among the settlers, rose up against both the tsarist regime and their own exploiting classes.³⁷ The attacks on settlers in Semirech’e were reinterpreted as attacks on “kulak villages” motivated by class conflict. Early Soviet historians were criticised for overemphasising the national element of the revolt and ignoring its class basis, but the revolt was still framed as a series of “national-liberation movements”, in uneasy tension with the idea of class struggle.³⁸

One of the most significant – and least known – outcomes of the conference was a collection of oral histories recorded by a group of anthropology students in the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. Apparently designed to complement the “class struggle” line of the post-war historiography, the collection of these testimonies had backfired, with the transcripts revealing instances of ethnic and sexual violence, persecution, and the persistent resentment and distrust between settler and “native”. Unsurprisingly, the interviews, which are kept in the manuscripts section of the National Academy of Sciences, were never published and remained largely inaccessible until the collapse of the Soviet Union.³⁹ Despite the disheartening, if entirely foreseeable, dismissal of collective memories of the revolt, the greater permissibility of the ideological landscape under Khrushchev lent itself to a growing diversity of interpretations. A decade later a new study, based on a doctoral dissertation by the Kyrgyz historian Usenbaev, described the rebellion as an “anti-feudal” and “anti-imperialist” movement of “national liberation”.⁴⁰ Although not quite rousing a scandal, the book nonetheless attracted pointed criticism and accusations of nationalism. Despite this critique, some of his conclusions, particularly his emphasis on the anti-feudal nature of the revolt, concurred with the definitions held by the editors of an extensive collection of archival documents commissioned by the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in 1960.⁴¹

Gorbachev’s *glasnost* prompted renewed interest in the uprising, and between 1988 and 1991 conferences on the subject were held in Bishkek, Alma-Ata and Tashkent. In substance, little was presented here that had not already been covered by Soviet historians. Perhaps the most radical conclusions were drawn not by scholars but political activists. On the eve of independence, a group of activists that would later form the “Party of National Revival Asaba” in newly independent Kyrgyzstan declared that the suppression of the native rebels by the colonial authorities had been an instance of genocide.

Post-Soviet scholarship on 1916

In Central Asia since independence there have been further important publications of original documents, notably that by the Kazakh historian

M. K. Kozybaev.⁴² In addition to publications of documents, another significant development in the historiography of the revolt since the breakup of the Soviet Union was the publication of demographic studies of the rebellion and the ensuing civil war in Semirech'e. Given the paucity of archival data – nobody kept records of native mortality rates before and after the rebellion – a study by Krongardt, based on available population censuses and covering the decade between 1916 and 1926, remains the most comprehensive treatment of the demographic aspects of the revolt.⁴³

However, in much modern Central Asian scholarship on 1916, the Soviet narrative of class-consciousness has been replaced with an equally problematic interpretation, namely that the revolt was a “national-liberation movement” or uprising, ironically enough another phrase that dates back to the early Soviet era, and which is usually used without much attempt to unpack its meaning.⁴⁴ This is an awkward and anachronistic way to describe a revolt that saw outbreaks across Central Asia. Dividing it up along modern national frontiers which did not exist at the time prevents us from seeing both divergences within national groups, and common patterns across them; Kyrgyz and Kazakhs alike rebelled against the colonial regime in Semirech'e and attacked the Russian settler population, and in each case the causes were the same – longstanding resentment over the expropriation of land and water for the settlement of peasants from European Russia, and the *ukaz* conscripting Central Asian Muslims into labour battalions in June 1916. Interpreting the Semirech'e rebellion as two separate Kazakh and Kyrgyz “national-liberation” movements is thus not helpful. The focus on the “national” also obscures the more immediate local dynamics of the rebellion. Few studies provide detailed accounts of the rebellion's development at the grassroots level. One notable exception is a 1997 study by Usenbaev, which draws on official documentation as well as folk songs and oral histories collected by Soviet anthropologists in the 1950s.⁴⁵

Meanwhile in Russian publications the deeply implausible narrative of class struggle has persisted.⁴⁶ Some of the most recent Russian scholarship puts forward the claim that the revolts were simply a “mutual tragedy” (*obshchaia tragediia*) provoked by wartime conditions,⁴⁷ or even by the machinations of foreign agents, while another strand alleges that Russian settlers were the principal victims, the subject of wholly unprovoked, bloodthirsty attacks by “savage” Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.⁴⁸ Even the first of these interpretations obscures the colonial nature of Russian rule in Central Asia and the profound inequalities this produced, in particular the privileged access to the best agricultural land which the tsarist state gave to peasant settlers from European Russia at the expense of the local population, something its own officials described as “sowing the seed of national strife” (*zakladyvaet semena natsional'noi rozni*).⁴⁹ What is clear is that while both Soviet and post-Soviet Russophone and Central Asian

scholarship are relatively abundant with detailed, archive-based studies of 1916, these are all strongly inflected by the prevailing ideology at the time they were written, and expected to serve contemporary political ends, often at the expense of any attempt to understand the revolt or those who took part in it on their own terms.

In this still highly politicised scholarly landscape, Anglophone, or more generally “Western” historiography on 1916 offers some important new insights, even though it is still underdeveloped compared with the rich legacy of scholarship in Russian and in Central Asian languages from the Soviet and independence periods. Much recent scholarship on the First World War has emphasised that it was a truly global conflict, a war between empires rather than nation-states, which sucked in soldiers and civilians from the Asian and African colonies of the European powers, and in some cases turned them into battlegrounds. This “Greater War” extended not just beyond the geographical boundaries of Europe, but beyond the conventional temporal boundaries of 1914–1918, beginning with the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911, and persisting well into the 1920s as violence convulsed much of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.⁵⁰ The 1916 revolt has begun, tentatively, to find its place in this historiography.⁵¹ In his recent study of the destruction of the Russian Empire during the First World War as a process of decolonisation, Joshua Sanborn attributes great significance to it as the beginning of a wider process in which the tsarist state unravelled and its peoples sought independence.⁵² Peter Holquist has argued that a “continuum of crisis” engulfed the Russian Empire from August 1914, enduring throughout the civil war period, and that the practices of surveillance, political violence and repression which we associate with the Bolsheviks were actually developed by the tsarist state during its final years under the pressures of war. This has important implications for our understanding both of the ruthlessness with which the revolt was suppressed, and the way in which the cycle of violence was prolonged into the Soviet period.⁵³ Jonathan Smele has also recently argued that the 1916 revolt marked the beginning of a ten-year cycle of civil war across the territory of the Empire,⁵⁴ while the late Keith Jeffery included a section on it in his global history of the year 1916, which of course also saw uprisings against colonial rule in Algeria and in Ireland.⁵⁵

While Dov Yaroshevski has studied the supposedly revolutionary (but in practice highly chauvinist) politics of the Tashkent Soviet, and Adeb Khalid Muslim politics in Turkestan during the revolution, works specifically devoted to the revolt remain sparse.⁵⁶ The best general history of the years of revolution and civil war in Central Asia is Turin historian Marco Buttino’s *La Rivoluzione Capovolta*, now translated into Russian, together with his recent contribution to the *Russia’s Great War and Revolution* series.⁵⁷ Buttino argues that the 1916 uprising must

be seen as growing out of an indigenous political dynamic, unlike the February and October Revolutions which “arrived via the telegraph” in Central Asia (as they did elsewhere in the Russian Empire).⁵⁸ In this and in other publications, Buttino lays particular stress on the economic pressures created by war: higher taxation and the distortions of the war-time economy, which shifted industrial production to munitions and away from consumer goods, meant that the local economy in Central Asia overheated, producing galloping inflation in food and fuel prices. In 1915, Russian Turkestan produced the largest cotton harvest seen in the pre-revolutionary period, with output levels that would not be matched until 1929, but the following year cotton output collapsed, to be followed in 1917–1918 by famine and depopulation.⁵⁹ Buttino’s focus on the inflation, famine and other economic disasters inflicted on Central Asia by war is unusual, but fully borne out by even a casual survey of the contemporary press, suggesting that this is an underestimated factor in the outbreak of the revolt and the subsequent chaos.⁶⁰ Jeff Sahadeo also devotes a chapter to 1916 in his monograph on Russian colonial society in Tashkent, which focuses particularly on the economic dislocation produced by war and revolution, and the numerous food riots or *bab'i bunty* (led by Russian women) that marked the months leading up to the rebellion.⁶¹

The only book-length study on 1916 to have appeared outside the former USSR in recent years is Jörn Happel’s monograph in German on the revolt in Semirech’e, which he characterises as a desperate response by Kazakhs and Kyrgyz to the existential threat which peasant settlement posed to their way of life.⁶² Happel’s key contribution in this book is his use of the techniques of microhistory, and in particular the meticulous analysis of interrogation records pioneered by Carlo Ginzburg and Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie, and also employed by the Subaltern Studies collective in South Asian history to understand anti-colonial revolts there.⁶³ Happel makes a convincing case that reading the colonial “archives of repression” against the grain is an essential part of understanding the revolt from below.⁶⁴ He provides numerous vivid testimonies and descriptions of key events during the revolt, such as the attack on the village of Stolypino in August 1916 and the Belovodskoe massacre in Semirech’e. He frames these individual stories with a vivid description and analysis of Russian settler society on the eve of and during the revolt, based partly on letters intercepted by the Okhrana, and of Kazakh and Kyrgyz society and its response to the growing pressures created by Russian settlement, agrarian and fiscal policies.⁶⁵ He also provides the best account so far in Western scholarship of the combination of additional pressures which the outbreak of war placed on the fragile relationship between the tsarist state and Central Asian Society, culminating in the disastrous conscription decree of June 1916. This dual approach allows him to draw some

important general conclusions – notably that the revolt was not religiously motivated – but never to lose sight of the fact that neither “rebels”, “settlers” nor colonial officers were an undifferentiated mass. The Okhrana officer Zheleznyakov, a key figure in his book, was an upholder of state power in Turkestan, responsible for the interrogation of Qanat Abukin and other Kyrgyz and Kazakh rebels, but he was also a severe critic of the Resettlement Administration.⁶⁶ It was the latter’s policies of land expropriation which, Happel argues, were the fundamental cause of nomadic discontent, to the extent that, if Abukin’s and other testimonies are to be believed, many Kyrgyz saw revolt as nothing more nor less than an existential struggle to prevent the destruction of their entire world and way of life. For all its strengths, however, Happel’s book does not make use of sources in Central Asian languages, and focuses only on Semirech’e. Other regions and phases of the revolt, notably the initial outbreaks in Khujand and Jizzakh, and the revolt among the Turkmen and in the northern steppe, remain much less well-studied.

When it first appeared in 1997 the late Daniel Brower’s article on conflict between the Kyrgyz and peasant settlers in the Pishpek and Przheval’sk districts was the first original contribution on the subject in Western scholarship since Sokol’s book over forty years before, and the only one to be based on research in Central Asian archives.⁶⁷ Brower focuses on the intense interethnic violence in this region, noting that this seems to have been a product of the particular type of agrarian economy there, where many Kyrgyz had shifted to sedentary agriculture, only to lose their best cultivated land to settlers. His key source is a report from a Captain Jungmeister of the Imperial Gendarmerie, who was sent on a fact-finding mission to southern Semirech’e in the aftermath of the revolt.⁶⁸ He described widespread devastation, and a pattern of persistent interethnic conflict and violence. Brower uses Jungmeister’s account to argue that the aims of Kyrgyz rebels went well beyond resisting the decree mobilising them into labour battalions, and was an attempt to expel the alien population who had usurped so much of their best land, and return to an earlier nomadic “golden age”. In this his analysis resembles Happel’s, although perhaps both underestimate the extent to which conflict was fiercest in areas where settlers and *sedentarised* nomads competed directly for arable land. Brower makes comparisons with other settler societies, and with the 1857 uprising against British rule in India, concluding that the long-term tensions produced by Russian settler colonialism in Semirech’e were the most important factor in the rebellion, rather than the short-term pressures of war.

The only contribution in Western scholarship to date that makes extensive use of Qazaq-language sources is that by the leading Japanese historian Tomohiko Uyama.⁶⁹ Uyama’s article is a dual study of 1916 and the Alash movement, and is particularly valuable for his comparison of Semirech’e and in Torghai, which shows how differently the revolt

developed among the Kazakhs in these two regions. He argues that while the former was spontaneous and poorly organised, with no very clear aim or ideology discernible among the rebels other than a desire to kill or expel Russian settlers, the Torghai rebellion was more carefully planned. Its leaders, Amangeldi Imanov and Abdigapar Zhanbosynov, created a putative state structure as an alternative to colonial rule, based on the idea of khanship. He also notes the position taken by the Kazakh intelligentsia, who opposed the revolt and encouraged Kazakhs to participate in the draft, in the hope that this might be the first step towards their goal of equal citizenship for Kazakhs within the Russian Empire. Uyama argues that the poor planning and timing of the conscription decree, and the rumours which immediately began to circulate about it, were very important in triggering the revolt, and in the motivation of many of the rebels, who in some cases believed either that they were going to be sent to the front to fight, or that they would have to dig trenches between the German and Russian lines. He also pays careful attention to the question of religion, noting that while in some areas rebels did use religious slogans, Islam was never a prime motivating factor in the rebellion – in which he agrees with Happel.⁷⁰

Another younger Japanese scholar, Akira Ueda, has published an article whose originality lies in his use of GIS mapping techniques to establish where the most intense areas of rebellion were located, focusing on Fergana and the Hungry Steppe, and comparing his findings for these areas with existing scholarship on Semirech'e.⁷¹ He suggests that in Fergana there is a clear correlation between propensity to revolt and areas with a predominantly nomadic (Kyrgyz) population, noting that this group had suffered particularly from the increase in grain prices consequent on the spread of cotton cultivation in the central area of the valley. They had also borne the brunt of illegal Russian settlement in the region, and been forced onto more marginal land as a result. On the Hungry Steppe, where sedentarised nomads had received adequate allocations of newly irrigated land (and, crucially, of water) there was no rebellion, while on the Tair-Sheikh steppe, north of Katta-Qurghan, where Kazakh nomads had been displaced and expropriated by Russian settlers, they rose up in rebellion. Ueda establishes a clear correlation between the expropriation of land and water for Russian settlement and revolt, and crucially suggests that it was sedentarised, formerly nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who were at the forefront, a significant revision of both Brower and Happel.

Outstanding questions and new approaches

This brief overview of Western and Anglophone scholarship on the 1916 revolt suggests how much work there is still to be done.⁷² The history of

the Great War in Russian Central Asia still abounds with unanswered or only partially explored questions. The Russian Imperial state had been planning a more thorough exploitation of Turkestan's agricultural and mineral resources in the years before the outbreak of war, a vision articulated most clearly in Agriculture Minister A. V. Krivoshein's well-known essay reflecting on his tour of the region in 1912, but the principal manifestation of this by the outbreak of war was an ever-greater influx of Russian settlers, without any of the new irrigation infrastructure that Krivoshein himself had said would be required to support them.⁷³ Turkestan's new water law, designed to prise control of irrigation from the hands of the local population and thus facilitate further Russian colonisation, had only just been entered on the statute book in 1916.⁷⁴ Tsarist colonisation policies in the last two decades of Russian colonial rule were already producing violent conflict over land and water resources between the indigenous population and Russian settlers before 1914.⁷⁵ While this allows us to question rose-tinted Soviet narratives of class solidarity between peasant settlers and the local population,⁷⁶ we still do not fully understand the connection between these earlier patterns of conflict and those of 1916. Apart from Buttino's work, we still know too little about the impact of wartime conditions in Central Asia. The outbreak of war saw much higher taxation and mass requisitions of livestock (especially horses) for the needs of the front. While the price of cotton, Central Asia's main cash crop, soared because of its use both for uniforms and the manufacture of munitions, only a small minority seems to have benefited from this: by 1916 the local economy in Turkestan seems to have been overheating, producing rapid inflation in food and fuel prices.⁷⁷ The importance of these immediate wartime pressures in stimulating rebellion is still not properly understood. Another intriguing factor is the presence of large numbers of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war in the region from 1915 onwards: their role both in 1916 and in the supposedly "revolutionary" violence of 1917–1918 is also underexplored.⁷⁸ It is important to re-establish the uprisings in this contemporary context, emphasising that the different actors involved did not know beforehand that 1917 would see two revolutions at the centre, or that after February 1917 the Provisional Government would so soon be overthrown. It seems probable that, rather than the 1916 revolt being a mere prelude to the 1917 revolutions in Central Asia, it was actually the former which established the political divisions and, above all, the patterns of violence of the years 1917–1924 in that region.

Above all, we are only just beginning to explore the rich legacy of poems, songs, oral narratives, literature and film which grew out of the trauma of 1916.⁷⁹ Most of this material is in Qazaq, Kyrgyz, Chaghatai or Persian, and promises to give a very different perspective on the revolt from the archival and published documents in Russian which have

formed the main source-base for scholarship so far. A more complete understanding of 1916 and its consequences will require a combination of traditional archival history, innovative analysis of Turkic-language oral and literary materials, and theoretical insights gleaned from studies of other anti-colonial uprisings in different contexts around the world.⁸⁰

We hope that the chapters in this volume will make a lasting contribution to the historical debate about the 1916 revolt – a debate which has now lasted more than a hundred years. Almost all aspects of the revolt are explored here, from its earliest origins to current memorialisation. Tomohiko Uyama provides us with what is surely the clearest and most definitive explanation of why there was a revolt in Central Asia, and why it occurred in 1916. He notes that while it was clearly provoked by the conscription decree of 25 June 1915, this was also applied in Siberia and the North Caucasus – but it only produced serious resistance and rebellion in Central Asia. The answer, he argues, lies in the much weaker integration of the region into the Empire, exemplified by the absence of birth registers (*metricheskie knigi*), which made it impossible to assess objectively who was liable for conscription. This left enormous power in the hands of local officials, which they proceeded to abuse. Tatiana Kotiukova gives a minutely detailed account of the debates in the Main Staff and War Ministry over the wisdom of extending conscription to Central Asian Muslims, and the eventual fateful decision to issue the Imperial decree. Akmal Bazarbaev and Cloé Drieu's chapter is a microstudy of the first serious outbreak of rebellion, in the town and district of Jizzakh, now in Uzbekistan; they show that the pattern of rebellion was in fact very uneven, with some cantons remaining entirely untouched, and explain this by looking at questions of leadership, and at underlying agrarian discontent that affected some groups in the district more than others. Oybek Mahmudov's chapter helps to explain why the revolt took the colonial administration almost completely by surprise: rather than focusing on the numerous material causes of discontent brought about by wartime pressures and longer-term colonisation policies, many of them lived in a form of "virtual reality" governed by preconceived ideas about the "native" population. They assumed that opposition to Russian rule must either be Islamically motivated or the product of manipulation by foreign agents, and were extremely sensitive to rumour, living in an almost permanent state of what Christopher Bayly called "information panic". Jörn Happel too emphasises the importance of rumour in sowing fear and breeding violence as he analyses the growing tensions between European settlers, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs in Semirech'e in the decade before the First World War. The files of the tsarist secret police, the Okhrana, reveal the paranoia of the settler population of the region with regard both to "native" attacks and to "German" plots. Aminat Chokobaeva's chapter also focuses on Semirech'e, seeking to explain both the violence

with which the settler population of the region was initially targeted, and then that of the reprisals that followed, which between them ensured that the death toll there dwarfed that in other regions. She shows how important perceptions of threat were on both sides – and how the rapid spread of rebellion among Kazakhs and Kyrgyz is best explained by fear of Russian reprisals, and a widespread belief that conscription was part of a deliberate plot to empty the land to make way for more Russian settlers.

Looking beyond the immediate causes of the outbreak in Central Asia itself, Niccolò Pianciola provides a masterly overview of the war-time context, and in particular the forms of eliminationist violence which had emerged on the eastern front over the previous two years, notably in Anatolia. Many of the soldiers of the first and second Turkestan brigades (largely made up of European settlers from the region) served in Anatolia and witnessed at first-hand the consequences of the Armenian genocide. When they returned to Turkestan to help suppress the rebellion they brought the violence of the front line with them. Ian Campbell's chapter takes a different approach to contextualising the revolt, exploring instead the career of the man given responsibility for suppressing it, General Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin (1848–1925). Plucked from command of the Riga section of the eastern front to be appointed Turkestan Governor-General in August 1916, Kuropatkin was returning to the region where his career had begun in the 1860s – in 1898 he had made a similar leap in the other direction, from Governor of the Transcaspian province to War Minister. Through a close reading of Kuropatkin's diary, Campbell shows how he remained haunted by memories of the campaigns of Russian conquest in the region in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, and in particular the terrible massacre ordered by General Mikhail Dmitri'evich Skobelev after the fall of the Turkmen fortress of Denghil-Tepe in 1881, which Kuropatkin had witnessed. These precedents were also important in determining the patterns of violence which erupted as the revolt was suppressed.

Alexander Morrison's chapter pursues this topic further, showing how from August 1916 onwards punitive expeditions and bands of vigilantes killed Kyrgyz and drove them off their land – anywhere that Russian blood had been shed was considered forfeit, but this was interpreted very broadly. He argues that the cycle of violence and ethnic cleansing barely slackened with the February Revolution, and continued into 1918 and beyond. Ablet Kamalov's chapter also emphasises these continuities across the revolutionary divide. He examines the participation of the Taranchis (Uyghurs) of Semirech'e in the revolt, and the connections between the violence of 1916 and that of the Atu tragedy – a massacre of 6,500 Taranchis in the Vernyi region by Bolshevik cavalry in February 1918. This incident was airbrushed from official histories in the Soviet period, but preserved in oral accounts and collective memory amongst

the Uyghurs of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Xavier Hallez and Isabelle Ohayon focus on the rebellion in Torghai province in the northern part of the Kazakh steppe, demonstrating convincingly how it formed part of a long continuum of rebellion against the demands and constraints of the Russian state, stretching back to Kenesary Kasimov in the 1830s and 1840s, and enduring into the anti-collectivisation revolts of the 1930s. They show how central the dual leadership of “khan and *batyr*” was to this resistance, and how this evolved in the colonial period into the figure of the *barymtashi*, or cattle-raider, who can be best understood using Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of social banditry.

The memorialisation of the revolt in poetry, songs and prose is the focus of the chapters by Duishembieva, Prior and Ross. Duishembieva’s chapter offers a vivid account of the fate of over 150,000 Kyrgyz who fled from Russian Semirech’e to China, using a rich combination of Russian archival sources and poems composed by Kyrgyz *aqyns* (bards). The latter speak vividly to the trauma of the *Ūrkiin* for those who fled and returned, and the desperate straits to which they were reduced, without their livestock in a strange land. Some of these accounts were composed and collected at the time, others in the 1920s and 1930s. Daniel Prior presents the first text edition, translation and commentary of one of these poems, Musa Chaghatay uulu’s *Qirghin (The Slaughter)*, composed in the 1920s and collected by Soviet ethnographers in 1927. It is a remarkable account of the revolt from the Kyrgyz perspective, testifying to the damaging effects of wartime requisitions and the fear produced by the conscription decree, and with detailed descriptions of events – such as the capture of a load of Russian rifles in the Boom gorge – which were turning points of the rebellion. Prior’s expert commentary and analysis allows this poem to speak to a new audience. Finally Danielle Ross’s chapter explores the creation of one of the most enduring figures in the mythology of 1916 – the Kazakh leader Amangeldi Imanov, one of the only individuals on the rebel side who was celebrated in the Soviet period. She explores the image of Amangeldi found in collections of Kazakh songs and poetry from the 1930s and 1940s, and how this was adapted with additional socialist realist and Russian elements for a famous 1938 film, widely regarded as the first in Kazakh cinema. Amangeldi subsequently featured prominently in front-line propaganda for Kazakh troops during the Second World War, and in official histories.

There are still many stories about 1916 that remain to be told – much to our regret we do not have a chapter on the uprisings among the Turkmen, although Ulfatbek Abdurasulov’s research on the Turkmen rebel leader Junaid Khan promises to at least partly fill that gap.⁸¹ Demographic research into the overall number of deaths remains incomplete and sometimes controversial, and the debate over whether its repression constituted a “genocide” against the Kyrgyz people will no

doubt rumble on both inside and outside academia. However, certain of the older canards can now finally be excluded. As A. D. Vasil'ev has argued, the involvement of that old colonial standby, "foreign agents" – German, Chinese or Turkish – was a complete fantasy.⁸² The German foreign ministry's intelligence on Russian Central Asia was poor and second-hand: they only heard about the revolt in November 1916, and did not make any attempts to intervene in the region until after the Bolshevik takeover (even this failed).⁸³ The Chinese state in Xinjiang was itself crumbling at this time, although as Pianciola shows, Chinese opium traders do seem to have played a role in the violence in Przhval'sk. While some Muslims of the Russian Empire did feel sympathy for the Turks and were troubled about fighting their co-religionists, no evidence of Turkish intervention in Central Asia can be found before Enver Pasha's adventures of 1921–1922. The reformist Muslim intellectuals – the so-called *Jadids* – whom Russian officials most darkly suspected of pan-Turkism were among the most loyal supporters of the war effort, and condemned the revolt.⁸⁴ Another conspiracy theory that should be laid to rest is Broido's assertion that the revolt was deliberately provoked to give the regime an excuse to massacre the "natives" and expropriate their land for European peasant settlers.⁸⁵ A classic case of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy, this reflects nothing other than the febrile atmosphere which prevailed in the Russian Empire during the First World War, when plots and treason, usually of German inspiration, were widely believed to be rife within the elite.⁸⁶ The notion that members of the local military administration, many of whom were hostile to peasant settlement in Turkestan, would have planned this in secret at a time when the Empire was staggering under the pressures of war is absurd. The balance between immediate wartime pressures and longer-term tensions over colonisation in provoking the revolt may still be a matter of debate, but there is no doubt that it was spontaneous and not the product of a conspiracy.

A *belief* in conspiracy was nevertheless important, and a better understanding of the motivations of the rebels themselves allows us to see this. While some may have believed that the war had weakened the tsarist state sufficiently that success might be possible (this was particularly so in Torg'ai, where the rebellion seems to have been better-planned) in general it was a product of fear and despair. The interrogations of rebel leaders, the rumours reported by the secret police, and the poems and songs produced after the event suggest that many Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in particular believed that they faced an existential threat, and had nothing more to lose. The conscription decree was interpreted as part of a plan to eliminate much of the male population as a prelude to the arrival of still more Russian settlers. "Better to die here than there" was a commonly heard cry. Russian punitive measures in the wake of the initial Jizzakh uprising helped to fuel this fear, and created a self-perpetuating

cycle of repression and revolt. The role which rumour, fear and belief in conspiracy played on both sides offers striking parallels with the outbreak of the 1857 rebellion in India sixty years before.⁸⁷ At the same time there is no clear evidence of nationalism as a motivating factor: those Central Asian intellectuals who were developing the national idea at the time, notably the Kazakh *Alash* movement, opposed the rebellion.⁸⁸ The memory of the revolt and its suppression was, however, important in generating a sense of national solidarity among the Kyrgyz in the early Soviet period, as Aminat Chokobaeva shows. The role of Islam in motivating the revolt remains a matter of debate – in some regions, as Uyama and Drieu have shown, the language of *jihad* or *ghazavat* was used as a slogan and a rallying-cry (as it had been in the 1898 Andijan uprising), but in 1916 this seems to have occurred after the original outbreak. Certainly the *'ulama*, who generally had a quietist attitude to Russian rule, do not seem to have played a major role.⁸⁹

The shallow roots of the Russian state in Central Asia were also clearly revealed by the revolt: while there had been little violent resistance to Russian rule since the conquest of southern Central Asia was completed forty years before, the legitimacy of the colonial state rested partly on latent violence (represented by Russian garrisons), but also on a tacit understanding that taxation and other state demands would remain low, and that there would be little deliberate interference in social and religious affairs. The irruption of unprecedented numbers of settlers after 1906 and the expropriation of land to accommodate them violated one part of this understanding, and the increased taxation and requisitions of wartime violated another. The “natives” of Central Asia were colonial subjects, not citizens of the Empire, and the attempt to impose the burdens of citizenship without any of its rights provoked a furious response.

The 1916 revolt was partly an anti-colonial uprising against the tsarist state, but it was also an interethnic conflict between the indigenous population and recently arrived Russian settlers. Like all such conflicts – the clearest parallel is perhaps Algeria – it produced atrocities on both sides. The attacks on settlers did not spare women and children, and involved mutilation, murder, rape and abduction, the destruction of churches and of the Orthodox monastery of St Matthew on lake Issyq-Kul. Equally there can be no doubt that the violence inflicted on the “native” population, particularly in Semirech'e, went far beyond what was needed to defeat the rebels, and extended to the collective punishment of whole communities, many of which had not participated in the rebellion, to revenge attacks by settler vigilantes, and to deliberate ethnic cleansing sponsored by the state. It is this repression and the flight which followed it, rather than the memory of the revolt itself, which etched itself most deeply in collective memory in Central Asia, in particular the Kyrgyz *Ūrkün*. The sheer disproportion in the number of dead on the Central

Asian side – at least 150,000, as opposed to just over 3,000 Russian settlers – cannot adequately be accounted for under the “mutual tragedy” rubric put forward by some Russian historians, but nor (in the editors’ view) does it amount to the genocide claimed by some nationalists in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

We hope that between them the chapters in this volume will allow the 1916 Central Asian Revolt to take its rightful place in the historiography of the First World War, the Russian Empire, and of anti-colonial rebellions.

Notes

- 1 Keith Jeffery, *1916: A Global History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 209.
- 2 *Vaqt*, 30 August 1916 quoted in Begali Qosimov, “Sources littéraires et principaux traits distinctifs du djadidisme turkestanais (début du XXe siècle)”, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 37/1–2 (1996), 118.
- 3 See Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Central Asian Uprisings in the Nineteenth Century: Ferghana under the Russians”, *The Russian Review* 46/3 (1987), 267–281, and Alexander Morrison, “Sufism, Pan-Islamism and Information Panic: Nil Sergeevich Lykoshin and the Aftermath of the Andijan Uprising”, *Past & Present* 214/1 (2012), 255–304.
- 4 “Qazaqstandaghy 1916 zhylyghy ult-azattyq köterilisting tarikhı mangyzy”, www.iie.kz/?p=5568&lang=ru; T. V. Kotiukova, *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral'noi Azii v nachale XX stoletiiia (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: Fond Mardzhani, 2016); a conference on “Rethinking the 1916 Uprising in Central Asia” was held in Bishkek in May 2016, co-organised by the Institut Français d’Etudes sur l’Asie Centrale and the American University of Central Asia – see <http://ifeac.hypotheses.org/2883>. The papers have been published in Russian in *Pereosmyslenie vosstaniia 1916 goda v Tsentral'noi Azii. Sbornik Statei* (Bishkek: Neo-Print, 2017). The International Turkic Academy in Astana hosted a conference on 1916 in June 2016: http://twesco.org/en/news/v_astane_sostoyalas_mezhdunarodnaya_konferentsiya_/.
- 5 www.silkroadstudies.org/forums-and-events/item/13203-revolt-in-central-asia-the-cataclysm-of-1916.html.
- 6 Edward D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia*, foreword by S. Frederick Starr (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016).
- 7 Sokol *Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia*.
- 8 For a review of the new edition see Alexander Morrison, “The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia. By Edward Dennis Sokol”, *Slavic Review* 76/3 (2017), 772–778.
- 9 Richard Pierce, *Russian Central Asia 1867–1917* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 265–301.
- 10 “Stenograficheskiı Otchet Gosudarstvennaya Duma. Chetvertıy sozıv. Sessiya V. Zasedanie Shestnadsatoe” 13/12/1916 in RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.68–75, also published as “Takoe upravlenie gosudarstvom – nedopustimo. Doklad A. F. Kerenskogo na zakrytom zasedanii Gosudarstvennoi dumy. Dekabr’ 1916g”, *Istoricheskiı Arkhiv* 2 (1997), 4–22.

- 11 The number of Kyrgyz and Kazakhs killed by punitive expeditions and settler militias is unknown. An estimate by a Russian priest, witness to the uprising, suggests that about 15,000 Kyrgyz of the Przhevalsk and Pishpek districts were killed during the uprising. "Dnevnik nastoiatel'ia Issyk-Kul'skogo monastyr'ia po kirgizskomu vosstaniiu", TsGAKR F.75, Op. 1, D.45, l.52. The total loss of life among the native population of Semirech'e, inclusive of deaths by famine, exposure and disease, was, however, a lot higher than 15,000 and is estimated at 150,000 persons. Vladimir Ploskikh, *Istoriia kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana* (Bishkek: Ilim, 2003), 189.
- 12 Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), 232.
- 13 See in particular M. Pokrovskii, *Diplomatiia i voiny Rossii v XIX stoletii* (Moscow: Izd. Krasnaia Nov', 1923).
- 14 G. I. Broido, *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916g. Moe pokazanie prokuroru tashkentskoi sudebnoi palaty, dannoe 3-go Sentiabria 1916g* (Moscow: Nauchnaia Assotsiatsiia Vostokovedeniia pri Ts. I. K. SSSR, 1925); T. Ryskulov, "Vosstanie Tuzemtsev Turkestana v 1916 godu", *Ocherki revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Srednei Azii. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1926), 46–122; K. V. Kharlampovich, *Vosstanie Turgaiskikh Kazak-kirgizov v 1916–1917gg* (Kzyl-Orda: Izd. Obshchestvo Izucheniia Kazakhstana, 1926); P. Galuzo (ed.), "Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 39–94; P. Galuzo (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii. Sbornik Dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932); A. Shestakov (ed.), "Dzhizakskoe Vosstanie v 1916g.", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 60 (1933), 60–91; S. Brainin and S. Shafiro, *Vosstanie Kazakhov Semirech'ia v 1916 godu* (Alma-Ata, 1935); A. S. Asfendiyarov, *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstaniia 1916 goda v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1936).
- 15 Broido, *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916g*, 1–2, 7, 28.
- 16 "Iz Dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina", in Galuzo (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii*, 45–67.
- 17 T. Ryskulov, "Iz istorii bor'by za osvobozhdenie Vostoka", *Novyi Vostok* 6 (1924), 270–274; I. Abdrakhmanov, "O vosstanii 1916 goda. Po povodu stat'i t. Menitskogo", *Kommunisticheskaia mysl'* 1–2 (1926), 229.
- 18 I. Menitskii, "O kharakteristike sobytii 1916 g. v Turkestane", *Kommunisticheskaia mysl'* 2 (1926), 151.
- 19 A. Miklashevskii, "Sotsial'nye dvizheniia 1916 g. v Turkestane", *Byloe* 27–28 (1924), 256; A. V. Shestakov, "Vosstanie v Srednei Azii v 1916 g.", *Istoriik-Marksist* 2 (1926), 106.
- 20 P. Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Izd. Sr.-Az. Kom. Un-ta, 1926), 62; I. Abdrakhmanov, *1916. Dnevnik. Pis'ma k Stalinu* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1991), 188.
- 21 Menitskii, "O kharakteristike sobytii".
- 22 Miklashevskii, "Sotsial'nye dvizheniia", 255.
- 23 I. Chekaninskii, *Vosstanie kirgiz-kazakov i kara-kirgiz v Dzhetyysiuskom (Semirechenskoi) krae v iuule-sentiabre 1916 goda* (Kzyl-Orda: Obshchestvo izucheniia Kazakhstana, 1926), 77.
- 24 Giorgii Safarov, *Kolonial'naiia revoliutsiia (opyt Turkestana)* (Moscow, Gosizdat, 1921; reprint: Society for Central Asian Studies, Reprint series no.4, Oxford, 1988).

- 25 For more details, see Cloé Drieu, *Cinema, Empire and nation in Uzbekistan* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019), ch. 5.
- 26 On the nature of early Uzbek nation-building see Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan. Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
- 27 The point of departure for this revision is Stalin's letter "O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii bolshevizma. Pismo v redaktsiiu zhurnala 'Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia'" and the resolution passed by Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party on 31 July 1931, pertaining to the publication of works about the civil war. These directives related primarily to the history of the party and of the civil war. See V. Germanov, "Ekspansia marksistkogo istoriograficheskogo mentaliteta v Tsentral'noiuziuzii, ili osobennosti internatsional'noi 'Okhoty na ved'm' (30-e gody XX veka)", *Ijtimoi Fikr* 1 (1998), 54–63.
- 28 Robert Byrnes, "Creating the Soviet Historical Profession (1917–1934)", *Slavic Review* 50/2 (1991), 297–308.
- 29 N. Abdurakhmanova and G. Rustamova, *Kolonial'naia sistema vlasti v Turkestane vo vtoroi polovine XIX-pervoi chetverti XX v.v.* (Tashkent: Akademiia Nauka, 1994), 11.
- 30 I. Abdrakhmanov, "Predvestnik Oktiabria, k 15-letiiu vosstaniia v Kirgizii v 1916 godu", *Sovetskaia Kirgiziia* (1931), 229.
- 31 I. Abdrakhmanov, "Zaiavlenie tov. Iu. Abdrakhmanova v biuro Kiromkoma VKP(b) *Sovetskaia Kirgizia* (1931)", in *Izbrannye trudy* (Bishkek: Sham, 2001), 203–204.
- 32 Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 45.
- 33 Glenda Fraser, "Basmachi-I", *Central Asian Survey*, 6/1 (1987), 14.
- 34 Sali Rajabov, *Rol' velikogo russkogo naroda v istoricheskikh sud'bakh narodov Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Gosizdatel'stvo UzSSr, 1955), 13, 192.
- 35 "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane. Narodnyi geroi Amangel'dy Imanov", in M. Abdykalykov and A. Pankratova (eds.), *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata: Kazgiz, 1943), 370–398. On the controversy over this book see Harun Yilmaz, "History Writing as Agitation and Propaganda: Kazakh History Book of 1943", *Central Asian Survey*, 31/4 (2012), 409–423. On the use of the figure of Imanov in Soviet wartime propaganda among Qazaq soldiers see Roberto Carmack, "History and Hero-Making: Patriotic Narratives and the Sovietization of Kazakh Front-Line Propaganda, 1941–1945", *Central Asian Survey* 33/1 (2014), 95–112.
- 36 Cloé Drieu, "L'impact de la Première Guerre mondiale en Asie centrale: des révoltes de 1916 aux enjeux politiques et scientifiques de leur historiographie", *Histoire@Politique*, 1/22 (2014), 175–193.
- 37 Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 185–193.
- 38 K. Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent: Gosizdat Uzb. SSR, 1962); A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960); K. Usenbaev, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizii* (Frunze: Izd. Ilim, 1967); Z. D. Kastel'skaia, *Osnovnye predposylki vosstaniia 1916 goda v Uzbekistane*

- (Moscow: Nauka, 1972); B. S. Sulemeinov and B. Y. Basin, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane (prichiny, kharakter, dvizhushchie sily)* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977).
- 39 NAN KR, F.1519 "Materialy, sobrannyye dlia nauchno-istoricheskoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi voprosu kharaktera natsional'nykh dvizhenii v Kirgizii".
- 40 Usenbaev, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizii*, 306.
- 41 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 5–6.
- 42 M. K. Kozybaev (ed.), *Qaharly 1916 zhyl. Quzhattar men materialdar zhinaghy/Groznyi 1916 god. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998), 2 vols; David Budianskii, *Istoriia Bezhentsev-Kirgizov (1916–1927godu)* (Bishkek: n.p., 2006).
- 43 G. Krongardt, "Demograficheskie aspekty istorii vosstaniia 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane", in V. Ploskikh and D. Dzhunushaliev (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane (sbornik materialov nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 75-letiiu vosstaniia)* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1993), 49–53.
- 44 Dono Ziyoyeva, *Turkiston milliy ozodlik harakati* (Tashkent: Sharq, 2000); K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstaniia 1916 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Bishkek, 2015), 5; "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane", <http://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/287>.
- 45 K. Usenbaev, *1916: Geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy* (Bishkek: Sham, 1997).
- 46 Z. D. Kastel'skaia, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gos. Izd. UzSSR, 1938); Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*; Z. D. Kastel'skaia, *Osnovnyie predposylki vosstaniia 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972); the persistence of this spurious interpretation is clear in O. I. Brusina, *Slaviane v Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura, 2001), 20–40, 137–147, and in the section on the 1916 revolt by N. E. Bekmakhanova in *Tsentral'naia Aziia v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, ed. S. N. Abashin, D. I. Arapov and N. E. Bekmakhanova (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 228–292.
- 47 The title given to T. Kotiukova's volume cited above.
- 48 A. V. Ganin, "Posledniaia poludennaia ekspeditsiia Imperatorskoi Rossii: Russkaia armiia na podavlenii turkestarskogo miatezha 1916–1917gg", in O. R. Airapetov, Miroslav Iovanovich, M.A. Kolerov, Brius Menning and Pol Cheisti (eds.), *Russkii Sbornik. Issledovaniia po istorii Rossii* (Moscow: Modest Kolerov, 2008), 152–214; O. R. Airapetov *Uchastie Rossiiskoi imperii v Pervoi mirovoi voine (1914–1917). 1916 god. Sverkhnapryazhenie* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2016), 253–255.
- 49 K. K. Pahlen *Otchet po Revizii Turkestarskogo kraia, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU poveleniiu* (S. Pb.: Senatskaia Tip, 1910), 406; See Alexander Morrison, "Sowing the Seed of National Strife in this Alien Region. The Pahlen Report and Pereselenie in Turkestar, 1908–1911", *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), 1–29.
- 50 Hew Strachan, *The First World War: Vol. I: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. ch. 6–9; Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (eds.), *Empires at War: 1911–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–16; Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished. Why the First World War Failed to End 1917–1923* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 2016); Gearóid Barry, Enrico Dal Lago and Róisín Healy (eds.) *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in*

- World War I* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Cloé Drieu and Julie d'Andurain, "Beyond the European Stage of 14–18: The Other Great War in the Muslim World", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 141 (2017), 11–33.
- 51 Joshua Sanborn, "The Russian Empire", in Gerwarth and Manela (eds.), *Empires at War*, 99–100.
- 52 Joshua Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 175–183.
- 53 Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 54 Jonathan Smele, *The "Russian" Civil Wars, 1916–1926: Ten Years That Shook the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 17–21.
- 55 Jeffery, 1916, ch. 7.
- 56 Dov Yaroshevski, "Russian Regionalism in Turkestan", *Slavonic & East European Review* 65/1 (1987), 77–100; Adeeb Khalid, "Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan", *Slavic Review* 55/2 (1996), 279–280; Cloé Drieu, "Situation révolutionnaire au Turkestan (février 1917–février 1918): les dynamiques locales des révolutions russes", *Vingtième Siècle* 135 (2017), 87–101.
- 57 Marco Buttino, *La Rivoluzione Capovolta. L'Asia centrale tra il crollo dell'impero zarista e la formazione dell'urss* (Naples: l'Ancona del Mediterraneo, 2003); Marko Buttino, *Revoliutsiia Naoborot. Sredniaia Aziia mezhdû padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), 58–91, deals specifically with 1916; Marco Buttino, "Central Asia (1916–20): A Kaleidoscope of Local Revolutions and the Building of the Bolshevik Order", in Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov and Mark von Hagen (eds.), *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014).
- 58 Buttino, *Revoliutsiia Naoborot*, 10.
- 59 M. Buttino, "Study of the Economic Crisis and Depopulation in Turkestan, 1917–1920", *Central Asian Survey* 9/4 (1990), 59–74; M. Buttino, "Economic Relationships between Russia and Turkestan, 1914–1918, or How to Start a Famine", in J. Pallot (ed.), *Transforming Peasants: Society, State and the Peasantry, 1861–1930* (London, Macmillan, 1998), 194–209.
- 60 See, for example, "Voina, Dengi i Dorogovizna", *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, 9 June 1915; "Vopros o dorogovizne pered predstaviteli gorodov", *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, 28 June 1915; "Voennyi Nalog", *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, 14 July 1915; "Kak rastut tseny", *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, 12 July 1916; "Khlebnyi vopros", *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, 10 August 1916.
- 61 Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent 1856–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 163–186.
- 62 Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten Und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010).
- 63 David Arnold, "Rebellious Hillmen: The Gudem-Rampa Risings 1839–1924", *Subaltern Studies I* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 88–142.
- 64 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 16–17, 117–121.
- 65 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 121–127.
- 66 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 197, 213.
- 67 Daniel Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* 44/1 (1996), 41–53.

- 68 He notes that this report was published in a redacted version in P'iaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 395–402, and that he was the first to use the uncensored version. Given the heavy reliance on collections of documents published in the Soviet period in much existing scholarship, this gives food for thought.
- 69 Tomohiko Uyama, “Two Attempts at Building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement”, in Stéphane Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (eds.), *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 77–98.
- 70 Uyama, “Two Attempts”, 85–86; Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 166–167.
- 71 Akira Ueda, “How did the Nomads Act during the 1916 Revolt in Russian Turkistan?”, *Journal of Asian Network for GIS-based Historical Studies* 1 (2013), 33–44.
- 72 For additional overviews of both Soviet and western historiography on 1916 see C. Drieu, “L'impact de la Première Guerre mondiale”, 175–193, and Aminat Chokobaeva, “Krasnye kyrgyzy: sovetskaia istoriografiia vosstaniia 1916 goda”, in *Al'manakh Shtaba no.2 Poniatiia o Sovetskom* (2016), 50–75 (www.art-initiatives.org/ru/almanac_of_stab).
- 73 A. P. Krivoshein, *Zapiska Glavnoupravlyaiushchago Zemleustroistvom i Zemledeliem o poezdke v Turkestanskii krai v 1912 godu* (St Petersburg: Gos. Tip., 1912).
- 74 “Zakonoproekt Glavnago Upravleniya Zemleustroistva i Zemledeliya po Otdelu Zemel'nykh Uluchshenii, o proizvodstve za schet chastnykh sredstvo orositel'nykh rabot v Turkestane”, *Voprosy Kolonizatsii* 14 (1914), 222–226; Muriel Joffe, “Autocracy, Capitalism and Empire: The Politics of Irrigation”, *Russian Review* 54 (1995), 365–388.
- 75 Morrison, “Sowing the Seed of National Strife”; Alexander Morrison, “Peasant Settlers and the Civilising Mission in Russian Turkestan, 1865–1917”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43/3 (2015), 387–417.
- 76 For example, B. Suleimenov, *Agrarnyi vopros v Kazakhstane poslednei tretii XIX – nachala XX vv* (1867–1907gg) (Alma-Ata: Izd. AN Kaz. SSR, 1963), 116–126; E. M. Brusnikin, “Pereselencheskaya Politika Tsarizma v kontse XIX veka”, *Voprosy Istorii* 1 (1965), 28–38; A. I. Ginzburg, “Pereselentsy i mestnoe naselenie Turkestana v kontse XIX – nachale XX veka”, *Voprosy Istorii* 2 (1976), 201–205; A. P. Fomchenko, *Russkie poseleniya v Turkestanskom krae v kontse XIX – nachalo XXv (sotsial'no – ekonomicheskii aspekt)* (Tashkent: Gos. Izd. Uz SSR, 1983); for a critique of this Soviet scholarship see S. N. Maltusynov, *Agrarnyi vopros v Kazakhstane i Gosudarstvennaya Duma Rossii 1906–1917gg*. (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2006), 21–34.
- 77 In this, Turkestan conformed to the overall pattern of rapid wartime inflation: Stone, *The Eastern Front*, 286–291.
- 78 The most vivid contemporary sources, which illustrate clearly the reliance of the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks on this trained European military manpower to keep the “native population” under control, are Fritz Willfort, *Turkestanisches Tagebuch. Sechs Jahre in Russisch-Zentralasien* (Vienna, Leipzig: W. Braumüller, 1930); Gustav Krist, *Pascholl plenny!* (Vienna: L. W. Seidel & Sohn, 1936); P. S. Nazarov, *Hunted Through Central Asia* (Edinburgh: Wm Blackwood & Sons, 1932); F. M. Bailey, *Mission to Tashkent* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946).
- 79 See, for instance, Zifa Auezova's account of Mukhtar Auezov's novel *Qily Zaman*: “‘The Time of Ordeal’: A Story of the 1916 Revolt in Central Asia”,

- Newsletter of the International Institute for Asian Studies* 74 (2016), available at <http://iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/time-ordeal-story-1916-revolt-central-asia>.
- 80 Jipar Duissembieva, "Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856–1924" (University of Washington, Seattle PhD Dissertation, 2015), ch. 5; Aminat Chokobaeva, "Born for Misery and Woe: National Memory and the 1916 Great Revolt in Kyrgyzstan," in Mariya Y. Omelicheva (ed.), *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 37–51.
- 81 Ul'fat Abdurasulov, "Konflikt kak resurs: anatomiya 'turkmenskikh besporyadkov' v Khorezme, 1914–1916gg.," *Ab Imperio* 3/2018, 141–186.
- 82 A. D. Vasil'ev, "K voprosu o vneshnem vliyaniy na sobytiya 1916g." , in Kotiukova (ed.), *1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii*, 108–113.
- 83 David X. Noack, "Continuing the Great Game: Turkestan as a German Objective in World War I," in Barry, Dal Lago and Healy (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries*, 234–235.
- 84 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform. Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 237–239; Uyama, "Two Attempts"; 87–89; Danielle Ross, "Fighting for the Tsar, Fighting Against the Tsar," in Barry, Dal Lago and Healy (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries*, 211–229.
- 85 Broido, *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916g*, 1–2.
- 86 See William C. Fuller, *The Foe Within: Fantasies of Treason and the end of Imperial Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), and Boris Kolonitskii, "Tragicheskaiia Erotika." *Obraz imperatorskoi sem'i v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: NLO, 2010).
- 87 Kim A. Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).
- 88 Uyama, "Two Attempts", 87–89.
- 89 Bakhtiyar Babajanov, "Russian Colonial Power in Central Asia as seen by Local Muslim Intellectuals," in Beate Eschment and Hans Harder (eds.), *Looking at the Coloniser* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004), 75–90, and Hisao Komatsu, "Dar al-Islam under Russian Rule as Understood by Turkestani Muslim Intellectuals," in Tomohiko Uyama (ed.), *Empire, Islam, and Politics* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre, 2007), 3–21.

1

Why in Central Asia, why in 1916? The revolt as an interface of the Russian colonial crisis and the World War

Tomohiko Uyama

While a large number of researchers have studied the revolt of 1916 in Central Asia, they have not provided sufficient answers to two fundamental questions. Why did the uprisings take place almost exclusively in Central Asia, while the edict to mobilise labourers was issued also to indigenous peoples (*inorodtsy*) of other parts of the Russian Empire, namely Siberia, the Caucasus and Kalmykia? Why did it occur in the year of 1916, although, according to many researchers, its causes had been accumulated during many years of Russian rule? In order to answer these questions, it is important to examine specificities of administration in Russian Central Asia, social changes in this region during World War I and people's perception of Russia's situation in the war and relations with its adversaries. The last point is also related to international factors of the revolt.

The impact of the Imperial edict

Before directly answering the two fundamental questions, let us touch upon the evaluation of the impact of the Tsar's edict issued on 25 June 1916, which is closely related to the timing of the revolt.

Many Soviet and post-Soviet historians have claimed that the main cause (*prichina*) of the 1916 revolt was tsarist colonial oppression, and the edict to mobilise labourers was only a trigger or occasional cause (*povod*).¹ We know, however, almost no document that would concretely and definitely prove that the main motive of the insurgents was anger against the tsarist authorities, which they had stored up for many years. The dissatisfaction of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs in Semirech'e with the seizure of land, which proceeded at a rapid pace in the several years before 1916, can be considered one of the main reasons for the uprisings in this region,² but this explanation is untenable with regard to other centres of the revolt, such as Torghai and the western part of Transcaspia,

where there were few Russian settlers. There is also little direct evidence that the revolt occurred due to the deteriorating economic situation and increasing colonial oppression during the war.

Who, in the first place, invented the distinction between the cause and the trigger of the revolt? Interestingly, this distinction was first formulated at an early stage of the revolt, at meetings of representatives of the district (*uezd*) administrations, commercial and industrial firms, and the Russian population of the cities of Ferghana province (*oblast'*), held under the chairmanship of the temporary acting military governor Pavel Ivanov at the end of July and the beginning of August 1916. Participants in the meetings expressed the opinion that the Imperial edict and the measures to carry it out "served only as a trigger for the riots observed in the province, and their very cause is more profound", which lay in "the peculiarities of the natives and their fanaticism". They alleged, "it is highly possible that there was pre-prepared external influence and propaganda based on religious and political grounds".³ Thus, the distinction of the cause and the trigger was originally invented to shift responsibility for the occurrence of the revolt from the Government and the local administration to the "fanatical" population and external propaganda.

A little later, some officials distinguished the main and occasional causes for a more or less objective analysis of the uprisings in Semirech'e, where conflict over land had been serious already before the revolt. The acting military governor of Semirech'e province Alexei Alekseev wrote in his report to the Tsar dated 4 March 1917:

The reasons for the dissatisfaction of the local nomads have not been made exactly clear yet, but undoubtedly, one of the main reasons was the widespread colonization of Semirech'e by the Russian element [i.e., Russians] ... The closest occasional cause for the riots was the misunderstood order to call the natives to work in the rear of the army.⁴

A similar view, although from the position of blaming the tsarist Government, was taken by one of the first Soviet researchers of the revolt of 1916, the Kazakh communist Turar Rysqulov. He wrote:

The mobilization of native workers for the rear work served only as a trigger for the revolt of the natives of Turkestan in 1916, and not its main cause. The most important reasons, ... were precisely those deep economic and political contradictions that were created as a result of the unrestrained colonial exploitation of Turkestan by tsarism over the course of fifty years of its domination.⁵

It was this formula that took root in Soviet historiography, presumably because it corresponded to the Marxist approach attaching greater importance to socioeconomic roots of historical events than to their

immediate causes or occasions. This formula is useful to some extent for understanding the uprisings in Semirech'e, but still it does not lose its original function to hush up the decisive importance of the call for rear work for the outbreak of the revolt.

As I argued elsewhere,⁶ the edict has to be considered essential in provoking the revolt. It was prepared hastily, without discussion in the State Duma and without consultation with the governors-general and governors. Moreover, the ambiguously worded edict to mobilise people "for the construction of defense structures and military communications in the area of the active army" without job descriptions provoked rumours about the fatal dangers of this labour, allegedly to be conducted under a hail of bullets. The absence of detailed instructions on the method and process of mobilisation left much room for unfairly manipulating the mobilisation process on the spot, which strengthened people's discontent.

Why did the revolt take place only in Central Asia? The situations in other regions

If the edict was one of the main causes of the revolt, then a question arises. Why did the revolt take place almost only in Central Asia, while the edict was issued also to peoples of many parts of the Russian Empire? Let us make a brief overview of the situations in other regions.

A part of the Kalmyks of Astrakhan province opposed or escaped mobilisation, but most people obeyed the order without resistance and went to serve as labourers in the rear, starting from 15 September. The Ministry of the Interior offered the Kalmyk Lama to take measures to widely explain the purposes of the Imperial decree, and *gelungs* (priests) were appointed to the working teams. Some Kalmyks even proposed to form a cavalry regiment on their own expense, but the governor rejected the offer, considering that they aimed at being transferred to the status of Cossacks and receiving land rights.⁷

Some Buryats in Southern Siberia moved to Mongolia to evade labour mobilisation, following earlier waves of migration to escape war-time economic hardships. There was no active resistance, however, and the first batch of workers was sent from early August 1916, although the bulk was mobilised, as in other regions, after 15 September. Overall, more than 20,000 Buryat labourers were sent to Arkhangelsk and the northwestern front with the help of *noyons* (notables) and Buddhist and Orthodox clergymen, and accompanied by lamas-healers and intellectuals, although a number of Buryat and other Siberian labourers later abandoned their workplaces because of bad working conditions in unfamiliar regions.⁸

In Yakutia, too, there was no active resistance, although many people fled to distant places to evade mobilisation. Soon the Government cancelled mobilisation at the request of the Lena Gold-Mining Company, which insisted that the mobilisation of Yakuts who supplied meat, oil and wood to mines would hinder gold production, and refused to provide steamboats to transport labourers.⁹

In the Caucasus, the Viceroy, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, requested Tsar Nicholas II by telegraph on 24 July to gather labourers only as volunteers, arguing that Muslims, seeing themselves capable of serving in the army, regarded the labour draft as a humiliation, and that there had already been unrest that could turn into disorder. The Tsar complied with the Grand Duke's request and cancelled the compulsory mobilisation in the Caucasus.¹⁰ Prior to the cancellation, in the village of Aqsai in Dagestan, major skirmishes between the villagers mainly consisting of Kumyks and a punitive detachment took place in mid-July, although they opposed the requisition of horse-drawn carriages with coachmen, and did not directly stand against the call for rear work. Similar small incidents seem to have occurred in various parts of the North Caucasus.¹¹

The situation in Altai was no less turbulent. Altaians, like Kazakhs, believed that the Tsar was breaking the promise they were given when annexed to Russia that they would not be conscripted. There was also the lingering influence of the Burkhanist resistance movement that had culminated in 1904. At an assembly point for mobilised labourers, more than 1,000 people, armed with stones and sticks, refused the labour draft and tried to resist Russian officials and Cossacks. Later, however, the army took labourers by force.¹²

Thus, attempts to evade labour mobilisation were widespread, and there were some cases of local resistance, but nowhere other than Central Asia did massive and enduring uprisings occur. The Caucasus and Yakutia differed from Central Asia in that labour mobilisation was cancelled there. But considering that violent uprisings in a number of localities in Central Asia began soon after the notification of the edict, the later cancellation cannot explain the absence of large-scale revolts.

There can be some other hypothetical explanations about particular regions. Kalmyks and Buryats could be relatively familiar to works related to the Russian army because their co-ethnics served in the Don, Orenburg and Transbaikal Cossack Hosts. Muslims in the North Caucasus also had close relations with the Russian army through volunteer troops, and moreover, the authorities there were cautious about introducing new measures that could disturb social order, as the region had often experienced unrest since the nineteenth century. Here, however, I would like to pay attention to an institutional difference in administration between Central Asia and other regions.

An institutional problem: the lack of metrical books as a manifestation of distrust between the rulers and the ruled

In Central Asia, there were no metrical books (*metricheskie knigi*, records of births, marriages and deaths), and family lists (*posemeinye spiski*) were often inaccurate or lost. When the edict for mobilisation was announced, native administrators had to compile lists of people of the ages subject to mobilisation without firm evidence. Wealthy people and administrators themselves manipulated (or were suspected to have manipulated) the lists to change people's ages, so that their foes would be drafted and their sons would not. While forms of resistance varied depending on the place, the most common behaviour in the first stages of the revolt in Central Asia was attacks on native administrators to seize family lists or lists of draftees, intending to prevent manipulation and obstruct mobilisation. Thus, the lack of metrical books was an immediate factor for disorders in the initial phase of the revolt, but it was more than that. It was a symptom of the poor integration of Central Asia into the Russian Empire and the weak penetration of Imperial power into local society, ultimately leading to large conflicts in implementing new wartime measures.

Among the peoples with the status of *inorodtsy* in the Russian Empire, Orthodox Christians (such as the Yakuts and a part of the Buryats and Altaians) had metrical books in churches. From 1828, metrical books were gradually introduced to Muslims under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly and the Tauride Muslim Spiritual Board (separated from the Orenburg Assembly in 1831). They were also introduced to Muslims under the Transcaucasian Muslim Spiritual Board in 1873.¹³ Although the North Caucasus did not fall under the jurisdiction of any spiritual board, mullahs at mosques were charged to keep metrical books.¹⁴ As to Buddhists, metrical books were introduced among the Buryats in the 1860s–1870s, and among the Kalmyks in 1904.¹⁵

In Turkestan, the Russian authorities did not introduce spiritual boards. The northern parts of the Kazakh steppe, originally supervised – although in a perfunctory manner – by the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, were removed from its jurisdiction in 1869. There is no indication that metrical books were introduced there even before that. Later, the authorities ignored repeated petitions of Kazakhs about their return to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly or the organisation of a special spiritual board for them.¹⁶ Overall, the Russian authorities in Central Asia did not charge mullahs with administrative duties, including vital registration, in order not to give an organisational structure to “fanatic” sedentary Muslims and to prevent the strengthening of Islam's influence on nomads.¹⁷

The only place in Central Asia where there were metrical books was the Kazakh Inner Horde (former Bökey Horde), situated in Astrakhan

province and put under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly,¹⁸ although even here sometimes births were not registered and ages were inaccurately written in family lists.¹⁹ It was no coincidence that there was almost no uprising in the Inner Horde in 1916, despite the Astrakhan authorities' rather provocative attitude toward the Kazakhs.²⁰ On 17 August, ten people threatened to kill a village head unless he changed people's ages in the family list,²¹ but no more serious incidents seem to have occurred.

The lack of metrical books and proper family lists was a result not only of the absence of clergy authorised by a spiritual assembly and charged with administrative duties, but also of the weak control over the work of the native administration. It was a manifestation of the segregationist character of the tsarist administration in Central Asia, whose power did not deeply permeate native society. The administrative system of this region was two-layered, consisting of Russian upper officials (governors-general, governors, district commandants, etc.) and native lower officials (*volost'* [canton] and village heads, local judges, etc.). While Russian officials' power was predominant, they were so few and detached from native society that they often could not grasp the local situation correctly. The Russian Government could have enlisted the help of local elites by including them in the nobility, as it did before with regard to the Tatars, Bashkirs and peoples of the Caucasus, but in Central Asia this was not done with rare exceptions. This was apparently due to contempt for nomadic peoples and fears of Muslims, which intensified by the time of the conquest of Turkestan because of the protracted war in the North Caucasus and the expansion of Islamic influence in the Volga-Ural region.

In order to exercise power (for example, to collect taxes and information about the local situation), Russian officials had to rely on native officials, but did not allow them to occupy important posts, such as district commandants, peasant captains and district police officers. Moreover, Russians distrusted native officials, calling them an "impermeable curtain" or "living wall" that obstructed their knowledge of Muslim life.²² Indeed, after the announcement of the call for rear work, many native administrators, Muslim scholars and other influential people could not or did not wish to perform intermediary roles, either in explaining the meaning of the edict, or in appeasing the people. The Ferghana Military Governor Alexander Gippius asked Muslim scholars to explain to the public that the Quran did not forbid giving workers for the needs of the Russian army, but seeing that they did not want to do this, he himself read out extracts from the Quran before a crowd of thousands in Namangan in order "to break through such an indestructible mediastinum between the administration and the native population under its rule".²³ Another category of natives who could be and were willing to mediate between the authorities and the population were Russian-educated intellectuals,

but as we will see in the next section, the authorities looked upon them with even greater suspicion.

Local people also often did not trust native administrators because of bribery, vote buying and other wrongdoings. Such mistrust was a main reason for the fact that during the revolt of 1916 people first of all attacked native administrators. At the end of 1916, the Assistant to the Chief Military Prosecutor, Vladimir Ignatovich, noted:

rumours persisted among the population that, even before the war, some representatives of the native administration in secret from the people had signed in Petrograd (during the jubilee celebrations) statements on their behalf about the readiness of the population to take on military service, and that the forthcoming recruitment was precisely the result of these statements. In general, the idea that the local authorities – canton heads, [village] chiefs, and *piatidesiatniks* [representatives of fifty households] – sold the population for a lot of money and that only because of this the whole burden of the new obligation, even if it was work service, fell on the population, was the general belief of the population.²⁴

Russian officials did not trust the people of Central Asia in general. In their reports, notes and other documents, they often used such words as “fanaticism”, “unreliability” and “low *grazhdanstvennost* [level of civic development]” in relation to the Central Asians. These alleged characteristics served as an argument for their exclusion from compulsory military service and the rejection of repeatedly proposed projects on the formation of militias (with the exception of the Turkmen cavalry regiment).²⁵ As a result, they remained unfamiliar with work related to the Russian army, and they received the call for rear work with fear.

The lack of trust between Russian and native administrators, between native administrators and the population, and in general between the Imperial authorities and local society, made the authorities’ understanding of the local situation superficial, and consequently, they often took counterproductive measures. The ethnologist and former official Vladimir Nalivkin noted that the Russian authorities did not want to hear Muslim voices of discontent over the domination of infidels and the degradation of native administrators, and even after the Andijan uprising in 1898 attributed this event to the bigotry and fanaticism of the natives and to the intrigues of Britain and Turkey, paying no attention to their own defects.²⁶ The realisation that they knew little about the activities of local people often pushed Russian officials to arrest people, especially intellectuals, as a preventive measure without firm evidence.²⁷ As we saw earlier in this chapter, Russian officials in 1916 also attributed the reasons for the revolt to fanaticism and external influence, and immediately resorted to cruel punitive measures, often without carefully investigating the situation.

Thus, while the main difference between Central Asia and the other regions of the Empire that led to different reactions to the mobilisation of labourers was a technical problem produced by the lack of metrical books, in the background there were larger problems, with malfunction of the administrative system deriving from distrust between the rulers and the ruled in Central Asia. As we will see, such distrust and social cleavages became even more complex during the war.

Social changes in Central Asia during World War I

It is undeniable that, as Soviet historians conventionally emphasised, Central Asian society was burdened with taxes and requisitions, and experienced food shortage and other economic hardships during World War I. But this was also a period of increased social activity. Shortly before the war, a number of Kazakh and Uzbek periodicals began to be published: the newspaper *Qazaq* (*Kazakh*, Orenburg) in February 1913, the magazine *Āyina* (*Mirror*, Samarkand) in August 1913, the newspapers *Sadā-yi Turkistān* (*Voice of Turkestan*, Tashkent) and *Sadā-yi Farghāna* (*Voice of Ferghana*, Khoqand) in April 1914. Although the latter three Uzbek periodicals were closed in 1915 for financial reasons, publishers, libraries and theatres were very active throughout the war period.²⁸

Kazakh intellectuals got involved in the war effort and appealed to people to contribute goods to the army and to help the families of Russian soldiers. They thought that such cooperation would prove that the Kazakhs were credible and enlightened, thus helping them acquire more political rights after the war. Jadid intellectuals in Turkestan also called for support of the Russian army, with Mahmud Khoja Behbudi writing the article "Patriotism is Needed", and Hamza Hakimzada Niyazi writing the poem "Prayer for His Majesty the Emperor". Both Kazakh and Jadid intellectuals organised a number of charity events such as theatre performances and literary evenings to raise funds for wounded soldiers and war victims, especially Muslims in Kars province.²⁹

While intellectuals' cooperation with the war regime and labour mobilisation, along with their opposition to the 1916 revolt,³⁰ is often interpreted as a manifestation of their detachment from the ordinary people and a source of discredit to them,³¹ their activities were broad enough to heighten the people's interest in the war. Reports by the newspaper *Qazaq* on the possibility of military conscription particularly deserve attention. They attentively followed the discussions in the Russian State Duma on future conscription of *inorodtsy*, gathered various opinions of Kazakhs, discussed pros and cons and possible forms of military service, and went to St Petersburg to talk with Russian politicians on this issue.³² Although yet to be proved documentarily, it seems that

awareness of the possibility of military conscription, based on the information given by intellectuals, was one of the reasons why many Central Asians, hearing of the Tsar's edict, immediately thought that they would be mobilised as soldiers, not as labourers.

The behaviour of the Russian authorities during the revolt of 1916 demonstrated that the cooperation of intellectuals with the war regime had not dispersed the authorities' distrust of them. To cite but a few examples, at the end of July, the Orenburg gendarmerie department searched the editorial office of the newspaper *Qazaq* and the home of Mir-Ya'qub Dulatov on the basis of rumours that the newspaper was agitating against mobilisation.³³ However, after a week Dulatov and his fellow intellectuals organised a meeting on the improvement of conditions for labour mobilisation with the permission of the Torg'hai Governor Mikhail Eversman, who asked for their cooperation.³⁴ In Turkestan, *Jadids* headed the native committees to facilitate the recruitment of workers, set up in towns and counties at the end of August at the initiative of Governor-General Alexei Kuropatkin. The prominent Tashkent lawyer Ubaydullah Khojaev cooperated especially closely with Kuropatkin, but some Russian officials reacted very negatively to his rising authority among the local population, and the temporary Ferghana Governor Ivanov asked Kuropatkin to expel Khojaev from Turkestan.³⁵ These instances show that some tsarist officials were still suspicious of intellectuals who offered to play intermediary roles, although some others did make use of them in the critical moments during the revolt. It is even more important that, together with the emergence of leaders of uprisings in a number of regions, intellectuals' activities both before and during the revolt produced centres of independent authority.

The war also caused new forms of population movement and social protest. A part of the Russian settlers were drafted to the army, while refugees from Poland and Galicia, as well as German and Habsburg prisoners of war, came to Central Asia. This made the local population acutely (although not always accurately) aware of the war situation. People in cities, especially ethnic Russians, were displeased that the arrival of refugees and POWs exacerbated the crisis of food supply, and directed their anger at Muslim merchants, whom they suspected of withholding supplies. In February and March 1916, Tashkent and many other cities witnessed *bab'i bunt*y (women's riots), where Russian women assaulted Muslim merchants. Soldiers and workers also made riots and strikes.³⁶ While it is almost futile to search for direct links between refugees, POWs, restive ethnic Russians and the native uprisings,³⁷ the war undoubtedly produced an atmosphere where group actions with specific demands could easily take place. As Russian women's riots against Muslim merchants showed, social cleavages between Russians and

Central Asians became even more explicit during the war, and served as a basis for interethnic clashes during the revolt of 1916.

The arrival of refugees and POWs and activation of social protest took place in many regions of the Russian Empire, but they were especially new to Central Asia, which until then had rarely been affected by Russia's external wars. Kuropatkin, enumerating direct causes of the uprisings in his report to the Minister of War in January 1917, cited, first of all, the arrival of a large number of refugees from the war-ravaged Western borderlands of the Empire to Turkestan in a terrible condition. He wrote:

The emergence of refugees heavily damaged our prestige in the eyes of the natives, clearly showing that we have lost a large territory. The natives perceived their appearance nearly as a result of the victory of the Germans, and agitators were not slow to take advantage of this.³⁸

While Kuropatkin may have exaggerated the impact of the refugees' arrival, this was a part of the problem with Central Asians' perception of Russia's weakening power in and outside its territory, which we examine in the next section.

International aspects of the revolt and perceptions of Russia's situation in the war

International aspects have been generally neglected or downplayed in the study of the 1916 revolt.³⁹ This is largely because contemporaries who alleged the role of foreign spies in the revolt without substantial evidence discredited themselves.⁴⁰ Already before the revolt, tsarist intelligence officers often reported, mainly based on rumours, about Afghan and Turkish agents who engaged in anti-Russian propaganda in Turkestan, especially in Ferghana,⁴¹ but Ferghana did not become a major site of uprisings in 1916. Right after the revolt, Kuropatkin alleged the influence of German agitators in Afghanistan and Iran, as well as German and Turkish POWs and agents in Turkestan, without providing concrete evidence.⁴² Ernest Redl, a British intelligence officer in Mashhad, writing on Russians' concern about the possible link between Turkestani insurgents and northern Afghanistan, noted that Russians "are notorious alarmists" and "appear to depend largely on inferior and sensational agents"⁴³

Self-professed foreign instigators were no less exaggerative. Five Ottoman officers were in Semirech'e then, and one of them, Hajji Selim Sami, some years later joined the Basmachi movement and boasted that they had stirred up the whole of Kyrgyzstan in 1916, but according to Zeki Velidi Togan, they joined Kyrgyz rebels led by two of the four sons of

the famous *manap*, the late Shabdan Jantaev, as late as November, when the rebels were already fleeing to China. Belek Soltonoev, a leader of the Kyrgyz uprisings, also testified that four or five Turks joined a group of Kyrgyz when they were fleeing to Tekes in China.⁴⁴

Information on the participation of Chinese Dungans and Kashgarians, including opium traders, in the uprising in Przheval'sk district seems more credible.⁴⁵ Among others, detailed information was recorded on the Chinese society Gelaohui. It was a secret society of mutual aid and self-defence, which began to spread in Xinjiang with the arrival of the Xiang (Hunan) army of Zuo Zongtang in 1876. Members of the society were mostly Han Chinese, but included Hui people (Dungans). They took an active part in the Xinhai Revolution and murdered a number of high-ranking Qing officials in Xinjiang in 1912. In the same year, they entered into violent conflict with the Russian consul and traders who tried to expand their influence in Xinjiang, turning local residents into Russian subjects. The new ruler of Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin, brutally repressed members of Gelaohui, and cells of the society in Xinjiang were gradually eliminated by 1919.⁴⁶

During the revolt of 1916, police officials reported that in the spring of 1915 members of Gelaohui came to cities of Semirech'e province to propagate their ideas and recruited many young Dungans, both Russian and Chinese subjects, in Toqmaq and Przheval'sk, and also had communications with the Kyrgyz of Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts. According to the testimony of local Dungans, there were thousands of members of Gelaohui in Semirech'e, and after the announcement of the mobilisation for work for the army, the Chinese began to disturb young Dungans with the call to rebel against the Russians, seeking to create "special khanates" in Turkestan and to purge this land of Russians. A policeman reported that before the outbreak of the Kyrgyz uprising, the Chinese propagandists of the society formed a gang of about 1,000 Dungans, who then besieged the city of Przheval'sk.⁴⁷ It can be assumed that members of Gelaohui, who found it difficult to engage in active work in Xinjiang, looked for a new field of activity in the territory of the Russian Empire, for which they harboured hatred because of its interference in Xinjiang. However, their exact motives and degree of participation in the uprising remain unclear, and they apparently had little if any influence outside Dungan communities.

Thus, there is little reliable information that proves the decisive role of foreigners in the uprising, but it is important that regardless of the presence or absence of foreign agitators, some insurgents hoped for help from outside. Kuropatkin wrote that rebels in Jizzakh cried that they wanted to become German subjects, and Afghanistan would help them.⁴⁸ This account by Kuropatkin, again, may not be reliable, but a British agent at Kabul reported that about twenty Turkmens actually

went to Kabul to petition the Afghan Amir for assistance. The Amir, however, did not respond, as the Russian government had requested that the British discourage him from contact with discontented Russian subjects in Turkestan.⁴⁹

Very interesting rumours can be found in reminiscences by Kazakh intellectuals. According to Saken Seyfullin, a future prominent writer who then lived in Aqmola district, rumour had it that an old shepherd saw “Anwarbek” (Enver Pasha), who came by airplane and told him to encourage people to be fearless, then flew away somewhere after promising to come again.⁵⁰ In Torghai province, the site of the largest Kazakh uprising, a Kazakh wrote to a rebel leader that Anwarbek Pasha was going to the Amir of Bukhara to help Turkic Muslims.⁵¹ It is evident from these rumours that some Kazakhs knew about Enver Pasha, an influential Pan-Turkic politician and the Minister of War of the Ottoman Empire, and laid their hopes on him.

Another form of internationalisation of the 1916 revolt is its spread across borders, and the uprising of the Yomut Turkmens deserves special attention in this regard. The Yomuts were divided by the Russo-Iranian border after the Russian conquest of Transcaspia, but Russian Yomuts took advantage of Russia’s semi-colonial policy that enabled its subjects to easily cross the border with Iran, using winter pastures in Iran and mingling with Iranian Turkmens. After an armed conflict with a police force in the southwesternmost part of Transcaspian province on 15–17 August, a large number of Yomuts moved to Iran. They attacked villages of Russian colonists who had recently settled in the Gorgan steppe and clashed with Russian troops, who had also crossed the border. Fights continued until the end of 1916.⁵²

The policeman who headed the force that first clashed with Yomuts in August reported that Turkmens had long prepared for the uprising, having heard of Russian forces’ retreat from Kermanshah and believing that the Russian army, beaten by Turks, had ceased to exist.⁵³ This was apparently an exaggerated interpretation by the Turkmens of the situation of the Baratov expedition. In order to block German and Ottoman influence in Iran, the Russian army established a corps commanded by General Nikolai Baratov, which entered Iran in October 1915 and soon occupied Qom and Hamadan. Then the corps took Kermanshah in February 1916, chasing out the pro-German self-proclaimed Provisional Government of Iran. However, the Ottoman army counterattacked, and Baratov’s corps was forced to leave Kermanshah in July 1916, before retaking the city in February 1917.⁵⁴

There were even more fanciful cases. According to a report by the Turkestan district guard department (the Okhrana, secret police) on 3 September 1916, there were rumours among Iranians and Khivan traders in Ashgabat that Tehran had been occupied by the Turkish army. Rumour

also had it that the Turkish Government sent a *shaykh* from Astarabad to Krasnovodsk district, who went around villages and agitated local Yomuts to immediately go to Astarabad and rise in revolt against Russia together with Iranian Yomuts. He also allegedly said that Junayd Khan, a long-time Khivan Turkmen insurgent leader who had fled to Afghanistan, would arrive in Astarabad to lead the uprising subsidised by Turks until the arrival of the Turkish army.⁵⁵

Some Russian officials considered that information and rumours on Russia's difficulties in the war stimulated uprisings in other regions as well. The military governor of Samarkand province, Nil Lykoshin, noted that some Kirgiz⁵⁶ came to Jizzakh in early spring and told people about the possibility of German invasion of Turkestan, where few Russian forces remained.⁵⁷ During the revolt, *ishans* who led the uprising in Jizzakh told that Germany had beaten down the Russians and there were no Russian forces that could come to Jizzakh.⁵⁸

The acting military governor of Semirech'e province, A. I. Alekseev, supposed that Russia's Great Retreat on the western front in 1915 could have influenced the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, and the repeated mobilisation of Russian soldiers and the withdrawal of troops from the province could make them think that Russia's enemies were very strong.⁵⁹ The order to mobilise labourers itself seems to have been perceived as a proof of the war situation unfavourable to Russia. Kazakhs in Torghai district said that the Russians' situation was so bad that they sought help from Kazakhs. A similar opinion was also heard among Altaians who, as we saw above, attempted an uprising.⁶⁰

Generally, organised uprisings are, in most cases, launched on the assumption that they had, more or less, some chance of success. The Kyrgyz uprising was quite well arranged: the Secret Police Captain Vladimir Zhelezniakov noted that they began preparing arms by 15 July.⁶¹ According to Belek Soltonoev, the Kyrgyz planned to rise in revolt together with Kazakhs in Semirech'e and launched attacks on Russian villages after receiving the news of the Kazakh uprising in early August. Sarybaghysh Kyrgyz declared Mokush (Shabdan's son) their khan on 9 August, and on the same day, Mokush's aide succeeded in seizing a large cache of arms, having received information about its transportation from İsamüdü, another son of Shabdan, who had met Russian officials for negotiation about the labour draft.⁶² Different sources cite different numbers of arms – from 170 to 200 rifles and from 3,000 to 35,000 cartridges, transported by only three or four Russian soldiers. A part of these arms then passed into the hands of other rebels, including Bughu Kyrgyz in Przheval'sk district.⁶³ The arms should have emboldened the Kyrgyz to continue the uprising. A Kyrgyz from Przheval'sk testified that rebels, encouraged by the information that Shabdan's sons and Dungans would help them, were convinced that they were now strong and could

well defeat the Russians.⁶⁴ While the 1916 revolt was comprised of various kinds of actions including desperate resistance without hope of winning, organised massive uprisings of Jizzakh Uzbeks, Torghai Kazakhs, Semirech'e Kyrgyz and Yomut Turkmens were more or less based on the calculation, albeit incorrect, that they had enough strength and outside support to defeat the Russians weakened by the war.

Conclusion

The revolt of 1916 in Central Asia was a colonial rebellion not simply in the sense that colonised people stood against the colonisers, but also because it reflected defects in the colonial administration. Russian rule in Central Asia had persistent problems, including weak integration of the native population into the Imperial administrative system epitomised by the lack of metrical books. There were cleavages between the Russians and the natives, as well as mistrust between officials and the population, both exacerbated by large-scale land seizure for Russian settlers.

Still, Russian Central Asia was basically peaceful until the first half of the First World War period. A large-scale revolt erupted in the atmosphere of increased social activity and upheaval, and after the news of the difficult war situation and the reduction of armed forces in Central Asia gave some natives the impression that Russian rule had been weakened. The edict on labourers, which was a result of the confused decision-making of the tsarist Government faced with the crisis of the whole empire, revealed a contradiction between the level of mobilisation required by a total war and the weak, segregationist administrative system in this region. The World War turned the latent colonial crisis into an explicit one. Therefore, the 1916 revolt has to be analysed as an interface of the World War and the Russian colonial crisis in Central Asia.

Notes

Parts of this chapter are based on my two papers in Russian: Tomokhiko Uiama [Tomohiko Uyama], "Vosstanie, rozhdennoe v voine: vliianie Pervoi mirovoi voiny na kataklizm v Tsentral'noi Azii v mezhdunarodnom kontekste", in *Turkestanskoe vosstanie 1916 g.: fakty i interpretatsii: materialy Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii* (Moscow: IRI RAN, 2016), 77–86; Tomokhiko Uiama [Tomohiko Uyama], "Pochemu krupnoe vosstanie proizoshlo tol'ko v Tsentral'noi Azii? Administrativno-institutsional'nye predposylki vosstaniia 1916 goda", in *Mezhdunarodnoe nauchnoe soveshchanie "Pereosmyslenie vosstaniia 1916 goda v Tsentral'noi Azii": sbornik statei* (Bishkek: Neo print, 2017), 104–112.

1 For example, see *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei v piati tomakh*, vol. 3 (Alma-Ata: Nauka KazSSR, 1979), 442–445.

- 2 The land issue not only gave rise to the general discontent of the Kyrgyz, but also complicated the already difficult relations between the authorities and *manaps* (chieftains), some of whom led the uprising in 1916. Tetsu Akiyama, *Yūboku Eiyū to Roshia Teikoku: Aru Kuruguzu Shuryō no Kiseki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2016), 127–147, 183–188.
- 3 A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 219–223. Earlier in July, Colonel Pavel Ivanov led the punitive detachment that suppressed the uprising in Jizzakh with extreme cruelty. During the Russian Civil War, he joined the White Movement under the name Pavel Ivanov-Rinov and became Minister of War of the Provisional Siberian Government.
- 4 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 405, 408. A similar view with in-depth analysis of the uprising in Przheval'sk district was presented in an internal document of the Turkestan district guard department (the Okhrana, secret police) in December 1916. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 395–402.
- 5 T. Ryskulov, “Iz istorii bor'by za osvobozhdenie Vostoka (Vosstanie kirgiz Turkestana protiv tsarizma v 1916 g.)”, *Novyi Vostok* 6 (1924), 268.
- 6 Tomohiko Uyama, “Two Attempts at Building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement”, in Stéphane Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (eds.), *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 80–83.
- 7 Konstantin N. Maksimov, “Kalmyki v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny”, *Voprosy istorii* 12 (2014), 69, 73–81; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoi ASSR: dooktiabr'skii period* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 379–384.
- 8 *Istoriia Buriat-Mongol'skoi ASSR*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Ulan-Ude: Buriat-Mongol'skoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1954), 470–473; *Istoriia Buriatii*, vol. 3 (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo BNTs SO RAN, 2011), 20–22; M. Shilovskii, “Osobennosti primeneniia Vysochaishego poveleniia ot 25 iunია 1916 g. ‘O rekvizitsii muzhskogo inorodcheskogo naseleniia...’ v Sibiri”, in T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstaniia 1916 g. v Aziatskoi Rossii: neizvestnoe ob izvestnom* (Moscow: Russkii impul's, 2017), 157–159.
- 9 Vasilii I. Fedorov, *Iakutiia v epokhu voin i revoliutsii (1900–1919)*, 2nd ed. (Novosibirsk: Geo, 2013), 218–227.
- 10 V. P. Semennikov (ed.), *Nikolai II i velikie kniaz'ia (rodstvennye pis'ma k poslednemu tsariu)* (Leningrad: Gos. izd-vo, 1925), 37, 138–140.
- 11 Mavlet Mutsalkhanov, “Aksai: Istoricheskaia spravka”, *Yoldash/Vremena*, 17 June 2011, <http://kumukia.ru/?id=738>; Natal'ia I. Sukhanova, “Svernnyi Kavkaz v usloviakh Pervoi mirovoi voiny”, http://legacy.inion.ru/index.php?page_id=539.
- 12 A. Danilin, “Iz istorii natsional'no-osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia na Altae v 1916 godu”, *Bor'ba klassov* 9 (1936), <http://web1.kunstkamera.ru/siberia/Texts/Danilin-IzIstorii.pdf>; V. P. Zinov'ev and E. V. Karikh, “Etnicheskii aspekt obshchestvennogo dvizheniia v Sibiri i na Dal'nem Vostoke nakanune revoliutsii 1917 g.”, *Istoricheskii ezhegodnik* (1997), <http://hrono.ru/statii/2005/etno1917sib.html>.
- 13 Diliara Usmanova, “Musul'manskie metricheskie knigi v Rossiiskoi imperii: mezhdu zakonom, gosudarstvom i obshchinosi (vtoraia polovina XIX – pervaiia chetvert' XX vv.)”, *Ab imperio* 2 (2015), 123.
- 14 Dmitrii Arapov, “Upravlenie dukhovnymi delami musul'man Kavkaza v Rossiiskoi imperii”, 30 April 2009, www.statusquo.ru/691/article_833.html/.

- 15 Marina Aiusheeva, "O nekotorykh arkhivnykh dokumentakh TsVRK IMBT SO RAN po istorii buriatskogo buddizma v XIX v.," *Gumanitarnyi vektor* 2 (2012), 169–170; Takehiko Inoue, personal communication.
- 16 Tomokhiko Uiama [Tomohiko Uyama], "Byla li islamskaia al'ternativa? Mesto islama v natsional'nom dvizhenii kazakhov nachala XX veka", *Shighis* 2 (2008), 143–148.
- 17 About tsarist officials' obsessional fear of Muslim "fanaticism", see A. S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 51–79.
- 18 I. A. Turemuratov, "Metricheskie knigi Vnutrennei Kirgizskoi (Bukeevskoi) Ordy (VKO) v arkhivakh Orenburgskogo Magometanskogo Dukhovnogo Sobraniia" (2012), www.bastanovo.ru/2012/06/mk_vk/.
- 19 Qir balasi [Älikhan Bökeykhan], "Bökeylik qazaghi", *Qazaq*, 30 July 1916.
- 20 The Astrakhan governor Ivan Sokolovskii nervously reacted to the petitions of Kazakhs to stop mobilisation. As stated in his telegram dated 25 July, he sent three Cossack platoons to the Inner Horde only to "suppress agitation". See "K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g", *Krasnyi arkhiv* 16 (1926), 56.
- 21 M. K. Kozybaev (ed.), *Qaharli 1916 jil / Groznyi 1916-i god (Sbornik dokumentov i materialov)*, vol. 1 (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998), 121–122.
- 22 Tomohiko Uyama, "A Particularist Empire: The Russian Policies of Christianization and Military Conscription in Central Asia", in T. Uyama (ed.), *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 47–48; V. P. Nalivkin, *Tuzemtsy ran'she i teper'* (orig. pub. 1913), in *Musul'manskaia Sredniaia Aziia: Traditsionalizm i XX vek* (Moscow: Institut Afriki RAN, 2004), 63–64, 76–77; Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*, 172–195.
- 23 "Gubernator v roli propovednika korana", *Krasnyi arkhiv* 75 (1936), 189–191.
- 24 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 68–69. The jubilee means the Romanov Tercentenary in 1913.
- 25 Uyama, "A Particularist Empire", 40–59.
- 26 Nalivkin, *Tuzemtsy ran'she i teper'*, 99–104.
- 27 Tomohiko Uyama, "Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals as a Sign of Weakness of Russian Imperial Rule: The Paradoxical Impact of Governor A.N. Troinitskii on the Kazakh National Movement", *Cahiers du Monde russe* 56/4 (2015), 696, 701.
- 28 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 123–124; Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920* (Paris: Mouton, 1964), 164–168; Zainabidin Abdirashidov, *Ismail Gasprinskii i Turkestan v nachale XX veka: sviazi – otnosheniia – vliianie* (Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2011), 267–270.
- 29 Uyama, "Two Attempts", 91–92; Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 237–239.
- 30 For more on Kazakh intellectuals' opposition to the revolt, see Uyama, "Two Attempts", 92–94.
- 31 For example, Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 124.

- 32 Uyama, "A Particularist Empire", 52–56.
- 33 Mämbet Qoygeldiev, *Alash qozghalısı* (Almaty: Sanat, 1995), 183–184.
- 34 "K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz", 57–61.
- 35 Dono Ziaeva, "Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane", (2010), www.academia.edu/12447774/Восстание_1916_года_в_Туркестане, 7; Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 180–181; T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane: dokumental'nye svidetel'stva obshchei tragedii: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016), 240–244.
- 36 Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, 164–176; Marco [Marco] Buttino, *Revolutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), 61–62; *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei v piati tomakh*, vol. 3 (Almaty: Atamūra, 2000), 634–635.
- 37 In July 1916, a Muslim who proposed Serbian POWs near Tashkent join the revolt was arrested. Almost nothing is known about the POWs' reaction to the revolt. A. Miklashevskii, "Sotsial'nye dvizheniia 1916 g. v Turkestane", *Byloe* 27–28 (1924), 249–250.
- 38 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 81. This view of Kuropatkin was based on a report by the Samarkand military governor Nil Lykoshin in December 1916. F. Bozhko, S. Volin and P. G. Galuzo (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii: sbornik dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932), 28.
- 39 Some researchers, on the contrary, exaggerate external factors of the revolt from the viewpoint of conspiracy theories. A recent example is an article of Salamat Malabaev, who alleges: "The events of 1916 were a kind of 'colour revolutions', inspired for the most part from outside." S. K. Malabaev, "Rol' vneshnikh sil v eskalatsii tragicheskikh sobytii 1916 g. v Kyrgyzstane", in T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral'noi Azii v nachale XX stoletiiia (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: Fond Mardzhani, 2016), 126.
- 40 Aleksandr Vasil'ev notes that the Russian military often exaggerated Turkish influence in Turkestan, which allowed them to impute miscalculation of state policy in this remote and intractable region of the Empire to hostile external forces. A. D. Vasil'ev, "K voprosu o vneshnem vliianii na sobytia 1916 g.", in T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty*, 109.
- 41 Miklashevskii, "Sotsial'nye dvizheniia", 244–246.
- 42 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 82, 94.
- 43 "The War: Situation in Russian Turkestan," *British Intelligence on Russia in Central Asia, c. 1865–1949: India Office Political and Secret Files and Confidential Print* (IDC Publishers), Microfilm reel 15, L/P&S/11/108, f. 39 (4 September 1916).
- 44 Zeki Velidi Togan, *Hâtıralar: Türkistan ve Diğer Müslüman Doğu Türklerinin Millî Varlık ve Kültür Mücadeleleri* (Istanbul: Hikmet Gazetecilik, 1969), 390; Zeki Velidi Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarihi*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1981), 341; Belek Soltonoev, *Qizil qirgiz tarikhii*, vol. 2 (Bishkek: Uchkun, 1993), 123–124. I thank Aminat Chokobaeva for alerting me to Soltonoev's reference to this.

- 45 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 382–383, 398.
- 46 Kazutada Kataoka, “Shinkyō no Karōkai”, in Sakai Tadao sensei koki shukuga kinen no kai (ed.), *Rekishī ni Okeru Minshū to Bunka* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982), 845–858.
- 47 K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda: dokumenty i materialy* (Bishkek: n.p., 2015), 122–125, 133–134. In these documents Gelaohui is written as “Ge-Liao-Khue”, and incorrectly defined as a society of anarchists. Also see David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 116–117, 146–147.
- 48 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 82.
- 49 “The War: Situation in Russian Turkestan”, ff. 50 (6 September 1916), 59 (23 August 1916).
- 50 Säken Seyfullin, *Tar jol, tayghaq keshu* (Almaty: Qazaqting memlekettik körkem ädebiät baspası, 1960; orig. pub. 1927), 40–41.
- 51 Ghabbas Salamatüli, “Tatir soghısi”, in *Qaharlı 1916 jil / Groznyi 1916-i god (Sbornik dokumentov i materialov)*, vol. 2 (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998), 100.
- 52 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 90–93. On Russian settlement in Northern Iran, see A. Sakharov, *Russkaia kolonizatsiia Astrabadskoi provintsii v Persii* (Petrograd: Sodruzhestvo, 1915).
- 53 *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkmenii (Dokumenty i materialy)* (Ashkhabad: Turkmenskoe gos. izd-vo, 1938), 88.
- 54 E. V. Maslovskii, *Mirovaia voına na Kavkazskom fronte 1914–1917 g.: strategicheskii ocherk* (Paris: Vozrozhdenie, 1933), 213–228; *Istoriia pervoi mirovoi voiny, 1914–1918*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 94–95, 230.
- 55 *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkmenii*, 90; Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 90–93.
- 56 It is unknown whether “Kirgiz” here means Kazakhs or Kyrgyz.
- 57 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 140–141.
- 58 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 128.
- 59 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 407.
- 60 K. V. Kharlampovich, “Vosstanie turgaiskikh kazak-kirgiz 1916–1917gg. (Po rasskazam ochevidtsev)” (orig. pub. 1926), in *Qaharlı 1916 jil*, vol. 2, 71; A. G. Danilin, *Burkhanizm: Iz istorii natsional’no-osvoboditel’nogo dvizheniia v Gornom Altae* (Gorno-Altai: Ak Chechek, 1993), 129–130.
- 61 “Doklad Zavedyvaiushchego Rozysknym Punktom v gorode Vernom i Semirechenskoi oblasti o prichinakh miatezha kirgiz v Semirechenskoi oblasti, ego techenii i nastroenii naseleniia k tekushchemu momentu” (November 1916), RGIA, F. 1292 Op. 1 D. 1933a l. 482ob, <http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/dokumenty-po-istorii-sobytiy-1916-g/doklad-zaveduyushchego-vernenskim-zhandarmskim-rozysknym-punktom>.
- 62 Soltonoev, *Qizil Qirghiz tarikhii*, 95–105.
- 63 L. V. Lesnaia and T. R. Ryskulov (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizstane: dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Sotsekgiz, 1937), 47; Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 110–111, 347; “Doklad Zavedyvaiushchego”, l. 487.
- 64 “Iz protokola doprosa uchastnika vosstaniia Sh. Dzhainakova o sobytiakh, sviazannykh s vosstaniem v g. Przheval’ske (19 avgusta 1916 g.)”, http://kghistory.akipress.org/unews/un_post:7163.

2

The exemption of peoples of Turkestan from universal military service as an antecedent to the 1916 revolt

Tatiana Kotiukova

In lieu of an introduction

As a researcher I have long been preoccupied with the subject of “military service for the native population of Russian Turkestan”. After a year working in the Russian State Military History Archive, in 2010 I wrote a short article, which I submitted for publication to the aptly-named *Military History Journal* (*Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*). The editor felt that the title of my article was terribly dull. Without my permission, he changed it to a “very eye-catching” one. I was upset by this, to say the least! In fact, I was horrified by the new title of my article: “‘They Harboured an Overwhelming Aversion to Military Service...’ The Exemption of Peoples of Turkestan from Military Service in the Late 19th Century–early 20th Century”.¹ The quoted phrase was taken out of context, lifted from one of the documents cited in my article. It was just one official’s opinion and in no way reflected the real situation. It was at complete odds with the content of my article, and mercilessly distorted the sense of what I had written. The editor could not understand why I was unhappy; as far as he was concerned, the new title was striking and effective. He completely refused to see my point of view, and so we parted ways, agreeing to differ. I did not write for this journal again...

After the publication of my article, and perhaps influenced by the difficulties over its title, I felt compelled to carry on “digging up” this subject in the archives. I wanted to redeem myself somehow, especially in the eyes of my colleagues from Central Asia. I was delighted to keep finding new documents in the Military History and Foreign Policy archives. My next article was published in 2011, in the online journal of the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences.² While the title of my 2010 article suggested that there was only one side to the story (although in reality this was far from the case), the title of my 2011 article did quite the reverse, opening up debate around the issue.

In 2011 it was the ninety-fifth anniversary of the tragic events of 1916. As a researcher, I was now convinced that the political and administrative disputes concerning the performance of military service by Turkestan's native Muslim population, together with a lack of balanced expert analysis, led to the infamous Imperial decree of 25 June 1916 on conscription for labour brigades of peoples not serving in the Russian army. It was impossible to produce a publication on the revolt without addressing the issue of military service.³

By this time, as well as official administrative sources, I had studied memoirs and recollections of participants in the revolt, Russian public figures, local officials, and eyewitnesses to these terrible events. To mark the centenary of the 1916 revolt, I decided to publish part of the archival documents relating to the revolt and to the prior sociopolitical and ethnic and religious situation in Turkestan, which I had unearthed during my years working in various Russian and foreign archives. I had already illustrated the consequences of the revolt using later sources.⁴ However, it is not possible to convey all the details of life in Turkestan and its development as part of the Russian Empire up to 1917 with just over a hundred documents. That same year, 2016, I finally managed to complete and publish the monograph that I had been working on for over eight years. In this I devoted a separate chapter to the issue of military service and the attitude of Turkestan's native population towards it. I included a short comparative analysis of the recruitment principles for the Russian army and the armies of other multiethnic and multifaith empires, namely the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, during the First World War.⁵

In 2016 a series of conferences to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 revolt (or what I believe was several revolts) was held in Russia and Central Asia. The Imperial decree of 25 June 1916 related not only to the native population of Turkestan and the Steppe provinces, but also to the Muslims of the northern and southern Caucasus and various peoples of Siberia and the Far East. I have always been interested in how the population of these borderlands of the Empire reacted to the Tsar's decision, and I tried to compare what had happened at this time in areas beyond Turkestan, to identify the extent to which the reasons for popular discontent were the same, and how they differed. A large collective monograph was published in 2017, looking at the Caucasus, Siberia, Turkestan and the Steppe region, incorporating the various historiographical views and methodological approaches of academics from six countries, to which I contributed a chapter on how various peoples of the Russian Empire felt about military service.⁶

In the centenary year of the 1916 revolt, academics from Central Asia and Russia made statements, especially in the media, that sometimes almost overstepped the mark in terms of professional ethics and professionalism in general. I would therefore like to point out that my

colleagues in countries more distant from Russia were more balanced and temperate in their views. Here I must mention the article by Alexander Morrison, “Central Asia: Interpreting and Remembering the 1916 Revolt”, which was widely reproduced in Russian-language online sources.⁷ In particular, he rightly notes (and I completely agree) that, “the revolt was triggered by conscription and the pressures of war, but it had much deeper roots in tsarist colonisation policies during the two decades leading up to 1916”. It is important to note that this was conscription for labour behind the front lines, not for actual military service in the Russian Imperial army, weapon in hand.

The subject of exemption from military service includes a number of quite separate issues:

1. whether or not being conscripted into the Russian Imperial army was a deprivation of civil rights or a kind of privilege;
2. the replacement of military service with the introduction of a special tax for the native population;
3. the different ways in which successive governors-general and their closest aides assessed and viewed military conscription;
4. discussions within the Muslim *umma* (community) about the performance of military service;
5. the way in which the decision was taken, in extreme circumstances, to mobilise for labour brigades a population that had previously been exempt from military service.

For many years I have been trying to find answers to the question: Was the native Muslim population of Turkestan amenable to serving in the Russian army, and if so, on what terms? This chapter is a kind of distillation for Anglophone readers of my reflections on the subject.

Recruitment for the Russian army, or why some peoples were not called on to serve

With the military reform of 1874, Russia switched to army recruitment based on compulsory military service (*obyazatel'naya voinskaya povinnost*). Military service was now extended to a very broad cross-section of Russian society. Universal compulsory military service would have entailed the risk that unreliable “natives” from the non-Russian peripheries would also be conscripted. Therefore, quite a number of the peoples living in the Empire were exempt from military service. However, the desire to unify the Empire, which was a long-term goal of the Russian ruling elite, meant that it was necessary to gradually, but inexorably, incorporate all of the *inorodtsy* living in the Empire into the one Imperial entity. In St Petersburg, some thought that the army would become a

kind of melting pot that would “digest the *inorodtsy*” and help ensure that they “assimilated the principles of Russian nationhood in every way”.

After the promulgation in 1905 of the decree on “Strengthening the Foundations of Religious Tolerance” (*ukreplenie nachala veroterpimosti*), the traditional restrictions on military service based on *national'nost* could not be retained in their existing form. In light of this, a special commission was set up to produce recommendations on changing this aspect of the development of the military. The commission’s main task was to establish an upper limit for the number of non-Russian peoples in the armed forces during wartime, especially in those regions where anti-government movements had been prominent. In the end, it was decided to retain the existing system, unaltered.

According to Professor Mark von Hagen:

The characteristic features of imperial policy, which shaped relations between the country’s Russian and non-Russian populations, were especially evident in the domain of tsarist military policy, including the policy on military service, deployment of troops, training and staffing the officer corps, and the territorial and administrative division of Russia.⁸

It is known that the military authorities were cautious when including members of the annexed and conquered population in the Russian army. They were, however, inclined to incorporate the local aristocracy into the officer corps.⁹ The last Amir of Bukhara, Sayyid ‘Alim Khan, with the rank of Lieutenant General and Adjutant General to His Imperial Highness, and the Khan of Khiva, Asfendiyar Khan, with the rank of Major General, were senior officers in the Russian army, although these positions were purely honorary. Other members of the ruling dynasties of Bukhara and Khiva were officers in the Russian army (according to service records).¹⁰ Overall, however, while 10 per cent of the population of the Russian Empire was Muslim, they made up barely 1 per cent of the Russian officer corps, and these were overwhelmingly Tatars and Bashkirs from European Russia, not natives of Turkestan.

The Russian Government established training for the children of the non-Russian elite in Russian military training establishments. In this, Turkestan was not alone. The main obstacle, however, was the poor command of the Russian language. The local education system had to be brought into conformity, but this required time and financial investment, which the military authorities did not always have.¹¹ Not all of the non-Russian ethnic groups living in the Empire performed military service. This was explained by various factors, such as: different groups had joined the Russian state at different points in time; this had not always been a voluntary process; and there were religious differences.

Was this a restriction or a privilege? It is not easy to give a straightforward answer, because it all depended on the specific nature of the region in question. By no means were all the peoples of the Empire uneasy about exemption from military service. There were two reasons: the traditions of a given people, and the territory's level of social and political development; that is, the extent to which it had modernised, adapted and integrated into the overall Imperial state system.

For example, in the North Caucasus, where military prowess was traditionally valued, there was an element of regret about the restriction placed on military service. Some Azeris thought that the skills acquired during military service would help them in interethnic conflicts with the Armenians, who were not exempt from serving.¹²

In the Steppe region, some of the Kazakh intelligentsia, who since the start of the First World War had pressed for the native population to enjoy the same rights as the Russian settlers and Cossacks, opened up the possibility of creating cavalry units based on nationality, like the Cossack ones.¹³ In their petition submitted to the State Duma on 30 August 1916 concerning the postponement that year of army conscription, they stressed that their eligibility for military conscription was not only just, it was also their "civic duty", as they considered themselves to be equal sons of a united Russia – thus liability for conscription became part of claims to a common citizenship.¹⁴

The situation was different in Turkestan, where exemption from military service was seen as a deserved privilege, given the relative loyalty shown by the population during the conquest of the region, part of an unwritten compact.

However, despite the various reasons for the limited application of the principle of compulsory military service, the War Ministry was strongly disinclined to retain the restrictions. For all the misgivings, it believed that it was important to remember the other side of the coin. First: "It is completely unjust to force the population of the central part of the state to bear the burden of military service for the peripheries, resulting in the population of the peripheries developing and growing rich at the expense of the centre." Second: "If a particular people is exempt from military service for too long ... it will accustom this people to viewing this privilege as sacrosanct ... and consequently it will become more and more difficult to introduce military service (example – Finland¹⁵)."¹⁶

War tax

In the Russian Empire, as well as being exempt from military service, Turkestan's native population enjoyed direct and indirect tax concessions. In 1879, A. N. Kuropatkin, who was still a colonel at that

time, proposed levying a war tax to compensate for this. He anticipated levying a total of 3,125,000 roubles annually. The War Minister, Adjutant General D.A. Miliutin, found the proposal interesting, but the Finance Ministry paid it little attention.¹⁷ In 1884, the commission responsible for drawing up the new Governance Statute for the Turkestan region discussed the possibility of introducing a special levy. The commission decided that this would be premature, and the tax was not introduced.¹⁸ In 1891 the Governor-General of Turkestan, A. B. Vrevskii, returned to the idea of introducing a war tax for the native population. He thought that the same tax rates could be applied as in Transcaucasia. The tax was to be calculated on the basis of the average annual wage of a new recruit, multiplied by the term of service (five years). In Transcaucasia, the annual wage was approximately sixty roubles. The income of the settled population of Turkestan was significantly higher than this, while for the nomadic population it was significantly lower. Vrevskii proposed settling on the average annual income across the whole population, which was thirty roubles. That worked out at 390,000 roubles a year, which was about 12.5 per cent of the land tax and *kibitka* tax. Vrevskii believed that this money should be spent on local needs, such as irrigation and railway construction.¹⁹

The Finance Minister, I. A. Vyshegradskii, approved the idea, but was opposed to spending the money in Turkestan, as he believed that this would only add to the region's financial privileges. The Main Staff (*Glavnyi Shtab*) proposed that the money be paid into a special fund to be administered by the military authorities. However, the War Minister, P. S. Vannovskii, thought that it was simply too soon to introduce a war tax in Turkestan. To avoid frightening the population with the prospect of military conscription, Vrevskii proposed introducing this tax under the guise of an additional government levy. He also reduced the amount of tax to be paid. The Finance Ministry agreed, with the provisos that the money be paid to the State Treasury and that the tax also be imposed on those sections of the Russian settler population that were exempt from military service. However, in 1891 the issue was put on hold.

In 1898 the Finance Ministry returned to this question again, having increased the proposed tax threefold, to 775,000 roubles. It was intended to introduce the tax in the form of a 10 per cent increment on the main direct taxes (the *kibitka* tax and state land tax) and a 15 per cent increment on other land duties and the tax on trade. In accordance with the rules for examining this type of legislative initiative, the opinion of the Governor-General of Turkestan, S. M. Dukhovskoi, was solicited. He proposed that it be mandatory to ascertain the views of the military governors of provinces and the district commandants.²⁰ It took four months to gather this information. On 11 December 1898, Dukhovskoi wrote to the War Minister saying that there was no point hurrying the introduction

of a war tax for Turkestan.²¹ The Finance Ministry was trying its best both to reduce expenditure on Turkestan and to increase the income provided by the region. The desire to introduce a war tax stemmed from this. In his “Most Humble Memorandum on the Military Position of the Turkestan Military District”, General Dukhovskoi urged caution, stating plainly that hasty decisions might be not only detrimental, but dangerous.

In 1899, A. N. Kuropatkin, by now the War Minister, instructed A. P. Protsenko, Lieutenant-General of the Main Staff, to examine the issue of conscripting Turkestan’s native population for military service. On 4 November 1899, Protsenko submitted a memorandum to Kuropatkin on introducing in Turkestan a special tax instead of requiring the native population to perform military service.²² It contained the following conclusions: first, a special war tax in lieu of military service must not be introduced in Turkestan; second, if the income from Turkestan was to be increased, it must not be through a war tax; third, while not confirming the exemption of Turkestan’s native population from military service, the population should be trained up to perform this duty by serving in police guards and in small “native” military units, initially on a voluntary basis, and then on the basis of lots drawn within “native communities”; fourth, the proper introduction of military service, albeit in the form of special military units, was certainly required.²³

Dukhovskoi’s sudden death in March 1900 meant the succession as Governor-General of Turkestan by N. A. Ivanov, who had served in the region since its conquest in the 1860s. Ivanov began looking into the matter in earnest. He sent the War Minister a submission dated 27 June 1900 on “exempting from military service the nomadic Kirgiz [i.e., Kyrgyz and Kazakh] population that has switched to a settled way of life, and the other native population of Semirech’e province [Dungans, Taranchis, etc.]”²⁴

Ivanov asked the minister two questions: 1) Should the nomads of Semirech’e be conscripted for military service when they switch to a settled way of life, and, if so, could they be given some kind of privilege once they have performed this service? 2) Does the Statute on Military Service apply to those *inorodtsy* who are living in rural localities, but who are assigned to urban social estates? The ministry responded that, “The *inorodtsy* comprise a specific social estate” and they would retain their special rights and advantages only for as long as they remained in it; a change in their way of life made no difference.²⁵ In pre-revolutionary Russia, the term “*inorodtsy*” had evolved to denote the entire non-Christian population of the Empire. Therefore, the only way to lose *inorodtsy* status was to convert to Christianity.

On 21 March 1903, at a special meeting chaired by Tsar Nicholas II to determine the War Ministry’s budget for 1904–1908, the Tsar said there needed to be a comprehensive discussion regarding to what extent

a war tax could be levied on the native population of Turkestan.²⁶ In September 1904, the Finance Ministry sent the military authorities a bill on “establishing a special tax for the population of Turkestan in lieu of performance of military service”, which proposed that the tax be levied in all five provinces of Turkestan (the Syr Darya, Samarkand, Ferghana, Semirech’e and Transcaspian provinces).²⁷ In 1904 the State Council, having examined the Finance Ministry’s submission on levying a war tax on Turkestan’s native population, found that given the war with Japan, the introduction of such a measure would be untimely, and must be deferred.²⁸

In 1908 the War Ministry and the Main Staff returned to the question once again. Letters on the issue were sent to the Finance Ministry and the Governor-General of Turkestan. The Finance Ministry’s Fixed Taxes Department reported on 17 March 1908 that the ministry was drafting a submission accordingly, which it intended to submit to the State Duma at the end of 1908 for discussion.²⁹ On 8 May 1908, the Governor-General of Turkestan, P. I. Mishchenko, held a meeting of the Council of the Turkestan Governor-General, which heard a report by the Governor-General’s Chancellery. The journal of the Council shows that overall the attendees were in favour, including Mishchenko,³⁰ but there was a proviso, as stated by the acting Military Governor of Syr Darya province, P. I. Khomutov. Like everyone else at the meeting, Khomutov considered it essential to introduce a war tax and that the population could afford it. However, due to political considerations, he advised against introducing it separately from other taxes; that is, as a standalone tax.³¹ It was anticipated that Turkestan would yield considerable revenues. None of those present had any interest in denying this, as otherwise it would suggest that all of the effort that had gone into conquering and assimilating the new territory, including the financial outlay, would appear to have been in vain. However, many senior officials were in no hurry to make a final decision, as they understood the specific nature of the region and were aware of the possible negative consequences of any increase in fiscal demands.

The question of whether to introduce a war tax for the population of Turkestan remained unresolved. In January 1912 a meeting of the provincial economic committees was held to discuss the introduction of a monetary war tax in lieu of performance of military service.³² Again, no consensus was reached. In 1912, the Finance Ministry submitted to the State Duma a bill on establishing a war tax, payable for three years at a rate of six roubles annually by all persons exempt from military service. However, the Duma’s finance committee said the proposal should be rejected.³³

After the outbreak of the First World War, in October 1914, the Finance Minister, in search of sources of new revenues for the state coffers, submitted his own proposals to the Council of Ministers on establishing

a war tax for persons exempt from military service, and also on introducing in certain non-Russian peripheries of the Empire a special tax in lieu of performance of military service, as an additional levy on the existing direct taxes. However, this bill also encountered opposition, this time from the committee to discuss the terms for reporting state revenue for 1915. The Finance Ministry revised the bill and resubmitted it to the Council of Ministers in December 1914.³⁴

It was decided to extend the war tax to persons who had not performed military service in the four conscription years of 1911, 1912, 1913 and 1914, for a period of eighteen years. If an individual was conscripted for actual military service in wartime, or if they reached the age of forty-three, they would no longer have to pay the tax. The annual tax was based on assets, and it ranged from six roubles per year (for annual incomes not exceeding 1,000 roubles) to 200 roubles (annual incomes in excess of 20,000 roubles).³⁵ For all of Turkestan's provinces, the war tax was to account for 21 per cent of total direct taxation. For comparison: in Akmolinsk province it was to account for 20 per cent; Semipalatinsk province, 18 per cent; Ural province, 17 per cent; Torgghai province, 13 per cent; Astrakhan province, 40 per cent; Saratov province, 65 per cent; and in provinces and districts of the Caucasus, 60 per cent.³⁶

The Law on Introducing a War Tax was approved by the Tsar on 19 April 1915 and entered into force on 1 January 1916. Nevertheless, the issue was still not resolved definitively, and the war tax was introduced in Turkestan only in connection with the financial difficulties resulting from Russia's participation in the war. With the start of the First World War, in the period from 1914 to the end of 1916, the land tax in Turkestan more than doubled, reaching 14,311,771 roubles, while the tax on trade increased from 1,149,676 roubles to 2,838,240 roubles. This increase was by no means the highest compared to other regions of the Empire, and it occurred amid a general increase in direct taxation in the country as a whole. However, indirect taxes increased substantially. The Government introduced an additional war tax on cotton of two roubles fifty kopecks per *pud* of cotton fibre.³⁷ From 1913 to the end of 1915, revenues to the treasury in Turkestan, including the land tax, the tax on trade, and customs duties, increased by 66 per cent.³⁸ The population were naturally unhappy about such a sharp increase in taxes compared to the lenient tax policy that had obtained before.³⁹ It should be noted that the increased tax burden applied to Turkestan's non-native population also.

On military service

In 1909 an interdepartmental commission to revise the Statute on Military Service was set up under the Main Directorate of the Main

Staff. The Government began to examine in detail the possibility of abolishing the restrictions on conscription based on nationality. In his Annual Report for 1909, the then Governor-General of Turkestan, A. V. Samsonov, had set out his views on the subject. He divided Turkestan's population into two main categories: settled and nomadic. He considered the settled population to be unsuitable for military service "by their very nature". The nomadic Kyrgyz and Kazakhs could be conscripted for service, but not on the usual basis. They should form irregular cavalry units, similar to the Turkmen cavalry division (an irregular militia of Turkmen-Teke established back in the 1880s), which was unique in Turkestan. Samsonov believed that introducing military service for Turkestan's native peoples would be premature, and, moreover, incompatible with the main task of "consolidating Russian dominion". He proposed going no further than introducing a war tax and creating irregular cavalry units.⁴⁰ Tsar Nicholas II wrote on the Annual Report for 1910 submitted by the Military Governor of Semirech'e province, M. A. Folbaum, that before the Kirgiz could be conscripted for military service on an inclusive basis, the first step was to ensure their political education and assimilation.⁴¹

On 15 January 1911, the head of the Mobilisation Department of the Main Directorate of the Main Staff, in a letter to the head of its Asiatic Division, General S. V. Tseil, wrote:

At present, the commission's next task is to tackle the issue of introducing military conscription for the *inorodtsy* of the Caucasus, Turkestan and Siberia. The immediate task is to extend military service to the Kirgiz population of Turkestan and western Siberia, that is, to the largest group of *inorodtsy*, approximately one third of the population of Asiatic Russia.⁴²

The head of the Mobilisation Department invited General Tseil to participate in this work, given his extensive experience.⁴³

In July 1911, on the orders of the War Minister, the Main Naval Department of the War Ministry gathered information about the present situation and the possibility of ethnic minorities serving in the army. Undoubtedly, the following conclusion of the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, following his visit to Turkestan in March–April 1912, influenced the analysis of the situation: "Conscription of the alien (*inorodcheskii*) population of Turkestan for military service on the usual basis is inadvisable, due to their backwardness and insufficient political reliability (*vvidu nedostatochnoi ikh politicheskoi blagonadezhnosti tak i maloi kul'turnosti*)."⁴⁴ In April 1913, the Council of Ministers heard a report on "conscripting *inorodtsy*" and determined that conscripting the native population of the Caucasus, Turkestan and Siberia for military service was "desirable and possible".⁴⁵

Several points at issue were discussed: Should the population of *inorodtsy* be conscripted to serve in special units comprising members of one nationality (*natsional'nost*), or should the existing practice be retained whereby they are distributed among various military units? Which individual characteristics of the various peoples (physical characteristics, level of cultural development, knowledge of Russian language, etc.) made them suitable for military service? Which peoples would serve faithfully, and which might pose a serious security risk?⁴⁶

Issues relating to military service were also discussed at a number of inter-provincial meetings (Omsk, Torghai, etc.) held by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The participants gave their opinions on the matter, and all of the findings were submitted for discussion to the interdepartmental commission tasked with revising the Statute on Military Service. In 1914, the conclusions were presented in a draft joint report, which stated that the Kirgiz (Kazakhs) of western Siberia and the Steppe region were wholly unsuited to military service. They were the largest group (2.5 million men) to be exempt from military service. The meeting drew the following conclusions about their military qualities:

The modern military training requirements for soldiers are beyond the Kirgiz, given their current level of development ... If conscripted, deprived of their usual, exclusively local food, and their health-giving drink, kumis, the Kirgiz would not be useful fighters for the army, but instead patients for the hospitals, the infirmaries.⁴⁷

In addition, their poor command of the Russian language was a serious consideration.

Moreover, the Kirgiz were deemed to be politically unreliable. First, they had put up some resistance to becoming part of the Russian Empire; second, the close proximity of the Kirgiz to many other Muslim peoples of Central Asia and China meant that, politically, they could be said to “still harbour a desire for independence”. Finally, the most important argument was that “the Orthodox faith and the Russian fatherland are alien to the Kirgiz, if not repellent”.

The War Ministry assessed the military qualities of the population of the “native provinces” (Ferghana, Syr Darya and Samarkand) as follows: “In terms of their cultural level, these peoples would be wholly suitable for military service, but they are not in robust health, and physically they are poorly suited for military service anywhere apart from their own scorching homeland.”⁴⁸ Also, none of these peoples had been found to have a “sense of affinity with the Russian fatherland”. Furthermore, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca most likely indicated that in the event of a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the peoples of Turkestan would gravitate towards the latter. It was concluded that conscripting

these peoples would be dangerous; teaching them how to use a weapon and about military affairs would be tantamount to training soldiers for a potential enemy or producing trained personnel for insurgent separatists.⁴⁹ These conclusions reflected widespread official paranoia regarding the foreign links and “fanaticism” of the Empire’s Muslim population, and pessimism over the prospects for their assimilation.⁵⁰

The Turkmen (primarily the Teke, but also some Yomuds) were described in more “positive” terms, despite their stubborn resistance to the Russian army in the 1880s. It should be noted that the idea of creating a Turkmen cavalry division had been mooted in the months immediately following the storming of the fortress of Gök Tepe.⁵¹ In 1881 a Turkmen Akhal-Teke militia was established to maintain order locally,⁵² and in 1884, after the annexation of Merv, a provisional Merv cavalry militia was formed from members of the local population.⁵³ On 24 February 1885, a Turkmen cavalry militia was formed, comprising Akhal-Teke and Merv Turkmen. On 30 January 1911, it became the Turkmen cavalry division. And although the population of the Transcaspian province, like all of the native population of Turkestan, was exempt from military service, Turkmen (primarily Teke) nevertheless served in the division on a voluntary basis.⁵⁴ The Governor-General of Turkestan, Samsonov, was convinced of the advantages of conscripting Turkmen into the Russian army, and he spoke in favour of the future deployment of the division in four-*sotnia* regiments.⁵⁵ However, after examining the situation in other regions, the idea of creating units based on nationality was rejected by the War Ministry. Historically, it had not been a positive experience, and the combat capabilities of such units had been significantly worse than the norm.⁵⁶

Guided primarily by political considerations, the commission tasked with revising the Statute on Military Service reported that it was opposed to removing the restrictions, including those that applied to the peoples of Turkestan. The War Ministry drafted a bill based on the conclusions enumerated above, but despite the importance of the issue, with the outbreak of war in 1914, the bill was “shelved”. Nonetheless, the War Ministry, represented by the Asian Division of the Main Staff, continued to gather information. The military governors of Turkestan were sent a kind of questionnaire with nineteen questions. Among other things, they were asked: How is Turkestan’s Muslim population responding to the possibility of conscription? Is it anticipated that it would result in insubordination and people fleeing to neighbouring states? How prepared is the region’s administration? What are the military and psychological qualities of the peoples of Turkestan? The military governors differed in their views, and sometimes their assessments were diametrically opposed.⁵⁷

The ministry returned to its bill a year later. On 14 July 1915, the Tsar chaired a meeting of the Council of Ministers at the military headquarters, at which it was intended to authorise the recruitment of exempt

groups of the population for military service.⁵⁸ According to the bill, the three main reasons why the Empire's non-Russian population had been exempted from military service were: their political unreliability; their low cultural level, manifest first and foremost in their lack of knowledge of the Russian language; and their delicate health. On the other hand, by not conscripting certain peoples, the Government was hampering its pursuit of the main "imperial idea", i.e., the integration of these peoples with the Russian population.⁵⁹

In the preface to the bill, the War Ministry noted the change in the international political situation. Russia faced potential threats from Japan and China (which was "waking to a new dawn"), and competition with European powers in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It was therefore not just a strategic objective, but vitally important that Russia could rapidly expand the number of people who could be mobilised. In light of this, it was important to identify not whom to conscript, but whom to exempt. The reason could be political: the militarisation of a particular ethnic group had become dangerous for the state; or geographical: the militarisation of certain ethnic groups would not bring substantial benefits but would be fraught with various difficulties; or based on cultural level and physical ability: the cultural backwardness and delicate health of the population meant that conscription was pointless. In addition to these reasons, it was noted that there were certain circumstances in which "the benefit to the state of temporary exemption ... exceeds the disadvantages of this measure".⁶⁰

The document gave a detailed assessment of all the peoples and ethnic groups that were exempt from military service. Of the Empire's 2.5 million Kirgiz, 1,241,000 lived in Turkestan. The bill classed the Turkmen of Transcaspia as Kirgiz on the basis that, according to the War Ministry, they "belong to tribes related to the Kirgiz". The regional authorities approved of this broader definition of "Kirgiz", with the inclusion of the Turkmen. They believed that the Kirgiz, "especially the Turkmen", were "good military material". Despite this, the "Kirgiz-Turkmen" did not inspire absolute trust, and it was decided to postpone their conscription for military service "until the conditions are more favourable".⁶¹

The Sarts were considered to be the second-largest group of Asian *inorodtsy* (527,000), living mainly in the Ferghana and Syr Darya provinces, and "in terms of their cultural level, they would have been entirely suitable for military service", were it not that the local authorities had found them to be lacking in the proverbial "sense of affinity with the Russian fatherland" and in delicate health. It was decided to temporarily postpone their conscription for military service.⁶² According to the War Ministry and Turkestan's administration, the Uzbeks, Qaraqalpaqs, Tajiks and "other tribes of the Turkic-Tatar race" (this extremely strange ethnographic amalgamation appeared as a separate category in the bill),

about 687,000 people in total, differed little from the Sarts, and so they were also temporarily exempt from conscription.⁶³

Tatars, Dungans and Taranchis (Uyghurs) were the next group of the “*inorodcheskii* population” of Turkestan. There were approximately 10,000 Tatars in Turkestan, and they lived mainly in urban areas. In terms of their everyday life and occupations they were no different from the Tatars of the Volga region and European Russia. Therefore, there were no grounds for their exemption. The War Ministry (apparently for convenience) christened the Dungans and Taranchis “Chinese Muslims who fled to Turkestan from persecution”. They lived in Semirech’e province (38,000), had a settled way of life, and were quite prosperous. When they settled in the Russian Empire in 1882, they undertook to perform all the duties that came with subjecthood (*poddanstvo*). For twenty-eight years the Government had not held them to this, allowing them time “to become firmly established in their locations”. The War Ministry considered the main military advantage of the Dungans and Taranchis to be their hatred of the Chinese, which could be used in the event of an armed conflict with China. It was therefore concluded that “now is the time” to extend military service to these peoples.⁶⁴

If this bill had been approved, it would have allowed for the mobilisation of an additional 148,000 people from Turkestan. The number of people exempt in the region was 2,255,000.⁶⁵ Such an extensive conscription reform would inevitably have entailed the creation of new administrative bodies for military service. In Turkestan, with the exception of Semirech’e province, family-based lists were not used. As there were no *zemstva* or organisations of the nobility in Turkestan, it was intended to assign this work to the district commandants.⁶⁶ From a financial point of view, it was anticipated that establishing new administrative bodies for military service would cost the state 115,200 roubles at the outset, and 143,000 annually.⁶⁷

In August 1915, the State Duma and State Council spoke in favour of the prompt conscription of the native population of the outlying areas of the Empire that were currently exempt from military service. The head of the Main Staff sent Turkestan’s administration a request to implement this. The then acting Governor-General of Turkestan, F. von Martson, responded in the negative. General von Martson gave the following reasons: conscripting the native population into the army even as a temporary measure in the current conditions could cause discontent; their religious unity “with peoples that are hostile towards us”, first and foremost, with the Ottoman Empire; an inability to adapt to the different culture, way of life and climate of other parts of Russia and Europe; a lack of commissioned and non-commissioned officers from among the native peoples of Turkestan for the formation of special “*inorodcheskii*” units;

the establishment of military service would be at odds with the war tax already being levied on the population.⁶⁸

There was no further correspondence between the head of the Main Staff and the Governor-General of Turkestan regarding military service for Turkestan's native population, and the issue was not raised again in the first half of 1916. The military authorities had another quite significant concern about conscripting "*inorodtsy*": the animosity between different native peoples of Turkestan.

On 29 July 1914, the day after the First World War began, an independent Teke regiment began to form from a division of the Turkmen Cavalry Regiment. The new regiment comprised Turkmen-Teke serving on a voluntary basis, and it was funded entirely by the Turkmen. On 9 February 1915, the Main Directorate of the Main Staff issued the War Ministry's Chancellery with a request concerning "enrolling Kirgiz hunters for service in the Turkmen reserve squadron". In connection with this, on 12 February the ministry asked the Asiatic Section (*Aziatskaya Chast'*) of the Main Staff for its opinion on "whether there is tribal enmity between the Kirgiz and the Turkmen and whether it is possible for them to serve together".⁶⁹

On 16 February 1915, the Asiatic Section reported that there was no tribal enmity between these peoples, and the fact that they lived in close proximity to one another in the Transcaspian province had never led to clashes caused by tribal hostility. However, the Asiatic Section considered it a mistake to assume therefore that conflict would not arise if they served together. There was a lack of unity between the Turkmen and the Kirgiz, but it stemmed from a very significant difference in their way of life rather than from tribal enmity. The Asiatic Division's experts said that the Main Directorate of the Main Staff was wrong to view the Turkmen as primarily nomadic.⁷⁰ The Asiatic Section believed that including Kirgiz in the Turkmen squadrons would be unsuccessful; it would serve only to reduce the value of these squadrons. On the other hand, it could be extremely useful to recruit the Kirgiz population to serve in separate Kirgiz *sotnias* attached to the Turkmen Cavalry Regiment for reconnaissance, guard, escort and courier duties.⁷¹

Several months later, in November 1915, the State Duma received the War Ministry's bill on "recruiting for military service certain parts of the population that thus far have been exempt". A reserve of people with military training was required for the Turkestan and Caucasus borders to respond to the military threats arising there.⁷²

At first glance, the texts of the bills submitted in July 1914 and November 1915 are almost identical. The difference lay in the conclusions about "whom to conscript and whom not to conscript." While the bill drafted by the War Ministry in 1914 postponed conscription "until a better time", according to the 1915 version, it would be

entirely consistent with the overall interests of the state to conscript the Kirgiz population of the Steppe provinces and Turkestan on the usual basis “right now”.⁷³ For several months the Sarts had not displayed a “sense of affinity” with the Russians, but the War Ministry was now determined to conscript them “without delay” for military service on the usual basis,⁷⁴ together with the Uzbeks, Qaraqalpaqs and Tajiks. The decision regarding the Tatars, Dungans and Uyghurs remained as before: they were also to be conscripted. As noted above, family-based lists (*posemeinye spiski*) were generally not used in Turkestan. Therefore, if the law were to be adopted, conscription could not begin until 1 October 1917 at the earliest, i.e., not for another year and a half to two years.⁷⁵ By that time, according to various optimistic predictions by the military, the war would have ended, meaning that all of the effort expended on conscription would have been in vain. The exigencies of a country at war had their own momentum. Reports submitted to the Council of Ministers and the State Duma in 1915 contained completely different conclusions about the military qualities of Turkestan’s native peoples than in 1914, and now, to allow for their being accustomed to a warm climate, it was intended to deploy these peoples predominantly in the southern military districts.⁷⁶

The bill was considered by the Council of Ministers on 27 November 1915. The Deputy Internal Affairs Minister, S. P. Beletskii, said that “the concept of Russia as a fatherland, the protection of which is their duty”, was “alien” to the native population of Turkestan (especially to the Kirgiz) and “on the contrary, they harbour an overwhelming aversion to military service”. According to Beletskii:

a single rumour about military service being extended to these peoples could provoke unrest and disturbances across the vast central Asian steppes, the suppression of which would be fraught with considerable difficulties, given the shortage of police forces at the local level and the absence there of military units (as the units previously stationed there had been sent to the front).⁷⁷

The ministers were concerned by the superficiality of the assessments provided in the document, and it was decided to postpone further examination of the bill “pending submission by the Internal Affairs Ministry of details about the whole issue of conscription”, i.e., indefinitely.⁷⁸ On 22 December 1915, the bill was recalled by the head of the Main Staff.

In early 1916, the Military Governor of Semirech’e, General M. A. Folbaum, asked the Governor-General for permission to form several Kirgiz *sotnias* to reinforce the troops stationed in Semirech’e. Von Martson did not object. Although Folbaum’s initiative did not come to fruition,⁷⁹ the Kirgiz could, if they wanted, set off for the front as

volunteers, and there is limited evidence that some did. The conscription of the region's native population and related issues were also discussed among the non-Russian intelligentsia. For example, in 1916 the newspaper *Qazaq* expressed the view that the possible conscription of Kazakhs in a time of war was undesirable, lamenting that, "People are willing to meekly accept any turn of events". The supporters of this position believed that the Kazakhs, who had not previously performed military service in the tsarist army, would struggle to adapt to it quickly. They proposed sending a delegation that would hold "talks with the government and Duma and convey the Kazakhs' views to them". It was also proposed that if *inorodtsy* were to be conscripted, they be mobilised via Muslim metrical registration bodies so that their exact age could be determined; they be allowed to serve exclusively in the cavalry; and that Kazakhs should enjoy the same rights as Cossacks with regard to both land use and military service.⁸⁰

In early 1914, under the existing legislation, seven million people across the Empire were exempt from military service on the grounds of their nationality and the territory in which they lived. Of these, 114,000 were Russian.⁸¹ As a form of incentive, some Russian peasants who had settled in Turkestan were exempt from military service. In 1914 the War Ministry considered that this incentive was no longer required, and in 1915 it revoked the privilege for this category of the region's population. The exemption had applied to "legitimate settlers" only, mostly those who had migrated to Turkestan before 1900. It had not been extended to unauthorised *samovol'tsy* (lit. "self-willed" settlers) who had therefore started to be called up in the first wave of conscription. The non-native urban population of Turkestan were not exempt, and they were conscripted for regular military service on the usual basis.

In the early days of the First World War, 22,999 reserves for the lower ranks were conscripted from the Russian population of Turkestan. By early 1915, about 70,000 people from the non-native population had been conscripted. This included: 25,329 people from Semirech'e province; 4,916 from Transcaspian province; 15,929 from Syr Darya province; 9,013 from Ferghana province; 3,585 from Samarkand province, and 2,173 from the Bukharan dominions.⁸² We can see that by far the largest number of Russian conscripts from Turkestan came from Semirech'e province. This was because the level of peasant settlement had been highest in Semirech'e. Peasant settlers were opposed to conscription for the army and any kind of requisitioning. Men aged nineteen to forty-three years old were called up, meaning that many peasant families found themselves without workers at the height of the harvest. June 1915 was marked by popular unrest due to the appearance in Pishpek, Andijan and Samarkand of soldiers who had been mobilised from among Russian settlers.⁸³

The Imperial decree of 25 June 1916: an old problem is resolved, and a new problem appears

As the First World War continued, economic performance became a priority concern. It was not only the front that required a constant supply of human resources. The shortage of workers for industrial enterprises in Central Russia, for trench-digging and fortification work, and even for agricultural labour in the region behind the front line, was becoming increasingly problematic. This was in part because a combination of German advances and *Stavka's* own policies had driven out so many of the local population and turned them into refugees.

In the summer of 1916, a meeting was held at the military headquarters to discuss the construction of military defences in areas near the front line. It was established that one million people were required for this work. It was intended to enlist a total of 550,000 people for labour brigades from among the peoples that were exempt from military service. The Council of Ministers discussed this issue at meetings on 3 June, 6 June and 14 June 1916.⁸⁴ As early as 6 June 1916, the Military Service Division (*Upravlenie Voynskoi Povinnosti*) of the Internal Affairs Ministry sent a secret despatch to the Governor-General of Turkestan, which said that the Council of Ministers had approved the bill in principle, but that additional information was required. The division asked the Governor-General to answer the following question: Should we anticipate some difficulties if the *inorodtsy* are conscripted?⁸⁵ Evidently, the question was asked as a formality – the decision was taken without allowing time for Turkestan's administration to give a considered and measured response.

The conscription of the population of the peripheries to meet the needs of the army in the field in 1916 was considered to be a safe and much less troublesome measure. At the same time, workers in the Central Asian region were being recruited on a voluntary basis for labour behind the front lines. However, the number of volunteers was relatively small, and it was insufficient to address the urgent shortage of workers for the defence industry and areas behind the front line. For example, in the Aulie-ata and Chernyaev (Chimkent) districts of Syr-Darya province, the Military Engineering section of the army recruited approximately 10,000 people from the native population.⁸⁶

Dominic Lieven has put forward the fairly controversial idea that after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, Russia's Imperial cohesion had started to wane.⁸⁷ Numerous documents testify to the growth of anti-Russian feeling in countries neighbouring Russia, including on her southern borders, during the First World War. In these circumstances, destabilisation in just one of the non-Russian peripheries of the Empire could have triggered a chain reaction. Despite all the risks of opening up a "domestic front", or rather, not even taking this danger into account, on

25 June 1916 Tsar Nicholas II signed the notorious Imperial decree (more commonly referred to as the “tsar’s *ukaz*”), ordering that peoples of the Empire who were exempt from military service were to be conscripted for labour brigades. The aim was to provide labour for a number of defence facilities and military enterprises so that Russian workers currently based there could be conscripted for the front. The workers were meant to be paid for performing this labour duty and to have their living costs met by the state. In the first instance, males aged nineteen to forty-three years old were to be mobilised. The final decision regarding the age of the population to be conscripted for labour lay with the Internal Affairs Ministry and the War Ministry. In other words, as Tomohiko Uyama shows in his contribution to this volume, the decree did not set out the mechanism for implementing the decision. The Imperial decree was followed on 27 June 1916 by a circular issued by the Internal Affairs Ministry on “requisitioning *inorodtsy* for construction work in the area where the army is on active service”. The requisitioning was to be carried out as quickly as possible.⁸⁸

The Imperial decree was signed at the Commander-in-Chief’s military headquarters. Usual bureaucratic practice would require that such an important decision be preceded by lengthy correspondence with the War Minister, the Internal Affairs Ministry, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Asiatic Section of the Main Staff, the Governor-General of Turkestan, and local experts, with detailed discussion and agreement of all the points in the Imperial decree, and, most importantly, identification of the possible consequences. However, in a time of war, the decision was taken without the usual consultation. This was probably determined by the realities of war-time, when the decision-making mechanism was somewhat simplified and contracted. I would support Marco Buttino’s theory that in this situation, the tsarist Government failed to realise the severity of the consequences of its policy and decision: “The war shifted all attention far away from the colony, and any considerations concerning local interests and political advantage became secondary compared to Russia’s military needs.”⁸⁹

On 11 October 1917, when interrogated by the Extraordinary Investigative Commission of the Provisional Government,⁹⁰ the former War Minister of the Russian Empire, D. S. Shuvaev, spoke about how the decision had been taken.⁹¹ The military headquarters needed to find workers. European Russia could not provide such a large number of people. The long-discussed law on conscripting *inorodtsy* for military service came to mind, but all of the parties involved recognised that this issue had to be postponed. “Yet in the meantime,” Shuvaev recalled, “we had to obtain these workers, come what may.”

Returning from the military headquarters, Shuvaev, with the permission of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, B. V. Shturmer, invited the acting Internal Affairs Minister, S. A. Kukol-Yasnopolskii, and the head of the Main Staff, General P. I. Averyanov, and said to them:

I need workers, come hell or high water, otherwise ... we will lose the campaign ... Within each district, of Turkestan, and then Siberia, the military commanders have the right, used to have it, yes probably now have the right to conscript workers.

During interrogation, Shuvaev was asked why he had not consulted the governors-general of the regions affected by the new law. Shuvaev replied openly that he had not viewed this decision as the adoption of a new law. If it had introduced military service, then that would have been a new law, requiring discussion and agreement with the heads of the regions. Shuvaev sincerely believed that this decision was taken within the scope of the Law on Requisitioning of 3 August 1914, which said that “local inhabitants” could be used “for any kind of work required by military circumstances”.⁹² The key wording was “local inhabitants”. Did this mean that the inhabitants of Turkestan, for example, could be taken away to work in other regions?

Shuvaev had initially thought that simply a special call up or even the introduction of military service was what was required. When questioned, he said in his defence:

I was not given much room for manoeuvre. At first, there was lots of discussion at headquarters, but then it had to be presented within the context of requisitioned workers, without any hopes or assumptions for the future. I viewed it as requisitioning.

Then Shuvaev, Shturmer and Kukol-Yasnopolskii “decided” that Shuvaev should “seek his Majesty’s permission” to requisition workers.

Shturmer, the then Chairman of the Council of Ministers, was the first to inform Tashkent of the signed Imperial decree. He sent a telegram ordering that immediate steps be taken to conscript the workers. In accordance with the laws of the Russian Empire, the decree entered into force upon its official publication in the Compendium of Legislation and Orders of the Government (*Sobranie zakononii i rasporyazhenii Pravitel’stva*). In Turkestan they learnt of the decree on 28–29 June 1916 by telegram, and they set about implementing it immediately. However, the decree was not officially published until 6 July 1916.⁹³ It is hard to say why the regional authorities were in such a hurry to “jump to attention” and why they began implementing the decree eleven days before the legally prescribed date.

During his interrogation, Shuvaev was asked directly: “Why was it that Shturmer, who according to this decree was obliged to reach agreement with you regarding both the age and the procedure for implementing this decree, gave the order himself, by telegram, that the Royal Command was to be executed?” Shuvaev refused to answer, on ethical grounds (Shturmer was no longer alive by this time). It should be noted that

Shturmer himself, before his death in August 1917, was called to the Extraordinary Investigative Commission for questioning twice, on 22 March and 31 March 1917.⁹⁴ However, he was not asked about the events that occurred in Turkestan and the Steppe region in 1916. The acting Internal Affairs Minister, S. A. Kukol-Yasnopolskii, and the head of the Main Staff, General Averyanov, were not called in for questioning.

One possibility why Shturmer was so hasty in relaying the Imperial decree might have been that there was no serving Governor-General in Turkestan at that time. The temporary Governor-General, von Martson, had left for Petrograd on 14 June 1916, and he did not return to Turkestan. His trip was related to the situation concerning the Khanate of Khiva. Moreover, it was rumoured that von Martson intended to return to serve on the Military Council. The Foreign Affairs Ministry did not approve of von Martson's position regarding the end of Khiva's independence. Therefore, a conference was held in Petrograd, attended by representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the War Ministry and the Turkestan Governor-Generalship. The diplomatic officer assigned to the Governor-General of Turkestan, S. V. Chirkin, recalled that:

The conference was rather lethargic, as the Foreign Affairs Ministry was aware that von Martson had departed and it appeared that they already knew who would be appointed as his successor ... After the conference, von Klemm [of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] told me that Adjutant General Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin had been appointed military commander and Governor-General of Turkestan.⁹⁵

In the end, General von Martson did return to the Military Council. General M. R. Erofeev was to serve as the acting Governor-General of Turkestan until the new head arrived. A. N. Kuropatkin's appointment as the new Governor-General of Turkestan was not confirmed until 22 July 1916.

Shuvaev kept stressing that the Tsar's decree was not a new law, and that it was within the framework of the existing law on requisition that they wanted to enlist new workers for labour brigades. However, quite a number of statesmen and political figures in Russia had the impression that the decree violated Article 71 of the Fundamental Law of the Russian Empire, which said that, "Russian subjects are obliged to perform duties" only "in accordance with the provisions of the law".⁹⁶ In other words, the Imperial decree of 25 June 1916 was not adopted under an existing law, but was in itself a new law, which no one had the right to adopt without it first being discussed and approved by the State Duma and State Council.

Under Article 86 of the Fundamental State Laws, as revised on 23 April 1906: "No new law may proceed without approval by the State Council and State Duma and it shall enter into force only when ratified

by the sovereign emperor.” However, Article 87 allowed the monarch to issue laws in the form of emergency decrees (*chrezvychnyye ukazy*) when the legislative chambers were in recess. The fourth session of the Fourth Duma ended on 20 June 1916. The fifth session began on 1 November 1916. The Imperial decree was signed on 25 June 1916, in the recess between the fourth and fifth sessions. Under Article 87 of the Fundamental State Laws, the Tsar had been legally entitled to do so.

Conclusion

After decades of discussion and consideration, as we see, in the summer of 1916 the regime took a completely unexpected and hasty decision. The decision in 1916 to conscript Turkestan’s native population for labour brigades did not arise out of the previously discussed scenarios for the performance by this population of one of the basic state duties. Instead, the decision was made in response to the pressing economic needs of the Empire, without considering expert opinion and the possible consequences. Exemption from military service was a constant source of resentment for those who did serve in the army, and for their relatives. When the war started, this privilege gave rise to accusations in Russian society that some people intended to save their own skins at the expense of others. On the other hand, there was a risk that ethnically homogenous military units could become symbols of the sovereignty of individual ethnic groups, which could also be seen as a threat to the integrity of the Empire. Recruiting volunteers for the army in the field was useful primarily for propaganda purposes; it did not address the need for a regular and systematic supply of contingents of troops.

It should be emphasised that Turkestan’s administration continually supported the Muslim population’s idea about freedom from personal participation in war, particularly when it asked for so-called voluntary contributions to help pay for the war. It would appear that the population’s trust in the administration when it said “They will not take your children to be soldiers” was reinforced by the law of 19 April 1915 on payment of a war duty in addition to existing taxes. Aside from the previous policy towards non-Russians in the Russian Empire, there was another reason for “not conscripting *inorodtsy*”: the Russian Imperial army was able to mobilise enough men from Central Russia. It would not have needed any additional manpower, had the World War not lasted so long.

The exemption of Turkestan’s native Muslim population from military service was yet another indicator of the low level of Turkestan’s integration with the Empire. As we know, the Russian Empire did not have “citizens”; it had only “subjects of his Imperial Majesty”. By not permitting the

“*inorodtsy*” to perform this duty for various reasons, the Russian state, consciously or not, caused the overwhelming majority of the Empire’s non-Russian peoples to feel that they were “other” – no longer “alien”, but not entirely “one of them” either. Evidently, be it paradoxical or only natural, the regime’s policy and the population’s desire coincided. However, this gave rise to a kind of dichotomy: the regime did not want to conscript the native population into the army, and the native population did not want to serve.

Translated by Emily Justice

Notes

This chapter was written as part of Russian Ministry of Education and Science project No. 33.4122.2017/PCh, “International Committees of Historians: contemporary approaches in historical research and the study and teaching of history in Russia and around the world”. I am very grateful to my colleagues, Alexander Morrison, Aminat Chokobaeva and Cloé Drieu for their comments and valuable advice, which I have endeavoured to take into account in my work.

- 1 See T. V. Kotiukova, “‘K voinskoi povinnosti oni pitali nepreodolimoe otrashchenie...’ Osvobozhdenie narodov Turkestana ot voennoi sluzhby v kontse XIX – nachale XX v”, *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 12 (2010), 55–61.
- 2 See T. V. Kotiukova, “Nerasprostranenie vseobshchei voinskoi povinnosti na narody Turkestana: ‘ogranichenie’ ili ‘privilegiya?’”, *Elektronnyi nauchno-obrazovatel’nyi zhurnal ‘Istoriya’* (2011) Vyp.7., <http://history.jes.su/s207987840000172-8-2-ru>.
- 3 See T. V. Kotiukova, “Vosstanie 1916 g. v Turkestane: oshibka vlasti ili formirovanie natsional’noi idei?”, *Obozrevatel’* 8 (2011), 98–126.
- 4 *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane: dokumental’nye svidetel’sтва obshchei tragedii (sbornik dokumentov i materialov)* ed. T.V. Kotiukova (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016).
- 5 T. V. Kotiukova, *Okraina na osobom polozenii... Turkestan v preddverii dramy* (Moscow: nauchno-politicheskaya kniga, 2016), 333–374.
- 6 T. V. Kotiukova “Voinskaya povinnost’ i narody imperii: ‘ogranichenie’ ili ‘privilegiya’”, in T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstaniya v Aziatskoi Rossii v 1916 g.: neizvestnoe ob izvestnom. (K 100-letiiu Vysochaishego poveleniya 25 iyunya 1916 g.)* (Moscow: Russkii Impul’s, 2017), 13–28.
- 7 A. Morrison, “Tsentral’naya Aziya: vspominaya i analiziruya vosstanie 1916g”, *eurasianet.org*, 20 October 2016, <https://russian.eurasianet.org/node/63501> and <http://inosmi.ru/social/20161023/238059412.html>.
- 8 M. von Hagen, “Predely reformy: natsionalizm i russkaya imperatorskaya armiya v 1874–1917 gody”, *Otechestvennaya istoriya* 5 (2004), 38.
- 9 A. Morrison. “The Military Bureaucracy in the Samarkand Oblast of Russian Turkestan”, in Don K. Rowney and Eugene Huskey (eds.), *Russian Bureaucracy and the State/ Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 89–109.
- 10 RGVIA F.400. Op.17 D.2056 ll.8–134; D.7212 ll.26–36; D.6290 ll.3–4, 7.

- 11 V. V. Korneev, "Deyatel'nost' organov voennogo upravleniya Rossiiskoi imperii po gosudarstvennomu stroitel'stvu v Tsentral'noaziatskom regione (vtoraya polovina XIX – nachalo XX v.)" (Kandidat Nauk dissertation, Moscow, 2000), 187.
- 12 E. G. Vapilin, "Politicheskie i natsional'nye aspekty komplektovaniya armii v XVIII – nachale XX v"; *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal* 10 (2001), 24.
- 13 M. Tynyshpaev, *Istoriya Kazakhskogo naroda* (Alma-Ata: Qazaq Universiteti, 1993), 40.
- 14 J. Sanborn, "Sem'ya, bratstvo i natsional'noe stroitel'stvo v Rossii 1905–1925 gg.," *Gosudarstvo natsii: imperiya i natsional'noe stroitel'stvo v epokhu Lenina i Stalina* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011), 128–129.
- 15 Military service was introduced in Finland in 1902, but by 1912 service in the army had been replaced by a monetary tax.
- 16 Cited in M. Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo v Krasnoi armii* (Leningrad: Voennaya Tip, 1927), 11.
- 17 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.596.
- 18 E. A. Pravilova, *Finansy imperii: den'gi i vlast' v politike Rossii na natsional'nykh okrainakh, 1801–1917gg* (Moscow: Novoe Izd., 2006), 277.
- 19 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.1467.
- 20 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2211 l.2.
- 21 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2211 ll.7–7 ob.
- 22 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2211 ll.21–29 ob.
- 23 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2211 l.29ob.
- 24 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2672 ll.1–2.
- 25 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.2672 l.17.
- 26 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 l.1ob.
- 27 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 l.1ob.
- 28 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 ll.3–3ob.
- 29 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 ll.5–5ob.
- 30 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 ll.7–14ob.
- 31 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.3698 l.8.
- 32 RGVIA F.400. Op.1 D.4265 l.84.
- 33 *Osobyе zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1915 god* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 168.
- 34 *Osobyе zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 168–170.
- 35 *Osobyе zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 168.
- 36 *Osobyе zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 169.
- 37 I. M. Muminov, *Istoriya Samarkanda* (Tashkent: FAN, 1969), Vol. II, 354.
- 38 *Istoriya Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent: FAN, 1974), 184.
- 39 A. S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 291.
- 40 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340. l.10ob.
- 41 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.4295 ll.3–12.
- 42 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.3698. ll.30–30ob.
- 43 The new Statute on Military Service was adopted in 1912, but the state retained the previous "privileges and preferences of the native population of Turkestan". See *Ustav o voinskoi povinnosti* (St Petersburg, 1912), 25–27.
- 44 AVPRI F.147 Op.485 D.1250 l.24.

- 45 A. V. Remnev (ed.), *Sibir' v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2007), 223.
- 46 N. V. Podpryatov, "Natsional'nye men'shinstva v bor'be za "chest', dostoinstvo, tselost' Rossii", *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 1 (1997), 54.
- 47 Cited in Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*, 13–14.
- 48 Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*, 14.
- 49 Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*, 17–18.
- 50 Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*, 51–55, 289–290.
- 51 A. Ilyasov (ed.), *Prisoedinenie Turkmenii k Rossii (sbornik dokumentov)* (Ashkhabad: Gilim, 1960), 529.
- 52 Ilyasov, *Prisoedinenie Turkmenii k Rossii*, 497.
- 53 O. Gundogdyev, *Boevoi put' Tekinskogo konnogo polka (1914–1918 gg)* (Ashkhabad, 2012), 23.
- 54 AVPRI F.147 Op.485 D.1250, l.24.
- 55 AVPRI F.147 Op.485 D.1250, l.24.
- 56 Von Hagen, "Predely reform", 40–41.
- 57 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.4297 ll.35–41.
- 58 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.5.
- 59 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.2.
- 60 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.3.
- 61 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.12.
- 62 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.13.
- 63 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.14.
- 64 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.14.
- 65 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 ll.32–33.
- 66 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.41.
- 67 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.46.
- 68 A.V. Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vostanie 1916 g. v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izd. AN SSSR, 1960), 86.
- 69 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.4413 ll.11–11ob.
- 70 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.4413 ll.12–12ob.
- 71 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.4413 l.13.
- 72 V. S. Dyakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros vo vnutrennei politike tsarizma (XIX – nachalo XX v.)* (St Petersburg: LISS, 1998), 927.
- 73 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.10
- 74 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.10.
- 75 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 l.34
- 76 Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*, 21–22.
- 77 *Osobyje zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 556.
- 78 *Osobyje zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 557.
- 79 AVPRI F.147 Op.486 D.340 ll.15 ob – 16.
- 80 S. V. Kuzina, "Natsional'nyi vopros v Gosudarstvennoi dume Rossii na materialakh oblastei Stepnogo kraya i Turkestana. 1906–1917gg." (*Kandidat Nauk* Dissertation, Moscow 2002), 125.
- 81 Zakharov, *Natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*, 20.
- 82 *Istoriya Uzbekskoi SSR*, Vol. 2 (Tashkent: FAN, 1968), 513.
- 83 *Istoriya Uzbekskoi SSR*, Vol. 2, 513–517; Muminov, *Istoriya Samarkanda*, 354.
- 84 *Osobyje zhurnaly zasedaniya Soveta*, 252–256.

- 85 A. I. Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naya politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917 gg)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 304.
- 86 L. V. Lesnaya (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 g. v Kirgizstane. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Gosotsekiz, 1937), 20
- 87 See D. Lieven *Rossiiskaya imperiya i ee vragi s XVI veka do nashikh dnei* (Moscow: Izd. Evropa, 2007)
- 88 Dyakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros*, 934.
- 89 Marko Buttino, *Revoliutsiya naoborot. Srednyaya Aziya mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 2007), 58.
- 90 The full name of the commission was the Extraordinary Investigative Commission to Investigate the Illegal Actions, By Virtue of Their Position, of Former Ministers, Chief Administrators and Other Senior Officials of Civilian, Military and Naval Departments (abbreviated to ChSK). It was founded in March 1917 by the Provisional Government to investigate the crimes of the imperial family and senior state officials of the tsarist Government.
- 91 *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima (Stenograficheskie otchety doprosov i pokazanii, dannykh v 1917 g. v Chrezvychainoi sledstvennoi komissii Vremennogo pravitel'stva)* (Leningrad: Gos. Izd, 1927), Vol. 7, 291–295.
- 92 *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima*, Vol. 7, 291–295.
- 93 Compendium of Legislation and Orders of the Government of 6 July 1916, No. 182, article 1526.
- 94 *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima*, Vol. 1, 221–293.
- 95 S. V. Chirkin, *Dvadtsat' let sluzhby na Vostoke. Zapiski tsarskogo diplomata* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2006), 248.
- 96 Article 71 said: “Russian subjects must pay the taxes and duties specified in law, and also perform duties in accordance with the provisions of the law.”

The 1916 uprisings in Jizzakh: economic background and political rationales

Akmal Bazarbaev and Cloé Drieu

Introduction

Andrei Shestakov, one of the main historians and ideologues who produced articles and in the 1930s published a collection of archival documents on the 1916 revolt in Jizzakh, wrote that:

the events (*sobytiia*) that occurred in the second half of the year 1916, when the Russian empire was collapsing on different fronts of the war, have to be considered without, any doubt, as one of the key moments that paved the ground for the revolution of 1917. This became clear when one looks at the process and the characters of the event of 1916 in Central Asia, where large masses of peasants and half “proletarianized” urban artisans rose up against the tsarist power.¹

Considered the “first mass colonial revolution of the nineteenth century”, the uprisings of 1916 were, according to Shestakov, “a national and democratic movement that however lacked leadership”.² These quotations seem old enough to be forgotten, however they dominated and still dominate the mainstream of Soviet and some post-Soviet historiography, especially in Uzbekistan, all of which was produced under important political constraints, and which forged durable representations of the event.³

To question these representations of the revolt as “national” and “massive”, we propose to discuss in depth the causes, character and rationale of the revolt, by shedding a new light on the specific case of the district (*uezd*) of Jizzakh, considered unanimously by Soviet official historians – not without reason – as the place where both the violence of the riots and their repression reached their peak,⁴ as far as the sedentary areas of Turkestan were concerned.⁵ There were no accurate estimates of the casualties and losses, and we can only rely on the figure given by Mirzo Quqonboy Abdukholiqzoda Samarqandiy, according to what people said

at the time. He wrote that from 15,000 to 20,000 natives died in the district of Jizzakh alone,⁶ against eighty-three persons among the official local and Russian administration, in addition to the seventy Russian women and children taken prisoner.⁷ These figures would correspond at a maximum to 10 per cent of the total population of the district (see Table 1). The number of persons under arrest reached 3,000 in the district.⁸ But these figures did not take into account the other consequences of both revolt and repression, that is to say the total or partial destruction of villages, crops, and displaced populations. Located half way between Tashkent and Samarkand and surrounded by mountain and steppe areas, during the pre-colonial period Jizzakh was not only important because of its bazaar and trade activities, but also because it was formerly a frontier fortress of the Emirate of Bukhara. Later, Jizzakh became a less significant town – but still a district centre – under the period of Russian Imperial domination.⁹ The living conditions were characterised by a peculiar mix of peasants and *Kirgiz* (i.e., Kazakh) stockbreeders, but the province (*oblast*) of Samarkand (in which the district of Jizzakh was located) was mainly a grain-growing area and suffered from the later adjustments of the decree decided by the Governor-General of Turkestan on 2 July (OS), that drafted more men from grain-growing areas than from the cotton-growing ones. Finally, the region of Samarkand had to provide 38,000 labourers (against the 35,000 planned initially), among which 10,600 men were from Jizzakh, while the estimate of the total population of the district in 1917 was 184,841.¹⁰

The first part of this chapter will focus on the economic background and the agrarian and agricultural situation of Turkestan and more particularly the district of Jizzakh on the eve of and during the First World War.¹¹ In the second part we will discuss the presumed mass character of the revolt, its logic of diffusion, its inner rationales and leadership,¹² in order to reassess the nature of the revolt and its presumed national character.¹³ For this purpose, we rely on archival documents from the National Archives of Uzbekistan or from the numerous collections of documents published mainly during the Soviet era. Furthermore, we also use the unfortunately too rare memories and testimonies of participants in the revolt that give additional and valuable information on the general context and a view from within.¹⁴

The agrarian and economic background of the revolts

In 1916, uprisings took place more or less sporadically in 15 *volosts* out of 22 that composed the district of Jizzakh.¹⁵ The main sources to analyse the event remain archival documents as well as some published collections of documents and secondary sources. Furthermore, the memories of participants in the revolt give some additional information and new

insights into the issue, while in the 1930s, a few witnesses of the revolt began to write down their memories. At the same time, some Uzbek historians from the Academy of Science organised special expeditions to take interviews from the participants of the revolt. These sources not only give information on the revolt itself, they also let us understand the local economic and social conditions in the region before the event. While official documents written by the colonial authorities illustrate the reasons as seen from above, local sources allow us to reconstruct the situation from below. Local intellectuals who wrote about the revolt suggested that the economic and social background was a major factor for the uprising. For example, Samarqandiy clearly explains how local people were progressively deprived of their land property, and how they faced difficulties in using their land under the colonial legislation and practices.

According to a long tradition of Soviet historiography running from the mid-1930s for ideological purposes, the main participants of the 1916 revolt in Central Asia were considered to be mostly peasants in the sedentary areas, or pastoralists in the nomadic ones.¹⁶ As Galuzo put it:

the determining stream of motion in that time was the movement of the peasants and pastoralist masses. The movement of the urban petty and middle industrial bourgeoisie that existed alongside it, and the movement of the nobility, the clergy and the big commercial bourgeoisie, never reached such proportions or sharpness as the peasant movement.¹⁷

Before analysing which groups took part in the revolt and how, we would like to shed some light on local economic and living conditions, which were deteriorating in consequence of the policy of the colonial authorities in regard to land and irrigation issues in particular.¹⁸ The situation had been strongly deteriorating over the colonial period and on the eve of the 1916 revolts there were already signs of famine in Turkestan, especially in the district of Jizzakh.¹⁹

Colonial legislation and local legal practices

The region of Jizzakh was largely a crop production area, and geographically it consisted of two parts, oasis and steppe. Oases, which coincided with the *volosts* of Za'amin, Yam, Sanzar, Boghdan and Yangi-Qurghan, were covered by irrigated and *lalmi* lands – that is to say rain-fed lands – for grain, while steppe areas such as the Chardar, Qizilqum, Fistalitau, Qurghan-tepe and Ata-Qurghan *volosts*, were covered by pasture lands. According to the report of inspection made by Senator Count Pahlen in 1908, 15.4 per cent of the total land in Jizzakh district was irrigated land, 32.5 per cent was *lalmi* land²⁰ and the other

52.1 per cent was uncultivated land.²¹ The quantity of irrigated land was less than other types, but it was very productive. *Lalmi* lands also usually provided large harvests for the district of Jizzakh.²²

The Russian Empire initially conquered Turkestan without much consideration for its economic development or exploitation.²³ After the conquest the colonial authorities hoped to derive economic benefit from the land along with underground resources such as gold, but until the early 1890s they remained frustrated by the complexity of land rights in the region, which they found it difficult to grasp. For this reason, from the 1880s the tsarist authorities sought to survey the land more accurately for tax purposes, collecting revenue on *lalmi* as well as irrigated land.²⁴ The often difficult relationship between Islamic and Russian law on property generated significant legal disputes and some changes.²⁵ These reforms also sometimes generated disputes between the colonial administration in Tashkent and the Imperial authorities in St Petersburg, while every group tried to protect its interests in the region.²⁶ During the first twenty years of Russian rule, the colonial authorities attempted to establish special rules for regulating the territory and its population in Turkestan. On 12 June 1886, the Statute for the Administration of Turkestan (*Polozhenie ob upravlenii Turkestanskogo kraia*) entered into practice, and changed directly or indirectly the economic and social context as well as everyday life. The local population were quite displeased with the 1886 Statute.²⁷ In order to understand how colonial legislation generated new economic conditions for the local population in Jizzakh, it is necessary to analyse the new legal processes that developed during the Russian rule.

Before the Russian conquest, the entire Jizzakh district was a single territory known as the Jizzakh *beklik* or *vilayat*. The colonial administration established an administrative structure based on the Statute of 1886 that had direct consequences for land and water use.²⁸ Articles 73, 74 and 76 of the 1886 Statute in particular dealt with the administrative structure, and laid down that districts, *volost'* and village communities (*sel'skoe obshchestvo*) should be established on the basis of the number of households, and the "advantage of use on land and irrigation canals."²⁹ However, the available sources show that colonial authorities were ignorant of the conditions of land use in the process of delineating *volost'* and village communities in Jizzakh district. As a result, local peasants and stockbreeders began to face difficulties in using their traditional land. On the contrary, they delineated new *volost'* and village communities only according to the number of households rather than existing kinship and ownership patterns.³⁰

Some articles of the 1886 Statute required land assessment works (*pozemel'no-podatnye raboty*) that impacted more on *lalmi* (rain-fed) lands.³¹ These works started in the district of Tashkent on 1 April 1887 and continued in Samarkand region in 1892. Land assessment works

took place in the district of Jizzakh in the decade between 1904 and 1907.³² Statistical data shows that there were more assessed agricultural lands in the district of Jizzakh than in the other districts in the province of Samarkand. According to Pahlen, the commission surveyed 763,120 *desyatinas*³³ of land in Jizzakh district, compared to 554,437 in Samarkand district, 464,843 in Khujand, and 393,833 in Katta-Qurghan.³⁴ At that time, the total amount of land in the district of Jizzakh was 837,434 *desyatinas*.³⁵ This process allowed the solution of some problems for the colonial administration; in particular, it was a good chance to levy tax systematically on rain-fed lands. Samarqandiy, one of the witnesses of the 1916 Jizzakh events, came to this conclusion, describing this process:

An organization for [measuring] a plot of land in each province was established in 1890 ... The board of this organization consists of twenty–thirty surveyors (*zemlemer* or *tanabchi*), five or six of them were commissioners (*komissar*); there were [also] five or six surveyors who collaborated with each commissioner. This board [the *pozemel'no-podatnoe pristavstvo*], having measured the irrigated land and rain-fed mountain land that were in the possession of the population (*dar dasti aholi buda-i*) and all the pastures in the plain and in the mountain, mapped them. Intentionally neglecting only that part of the irrigated and rain-fed land that was in the possession of the population, it turned all the other land, steppe and mountain pastures, into State land property.³⁶

Samarqandiy offers an accurate reconstruction of what the commissions that operated in Samarkand from the early 1890s and in Jizzakh in 1904–1907 did, following the instructions appended to Article 255 of the Turkestan Statute in 1886: they registered and recorded on a map all the land in the possession of the population. Land on which the settled rural population could claim possession, usage and disposition was assigned to them in this phase: not to individuals but to villages, and this included communal land. The problem was that, when taxes on *lalmi* and non-productive land increased after 1900 and again in 1907–1908, the villagers found themselves with too much land assigned to their community and a correspondingly high tax burden.³⁷ Samarqandiy also notes that all the land, excluding that in possession of the population, was transferred to the state property. It seems from the above citation that *lalmi* lands that did not belong to any individual were transferred to the state. It was a fact that the colonial authorities transferred unused lands, but not cultivated ones to the state. On the other hand, there was a custom based on Islamic law (*shari'a*) that individuals could transform any plot of *lalmi*, pasture or other types of land that were not cultivated to private property by tilling a new plot of any land.³⁸

Another means used by the colonial administration to transform land into state property was to define more and more of it as “spontaneous

forest.” This then allowed the colonial authorities to make revenue by selling permits for using “forest”. The district of Jizzakh was one of the most important districts in Turkestan in terms of the amount of livestock, and had the largest number of sheep in the province of Samarkand.³⁹ These corresponded to 58.3 per cent of the total livestock in Jizzakh, while this number was only 23.4 per cent in the district of Samarkand and 27.8 per cent in the district of Khujand.⁴⁰ This shows that pastoralism was as important as arable agriculture in Jizzakh. Some of the colonial administration’s reforms made it more difficult to use these pasture lands, in particular the designation of many steppe areas, usually covered by *saxaul*, as forest, where previously they had been wasteland. In this way, steppe areas became state property to the detriment of local people, who now had to pay for permits to use *saxaul* and pastures – this type of marginal territory was widespread in the northern and northeastern regions of Jizzakh district. This process began under the first Turkestan Governor-General, von Kaufman, and succeeding governors of Turkestan established instructions and statutes for managing, controlling and using forests and state properties respectively in 1890 and 1897.⁴¹ The colonial administration gained some economic advantage from this policy and state income from forest increased from 11,217 roubles to 45,440 roubles between 1899 and 1908 in the region of Samarkand.⁴² This income came from the taxes collected from local people by forest guards for feeding their livestock. The changes in what were now classified as “forest type” pastures damaged the economic condition of the local population because livestock was one of its main sources of income.⁴³ For this reason, the population had a particular hostility to forest guards, as the Jizzakh uprising showed.⁴⁴

Agricultural products and their prices: cotton and wheat

On the eve of the First World War, Turkestan became the main cotton-producing region for the Russian state and textile industry. Cotton production had begun to grow especially after road and railway networks were built, allowing for an increase in export trade. In 1869, Turkestan produced just 6.67 per cent of the total consumption of cotton in the Russian Empire; in 1913 it was over 50 per cent, and after imports were cut off it reached nearly 100 per cent during the First World War, in 1916.⁴⁵ The statistics for cotton plantations give a better picture of these changes. In 1888, 68,500 *desyatinas* of land in Turkestan were under cotton. In 1915, at the beginning of the First World War, cotton fields covered 466,100 *desyatinas*. Cotton became the main agricultural product in the province of Ferghana the same year: in 1885, 14 per cent of total agricultural produce consisted of cotton, and this share reached 44 per cent in 1915.⁴⁶

The district of Jizzakh showed another picture: cotton production was lower than in other parts of Turkestan. Shakhnazarov wrote that in 1890 and 1894, the cultivation of American cotton was less successful in the district of Jizzakh because there was less irrigated land and because local agriculture needed crops that did not require an artificial system of irrigation.⁴⁷ In 1900–1901, the district had just 343 *desyatinas* of cotton fields, when in the Andijan district the equivalent figure was 95,315 *desyatinas*, with 29,000 *desyatinas* in Tashkent district and 2,800 *desyatinas* in Chimkent district.⁴⁸ The surface under cotton in Jizzakh was lower than anywhere else in the province of Samarkand. According to Count Pahlen, out of every 100 *desyatinas*, 11.46 *desyatinas* in Katta-Qurghan district, four *desyatinas* in Khujand district and 2.11 *desyatinas* in Samarkand district were occupied by cotton. At this time, the district of Jizzakh had only 0.23 *desyatinas* of cotton for every 100 *desyatinas* of agricultural land.⁴⁹ Despite the new irrigation works in the Hungry Steppe, where the main lands were located as far as Jizzakh district is concerned, this territory corresponded to 3.6 per cent of the total cotton production of Turkestan in 1914 when the First World War began.⁵⁰

Instead, wheat in particular played a crucial role in the economic life of the population of Jizzakh in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Some of the agricultural fields were irrigated by a system of *ariqs*, which were small canals, but many crop surfaces were located around mountain areas and depended on rainfall.⁵¹ At the same time, local peasants depended largely on *lalmi* as the main type of agricultural land. *Lalmi* and wastelands were not irrigated by canals, but were nevertheless taxed. Wheat cultivation on *lalmi* lands was increasing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when wheat fields in the irrigated valley areas of Turkestan were decreasing as cotton spread.⁵² This character fitted with the situation in the district of Jizzakh. There, the *lalmi* lands gave very good harvests together with irrigated lands. For example, in the village of Qarabdal, cultivated fields on *lalmi* lands located around a mountain area gave a yield ranging from six up to fifty *puds*⁵³ per *desyatina*, according to quantity of rainfall and natural and climatic conditions of the spring sowing season.⁵⁴ The grain harvest in the district of Jizzakh was not only enough for the needs of the local population, but it was also sold in other districts in the region when the yields were particularly good.⁵⁵ The Russian administrator Georgii Arandarenko demonstrated in his work that in the 1880s the people of the district of Jizzakh produced such a huge quantity of grain that it was also sold in neighbouring markets such as Bukhara.⁵⁶ By the early 1900s every year, 100,000 *puds* of grains were shipped to Ferghana from Jizzakh.⁵⁷

These data and statistics illustrate that cotton did not play a crucial role in the economy of Jizzakh district; on the contrary, wheat still did

not lose its value for local peasants. When we look at the difference between the prices of cotton and wheat, we see another picture. In 1914–1915, when the First World War began, prices continued rising. In these years, the price of cotton was 50 per cent higher than in 1913, while the price of cereals increased by 100 per cent in the same years.⁵⁸ In 1916, the situation worsened for local people in cotton-growing regions since the price of cereals doubled again and that of other main foodstuffs doubled or tripled, while the cotton price remained stable in Turkestan.⁵⁹ This is because it was fixed by the Government, which acquired a monopoly. Additionally, peasants, particularly those from Jizzakh, were still being forced to sell their harvests during the First World War when the cereals price was unstable. According to Samarqandiy, when “the First World War began, the expenses for military activities increased and it was again on ordinary people’s shoulders. They had to sell their grains at a price that was several times less than the market price.”⁶⁰ A process of putting pressure on peasants to sell grain harvests at a low price took place in the autumn, when prices of foodstuffs were lower than other seasons. Peasants had to buy cereals while their price was high.

In conclusion, colonial legislation appropriated land for the state or made difficulties in using land for native local people. In the meantime, the colonial authorities prioritised a stable fiscal income and for this reason, they reformed the land revenue system. These attempts created economic problems for local people in Jizzakh. Year by year, cotton production rose because of the huge demand for this product by Russian companies and the state, while the prices of other crops were unstable. The two together, limiting land use and speculation, had a considerable impact on the economic life of local people.

Revolts and repression

As has been shown, locally in the district of Jizzakh, Imperial land policies and the development of cereal production, rather than the process of colonisation by Russian settlers (who were very few in the district – see [Table 1](#)) – had a profound impact on the population and local economy. When the 25 June Imperial decree on labour requisition was modified to put more pressure on the cereal production areas of Central Asia, Jizzakh district was directly concerned.

The district was one of the main centres of violence in the sedentary areas of Turkestan. Several factors made possible the riots that took place there, and some even amplified them. The main places that revolted were the old town of Jizzakh, and the *volosts* of Za’amin, Boghdan and Sanzar; the revolts were far from affecting the entire district. It is important to

Table 1 Population and revolt in the district of Jizzakh

Cantons in the district of Jizzakh (21 <i>volosts</i> and 1 town)	Population in 1898	Population in 1917	Number of men requisitioned by decree	State of revolts (“0” means that the <i>volost’</i> did not revolt while “1” that the whole <i>volost’</i> rioted)	Canal of irrigation used for agricultural purposes/type of lands	Remarks
Ata Qurghan	11,450	?	508	0	No canal; people used water from wells	Steppe, Kazakh population
Fistalitausk	7,426	5,346	319	0	No canal; people used water from wells	Steppe, Kazakh population
Qizyl Qum	16,561	6,766	373	0	No canal; people used water from wells	Steppe, Kazakh population
Kok Tiube	7,894	?	397	0	No canal; people used water from wells	Steppe, Kazakh population
Qurghan Tiube	–	2,290	343	0	–	Steppe, Kazakh population
Farish	–	?	307	0.25	–	One <i>volost’</i> out of four under riots
Chardarya	7,514	6,111	318	0.5	Syr-Darya	Steppe, Kazakh population
Yam	11,211	14,005	474	0.5	Za’aminsai, Khoja-mushkant/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Steppe, Tajik and Uzbek populations Three <i>volosts</i> rioted (Jar-Aryk, Sharmabad, Chukurtakht), five did not take part in the riots

(continued)

Table 1 (Cont.)

Cantons in the district of Jizzakh (21 <i>volosts</i> and 1 town)	Population in 1898	Population in 1917	Number of men requisitioned by decree	State of revolts (“0” means that the <i>volost’</i> did not revolt while “1” that the whole <i>volost’</i> rioted)	Canal of irrigation used for agricultural purposes/type of lands	Remarks
Yany Qurghan	13,278	?	518	0.5	Sanzar, Qorasu, Khoja-buloq, Gul/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Steppe, Tajik and Uzbek population No details were found on the scale of rioting
Jizzakh (town)	16,041	14,644	550	0.5	Sanzar/irrigated and <i>lalmi</i> land	Sart population, “native” part of Jizzakh riots
Nakrut	12,255	14,964	270	0.5	Mountain springs/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountains, Uzbek and Turkmen populations
Sintab	11,082	?	462	0.5	Sintab, Temir Kauksay/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountains, Tajik population At least five <i>volosts</i> rioted (Sintab, Turkmen, Temir-Kabuk, Ustuk, Madzharum)
Za’amin	18,492	9,601	665	0.7	Za’aminsai/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountainous steppes, Tajik and Uzbek populations. Five <i>volosts</i> out of seven under riot (Za’amin, Tashkent, Gortiube, Chit-Aryk, Kudukchin)
Boghdan	13,570	?	283	1	Osmansay, Sintab/ Irrigated and <i>lalmi</i> land	Mountain and Steppe, Tajik and Uzbek populations.

Chashmaob	11,218	?	372	1	Boghimazar, Terekli, Qizilturuq, Garalas/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountains, Uzbek population
Qaratash	12,488	14,409	580	1	Zaaminsay, Usmansay, Urukli, Jeti-kechu/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountain and steppe, Qara-Kirghiz populations
Khoja Mukur	–	5,471	172	1	–	
Rabat	15,710	?	614	1	Uab, Kurpa, Isaralan, Taylaq/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	<i>Volosts</i> that rioted: Rabatskoe, Agajinskoe, Uch-Kizska, Pyatigorskoe, Chok-Mazarskoe
Sanzar	13,778	7,527	542	1	Boghi-mazar, Terekli, Aydashman, Qizil- turuq, Bayqunghur/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountains, Tajik and Qara-Kirghiz populations
Sauriuk	10,423	1,146	415	1	Mountain waterhole/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Mountains, Uzbek population
Usmat-Katartal'	7,344	9,301	341	1	–	Plains population
Uzbek	9,493	?	660	1	Sanzar/ <i>lalmi</i> and irrigated land	Plains, Uzbek population The village of Iran did not riot
Total	,227,228	202,138	9,483	12.95		

In 1917, the rural population of the district of Jizzakh was 187,494 (the census of 1917 was incomplete and recorded 90,557 persons, to which 96,937⁶¹ needed to be added) and 14,644 in the urban parts of the district (Jizzakh).

Sources: Table drawn mostly from data gathered in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*; M. Virskii "Statisticheskaya Svedeniya gorodoam i volostyam uezdov Samarkandskoi Oblasti za 1897g.," in M. Virskii (ed.), *Spravoch'naya Knizhka Samarkandskoi Oblasti 1898g.* Vyp.VI (Samarkand: Tip. K. M. Fedorova, 1899); and I. I. Zarubin, *Naselenie Samarkandskoi Oblasti* (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1926).

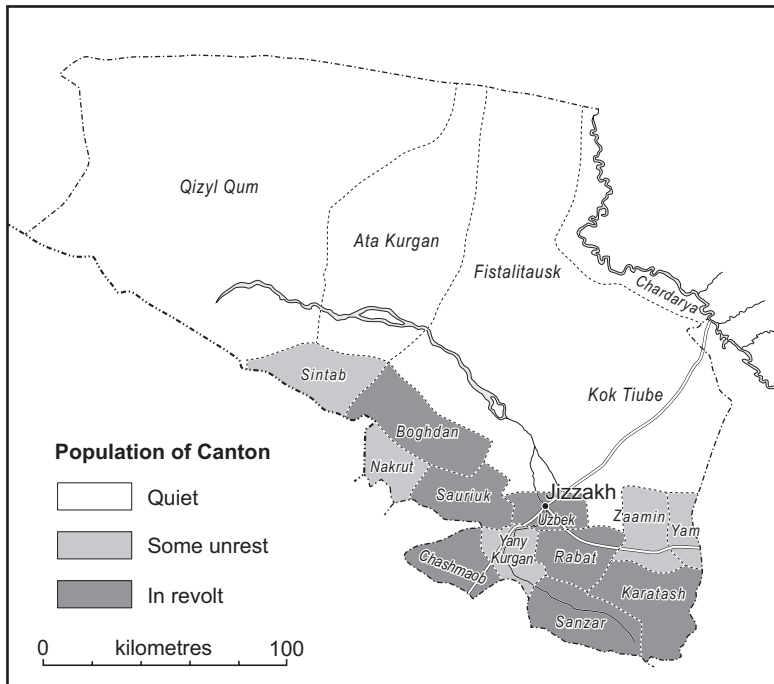
Table 2 Array of workers for work in the rear of the army from the district of Jizzakh

Name of cantons and town	Number of households	Number of workers to be sent to the rear of the army	10% of the additional premium in the case of affliction	Total
Jizzakh town	2,300	550	55	605
Za'amin volost'				
Za'amin	2,773	665	66	731
Qaratash	2,321	580	58	638
Rabat	2,460	614	61	675
Uzbek	2,641	660	66	726
Yam	1,900	474	47	521
Total	12,095	2,993	298	3,291
Sanzar volost'				
Nakrut	1,080	270	27	297
Sanzar	2,170	542	54	596
Sauriuk	1,660	415	41	456
Usmat Katartal'	1,420	341	34	375
Khochha Mukur	730	172	17	189
Yani Qurghan	2,075	518	51	569
Chashmaob	1,530	372	37	409
Total	10,665	2,630	261	2,891
Boghdan volost'				
Boghdan	1,150	286	28	314
Farish	1,250	312	31	343
Sintab	1,850	462	46	508
Total for sedentary volosts	4,250	1,060	105	1,165
Qurghan Tiube	1,260	343	34	377
Kok Tiube	1,450	397	39	436
Fistalitausk	1,320	363	36	399
Ata Qurghan	1,850	508	50	558
Qizyl Qum	1,360	373	37	410
Chardarya	1,320	363	36	399

Table 2 (Cont.)

Name of cantons and town	Number of households	Number of workers to be sent to the rear of the army	10% of the additional premium in the case of affliction	Total
Total for nomadic <i>volosts</i>	8,560	2,347	232	2,579
Total for Boghdan <i>volost'</i>	12,810	3,407	337	3,744
Total for Jizzakh district	37,870	9,580	951	10,531

Source: I-21/op. 2/ d. 50 p. 44.



Map 2 The revolts in the district of Jizzakh

understand how they began, how – and to what extent – they spread, who led them and what their aims were.

To understand the logic of the revolt in the district of Jizzakh, one must go back to 2 July 1916, when Russian officials met with the representatives of the native administration of the old town of Jizzakh to announce the Imperial decree of labour conscription, when they gave

them ten days to draw up the lists of draftees' names. It was precisely ten days later, on 12 July 1916, that the unrest began when Colonel Rukin, the District Commandant of Jizzakh, summoned people to give their names for labour service by threatening to confiscate their land in case of resistance. In the evening, in some places in the old city, the decree was implemented and those conscripted for work were to present themselves the next morning. But, according to the official report,⁶² on the night of 12–13 July, Nazir Khoja Ishan, considered by the Russian imperial and judicial authorities as the main leader of the rebellion in the old town of Jizzakh, returned from Tashkent where he had been for business, and reported that labour conscription there had been postponed to the end of Ramadan (on 17 July).⁶³ This demand seems to have motivated Nazir Khoja Ishan to take action to seize the lists of names, even though he later denied having been the leader of the revolt.⁶⁴ According to the official report he declared a *ghazavat* and interrupted Ramadan fasting to march to the new city, with several hundred men, for talks with the Russian Imperial authorities. Colonel Rukin seems to have been killed while he was trying to calm the mob, promising to postpone the decree (as in Tashkent), but the protesters did not believe him. As a result, four men from the colonial administration were killed, including Colonel Rukin and his assistant, and about ten natives. The version of the event given by Nazir Khoja Ishan while he was interrogated stressed that the meeting with the Imperial authorities was meant to be “quiet and deliberative.” In the aftermath of the murders, some of the protesters headed to the new city for looting, while some of the others headed towards the train station; the native employees of the railways joined them. As a result, telegraph lines, bridges, and the railway between the stations of Jizzakh and Obruchevo were destroyed, while Lomakino train station was burned, and about sixteen employees were killed by the rebels.⁶⁵ The Russian population of Jizzakh took refuge in the church of the new town and they were protected by regular patrols. The mob continued to riot on 14 July, and on 16 July most of the *volosts* of the Jizzakh district were “entirely rioting”, according to the official records published during the Soviet period.⁶⁶ By 15 July soldiers had already intervened and on 17 July, a first punitive expedition under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Afanas'ev, along with thirty Russians, “armed as they could”, moved towards the old town to recover the corpses of the Russian soldiers who had been killed. On 26 July, according to official records, public order in the district was restored. The revolt lasted less than two weeks.

It seems important for us to deconstruct the erroneous perception conveyed by earlier historiography, which gives the impression that the revolts were spreading massively all over Central Asia starting from Khujand and were universal.⁶⁷ In our case study, determining which *volosts* of the district of Jizzakh were rioting, and which were not,

according to a compilation of data drawn from the archival documents published,⁶⁸ allows us to come to the conclusion that only half of them saw rioting during the summer of 1916.

Similarly, further research must be done to delineate the logic of expansion – or not – of the revolts from one place to one another, to explore why the revolts broke out in strictly localised geographical spots that sometimes had links between them, but not necessarily. Again, this idea is in contradiction with the Soviet and sometimes post-Soviet narratives of a unified moment of riot in 1916 that spread centrifugally from the original outbreak, according to a “diffusionist” logic. If this logic applied at all, it seems to have been true only on a small geographical scale. In the case of the district of Jizzakh, the old city undoubtedly constituted an epicentre, extending to the *volosts* of Boghdan, Za’amin and the Sanzar Valley – a rather limited second circle – by a logic of alliances and mutual recognition of legitimacy, through messengers and missives. It hardly spread beyond these *volosts*.

Leadership and Islam in the revolts

Before trying to describe the leadership in the case of Jizzakh district, it is worth underlining some of the biases of such an approach: one must be aware that the descriptions we have of the riots reflect the perception of the Russian Imperial administration, which tried to identify the leaders in order to punish them; it might be also the result of the Soviet and post-Soviet narratives that tended, on the one hand, to identify leaders of the revolt in order to produce anti-colonial heroes (such as Amangeldi Imanov for the steppe region, as Danielle Ross shows elsewhere in this volume) or, on the other hand, to show that the leaders bore the responsibility for drawing the uprising along an Islamic path, while the “ordinary people” would be praised for their revolutionary potential. In fact, according to different reports and interrogations, a lot of disturbances such as looting, destructions of goods and properties, lynching and killing occurred spontaneously without any true leadership; unfortunately, very few documents shed any light on this aspect in detail.

In order to appreciate how the revolt spread as a form of discontent against the Imperial administration, Russian as well as indigenous, the aspects of leadership and of the means of diffusion should be more precisely understood. How does the leader of a riot appear, or how was he appointed? What was his legitimacy? The character of Nazir Khoja Ishan is quite elusive: in his interrogation, he emphasised that the title of “Ishan” attached to his name did not accord with a particular religious status, which could bring him a certain notoriety, as the official Imperial records tended to show.⁶⁹ But he continued, “I do repeat, I’m a man of no

importance (*chelovek malen'kii*), only a strange current of circumstances suddenly promoted me to the leader of my people".⁷⁰ Even though this sentence was produced during an interrogation before his trial, it suggests that possibly rioters more likely chose their leader, rather than that he decided to raise the people against the Imperial administration. As Haidarov has stated, Nazir Khoja Ishan's notoriety came more probably from his father, who had Islamic knowledge and was an "enlightened intellectual" (*ziyoli*); he might have been respected as a man with charismatic and knowledge-based authority.⁷¹

The character of 'Abdurrahman Jevachi (of the *volost'* of Bodgan), for which we have more information, gives a better insight into our understanding of legitimacy and leadership at this peculiar turning point of the pre-colonial and colonial domination systems. Jevachi (or 'Abdurrahman Khoja 'Abdujabbarov)⁷² was sixty-eight years old at the time; he was a man of influence thanks to his wealth (which he inherited from his father) and his clan (*rod, qabila*) of Chatal Ib from the Manghit tribe, the ruling dynasty of Bukhara; he was also the son of the last Bukharan ruler (*bek*) in the region of Chahar Darya in the Emirate of Bukhara before the conquest. Jevachi survived the Russian conquest together with his brother (he was one of six sons), while his father was killed. The history and the military commitment of his family did not prevent him from serving the Russian Imperial native administration twice as the head of the *volost'* of Boghdan.⁷³ Indeed the Russian Imperial administrative system in Turkestan was based in part on co-opting existing lineages and the revolts of 1916 showed the limits of such a system. The Russian Imperial system of power, in its territorial divisions and in its administrative structures, was to some degree based on the territoriality and the legitimacy of pre-colonial clans.⁷⁴ This meant that the persons identified by the Russian administration as leaders were or had held positions in the Russian administrative system, or had taken advantage of their new Imperial "mandate", as was the case with Shabdan Batyr in the Pishpek region, to solve pre-colonial disputes among clans.⁷⁵ This pre-colonial clan legitimacy, but also the emphasis the colonial administration put on the importance of lineage to render native society more legible, allowed Jevachi to declare himself *bek* or to be considered as such by the population; the same seems to have happened with Nazir Khoja Ishan.

Once some leaders are identified as such according to the administrative documents, how do they communicate among themselves, and how could discontent and revolt spread around? Nazir Khoja Ishan acknowledged in his interrogation that he wrote letters – under threat from some villagers, he said – calling for rebellion; but he mentioned that he did not contact Jevachi of the *volost'* of Boghdan. The men of a number of villages joined Nazir Khoja to form a group of 100–200

people, sometimes up to 500 men according to some sources. According to Nazir Khoja Ishan again, the rioters of the old town of Jizzakh sent also a “deputation” (*deputatsiia*) to Jevachi to ask him for protection; in return, Jevachi was to declare a “holy war” (*ghazavat*) against the Russians. On his side, Jevachi explained that he refused to be named *bek*, and that later on Nazir Khoja accepted this duty, during a meeting that ended with the formula “Amin Allah Akbar”.⁷⁶ They planned to march onto Jizzakh, but they had to postpone this because they were lacking fodder for their horses. Eventually, three groups prepared themselves and each one had a white flag⁷⁷ two *arshins* in length, with written on it in big black characters “*La illah illah la, Muhamed rasul Allah*”⁷⁸

Soviet historiography and the documents available in the publications of primary sources also put an emphasis on the religious character – i.e., “backward” in the Soviet ideological perspective – of the revolts in the sedentary areas when the “holy war” was declared (*ghazavat*; the term *jihād* is never mentioned).⁷⁹ In his interrogation, Jevachi said he declared *ghazavat* against the Russian authorities, but he also stressed that those declarations, repeated several times, had been made relatively independently by the groups in action, even individually by the men that were rioting. Meanwhile, Nazir Khoja Ishan claimed that he had not declared *ghazavat*, and denied having brandished the Islamic flag as he was accused; but he admitted in his interrogation to have heard the term repeatedly, in the chaos of the disorders. The reference books of the Soviet period on the 1916 revolts, notably that by Habib Tursunov, tried to dissociate the social bases of the revolt, politically considered as a popular and “progressive”, from the religious motivations of its leaders, whose legitimacy came from pre-colonial times. Indeed, this kind of leader constituted the archetype of the “reactionary and anti-Russian separatist figure”.⁸⁰ It is also worth mentioning that several testimonies and reports underlined that there were absolutely no foreign influences (neither German nor Ottoman-Turkish) in the course of the revolt in the district of Jizzakh.⁸¹

Repression and its economic consequences

How did the revolt in the district of Jizzakh end? After ten days of military repression, calm was restored. The repression started on 18 July, under the command of General Ivanov, who was previously the head of the district of Khujand and Deputy Governor of Semirech’e; he took the command of important means (men and materiel): thirteen companies (*rota*), six cannons (*orudii*), 300 Cossacks and an engineer regiment that arrived in an armoured train.⁸² The repression began with the “pacification” of the old town of Jizzakh, where the rebel groups were neutralised and driven away; then, the repression extended to Za’amin, Rabat and the mountain

areas. On 21 July, the *volost'* of Boghdan suffered military repression, and a military unit from Samarkand secured the railway stations.⁸³ The soldiers were ordered to open fire, to burn, to confiscate the agricultural tools, to destroy crops and houses, or to carry away the grain harvested; a few cases of rape of native women by the soldiers were also mentioned in the documents from the colonial military administration. The repression resulted in the flight of the population (women sometimes abandoned their children) to larger cities and the steppe, while a period of famine began.⁸⁴ The punitive action ended on 26–27 July. Fifty-six women and children were freed, along with six Russians who took refuge among the “Kirgiz” (i.e., Kazakhs), who were repeatedly mentioned for their loyalty to the Imperial state. The punitive military expeditions also led to the arrest of at least twelve leaders, and the discovery of four letters from Jevachi declaring *ghazavat* and giving instructions to attack the town of Jizzakh. Jevachi was arrested because he surrendered, and the Kazakhs gave Nazir Khoja Ishan to the Imperial authorities. They were accused by the military courts of having claimed independence from the Russian Empire, declaring *ghazavat* against the Russians between 13 and 25 July 1916.⁸⁵ In total, thirty-four death sentences by hanging were pronounced by the Turkestan military court on 25 November 1916, but only three were carried out. Jevachi and Nazir Khoja were not among them; four of those convicted were sent to a labour camp for twelve years, and twenty-seven were sentenced to four years in prison.⁸⁶ Other civil penalties were imposed, notably the confiscation of 2,000 *desyatinas* of land. On 20 August 1916, General Kuropatkin gave a speech, which was to have consequences for the population of the district of Jizzakh:

We should hang all of you, but we let you live for you to be a dissuasive example to others. The place where Colonel Rukin was killed will be razed to zero over a distance of 5 *versts* and this area will become state property. We must not wait to expel the population living on this territory.⁸⁷

After the uprising, Jizzakh faced starvation because the event took place in the period of harvest. Some peasants could harvest four or five *puds* of wheat for their daily needs, but could not store grain for winter. Additionally, during the event, many parts of grain fields and wheat in storage were burned as part of a scorched earth technique of colonial repression, and when the grain fields were safe, there were not enough people to harvest them. As a result, the crop harvests of 1915–1916 were wasted and farming in the region suffered a dramatic deterioration that worsened with the lack of rain and snow over the two following years. The other districts of the region of Samarkand, such as Katta-Qurghan, or Khujand, did not suffer such a situation.⁸⁸ The repression led also to a

process of land confiscations in the district. On 4 August, a commission under the presidency of the governor of Samarkand province asked the administration of the Governor-General to set up a meeting four days later in order to discuss, among others things, a confiscation issue in the district of Jizzakh.⁸⁹ In September, the colonial authorities produced a plan for land confiscation, according to which it was proposed to seize 800 *desyatinas* of land in the town of Jizzakh, 300 *desyatinas* around Naukent Bazar village and 100 *desyatinas* in a place near Kaltay village in the *volost'* of Sanzar. Furthermore, there was an unfinished plan, which proposed to confiscate 400 *desyatinas* of land in the *volost'* of Za'amin and 100 *desyatinas* in the *volost'* of Yam.⁹⁰ In consequence, a total of 798 *desyatinas* of land in the district of Jizzakh were confiscated; 1,082 individuals owned these lands; 398 of them had additional houses or a parcel of land in other parts of the town except when they suffered confiscated properties. Moreover, another 684 individuals became totally landless.⁹¹ Some 675 *desyatinas* of land out of a total of 798 *desyatinas* confiscated were built on or cultivated.⁹²

Conclusion

Alexander Kerensky (1881–1970) travelled in August 1916 to Central Asia, where he had spent much of his childhood, to investigate the causes of the revolts and the military excesses that occurred during their repression. Accompanied by several political figures such as Mustafa Choqaev and the Duma Deputy Kutlu-Muhammad Tevkelev, he visited Samarkand, Jizzakh, Andijan and Khoqand by postal train to collect testimonies, while the local political police tried to stop him. As early as December 1916, the revolts in Central Asia were the topic of several debates in the State Duma and Kerensky, in a long speech, denounced the Imperial decree as decision that was not taken on regular legal basis, he also denounced the “systematic and planned terror” (*planomernyi i sistematicheskii terror*) used by the Russian soldiers during the repression. For him, this was “unacceptable” and he compared it to the “Turkish atrocities” against Armenians, or the German atrocities in Belgium.⁹³ As far as the district of Jizzakh is concerned, Kerensky denounced the illegality of land confiscation, the actions of the punitive expedition that had taken place and what he described as the unparalleled degree of violence employed by the Russian military.

The revolts of 1916 were indeed a traumatic event, for those people who suffered directly from their dramatic consequences, but also for Soviet and post-Soviet historians, as well as for certain artists (directors, writers and poets) who understood it as an anti-colonial foundation myth until the mid-1930s, and who read the reality of the event through

political and ideological lenses. This chapter was meant to reassess the causes – the colonial legislation on water and land use, the impact of the First World War on the economy of Turkestan – as well as the scale and the structure of the contestation (how it spread, the leadership, etc.). It seems important to understand that a large part of Central Asia did not revolt in 1916, even if it is difficult to evaluate this aspect: the reports of colonial authorities focused on what disturbed the everyday life of the administration. Understanding the diversity of the situations in 1916 would allow us to better understand how and where the Russian colonial authorities began to crack down on rebellion.

Notes

- 1 A. Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie 1916 goda”, *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 60 (1933), 64–66.
- 2 Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 63.
- 3 For an analysis of the Uzbek historiography, see Cloé Drieu, “L’impact de la Première Guerre mondiale en Asie centrale: des révoltes de 1916 aux enjeux politiques et scientifiques de leur historiographie”, *Histoire@politique* 22 (2014), www.histoire-politique.fr/index.php?numero=22&rub=dossier&item=214; Dono Ziyaeva, “Istoriografiia. Osveshchenie vosstaniia 1916 goda v Turkestane v Istoricheskoi literature”, *Obshchestvennye Nauki v Uzbekistane* (1991), 42–46.
- 4 Shestakov writes about “one of the brightest moments” (*odin iz yarkii moment*) of 1916 uprisings; Mavliani writes about the “culminating point” (*kul’minatsionnyi punkt*), I. Mavliani, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie 1916 goda”, in *Natsional’no-osvoboditel’noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gosizdat, 1947), 31.
- 5 Sedentary regions are usually understood as “Uzbekistan”, even though the creation of the Uzbek SSR occurred later in 1924.
- 6 Mirzo Quqandboy Abdukhaliqzoda Samarqandiy (1868–1948) was a witness of the events in Jizzakh in 1916. He was educated at home and later attended both “old” and “new-method” *maktabs*, where he learnt Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Russian. During the colonial period, he worked in several offices as a translator. Mirzo Quqandboy Abdukhaliqzoda Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh. Istadchon as negi qamchin khun mechakad* (Samarkand: Sangzor, 2009), 24–25.
- 7 Telegram no. 5816 of General Erofeev sent to the minister of War (1 August 1916), in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 64–66.
- 8 Mavliani, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 39.
- 9 Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja* (London: Sampson, Marston & Low, 1876), vol. 1, 229.
- 10 The population of the region of Samarkand was 785,745 in 1917: I. Zarubin, *Naselenie Samarkandskoi oblasti, ego chislennost’, etnograficheskii sostav i territorial’noe raspredelenie* (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1926), 7, 22.
- 11 This portion of the chapter is drawn from the following works and still uncompleted PhD dissertation of Akmal Bazarbaev: *XX asr okhiri–XXI asr boshlarida Mirzachuldagi agrar munosabatlardagi uzgarishlar* (Tashkent,

- supervisor: Ravshan Abdullaev); “Rural Land Situation in Turkestan Under the Tsarist Rule”, *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* 19/3–4 (2015), 59–69; “XIX asr oxhiri–XX asr boshlarida Jizzakhdagi er narkhlari tughrisida ayrim mulohazalar”, *Uzbekiston tarixi* 2 (2014), 44–55; “XIX asr oxhiri–XX asr boshlarida Jizzakh vohasida yaylov erlaridan foydalanish va unga egalik qilish”, *Imom Bukhoriy saboqlari* 2 (2016), 52–55.
- 12 This portion of the chapter is partly based on previous works by Cloé Drieu, especially “La rupture des espaces coloniaux en 1916: le cas des révoltes contre la conscription à Jizzakh, dans les zones sédentaires du Turkestan”, *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 141 (2017), 191–209, <https://remmm.revues.org/9927>.
 - 13 Shestakov wrote about the “white flag of national liberation” (*beloe znamia natsional’nogo osvobozhdeniia*) – Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”; Mironov described it as “the culmination of national liberation movement” (*naivyshii punk natsional’no-osvoboditel’nogo dvizheniia*) – P. Mironov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie 1916 goda”, in *Natsional’no-osvoboditel’noe vosstanie*, 42; while Broido, as early as 1926, denied the “national character” of the revolt – Grigorii Broido, “Materialy po istorii vosstaniia Kirgiz v 1916 godu”, *Novyi Vostok*, 6 (1924), 408–517.
 - 14 In the 1930s, some witnesses of the revolt began to write down their memories, see N. Safarov, *Unutulmas kun (1916 yilgi Jizzakh quzgholonidan khotiralarim)* (Tashkent-Baku: Ūznashr, 1932); Fozil Yuldosh ugli, “Jizzakh quzgholoni,” *Uzbek khalq shoirlarining sovet davridagi ijodi* (Tashkent: UzSSR Fanlar Akademiyasi nashriyoti, 1958), 75–118; Samarqandiy, *Shurishi Jizzakh*. Later in the 1950s, Central Asian historians under the patronage of the National Academies of Sciences organised special expeditions to take interviews, which were not all published, see Hamid Ziiaev, *Uzbekistonda 1916 iilgi khalq quzgholoni qatnashchilari* (Tashkent: FAN, 1976). More recently, see Mamadiyor Allayorov, “1916 yil Jizzax qo’zg’oloni” and Begali Qosimov, Sotimjon Kholboev, “Mamadier Allaeorvning ‘Zhizzakh quzgholoni’ materiallari haqida”, <http://kh-davron.uz/kutubxona/uzbek/mamadiyor-allayorov-1916-yil-jizzax-qozgoloni.html>.
 - 15 P. A. Kovalev, “O kharaktere vosstaniya 1916 goda v Uzbekskikh i Tadzhikskikh raionakh kolonial’nogo Turkestane”, in *Materiali nauchnoi sessii po istorii narodov Sredney Azii i Kazakhstan* (Tashkent: AN UzSSR, 1954), 331–332.
 - 16 Kovalev, “O kharaktere vosstaniya 1916 goda”, 333.
 - 17 P.G. Galuzo, *Turkestan-koloniya: ocherk istorii Turkestana ot zavoevaniya russkimi revoliutsii 1917 g.* (Moscow: KUTV, 1929), 254.
 - 18 K. Tursunov, “O kharaktere vosstaniya 1916 goda v Sredney Azii i Kazakhstane”, in *Materiali nauchnoi sessii po istorii narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstan* (Tashkent: AN UzSSR, 1955), 282.
 - 19 L. Alimi, “Qanli va aghir qayghili kunlar”, *Yer Yuzi* 11 (1926), 10.
 - 20 This type of land is also known as *bahâri* and the Russian sources define rain-fed land as “*bogara*”. See Beatrice Penati, “Swamps, Sorghum and Saxauls: Marginal Lands and the Fate of Russian Turkestan (c. 1880–1915)”, *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), 61–78.
 - 21 K. K. Pahlen, *Materialy k kharakteristike narodnogo khozaistva v Turkestane* (St Petersburg: Senatskaya Tipografiya, 1911), 102.

- 22 RGIA F.432 Op. 1 D.148 l.5.
- 23 See Alexander Morrison, "Introduction: Killing the Cotton Canard and Getting Rid of the Great Game: Rewriting the Russian Conquest of Central Asia, 1814–1895", *Central Asian Survey* 33/2 (2014), 131–142.
- 24 Penati, "Swamps, Sorghum and Saxauls".
- 25 See Paolo Sartori, *Visions of Justice: Sharia and Cultural Change in Russian Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 157–210.
- 26 David Mackenzie, "Kaufman of Turkestan: An Assessment of his Administration 1867–1881", *Slavic Review* 26 (1967), 273
- 27 A. V. Piaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 93–94.
- 28 TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 1 D.840 ll.10–23; TsGARUz F.I-21, Op. 1, D.511, l.4; Martin Virginia, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001); Bazarbaev, "Rural Land Situation", 61.
- 29 *Polozhenie ob upravlenii Turkestanskogo kraia*, vol. 2, part 2 (St Petersburg, 1886), 11.
- 30 Some individuals wrote petitions to the colonial administration explaining that their private, communal and pasture lands were divided in consequence of the new administrative delineations. In other words, one part of their lands was situated in one administrative unit and the other part was positioned in another administrative unit. In these cases, the local population had problems in using their lands and irrigation system, as well as paying taxes: TsGARUz, F.I-21 Op. 1 D.266, l.1ob.; TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 1 D.511, l.9; TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 1 D.1100 ll.4–12ob; TsGARUz, F.I-21 Op. 1 D.887 l.1.
- 31 On the changes to the fiscal status of *lalmi* lands see Penati, "Swamps, Sorghum and Saxauls", 61–78.
- 32 K. K. Pahlen, *Otchet po revizii... Pozemel'no-podatnoe delo* (St Petersburg: Senatskaya Tipografiya, 1910), 24.
- 33 1 *desyatina* was equal to 1.09 hectares.
- 34 Pahlen, *Pozemel'no-podatnoe delo*, 24.
- 35 Pahlen, *Materialy k kharakteristike*, 102.
- 36 Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh*, 13.
- 37 See Beatrice Penati, "Beyond Technicalities: On Land Assessment and Land-Tax in Russian Turkestan", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 59/1 (2011), 1–27; Penati, "Swamps, Sorghum and Saxauls".
- 38 For instance, this process worked in Yangi-Qurghan and Chardar *volosts* of Jizzakh district. Pahlen, *Materialy k kharakteristike*, 106; M. Virskii, "Ocherk Yanykurganskoi volosti Dzhizakskago uezda Samarkandskoi oblasti", in *Spravochnaya knizhka Samarkandskoi oblasti* (Samarkand: Tip-Lit. T-va B. Gazarov i K. Sliyanov, 1912), vol. 10, 24.
- 39 R. Rassudova, "Khozyaistvo Kattakurganskogo uezda Samarkandskoi oblasti v kontse 19-nachale 20 v", in *Ocherki po istorii khozyaistvo narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), 150.
- 40 Rassudova, "Khozyaistvo Kattakurganskogo uezda", 150.
- 41 K. K. Pahlen, *Otchet po revizii ... Gosudarstvennye imushchestvo* (St Petersburg: Senatskaya Tipografiya, 1910), 7, 107–109.

- 42 Pahlen, *Gosudarstvennyye imushchestva*, 185.
- 43 Pahlen, *Gosudarstvennyye imushchestva*, 133.
- 44 Piaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 81.
- 45 Marco Buttino, "Economic Relations between Russia and Turkestan, 1914–1918, or How to Start a Famine", in Judith Pallot (ed.), *Transforming Peasants: Society, State, and the Peasantry, 1861–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 195.
- 46 A. M. Iuldashev, E. N. Vlasova and Z. K. Akhmedzhanova (eds.), *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe i politicheskoe polozhenie Uzbekistane nakanune oktyabrya* (Tashkent: Fan, 1973), 29–30.
- 47 A. I. Shakhnazarov, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo v Turkestanskom krai* (St Petersburg: V. O. Kirshbaum, 1908), 145.
- 48 Shakhnazarov, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo*, 154.
- 49 Pahlen, *Materialy k kharakteristike*, 309.
- 50 Beatrice Penati, "The Cotton Boom and the Land Tax in Russian Turkestan (1880s–1915)", *Kritika* 14/4 (2013), 742.
- 51 Shakhnazarov, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo*, 77.
- 52 Shakhnazarov, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo*, 112.
- 53 *Pud* – a Russian weight measure. One *pud* is 16.38 kilograms.
- 54 G. A. Arandarenko, *Dosugi v Turkestane, 1874–1889* (St Petersburg: M. M. Stasyulevicha, 1889), 656.
- 55 Shakhnazarov, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo*, 77.
- 56 Arandarenko, *Dosugi*, 656.
- 57 Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh*, 58.
- 58 Buttino, "Economic Relations", 197.
- 59 Buttino, "Economic Relations", 197.
- 60 Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh*, 23.
- 61 This figure is underestimated, as data from some *volosts* were not collected (Qaratash, Nakrut, Khoja-Mukur, Yam and Chardarya), as well as from some villages located far from the railway stations. See Zarubin, *Naselenie Samarkandskoi Oblasti*, 7–8.
- 62 See Telegram no.5816 from General Erofeev in Shestakov, "Dzhizakskoe vosstanie", 64–66.
- 63 Another source mentioned that he was sent to understand how the decree was implemented in Tashkent: Mavliani, "Dzhizakskoe vosstanie", 34–35.
- 64 See the interrogation of Nazir Khoja Ishan, in Shestakov, "Dzhizakskoe vosstanie", 66–70.
- 65 V. N. Maidel', Commander of the 1st Cossack Division of Turkestan to General Erofeev, 15.07.1916 TsGARUz F. I-1, D. 31, Op. 1135, l.33.
- 66 Report by the assistant to the Governor of Samarkand 14.07.1916 TsGARUz F.I-1 Op. 31 D.1135, l.39 in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 115; Telegram no. 5816 of General Erofeev in Shestakov, "Dzhizakskoe vosstanie", 64–66.
- 67 For an analysis of the historiography concerning the mostly sedentary territories, see Drieu, "L'impact de la Première Guerre mondiale."
- 68 Especially from Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, which proposes, over more than 700 pages, a wide geographical understanding of the uprisings through reports, interrogatories and testimonies. See also Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*.

- 69 For an analysis of the limits of judicial sources during the Soviet period, see Niccolò Pianciola, “Interpreting an Insurgency in Soviet Kazakhstan: The OGPU, Islam and Qazaq ‘Clans’ in Suzak, 1930”, in N. Pianciola and P. Sartori (eds.), *Islam, Society and States across the Qazaq Steppe* (Vienna: VÖAW, 2013), 297–340.
- 70 Interrogation of Nazyr Khoja Ishan, in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 69.
- 71 H. Haidarov, *Zhizzakh Tarikhidan Lavhalar* (Tashkent: Mehnat, 1992), 36
- 72 The term *Jevachi* corresponds to the third rank (after *khan* and *toqsaba*) in the military hierarchy of the Emirate of Bukhara.
- 73 Transcript of the interrogation of Jevachi (‘Abdurahman Khoja ‘Abdujbarov), 9 August 1916 in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 73–75.
- 74 Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh*, 8.
- 75 In the district of Pishpek, for example, the requisition was instrumentalised by the clans that were integrated in the native administration and designated in priority the men of the enemy or opposite clans to send them in the labour battalions, see Broido, “Materialy po istorii vosstaniia”, 154–155.
- 76 Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 77.
- 77 The white flag as a symbol of Islam is used in the *dar al-islam* (abode of Islam) – the Prophet used it while he conquered Mecca – while black denotes the *dar al-kufr* (abode of unbelievers), E. Ozmitel, “Religioznyy faktor v Semirecheskom vosstanii 1916”, in T. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstaniia 1916 goda v Aziatskoi Rossii: Neizvestnoe ob Izvestnom* (Moscow: RAN, 2017), 53.
- 78 Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 78.
- 79 The term *ghazavat* is better translated as “holy armed struggle” rather than “holy war” (*jihad*).
- 80 Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 235–237.
- 81 Such as Nazir Khoja in his interrogation, the *pristav* of the Boghdan *uchastok* P. Boril, or Lieutenant-Colonel Dmitrii Vodop’ianov, in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 69, 70, 82.
- 82 Telegram no. 5816 of General Erofeev, in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 64–66.
- 83 TsGARUz F.I-1 Op. 31 D.1135 l.33 in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 115.
- 84 Introduction by Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 63.
- 85 Report dated 18 August 1916 by Maslianskevich to the court of Jizzakh district, in Shestakov, “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 63.
- 86 Document from the Turkestan Police Chief 13 January 1917 GARF F.102 Op. 365 D.247 l.18.
- 87 Introduction by Shestakov “Dzhizakskoe vosstanie”, 63.
- 88 Samarqandiy, *Shurishi dizzakh*, 49–51.
- 89 TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 2 D.47 l.2.
- 90 TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 2 D.47 l.28.
- 91 TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 2 D.47 l.36.
- 92 TsGARUz F.I-21 Op. 2 D.48 l.25.
- 93 Report from the Okhrana to the Governor of Turkestan 27/08/1916 GARF F.102, Op. 246, D.365, ll.140–140ob.

The “virtual reality” of colonial Turkestan: how Russian officials viewed and represented the participation of the local population in the 1916 revolt

Oybek Mahmudov

Introduction

After establishing its rule in Central Asia, the Russian Empire created a complex bureaucratic administration to govern the conquered Turkestan *krai*. Most of the colonial officials were either barely or entirely unknown in wider colonial circles and Russian society. However, they included genuine “Turkestan experts”, some of whom became “public” experts (among others, V. N. Nalivkin, N. P. Ostroumov, N. S. Lykoshin, N. G. Mallitsky, N. I. Grodekov, A. L. Kun, N. A. Maev and V. L. Vyatkin). The local authorities often turned to these experts (taking into account their knowledge and experience) to resolve various issues regarding governance and relations with the “natives”. To this end, the colonial authorities often included these officials in various commissions, councils, meetings and so on, to consider different aspects of domestic policy in the Central Asian dominions. Often, they were people who had gone there on official business. Their level of education, outlook and worldview set them apart from other officials. Over time, as they became more and more involved in the internal life of Turkestan and familiar with its intricacies (in so far as this was accessible to them), some of them became experts in various aspects of life and governance in the *krai*. The local colonial administration considered their opinions to be important to the governance of Turkestan (or to use the term at the time, “mastering” it – *osvoenie*). In their writings, many of which remain significant sources today, the “Turkestan experts” recorded for posterity extremely valuable and unique information about various material and spiritual aspects of the lives of the local population.¹

However, only some of these “experts” became public figures, whose writings were known far beyond Turkestan, and whose opinions were a

kind of overt representation of their view of the internal life and Russian governance in the *krai*. After all, most of these colonial officials were either barely or entirely unknown in wider colonial circles and Russian society. Yet it was they who were the main engine of the colonial machine. A question arises: was there a difference in the expert opinion provided by the generally recognised and widely known “experts” and presented in their published works, and those expert memoranda, reports and so on, which were initially not intended for publication and general disclosure? One might think that the expert opinion not intended for public consumption would be more “colonial” and “pragmatic”. However, careful examination of all the many documents reveals that here also much of the discourse, even when directly addressing a specific political issue, was moralistic in tone. That is, this moralising genre was seen in officials’ internal work correspondence also. I will try to illustrate this below.

However, within officialdom as a whole, which comprised a significant part of Turkestan’s colonial society, both types of “Turkestan experts” (those who were widely known and those who were not) were exceptions. Most of the officials could not see beyond their own desks or offices, and indeed did not especially try to. For example, few officials had a reasonable grasp of the local languages, even after serving in Turkestan for two decades. Consequently, despite daily contact with the “natives” on official business, their knowledge and understanding of the latter was rather superficial and often quite subjective and inaccurate. As a result, officials often inhabited a kind of “virtual reality”.² Their views on the local population’s lives, activities, motives and so on were based on stereotypes and were often very different from the actual situation.

There are a number of studies examining various aspects of the life of the bureaucratic class, and the political and social contexts in which it existed.³ Unfortunately, there have been no studies looking specifically at how different strata of colonial officials in Central Asia perceived the local population, or how they viewed, related to and understood the “natives”, whose affairs they were assigned to govern. There is also a lack of research about how the bureaucratic class perceived itself and its work in Turkestan.⁴ The answers to these questions are extremely important. After all, an official is a person with authority, but like any representative of the human race, he has his own views, bias, phobias and so on. To a greater or lesser extent, his own perception of the world around him will influence his actions and decisions. If we knew how the official, as an administrator and decision-maker, represented the colony and its inhabitants both to himself and to others, we would have a chance to understand the reasons behind many actions, and also the hidden, often unconscious driving forces behind the policy implemented by the local Russian colonial administration in the “outskirts” of the Empire. Ann

Stoler has something very interesting and rather apt to say about this phenomenon:

They are relatively dry, formulaic documents – administrative epistles, resolutions, and internal reports – of colonial bureaucrats eager to be read in a favourable light by their superiors, careful to deflect attention from their own inadequacies while affirming their loyalties to continued rule. Unlike the pardon tales, these stories categorically deny the voices of those they feared.⁵

This is why archival documents from the colonial period are still so significant. The study of these documents, held today in various archives, can show how the officials themselves viewed the colonial territory and the “natives” who lived there, and this adds to the representations contained in published works.

Although in no way professing to be able to resolve this issue fully, in this chapter I will attempt to examine some aspects of it, by taking the example of the 1916 revolt and its portrayal in various archival documents. These sources will enable us to see the local population’s participation in the revolt through the eyes of Russian colonial officials. The revolt very much brought to the fore all the fears and stereotypes held by colonial officials in Turkestan regarding the local population, sentiments which comprised the “virtual reality” inhabited by Russian colonial officials and society in Turkestan.

It is evident from the documents that any dissatisfaction with the Russian authorities on the part of the local population was viewed as “anti-Russian” and motivated by “Muslim fanaticism” and a desire to be free from the “infidel” Russian rulers. Therefore, when the Russian colonial officials first heard that the “natives” were vexed by and refusing to comply with the Tsar’s decree on conscription of the population for labour brigades, they immediately began looking for signs of a “Muslim” or “Pan-Islamic” influence. Any news of the involvement of a member of the so-called Muslim “clergy”, such as an *ishan*, mullah or *qadi*/people’s judge, was viewed as incitement against the Russians and their supporters. The colonial officials and Russian society as a whole became increasingly fearful of this. As a result, instead of trying to understand the genuine reasons for the revolt, which often stemmed from the abuses and incompetence of the local authorities (both “native” and Russian), the colonial administration tried to comply with the Tsar’s decree by any means. Possibly they thought that any concession could erode respect for the Russian authorities and their “prestige” in Turkestan. To some extent, this “information panic”,⁶ to use Chris Bayly’s term, played a role in exacerbating the conflict and the ensuing violence, especially in Jizzakh and Semirech’e, although specific factors were also involved in the latter.

When describing events and their perception, Russian officials were sometimes guided by the general atmosphere and the worldview of the “natives”. This was all based on rumours that reached the officials via both official channels (e.g., reports by local police and Okhrana agents, recruited from among the local population, and by officials from the “native” administration) and unofficial channels (conversations overheard at the market, the conversations of “native” servants, officials’ wives gossiping about what they had heard regarding events and the mood). Together with other factors, rumours contributed significantly to the “virtual reality” inhabited by the colonial officials and colonial society as a whole. And rumours were often the main fuel for the “information panic”, which grew ever-greater as the reports became more inconsistent, and which was reflected by the officials in these same despatches, reports, telegrams and so on. The circulation and modification of rumours often resulted in a vicious cycle: a rumour reported in a despatch to a superior could come back round via several documents, all confirming the rumour, but now in the form of an official “credible” report, which naturally, intensified the “information panic”. Undoubtedly, rumours also greatly influenced the local population’s mood and perception of events.

Ann Stoler writes about the circulation of rumours:

I have suggested that we suspend what we usually take to be accepted hierarchies of credibility – “rumours” (*gerucht*) as opposed to news (*bericht*), hearsay as opposed to visually confirmed “facts.” These narratives attest to ways of knowing that confounded such distinctions. Rumour, more than first-hand observation, shaped people’s fears and armed responses. But these fears in turn provided the milieu in which stories captured people’s imaginations, shaping which versions spread across thousands of kilometres of estate complex through the border villages, to return transformed back to the estates. If gossip is based on rules of conduct, rumours must have plausible plots (even if an exaggerated relationship to what people believe is true about the world).⁷

All of this created the backdrop of information that shaped the general mood of colonial society, its views, perspective on events, and so on. Therefore, “rumour was a highly ambiguous discursive field: it controlled some people, terrorised others; it was damning and enabling, shoring up colonial rule and subverting it at the same time.”⁸

Of course, rumours were not the main source of information for officials. When compiling documents, they used, among other things, statistical data, observations, information received from local “native” elites and agents, and interrogations of people who had been arrested. Therefore, knowledge was not always “fantasy”, completely detached from reality. It was, however, processed selectively and used variously, reflecting the different governance contexts. It is also interesting to look

at whether the ideas of Edward Said are applicable to the issue being examined here. Should we consider that the numerous expert memoranda, reports, accounts, letters and so on, held in various archives, and also the published works of “Turkestan expert” officials, confirm Said’s idea about the instrumentalisation of knowledge?⁹ That is, were they an instrument to consolidate Imperial rule in their colony?

It could be instructive to look for parallels in the way that the British used their knowledge about local forms and links to consolidate their rule in India. Chris Bayly devoted much attention to this subject, subjecting Said’s ideas to considerable criticism. Said maintains that the efforts of the West were directed at acquiring knowledge to make it easier to control the East, and moreover, orientalist scholars were actively involved in this. He claims that this “knowledge” was in fact a fantasy and a Western/European construct, which bore no relation to the “real” East, which the Europeans were trying to colonise. Bayly finds significant contradictions in all of this. For example, he reasons that if all this “knowledge” was just a fantasy, as claimed by Said, then surely it would have impeded the real-life governance of colonies? But perhaps this is not entirely correct, and Bayly is being overly forthright. Everything suggests that all these ideas and views were so ingrained within British-Indian colonial officialdom and society as a whole, that they created an unyielding and largely self-sustaining “virtual reality”. Seen through the lens of this virtual reality, the images of the colonised societies were transformed, presented as passive, feminised, irrational and so on. However, Bayly refutes this empirically. He argues that as the British attitude towards the Indians at the start of the nineteenth century became more “orientalist”, in Said’s sense, they also became increasingly contemptuous towards the Indians and their forms of knowledge. Bayly writes, “colonial knowledge represented a partially accurate reflection of Indian society and politics distorted by the fear and greed of both colonisers and colonised”.¹⁰ In his opinion, all of this ultimately resulted in the Indian Rebellion of 1857.¹¹ Parallels with the situation in Turkestan on the eve of the 1916 revolt are evident.

The applicability of Said’s ideas about the forms and tasks of “knowledge” in a colonial empire’s civil service (based on Michel Foucault’s “knowledge and power” concept) has been the subject of considerable discussion in recent times, and I will attempt to contribute something to the debate. While Nathaniel Knight insisted that caution was required when applying this theory to the Russian Empire,¹² this view was rejected quite forcibly by Abeed Khalid.¹³ I will not go into the details of this debate, particularly as it is already covered extensively in the academic literature.¹⁴ This debate has shown that this question, like any other aspect of colonial discourse – but particularly with regard to Central Asia – is usually multifaceted, and that applying comparative methods (or looking

at other “colonial cases”) makes it more likely that discussion will lapse into typical dichotomous thinking or essentialism.

I do not intend in this chapter to look for the real origins, causes and aims of the 1916 revolt. I will simply try to show how Russian colonial officials themselves saw, perceived and represented the revolt, its aims, objectives and causes, and also the participation in the revolt of various people and sectors of the local population. Therefore, I will not be referring to documents originating from the local inhabitants who participated in the revolt, showing how they perceived and portrayed events. This would be the subject of a separate study, which I intend to embark on in the future.

The revolt in the “core provinces”

We have been unable to overcome the people’s fanatic intolerance of the infidel conquerors and to persuade them of the advantages of Russian culture and Russian citizenship (*grazhdanstvennost’*).¹⁵

The 1916 revolt encompassed an enormous area of the land now belonging to the modern-day Central Asian states. There were many reasons for the revolt, with the interweaving of political, economic and social factors, and also the local population’s general disaffection with the attitude and methods of colonial governance, and with the settlement in Turkestan of Russian peasants. At the same time, the underlying causes of the revolt differed somewhat between nomadic areas and areas inhabited by a settled population.¹⁶ This discontent had been building gradually over many years. However, as noted above, it went virtually unnoticed by the authorities right up until the revolt began. Incidentally, the same applied to the Andijan uprising of 1898, which also largely took the Russian authorities completely by surprise.¹⁷ At the same time, we could say it was an “expected unexpected event”, of the type that, as confirmed by a number of documents, the colonial authorities continually anticipated and feared.

Of course, rather than trying to understand the genuine discontent of the “natives” with the colonial administration’s policy and unsatisfactory governance methods, it was much easier to look for the causes of the revolt in the “Muslims’” persistent hatred of the “infidel” Russians. This is why the Islamic factor as an explanation for the disaffection with Russian rule in Turkestan was very popular among officials at all levels. Much was written about it at the highest level. For example, there was the well-known report, “Islam in Turkestan”,¹⁸ written by the Governor-General of Turkestan, S. M. Dukhovskoi, in the wake of the Andijan uprising of 1898.

At the same time, we also see some extremely curious attempts by certain colonial officials to use the Muslim “clergy” to help implement the

Russian authorities’ decisions in Turkestan. For example, in a telegram dated 19 July 1916, P. P. Sekretarev, Acting Diplomatic Officer under the Governor-General of Turkestan, tells the head of the Political Agency in Bukhara, N. A. Shulge (in reply to a telegram from the latter), that to comply with the Tsar’s decree, the Governor-General approves

the idea of using the ishan Siyahk by means of his issuing appeals to the Muslims of Ferghana and other regions of the *krai*. You may tell the ishan that his loyal attitude to our [Russian] state interests will not go unnoticed.¹⁹

Another such case related to an *ishan* by the name of Shah-Yakhsy, living in old Bukhara, who enjoyed “the particular respect of the Sarts”. There are documents testifying that he “gave his seal to the Political Agency so that appeals favourable to us [the Russian authorities] could be sealed in his name”.²⁰

In this next section I will briefly describe and consider some of the events that occurred during the revolt.

The catalyst for the revolt was the Imperial decree of 25 June 1916 to “recruit the male non-Russian [*inorodcheskii*] population of the empire for the construction of military defences and transport links in areas where the army is on active service and for any other work essential to state defence”.²¹ As has been repeatedly shown by many researchers, this measure was introduced extremely hastily. The promulgation of the Tsar’s decree was preceded by a whole series of meetings, and opinions were garnered from various experts and senior colonial and Imperial officials on the wisdom of recruiting the “non-Russian population of Turkestan” for military service. The “Digest of Deliberations and Conclusions of the Heads of the Provinces of Turkestan *krai* on the Conscription of Non-Russians [*inorodcheskii*] for Military Service”,²² dated 1914 by its publisher, T. V. Kotiukova, is very intriguing. It shows that senior Russian colonial officials in Turkestan held extremely diverse views on the subject. Moreover, it was noted that the settled and nomadic populations had different attitudes towards conscription. For example, the following questions were asked,

Is it being rumoured among the local non-Russians [*inorodcheskii*] that they are being conscripted for military service? Overall, what do the non-Russians think about these rumours? Are the influential and wealthy non-Russians reacting to the rumours in the same way as the general masses?

In response, it was reported that, “among the local population of the Samarkand, Syr Darya and Transcaspian provinces, rumours about

the recruitment of non-Russians for military service ... have been met with grumbles and heightened criticism". Regarding the Ferghana and Semirech'e provinces, the local governors maintained that the Kirgiz apparently "were by and large not alarmed about the possible introduction of military service, and the poor among them even desire it, believing that they will simultaneously be provided with specific parcels of land".²³ The view was expressed that the Kirgiz were more favourably disposed towards military service than the Sarts.²⁴ However, overall there are inconsistencies and contradictions in the opinions given by the regional authorities to the Imperial regime. Therefore, although the prevailing opinion was negative, it was not known definitively whether, and to what extent, it would be dangerous to recruit the local population of Turkestan for military service.²⁵

As for the sentiment in Turkestan towards the Russian authorities, in various parts of the *krai* some dissatisfaction with the authorities' actions had been observed. This primarily concerned the removal of land from the local population to provide for Russian settlers and Cossacks, especially in Semirech'e.²⁶

After the promulgation of the Tsar's decree, disturbances began among the local population. Moreover, as noted by the Russian colonial authorities, "their nature and scale varied considerably, depending on the local conditions in the province and even in individual districts".²⁷ The disturbances were primarily due to the decree being unexpected, and also because it was peak season for agricultural work.

Chronologically, the very first uprising occurred on 4 July 1916 in Khujand.²⁸ A crowd of "native townspeople" gathered by the office of the head of the local police and demanded that the compiling of lists of workers for labour battalions be abandoned. A skirmish ensued, and shots were fired. Two of the attackers were killed, and one was wounded.²⁹ A few days later, the Military Governor of Samarkand province, N.S. Lykoshin,³⁰ met with local inhabitants, who had gathered in the square by the town's railway station. The scene that followed was extremely interesting and telling. In his despatch, Lykoshin stated:

I started to explain to the crowd the full meaning of the Royal Command to requisition workers and the rules for the actual conscription ... The crowd listened to me attentively, but with gloomy faces, and there was a terrible silence.

A "learned native, one of the mullahs from the settlement of Ispisar, a former people's judge" (*qazi*), replied to Lykoshin on behalf of the crowd. In particular, "he repeated to me [Lykoshin] the story about the promise given by General Kaufman that natives would not be conscripted as soldiers ... until 50 years had passed from the day that the *krai* was taken." Lykoshin refuted this story, and at first it seemed that his

explanation had apparently been accepted, but then something completely unexpected happened: the mullah with whom I [Lykoshin] had been speaking, suddenly turned to the crowd and said, “What’s the point in talking about this? You did say, Muslims, that you wouldn’t provide workers.” There were murmurs of, “We won’t give you them,” “We won’t give you them” from the crowd, and I simply repeated again that it was mandatory to comply with the Imperial Command, come what may.³¹

In this incident, it is the role of the mullah that was particularly interesting and revealing. As a former people’s judge, in his time he had served the Russian colonial administration. But now he had become a kind of leader and mouthpiece for a crowd of people who did not want to be sent to labour brigades. And in this, he and his supporters seemed resolute. Recognising this, and futile though it seemed, all Lykoshin could do was state that there was no avoiding compliance with the Imperial decree. It is notable that Lykoshin was actually considered a “Turkestan expert”, and he had an excellent grasp of the local languages. Given that he understood the natives fairly well and was on quite good terms with them, Lykoshin may have felt somewhat impotent and hesitant in the face of the protest that, although it had been partly subdued by the authorities, still persisted.³²

The day after the events in Khujand, there was unrest in some *volosts* of Samarkand province. This was described by the District Commandant, Colonel A. I. Martinson, in his report to the Military Governor of Samarkand province, N. S. Lykoshin, dated 5 July 1916. On that day, Martinson convened meetings in a number of *volosts*. He wrote:

At the meeting in Angar *volost’* it was clear from the outset that the population were completely opposed to conscription and that the workers would have to be taken by force ... Sensing this mood, I still tried to persuade the crowd, but people in the back rows starting pushing and shoving, and a mob began beating up some old man and then some other people from among those who had not protested against the conscription. There was also an attempt to beat up three village elders: it seemed that these elders had not behaved impeccably when compiling the lists. I relieved them of their duties. Having calmed the crowd, I left the *volost’*.³³

Here too, as in the description of Lykoshin’s meeting with the people of Khujand, we sense a certain impotence and even resignation. It appears that many of the officials of the Russian colonial administration experienced similar feelings in such situations. Moreover, the Russian administration started to suspect that the local administration itself was partly to blame for these events (or else it just blamed it anyway).

However, while the events in Angar *volost’* did not become critical, in another *volost’* in the same district, Dahbid, the disaffection of the local

population took a much more violent turn. Here, according to a statement by the same Martinson, the crowd, led by a local resident, Mullah Usman Abdurasulev, turned up at the meeting and began demanding that the *volost'* administrator and his mirza, Said Murad Mirza Kabylov, give them the lists of the "requisitioned" workers. Although the lists were handed over, the mob still attacked the administrator and the mirza. The *volost'* administrator was wounded, and Mirza Kabylov was "torn to pieces" by the mob.³⁴ In the subsequent investigation into the events, Lykoshin established that the instigators included a number of *pyatidesyatniks*; that is, members of the subordinate "native" administration. It is curious that although here Martinson does not explicitly mention the participation of Muslim "clergy" in these events, when he arrived in Dahbid on Lykoshin's orders, Lykoshin himself reported that it was primarily "ishans who were captured,³⁵ including former murids, moreover, I [Lykoshin] arrested several *pyatidesyatniks* who attended the meeting, 24 people in all."³⁶ Therefore, everything again came down to an attempt to find evidence that "Muslims" were to blame.

Also of interest is the opinion expressed by the same Samarkand Military Governor N. S. Lykoshin, in a despatch to the acting Governor-General of Turkestan, General M. R. Erofeev, dated 7 July 1916, on the reasons why the local population were so aggrieved by the Tsar's decree. In particular, he wrote:

The order to compile lists, received at the local level, alarmed the population very greatly, especially as during the fast in the month of Ramadan the natives go hungry all day, and in any case, they are nervous and easily angered. First and foremost, none of the natives believed that the population was being required to provide workers for labour brigades, for payment. Instead, they were all scared that all the men who were in those twelve age groups would be taken as soldiers, and that these people would therefore not return to their homeland.

In an attempt to explain or even justify the position of the wealthy "natives", Lykoshin noted the following:

Undoubtedly, the influential natives were forced, by dint of their status, to oppose the order immediately and to instruct the people not to submit to the demand made. Otherwise, the people could have accused their leaders of being traitors and of wanting to send poor and inconsequential people to war, while avoiding this duty themselves. Taking this stance, the influential natives advised the people against handing over workers on their own volition, as they would not be taken by force, and that given the difficulty involved in using troops for the requisitioning, they would rather just take a sum of money from the population, albeit a sizeable one. Moreover, they advised waiting while the conscription

took place in other towns in Turkestan, so as to avoid being more compliant than others and ruining things by being hasty.³⁷

However, all of these disturbances were nothing compared to what happened in Jizzakh district in Samarkand province, which may well have seen some of the most salient and brutal incidents of the 1916 revolt (apart from those in Semirech’e).

A week before the uprising in Jizzakh, the District Commandant reported to Lykoshin that, “having returned to Jizzakh from Samarkand on 7 July, I have not received any word from anyone of unrest or discontent among the district’s population.”³⁸ On 12 July, literally on the eve of the revolt, Lykoshin himself was in Jizzakh. He wrote that the District Commandant Colonel Rukin,

who has a good command of the native language, said that he had managed to persuade the population that they had to comply with the requisition of workers, and that he had not encountered open opposition anywhere or even any serious objections.³⁹

It is hard to say why Russian officials missed the signs of the events that took place the very next day. Was it Rukin’s blindness, or was he trying to put a positive spin on the situation and his own actions in the district under his jurisdiction, when reporting to his superiors? Whatever the case, it resulted in the death of Rukin and several other Russian and “native” colonial officials, as well as ordinary Russian inhabitants.

As Akmal Bazarbaev and Cloé Drieu describe elsewhere in this volume, the uprising in Jizzakh district began on 13 July 1916, and it very quickly turned extremely violent. That day, a crowd had demanded that the District Commandant, Rukin,⁴⁰ give them the lists of people being sent to labour brigades. When Rukin refused, there was uproar, and Rukin and several of his people were brutally killed.⁴¹ The next day the uprising had spread to almost the whole district. For example,

in Za’amin on the 13th, the following were killed: the *pristav* Sobolev, the midwife, her mother, and 14-year old nephew, her servant with three children, and the mother of the teacher, a guard’s servant, and her four children, and the small loans clerk. All of the official files were covered in kerosene and set alight, and private and state property was plundered. There were as many as 200,000 Sarts.⁴²

Such reports caused fear and panic among the local colonial authorities and the Russian community as a whole.

In a number of places, just as it undoubtedly seemed to the Russian administration, the uprising was overtly anti-Russian in nature. Moreover, as was highlighted in all the documents from that time, this was most

apparent in those areas of the district where the insurgents were led by members of the Muslim “clergy” and descendants of former local rulers. According to the documents, one of the leaders of the uprising was Nazir Khoja Ishan. As asserted by the deputy military procurator, General Lieutenant Ignatovich, who investigated the events in Jizzakh, “the signal for this uprising was given by a certain *ishan*, Nazir Khoja, a former envoy from the town of Jizzakh in Tashkent”.⁴³

The Military Governor of Samarkand province, N. S. Lykoshin, reporting on the events to the Governor-General of Turkestan, A. N. Kuropatkin, claimed that there was a connection between Nazir Khoja Ishan, Mukhtar Khoja, another supposed head of the insurgents in Jizzakh, and the head of the uprising in Boghdan *volost’* in Jizzakh district, Abdurrahman Jevachi Khoja. This conclusion was reached on the basis of information that the son of the latter was “a *murid* or disciple, a pupil of *ishan* Nazir Khoja”. Lykoshin, who had studied “ishanism” in Turkestan and published a number of works and translations of Sufi writings,⁴⁴ with all his authority as a “Turkestan expert”, also thought it was clear that

ishans from other localities in Jizzakh district (for example, the *ishan* in the settlement of Za’amin) were familiar with the suppositions of the Jizzakh *ishans* and may have acted in concert with them through their own *murids* (disciples) in various areas of Turkestan, and by means of mystical-religious suggestion, completely subjugated their pupils to their will; an *ishan* had only to instruct their *murids* to do something, and the order would be carried out automatically, without questioning. Fear of the consequences would not deter the *murid* from carrying out the *ishan’s* command, even when it was manifestly illegal, as the *murid* considered the *ishan* to be their spiritual leader. *Murids* believed that they had to do the bidding of their mentors, thereby saving their own souls and earning their mentor’s approval.

Moreover, Lykoshin believed that,

The conscription of workers was just a convenient pretext. The fact that when they attacked the Russians, they kept urging them to convert to Islam, shows that the *ishans* were motivated more by religious expansionist ambitions. It was even said that circumcisions were performed on new converts, who on pain of death had agreed to betray their fathers’ faith for the Muslim one.⁴⁵

It seems that Lykoshin considered that the “clergy” had absolute control over their followers, who, in his opinion, could not think for themselves at all, and acted only on the instructions of their *ishans* and mullahs.

The impression given is that Lykoshin, like many other colonial officials, exaggerated the influence of the Muslim “clergy” on the outbreak and

progress of the revolt, although as confirmed by various documents, they undeniably did play a role, at times quite a significant one. Of course, it is possible that it was easier and more convenient for the authorities to try to attribute the uprisings entirely to the influence of some force, be it the Muslim “clergy”, or Chinese, German or Turkish agents,⁴⁶ or the incompetence of local officials,⁴⁷ than to try to understand the profound, internal reasons for the discontent of the “natives”.

The purely “orientalist” view that “the inert and ignorant⁴⁸ Asians recognise only the fist” was also very widespread among a large part of Russian colonial society and officialdom. Related to this, there was a view that to punish and remove the local inhabitants who had participated in the “disturbances”, their land should be expropriated and given to Russian settlers, and the insurgents and their families should be “exiled to Siberia without the right to return”. Reference was made to the suppression of the Andijan uprising of 1898.⁴⁹

However, Lykoshin, for example, although he agreed with and supported “the need for ... the most merciless punitive measures” against the insurgents, also pointed out that the “Jizzakh district is the bread-basket of Turkestan and destroying its bread supplies could have undesirable consequences, in the form of excessive price increases and starvation among the local population.”⁵⁰ Undoubtedly, the announcement of conscription for labour battalions and the supposed activities of the Muslim “clergy” were just a catalyst and spur for the popular revolt against the Russian authorities, which sometimes spilled over into a desire to eradicate all Russians.⁵¹

In most of the documents from the officials in “core” regions, it is more often the “fanatical” and backward local population that is blamed, despite it usually being claimed that the Russian authorities had done everything they could to bring truth and enlightenment to the peoples of Turkestan. For example, Lykoshin wrote bitterly, “Evidently, in the last half century since taking the *krai*, we have been unable to overcome the people’s fanatic intolerance of the infidel conquerors and to persuade them of the advantages of Russian culture and *grazhdanstvennost’* [citizenship]”. Most likely, this reflected the views of a significant part of Russian “enlightened” society in Turkestan. Further, Lykoshin gave more than sixteen reasons for this “unsuccessful colonisation”. They included,

our [the Russian authorities] complete lack of awareness of the progress of the spiritual and intellectual development of the native population, a lack of “new method” schools, and total non-interference in the affairs of the Muslim school, which imparts to the younger generation only scholastic wisdom, inherited from their forefathers, and in no way develops, but instead fanaticises its pupils.

Another of the reasons according to Lykoshin was

indifference to combatting the Sufi preaching of local *ishans*, who subjugate their spiritual followers (*murids*) and lead their flock in a direction that is at variance with Russian interests in Turkestan. The manifest involvement of *ishans* in the Jizzakh uprising confirms this view.⁵²

Colonel Ivanov, acting Military Governor of the Ferghana Valley, concurred with Lykoshin's view. He noted that for a long time

propaganda against infidels has been disseminated in the Muslim institutions that we protect, but that have been left completely unsupervised. At the same time, large-scale pilgrimages to Mecca have become easier, and hundreds of thousands of Khojas have spread throughout the *krai* fanatical Islamic doctrines and pan-Islamic ideas from Turkey, as well as their impressions of the majesty of the Muslim state.⁵³

Thus, for most Russian colonial officials, it was incontrovertible that "Muslim fanaticism" and the influence of the "clergy" had been paramount in the events of 1916 in Turkestan. At the same time, it is worth noting that not all Russian officials were entirely in thrall to this "virtual reality". For example, the Governor-General of Turkestan, A. N. Kuropatkin, believed that although the Islamic factor had played no small role "in the uprisings that occurred", the Muslim "clergy" "whose position depends on kind acts of the population, were forced to present themselves as champions of the cause of the people".⁵⁴ Therefore, Kuropatkin did not hold the "clergy" chiefly responsible for causing the revolt, but at the same time he does not mention here who exactly was to blame.

"The authorities sanctioned the merciless robbing of the poor"

However, while colonial officials said that the "Muslim" factor was undoubtedly key in the revolt in Turkestan's Samarkand and Ferghana provinces, and also in part in Syr-Darya province, in documents from Russian officials in the Semirech'e province, it usually did not feature as one of the decisive and key elements. To a significant extent, the uprising of the local population here was linked to the misconduct and wrongdoing of local Russian and "native" officials.

A report from the acting Chief of Police for Vernyi, Porotikov, to the Military Governor of Semirech'e province, dated 8 August 1916, is instructive. Porotikov reports on preparations for a Kirgiz uprising against the Russian authorities. He writes that firearms are being stockpiled; local blacksmiths are making edged weapons, for which they are paid

“one slaughtered sheep” per item; and people are being rallied. Then he writes that besides the sources informing him of the preparations for the revolt by the Kirgiz, there are also other sources that

are convincing me that all the preparations, the arming, and the resistance offered are not serious in nature, because they are due to the malevolent and mercenary objectives of the native administration: when compiling the lists of people to be conscripted into the army, thanks to bribes, the *volost'* administrators have shifted the whole burden of the conscription onto the poor population, who, angered by this, are attacking the native administration. Meanwhile, the latter, to conceal their criminal actions, and with a strong contingent of freed wealthy people, is espousing the revolt, ostensibly in defence of the poor population.

Thus, all of the above comes down to profiteering by the *volost'* administrators and *manaps*, who are deriving benefit not only from people who they have freed, but also from the ordinary blacksmiths who are making the daggers, and who receive for this work, the making of daggers, one sheep per item, of which they keep for themselves only a small part, while the rest goes to the very same *volost'* administrators and *manaps*.⁵⁵

Therefore, in this report, it is primarily officials from the “native” administration who are accused of organising and inciting the revolt.

We see the same views being expressed by Porotikov in other despatches. For example, we have his report on the causes of the revolt of the “Kirgiz” in Semirech'e province, its progression, and “the mood of the population in the present situation”, dated November 1916 (accompanied by numerous appendices).⁵⁶ In this document, Porotikov identifies what he considers to be the main “components” of the revolt in Semirech'e province: 1) “extortion, the inappropriate attitude of officialdom towards the natives, and of the native administration towards the natives”; 2) the land question; 3) the “attitude of Russians towards the Kirgiz”; and 4) anger with the “gendarmes”, i.e., the unofficial colleagues of the Vernyi Chief of Police, *shtabs-rotmistr* Porotikov, from among the local population, “who roam around the province, inspiring fear among the native population and mercilessly robbing them”.⁵⁷

From this report it again follows that to a significant extent, it was the Russian administration, and its subordinate “native” administration, that were to blame for all the tragic events that occurred in Semirech'e province. Moreover, Islam and fanaticism as a catalyst for the revolt is not even mentioned here. According to the report, the main reasons for the revolt were social and economic, and also that “the authorities sanctioned the merciless robbing of the poor”.⁵⁸

The head of the gendarmes in Vernyi claimed that, “all of the aforementioned components created the grounds and the mood, which, ignited by the unexpected and misinterpreted conscription of workers, led to the revolt of natives, Kirgiz, and Kara-Kirgiz, expressed in such an ugly form”. Moreover, as if trying to exonerate himself, he continually notes that he had long warned his superiors about all the abuses and misconduct of the local Russian and “native” authorities, but they had not paid any attention to this. Apparently, he alone saw and knew everything, but he was powerless to withstand it.

With regard to the Kyrgyz *manaps*, who were favoured by the Russian authorities and some of whom were part of the “native” administration, Porotikov even seems to justify, if not their participation in the revolt, then at least their inaction and inability to withstand it. He claims that

officials from the native administration found themselves in an impossible situation. In effect, they were the executors, the people who had to produce the lists of workers. But who could they put on the lists? If as in the past, they placed the burden on the “*bukhara*”,⁵⁹ the “*bukhara*” would undoubtedly rise up against the “*manaps*” and “distinguished citizens” and massacre them, as they considered it a matter of life or death and they would rather die here in their homeland, than in some unknown region; if the lists included children of distinguished citizens and *manaps*, then it would be the *manaps* who would massacre the officials. There was no way out of this situation.⁶⁰

To a certain extent, in his “Memorandum to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Revolt in Semirech’e Province and the Causes Thereof”, T. F. Stefanovich, Dragoman of the Russian Imperial Consulate in Kashgar, gives similar reasons for the *manaps*’ participation in the revolt. He writes:

With almost unlimited control over the ignorant Kirgiz masses, over their property, and pretty much their lives ..., the *manaps* viewed the conscription of the Kirgiz for labour brigades as a threat to their unaccountable and unlimited authority over them. The chieftains understood this very well, that their power depended on the ignorance and backwardness of the Kirgiz ... with the conscription for labour brigades, it was unavoidable that, as a result of closer contact with the Russian population, the masses could acquire at least a basic notion of the law, which could subsequently bring an end to the *manaps*’ dominance. The *manaps* could foresee this: they were noticing signs of resistance in the attitude of the Kirgiz, who had become a settled population, towards their *manaps*. Indeed, for the same reasons as outlined above, the *manaps* had been opposed to this change in the Kirgiz way of life. Therefore, the *manaps* faced a dilemma: to relinquish their supremacy and authority, which would transfer to other people, their enemies,

who would wish to take advantage of such auspicious circumstances as widespread fermentation among the Kirgiz, resulting from the conscription of workers, or they could themselves remain in charge of the obedient masses, with the prospect of opportunities to rob and make easy money from the Russian civilian population.

This is why in almost all *volosts* the revolt was led by *volost'* administrators, whom one would have expected to have been beyond reproach in carrying out the will of their superiors and promoting the idea of Russian rule.⁶¹

In addition, Stefanovich also accuses the local Russian authorities of "a known short-sightedness and even a criminal lack of awareness"⁶² about the preparations for the revolt.

We see that both the head of the gendarmes in Vernyi and the Dragoman of the Kashgar Consulate also lived in something of a "virtual reality", but of a different nature. In this virtual reality, indifferent, unscrupulous and incompetent officials, the "native authorities", Russian peasant settlers and Cossacks were to blame for everything, while the local population were merely victims of these people, circumstances and their own "ignorance", and it was due to this that they rose in rebellion, with such tragic consequences. Moreover, in Semirech'e province, this gradually became, if not the dominant view, then one of the main ways of looking at the revolt, while in the other provinces of Turkestan, officialdom and colonial society had almost no doubt that the local population was primarily to blame. Of course, here also there was a view that the insurgent "Kirgiz" in Semirech'e had been, in the words of the Russian Imperial Consul in Kashgar, Prince D. V. Meshchersky, "stirred up by various Muslim agitators, who had intentionally misled them about the actual terms of the conscription"⁶³

Here I think it would be useful to look at how the Commandant of Przheval'sk district, Colonel Ivanov, saw the situation. According to numerous accounts and testimonies, much of the blame for the events that unfolded in this district lay with him. For example, when Ivanov brought together the representatives of the population that were required to decide which workers would be sent to labour battalions, they refused to comply, fearing that "the conscripts and their families would slaughter their representatives". To this, the District Commandant replied that

he had served in the administration for 18 years and knew the customs and ways of the Kirgiz very well, and the representatives' claim that they would be disobeyed was "nonsense". And then he demanded that they indicate their willingness to influence the population and to compile the lists of workers. The *volost'* representatives gave their consent.⁶⁴

On 26 September 1916 Colonel Ivanov submitted a report to the Vice-Governor of Semirech'e province.⁶⁵ While it was undoubtedly an attempt to justify himself, this report is still of some interest, as it shows how this colonial official viewed and portrayed events. At the start of the report, Ivanov claims that everything was calm in the district. He does acknowledge the existence of rumours that the population might refuse to provide workers for labour brigades, but in his view "these rumours were completely unfounded". And it was only on 9 August that word was received in Przheval'sk that the Kyrgyz had attacked the village of Prigorevsk. In the report, Ivanov briefly describes the retaliation of the Przheval'sk inhabitants against the "natives," in response to Russians being murdered and brutalised. All he says about this is: "Upon seeing these mutilated people, the crowd went into a frenzy and began beating up every Muslim they came across: all the Dungans, Sarts and other natives." According to Ivanov, he took measures to save them, by means of arrests. But, as he states later:

often on the road the mob dragged them away from the soldiers and finished them off on the spot. As I discovered afterwards, a number of times, many of the people arrested had not even made it to the yurt where I was situated; the crowd, mainly women, threw themselves on them and punished them most brutally. There was no sense in fighting this when I had such a small number of soldiers at my disposal, especially as all of these soldiers were local inhabitants, some of whom, just like the peasants, had lost loved ones or property as a result of the revolt.⁶⁶

The main impression here is that Ivanov was attempting to absolve himself of any responsibility for these murders and atrocities, and also, partially, to justify those who had committed these acts. Overall, the main aim of Ivanov's report was to justify his own actions.

Another of the main culprits often accused of having "overlooked" the revolt in Semirech'e was the Military Governor of Semirech'e province, M. A. Folbaum.⁶⁷ He had previously been the city administrator of Baku and had not served in Turkestan before. It is possible that he did not fully understand the specific nature of Turkestan, its population, and the overall situation. Therefore, he may have underestimated just how dangerous the impending events were. Unlike Lykoshin, who was an "old Turkestan hand" and a genuine "expert" regarding the *krai*, Folbaum did not speak the local languages, and he made no real effort to learn about the lives of the "natives" of Semirech'e. He was a typical seasoned military careerist. What mattered most to him was currying favour with his superiors, and always appearing very competent in their eyes. This in itself may have contributed to his inability to deal with the tragic events that occurred on his watch.

Folbaum’s stance was extremely interesting. For a long time, he sent reassuring news to Tashkent about the peaceful local population and their willingness “to provide workers”. For example, he reported that on 22 July he had brought together

volost’ administrators and distinguished persons from among the natives of Vernyi district, over a thousand people in all, to explain the details of the conscription of workers, and as one, they assured me that they understood the false rumours, and said that if it so pleased his Majesty, all of the Kirgiz of Vernyi district would join the labour brigades and even the army. The mullah expressed the elated mood of the crowd, coming forward to pray for the tsar, and there were rousing shouts of “Hurrah!” in honour of his Majesty the Emperor and the valiant army, while the elders, who were moved, said that they would do everything they had been ordered to do.⁶⁸

On 6 August 1916 Folbaum sent a telegram to the Governor-General of Turkestan, A. N. Kuropatkin.⁶⁹ In a largely reassuring tone, similar to that of the previous document, Folbaum reported that:

[In] Vernyi and Toqmaq the Sarts have told me personally that they are willing to comply with the conscription, moreover, the Vernyi Sarts have given me their decision that they will take their workers to Chernyaev [Chimkent], at no cost to the public purse. As for the Kirgiz *volost’*, until 4 August from all the districts there were daily reports by the district commandants and heads of garrisons that the mood was calm everywhere, with the exception of a few *volosts* in Lepsinsk and Zharkent districts and the area of Naryn, where it could be seen that the Kirgiz wished to leave for China ... [On] the steppe there is great concern [and] dismay and [it seems] that women are influencing this.

Then we have some very interesting lines using “orientalist” clichés, in which it appears that Folbaum is trying to justify his previous reports:

In writing all the daily reports from 1 July to 4 August, I was presuming that reports on the mood were inevitably liable to change, as liable to change as the mood of the Asians. The administration liaises primarily with *volost’* authorities and distinguished persons. They have been persuaded that the law on conscription is immutable, but the million-strong native masses continue to feed on harmful rumours.

The Semirech’e Military Governor tries his best to reassure and convince his superiors, and possibly himself also, that everything in the province is mostly “as usual”, with the exception of the conscription of workers, and that if something happens, it would not be so terrible:

Reasons for discontent also arise continually, for example, I have information from 4 August that a new reason for unrest emerged in Pishpek district, as the population suddenly became unhappy about the procedure for selecting workers using lists compiled by administrators, and want to ask that lots be drawn. We could anticipate that in other districts also, over time, there will be reasons for emotions to run high again. However, in the daily reports, which should not obscure the general state of affairs, I report only the facts, and of these there have been few. Besides, the rest of life in the province goes on as usual, by which I mean everything unrelated to the requisitioning of workers.

Regarding his own activities, Folbaum writes:

The measures I am taking continue to involve a sustained effort to influence the natives on behalf of the administration, develop as extensive a network of agents as possible, and eliminate harmful rumours ... Generally speaking, as before I intend to act patiently and resolutely, but if protest breaks out somewhere unexpectedly forcefully, then it will be time to act without mercy.⁷⁰

On 7 August, even when the revolt in Pishpek district was underway, Folbaum continued, for some unknown reason, to inform Kuropatkin: "The mood [in] Pishpek is good, the population is calm, Kanayev *volost'*, having finished the conscription lists, has held prayers [for] his Majesty's health." Although then he was nonetheless obliged to inform Kuropatkin of the disturbances and the defiance of Russian rule in the majority of the province's districts.⁷¹

However, in Folbaum's subsequent telegrams to Kuropatkin, we can clearly sense the alarm and even panic which it seems were increasingly taking hold of him. Now we have a real appeal for help. This is illustrated by the following extract from one of the telegrams:

On 15 [August] the official Labanov arrived in Zharkent from Podgorny *stanitsa*, and reported that Karkara had been laid under siege by Kirgiz. A Dungan from Karkara confirmed this news, reporting that 24 Cossacks from Kravchenko's brigade had been killed, the company had dug in. A *sotnia* of irregular cavalry has come from Zharkent at the gallop with a supply of cartridges. It has been a week already since there was news from Przheval'sk; evidently, the *jigits* are being killed. The fate of the Przheval'sk district, where there are almost no troops, is a continual worry. Burzi's brigade will not act alone. Geitsig will not be able to defend Toqmaq and Pishpek for long. Alatyrtsev is needed in Vernyi. In light of this, I ask in earnest that besides Burzi, another eight companies with artillery and cavalry be moved without delay from Andijan to Przheval'sk district, and that from Tashkent, at least eight companies with artillery be moved to Vernyi for operations to support Zharkent and Przheval'sk. I await decisive assistance.⁷²

Folbaum’s opinion on the causes and organisers of the revolt in Semirech’e province also merits attention:

I am obliged to report that, according to the information coming from all sides, the revolt of the Kirgiz of Vernyi district resulted from provocation. It began with inappropriate jokes by Russian townfolk and peasants that the Kirgiz were being sent to cut wires, that they were being sent to war “to die”, that they would be forced to dig trenches in which they would then serve as soldiers, and so on and so forth. The masses stopped believing not only the authorities, but also their own popular and reasonable Kirgiz. For their part, many prominent *manaps* undoubtedly also sowed discord, using their influence when compiling the lists in order to spare their own loved ones and [in order to] unfairly conscript poor people and their partisan opponents. Certain chieftains have impetuously, but boldly, exploited the confusion [and] dismay, and sometimes even animosity of the Kirgiz. Fervent sermons were heard, urging that the Russians be expelled. A rebellious mood surged and swept over many people, bringing to the fore elements that were much more dangerous for the Russian authorities. It is known beyond doubt that many reasonable Kirgiz are opposed to the revolt, but both they and the distinguished persons and *volost’* administrators are powerless. As always, the masses are listening more to the criminal leaders, who, as always in such cases, are acting more decisively. It is impossible to fight the provocation by the Russians and therefore it is difficult to say who is the guilty party. However, to my great regret, I have information that there were also malicious provocateurs, who supposed that the Russians would benefit from the Kirgiz revolt, both when the revolt was suppressed, and afterwards also, with the possible confiscation of land. I did arrest one such provocateur, although the evidence was weak, and he denied it. Naturally, reprisals against the native provocateurs will be possible if they are detained, but for that the whole mob will first need to be made an example of, as punishment for their defiance and for the Russian blood spilt.⁷³

This opinion about the origins and organisers of the revolt is extremely interesting and, in many respects, revealing. It serves to illustrate how Folbaum viewed and perceived the events that occurred in the province under his jurisdiction. It is very hard to say to what extent Folbaum himself believed all of this, and in general, how accurately he understood the situation in Turkestan, but in any case, all of these views and perceptions were part of the “virtual reality” inhabited by Russian officials at all levels in Turkestan, and its colonial society as a whole. Moreover, the Military Governor of Semirech’e province, thanks to his senior position in the Russian administrative hierarchy in Turkestan, could directly influence the formation of all these perceptions. And these may simply have been

a result of his inexperience, incompetence and poor understanding of the way of life and psychology of the population of Turkestan and of Semirech'e province in particular, with its predominantly nomadic population. At the same time, it is possible that Folbaum, to the last, tried if not to hide, then to minimise the extent and the seriousness of the events in Semirech'e, so as to look better in the eyes of his superiors in Tashkent and Petrograd. Perhaps he hoped that he could manage the situation himself, but by the time he understood the true dangers, it was already too late. Then when he realised this, he started to show signs of panic in his reports, going as far as saying that if the revolt was not stopped now, then "the whole Russian endeavour in Semirech'e would collapse".⁷⁴

For comparison, I would like to cite the opinion of the Governor-General of Turkestan, A. N. Kuropatkin, on the reasons for the Kirgiz revolt in Semirech'e province. He believed that the reasons were complex, but that

the main reason for the eruption was the conscription of workers to be sent to the front. According to rumours that spread rapidly, it was intended to send the workers to the front line, where they would be placed between the Russian and German troops, so that they would be slaughtered, and their lands given to Russian settlers ... [The Russian authorities], being overly zealous in their efforts to alienate the best land, which had been [at] the disposal of the Kirgiz for centuries, in order to establish Russian settlements, caused the Kirgiz to resent the new regime ... The extreme limitations of the administration's officials meant that they could not influence the mood of the population [to] the extent required, or indeed be aware of their mood in good time. Besides, during the great war, the Kirgiz population had been preparing [for] a mutiny by German officers who had made it [into] Afghanistan and Kashgar. The influence of the fanatical mullahs living among the Kirgiz was also without question. Exaggerated rumours [about] the victories of our enemies and the weakness of the military defence in Semirech'e gave the leaders the prospect of an easy victory; the disarmament [in] the previous year of the Russian population of Semirech'e, in order to send 7500 Berdan rifles [to] the army, gave the Kirgiz hope that they could quickly take their revenge, with bloodshed, on the incomers who had settled on their lands. These hopes were partly realised: many Russian settlers were killed; much Russian blood was spilled.⁷⁵

As is clear from this text, Kuropatkin's opinion on the reasons for the revolt in Semirech'e was, by and large, completely different from that of Folbaum. He attributed it to both the inappropriate actions and policy of the Russian colonial authorities, and the influence of external factors. There was also the influence of "fanatical mullahs," although this was seen as less significant. Kuropatkin combined the different opinions about

the causes of the revolt expressed by various Russian colonial officials in Turkestan, and added in his own perceptions and views about events.

Conclusion

Having considered all these stereotypes and ideas that had become ingrained in the minds of a significant segment of officialdom and colonial society in Turkestan, it is evident that for Russian colonial officials from the “core” regions, notions about the significance of the “Muslim” factor in the 1916 revolt prevailed. The situation was simplified; everything came down to the narrow-minded fanaticism of the local population, their hatred of the Russian infidels (*kafir*), and their desire to be free from rule by “infidels”. There was also the agitation by certain hostile forces from abroad. Another view that had currency among some of the colonial officials in Turkestan, especially in Semirech’e province, was that the root cause of the revolt was the indifference, lack of scruples, wrongdoing and incompetence of officials from the Russian and native administrations. Of course, the “core” provinces and Semirech’e differed in terms of their populations and economy, and they had their own specific challenges. However, among other things, the different experiences of the administrators of these regions undoubtedly influenced their views on the causes and sources of the 1916 revolt. Their experiences varied depending on where they worked, their position in the administrative hierarchy, and the specific nature of the territory. Therefore, it stands to reason that we often see a highly diverse range of opinions about the causes and triggers of the 1916 revolt among the colonial officials of Turkestan at different levels.

It is known that already in 1915 there was a view that the local population of Turkestan must not be conscripted for “genuine” military service because they were unreliable, “fanatical”, disloyal and even hostile to the Russian state.⁷⁶ But here again, everything was reduced to black or white, loyal or disloyal. To a significant extent, it was this absence of nuance that led to the numerous conflicts and misunderstandings between the Russian authorities of Turkestan and the local population, ultimately resulting in the general tragedy of 1916.

One of the consequences of the revolt was that it compelled the colonial authorities to again pay close attention to the “Muslim” factor and the Muslim “clergy”, and at least in some regions of Turkestan, the authorities looked to the “Muslim” factor as the likely source of the “rebellion” against conscription for labour brigades, and against Russian rule in general. It is very hard to say how significant or otherwise the participation of Muslim “clergy” in the 1916 revolt really was, and in any case, this question is beyond the scope of this chapter. Whatever the truth of the matter, for many Russian officials, in the ‘virtual reality’ in which they

lived and worked, it was really quite significant, sometimes even decisive. Moreover, they were not interested in finding particular proof; it was acknowledged as a given, as a fact since the time of the Andijan uprising of 1898.

It is also very hard to say whether it was mainly colonial officials at various levels of the administration who were to blame for the outbreak of the revolt in Semirech'e. The lamentable administrators mentioned most often in the documents are the Military Governor of Semirech'e province, General M. A. Folbaum, and the head of Przheval'sk district, Colonel V. A. Ivanov. The former had not served in Turkestan before and did not know much about the situation, while the latter, known for his high and mighty manner, was ill-suited to being in charge of the district. This played a significant role in the tragic events here. In their despatches, these officials tried first and foremost to exonerate themselves and to present their actions and the situation in the territories under their control in a favourable light.

It is of note that in the "core" provinces of Turkestan, unlike in Semirech'e, the military governors were "old Turkestan hands" who actually had a reasonable grounding in oriental studies: N. S. Lykoshin in Samarkand province, A. S. Galkin in Syr Darya, and A. I. Gippius in Ferghana. They were a completely different type of official. Lykoshin, Galkin, Gippius and others had spent most of their lives serving in Turkestan, and so had a decent grasp of the local realities and treated the subordinate "natives" fairly well. Accordingly, they had a completely different view about the events that occurred and their origins. This possibly explains why, although the revolt itself was not prevented, these provinces managed to escape the tragic turn taken by events in Semirech'e. Undeniably, they were still influenced by various "orientalist" bias and stereotypes, but thanks to their better grounding, and their kinder treatment and understanding of the population, their measures to contain and end the revolt were more effective than in Semirech'e. However, as the Russian authorities themselves noted, there was clearly only a small number of such officials.⁷⁷

On the other hand, officials like Folbaum and Colonel Ivanov were seasoned careerists. They knew little about the territories that they controlled or their inhabitants, who they judged from a position of "orientalist distance". Their main aim was to avoid any blame being laid at their door. This prejudice and desire to avoid blame might partly explain why the colonial officials failed to notice the start of the rebellion of the population against the Russian authorities, or why they began saying it was "unexpected", even although a number of documents mention signs of discontent and fermentation among the "natives". In many respects, the infamous Royal Command to conscript workers for labour brigades was merely a catalyst for the events that proved tragic for all sides.

Translated by Emily Justice

Notes

- 1 On the life and work of these “Turkestan experts” see: B. V. Lunin, *Istoriografiya obshchestvennykh nauk Uzbekistana. Biobibliograficheskie ocherki* (Tashkent: FAN, 1974); S. D. Miliband, *Biobibliograficheskii slovar’ sovetskikh vostokovedov* (Moscow: GRVL, 1977); M. K. Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye vostokovedy do 1917 goda. Biobibliograficheskii slovar’* (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2005); and others.
- 2 To a considerable extent, senior colonial officials in Turkestan understood this themselves. As it was not mandatory to know the local languages before taking up an administrative post, by no means all the officers and officials did have a grasp of them or try to learn them. Some of the governors-general of Turkestan, for example, D. I. Subotich and M. I. Grodekov, believed that as a matter of principle it was necessary to know the languages of the native peoples. General Grodekov, who was also the military governor of Syr Darya province, learned the local languages as he did not want to be dependent on interpreters, and he required the same from his administration: B. M. Babadzhanov et al. (eds.) *Turkestan v imperskoi politike Rossii: Monografiya v dokumentakh* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2016), 143.
- 3 Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007). See also Alexander Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand (1868–1910): A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 4 Similar questions about relations between British-Indian officialdom and the local population are touched upon in a study by Clive Dewey. See Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambleton Press, 1993); Ann Stoler, “‘In Cold Blood’: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives”, *Representations* 37 (1992); Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 5 Stoler, “In Cold Blood”, 182.
- 6 Chris Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 149, 171–173; Alexander Morrison, “Sufizm, Panislamizm, i informatsionnaya panika. Nil Sergeevich Lykoshin i posledstviu Andizhanskogo vosstaniya”, *Tartaria Magna* 2 (2013), 50–51.
- 7 Stoler “In Cold Blood”, 179.
- 8 Stoler “In Cold Blood”, 182.
- 9 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).
- 10 Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 149.
- 11 For example, Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 142–179. See also Kim Wagner Thuggee, *Banditry and the British in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), ch. 6.
- 12 Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?” *Slavic Review* 59/1 (2000), 74–100; Nathaniel Knight, “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid”, *Kritika* 1/4 (2000), 701–715.
- 13 Adeeb Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate Over Orientalism”, *Kritika* 1/4 (2000), 691–699

- 14 See M. Todorova, "Est' li russkaya dusha u russkogo orientalizma? Dopolnenie k sporu Natanielya Naita i Adiba Khalida", in *Rossiiskaya imperiya v zarubezhnoi istoriografii* (Moscow: Novoe Izd., 2005); S. N. Abashin, "V. P. Nalivkin '...budet to, chto neizbezhno dolzhno byt'; i to, chto neizbezhno dolzhno byt', uzhe ne mozhet ne byt'...'. Krizis orientalizma v Rossiiskoi imperii?", in *Aziatskaya Rossiya: liudi i struktury imperii. Sbornik nauchnykh statei. K 50-letiiu so dnya rozhdeniya professora A. V. Remneva* (Omsk: Izd. OmGU, 2005); S. Gorshenina, "Izvechna li marginal'nost' russkogo kolonial'nogo Turkestana, ili voidet li postsovetskaya Srednyaya Aziya v oblast' post-issledovaniy", *Ab Imperio* 2 (2007); V. O. Bobrovnikov, "Orientalizm v literature i politike na rossiiskom Kavkaze XIX v", <http://bs-kavkaz.org/>; B. Babadzhanov, "Nikolai Ostroumov: 'missioner', 'islamoved', 'tsivilizator'?", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014); S. Abashin, "Ostroumov i orientalizm?", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014); A. Dzhumaev, "Eshche o 'missionerstve' Ostroumova", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014); U. Abdurasulov "Ostroumov i ideologiya kolonizatsii", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014); I. Flygin, "Nikolai Ostroumov, 'Ya schitaiu sebya ne bespoleznym chelovekom dlya inovertsev ... i otniud' ne vragom ikh'", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014); B. Babadzhanov, "Posleslovie k obsuzhdeniiu", *Vostok Svyshe* 32 (2014). See also Adeeb Khalid, "Culture and Power in Colonial Turkestan", in S. Gorshenina and S. Abashin (eds.), *Le Turkestan Russe: Une colonie comme les autres?* (Tashkent and Paris: IFEAC, 2009), 413–447; Vera Tolz, "Orientalism, Nationalism and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia", *The Historical Journal* 48/1 (2005), 127–150; Vera Tolz, "European, National and (Anti-) Imperial: The Formation of Academic Oriental Studies in Late Tsarist and Early Soviet Russia", *Kritika* 9/1 (2008), 53–81; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2010). See also V. O. Bobrovnikov and S. D. Miri (eds.), *Orientalizm vs. orientalistika* (Moscow: OOO Sadra, 2016).
- 15 N. S. Lykoshin, "Opisanie besporyadkov vyzvannykh naborom rabochikh v Samarkandskoi oblasti", TsGARUz F.I-1 Op. 31 D.1100 ll.29ob–30.
- 16 In particular, see *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral'noi Azii v nachale XX stoletiya (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: Fond Mardzhani, 2016).
- 17 See F. M. Korol'kov, *Otchet po rassledovaniuu obstoyatel'stv vosstaniya tuzemtsev Ferganskoi oblasti v mae 1898 g.* (3 Aug 1898 g.): TsGARUz, F.I-1. Op. 25. D.73. ll.1–35.
- 18 "Islam in Turkestan: Report by Governor-General of Turkestan, Infantry General [S. M.] Dukhovskoi, Tashkent, 1899", in D. I. Arapov (ed.), *Imperatorskaya Rossiya i musul'manskii mir* (Moscow: Natalis, 2006), 142–178.
- 19 "Telegramma vremenno ispolnyaiushchego obyazannosti diplomaticheskogo chinovnika pri Turkestanskom general-gubernatore P.P. Sekretareva upravlyaiushchemu Politicheskim agentstvom v Bukhare N.A. Shul'ge" (19 July 1916), AVPRI F.147. Op. 486. D.247. l.19. However, in some documents Shah-Yakhsy is referred to as one of the instigators of the struggle against the Russian authorities (see below).
- 20 "Donesenie nachal'nika Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniya M.N. Volkova direktoru Departamenta politsii E.K. Klimovichu" (8 August 1916), in T. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane. Dokumental'nye*

svidetel'stva obshchei tragedii. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016), 191–192. There are also a number of testimonies that this *ishan* was actually a secret opponent of the Russian authorities. See “Donesenie nachal'nika Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniya M.N. Volkova direktoru Departamenta politicii E.K. Klimovichu” (8 August 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 186–192. On this individual and his “anti-Russian” activities, see “Donesenie agenta Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniya” (23 August 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 205.

- 21 “Vysochaishee povelienie O privilechenii muzhskogo inorodcheskogo naseleniya imperii dlya rabot po ustroistvu oboronitel'nykh sooruzhenii i voennykh soobshchenii v raione deistvuiushchei armii, a ravno i dlya vsyakh inykh neobkhodimykh dlya gosudarstvennoi oborony rabot” (6 July 1916), in *Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporyazhenii pravitel'stva izdavaemoe pri Pravitel'stvuiushchem Senate za 1916g.* (St Petersburg, 1916), 1747–1748.
- 22 “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia M. R. Erofeevu” (24 July 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 124–143.
- 23 “Svod soobrazhenii i zakliuchenii nachal'nikov oblastei Turkestanskogo kraia po voprosu o prizyve inorodtsev k ispolneniiu voinskoj povinnosti” (1914), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 124.
- 24 It is curious that after the revolt had actually started, the Semirech'e Military Governor, Folbaum, proposed establishing a Semirech'e Kirgiz Cavalry Division, and that Kirgiz serving in this division could be granted land, which would help “to settle, albeit partially, the critical land question among the Kirgiz population.” “Otzvyv deloproizvoditelya Aziatskoi chasti general-maiora A.A. Davletshina i nachal'nika Aziatskoi chasti Glavnogo shtaba general-leitenanta M.M. Manakina na proekt sozdaniya Semirechenskogo 'kirgizskogo' konnogo diviziona i nadeleniya sluzhivshikh v nem 'kirgiz' zemel'nym uchastkami” (28 July, 3 August 1916), RGVA, F.400. Op. 1. D.4521 ll.28–30ob.
- 25 For example, see “Donesenie diplomaticheskogo chinovnika pri Turkestanskom general-gubernatore S.V. Chirkina sovetniku Tret'ego politicheskogo otdela MID V.O. fon Klemmu” (10 January 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 153.
- 26 On this and the actions of the Russian authorities, see, for example: “Proshenie koren'nogo naseleniya Turkestana ministru zemledeliya i gosudarstvennykh imushchestv o prekrashchenii iz'yatiya zemli u kochevnikov” (March 1912), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 116–121; “Otvét pereselencheskogo upravleniya Glavnogo upravleniya zemleustroistva i zemledeliya” (25 May 1912), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 121–122.
- 27 “Dokladnaya zapiska pomoshchnika glavnogo voennogo prokurora V. E. Ignatovicha komanduiushchemu voiskami Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga A. N. Kuropatkinu” (31 December 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane*, 69.
- 28 For more information about the start and the course of the uprising in Khujand, see: N. U. Gafarov, “Khudzhand – kolybel' sredneaziatskogo vosstaniya 1916 g.,” in Kotiukova (ed.), *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral'noi Azii*, 50–62.

- 29 See “Otnoshenie tovarishcha ministra vnutrennikh del Rossii V.M. Volkonskogo tovarishchu ministra inostrannykh del A.A. Neratovu ob otsrochke ispolneniya vysochaishego poveleniya 25 iyunya 1916 g. do 15 sentyabrya i rospuske ranee sobrannogo dlya privlecheniya k rabotam v tylu armii mestnogo naseleniya” (2 August 1916), AVPRI, F.147. Op. 486. D.340b.1.34.
- 30 On the life and work of N.S. Lykoshin, see: Oksana Pugovkina, “Nil Lykoshin: zhizn’ i prizvanie vidnogo russkogo chinovnika i vostokoveda”, in *Istoriya: problemy ob’ektivnosti i npravstvennosti* (Tashkent: n.p., 2003); Oksana Pugovkina, “Voенno-politicheskaya elita Turkestanskogo kraya kontsa XIX – nachala XX veka (N.S. Lykoshin, N.G. Mallitskii)”, <http://mytashkent.uz/2010/04/06/voенno-politicheskaya-elita-turkestanskogo-kraja-kontsa-xix-nachala-xx-veka-n-s-lykoshin-n-g-mallitskiy/>.
- 31 N. S. Lykoshin, “Opisanie besporyadkov vyzvannykh naborom rabochikh v Samarkandskoi oblasti [1916]”, TsGARUz F.I-1 Op. 31 D.1100 ll.21–22ob.
- 32 Interestingly, in his diary, A. N. Kuropatkin, appointed by the Governor-General of Turkestan, described N. S. Lykoshin in the role of Military Governor of Samarkand Province as “blind”: A. N. Kuropatkin, “Dnevnik komanduiushchego voiskami Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga A.N. Kuropatkina za 22 maya–9 sentyabrya i 18 sentyabrya 1916 g.”, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1968.1.59ob.
- 33 “Raport nachal’nika Samarkandskogo uezda A. I. Martinsona voennomu gubernatoru Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshinu” (5 July 1916), in A. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 104.
- 34 “Raport nachal’nika Samarkandskogo uezda A. I. Martinsona voennomu gubernatoru Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshinu” (7 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 105–106.
- 35 The published document contains an error: “imami” instead of “ishani”.
- 36 “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraya M. R. Erofeevu” (12 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 112–113.
- 37 “Iz doneseniya voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraya M. R. Erofeevu” (7 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 107.
- 38 “Iz doneseniya voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraya M. R. Erofeevu” (12 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 114.
- 39 “Doklad Samarkandskogo voennogo gubernatora Lykoshina” (December 1916), in P. G. Galuzo (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii. Sbornik dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932), 15.
- 40 For some interesting, distinctive and highly revealing details from Rukin’s biography, see T. Kotiukova (ed.), *Polveka v Turkestane. V. P. Nalivkin: biografiya, dokumenty, trudy* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2015), 89, 104, 114, 117.
- 41 For a detailed description of these events, see “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N.S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraya M. R. Erofeevu” (23 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 122–124.

- 42 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina i. d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia M. R. Erofeevu” (16 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 116.
- 43 “Dokladnaya zapiska Pomoshchnika Glavnogo Voennogo prokurora general-leitenanta Ignatovicha Voennomu ministru Shuvaevu” (31 December 1916), TsGARUz F.I-1. Op. 31. D.1100. ll.103–103ob.
- 44 Pugovkina “Nil Lykoshin”, 171.
- 45 “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti N. S. Lykoshina general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu” (8 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 141. In Lykoshin’s discourse it is very apparent that he was fairly familiar with the Turkism-Ishanism of Turkestan, as confirmed by a number of his publications.
- 46 Although there are a number of documents about the imaginary actions of German and Turkish agents against the Russian authorities in Turkestan that were written even before the start of the revolt: “Sekretnaya telegramma poslannika v Pekine V.N. Krupenskogo v Urumchi, Kashgar i Kul’dzhu”, in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 156–158.
- 47 See, for example: “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti general-leitenanta M.A. Fol’bauma i. o. pomoshchnika komanduiushchego voiskami Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga generalu ot infanterii M. R. Erofeevu” (14 August 1916), RGVIA F.1396. Op. 2. D.2419 ll.179–179ob; “Protokol mezhvedomstvennogo soveshchaniya, obrazovannogo pri Voennom ministerstve dlya obsuzhdeniya voprosa ob okazanii material’noi pomoshchi russkomu i ‘kirgizskomu’ naseleniiu Semirechenskoi oblasti, postradavshemu ot ‘kirgizskogo myatezha’ v 1916 g.” (8 July 1917), RGVIA, F.400. Op. 1. D.4639. l.102. Interestingly, even today some publications present this as the main view. See for example: A. Zubov, “Kak inostrannaya razvedka gotovila vosstanie 1916 goda”, <http://365info.kz/2016/07/kak-inostrannaya-razvedka-gotovila-vosstanie-1916-goda/>.
- 48 The document contains an error: “nevezhestvennye” has been written “nevshchestvennye”.
- 49 *Donesenie Pomoshchnika Nachal’nika Raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniya* (20 July 1916), TsGARUz F.I-276 Op.1 D.905 l.36.
- 50 “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti” (December 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 20.
- 51 See for example: T. V. Kotiukova, “Vosstanie 1916 g. v Turkestane: oshibka vlasti ili istoricheskaya zakonomernost’?” *Obozrevatel’-Observer* 8 (2011), 98–126.
- 52 N.S. Lykoshin, “Opisanie besporyadkov vyzvannykh naborom rabochikh v Samarkandskoi oblasti”, ll.29ob-30.
- 53 A.N. Kuropatkin, “Otchet o besporyadkakh proshedshikh v Ferganskoi oblasti po povodu Vysochaishego poveleniya o nabore rabochikh na tylovye raboty ot 25 iiunya 1916 goda” (1916), TsGARUz F. I-1. Op. 31 D.1100 ll.46ob.
- 54 “Donesenie Turkestanskogo general-gubernatora A.N. Kuropatkina Voennomu ministru D. S. Shuvaevu” (4 January 1917), TsGARUz, F.I-1. Op. 31. D.1100. l.149.

- 55 “Raport i. d. politmeistera g. Vernogo Porotikova voennomu gubernatoru Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol’baumu”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 334–335.
- 56 “Doklad zaveduiushchego Vernenskimi zhandarmskim rozysknym punktom” (November 1916), RGIA. F.1292 Op. 1 D.1933a ll.475–505.
- 57 “Doklad zaveduiushchego Vernenskimi zhandarmskim rozysknym punktom”, ll.477–481
- 58 “Doklad zaveduiushchego Vernenskimi zhandarmskim rozysknym punktom”, l.478.
- 59 I.e. *fuqara* – common people.
- 60 “Doklad zaveduiushchego Vernenskimi zhandarmskim rozysknym punktom”, l.482.
- 61 “Dokladnaya zapiska dragomana konsul’stva Rossii v Kashgare T.F. Stefanovicha v MID Rossii o vosstanii v Semirechenskoj oblasti i vyzvavshikh ego prichinakh ([1916])”, AVPRI, F.Konsul’stvo v Kashgare. Op. 630 D.28 ll.4–5.
- 62 “Dokladnaya zapiska dragomana konsul’stva Rossii v Kashgare T.F. Stefanovicha”, l.5.
- 63 “Donesenie Imperatorskogo Rossiiskogo konsula v Kashgare v Rossiiskuiu Imperatorskuiu missiiu v Pekine” (1 December 1916), TsGARUz F.I-1 Op. 31 D.1205 l.1ob.
- 64 “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoj oblasti Lykoshina” (December 1916), in Nuriddin Isaev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane. Natsional’naya Tragediya Kyrgyzskogo naroda* (Bishkek: Maxprint, 2016), 31.
- 65 “Raport polkovnika Ivanova Przheval’skogo uезда Semirechenskoj oblasti vitse-gubernatoru Semirechenskoj oblasti” (26 September 1916), in Isaev (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane*, 35–40.
- 66 Raport polkovnika Ivanova Przheval’skogo uезда Semirechenskoj oblasti vitse-gubernatoru Semirechenskoj oblasti” (26 September 1916), in Isaev (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane*, 37–38.
- 67 On Folbaum, see, for example, [www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Fol’baum_\(Sokolov-Sokolinskii\)_Mikhail_Aleksandrovich_-_bakinskii_gradonachal’nik](http://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Fol'baum_(Sokolov-Sokolinskii)_Mikhail_Aleksandrovich_-_bakinskii_gradonachal'nik).
- 68 “Telegramma nachal’nika Shtaba Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga M.N. Mikhailovskogo voennomu gubernatoru Samarkandskoj oblasti N.S. Lykoshinu” (23 July 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 173–174.
- 69 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraya A. N. Kuropatkinu” (6 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 330–331.
- 70 Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraya A. N. Kuropatkinu” (6 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 330–331.
- 71 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraya A. N. Kuropatkinu” (7 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 332–333.
- 72 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraya A. N. Kuropatkinu” (15 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 342–343.

- 73 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu” (9 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 336–337.
- 74 “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu” (10 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 337.
- 75 “Telegramma general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia A.N. Kuropatkina voennomu ministru D.S. Shuvaevu” (18 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 345–346.
- 76 “Otnoshenie nachal’nika Glavnogo shtaba Voennogo ministerstva generala ot infanterii N.P. Mikhnevicha ministru inostrannykh del S.D. Sazonovu” (21 September 1915), AVPRI, F.Sredneaziatskii stol Op. 486 D.340b ll.5–5ob., ll.1–4, 8–16, 31–33.
- 77 See, for example, “Doklad nachal’nika Aziatskoi chasti Glavnogo shtaba general-leitenanta M.M. Manakina o naznachenii voennykh gubernatorov Turkestanskogo kraia nachal’niku Glavnogo shtaba generalu ot infanterii N.P. Mikhnevichu” (14 February 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane*, 154–156.

5

Fears, rumours, violence: the tsarist regime and the revolt of the nomads in Central Asia, 1916

Jörn Happel

The First World War threw tsarist Russia into a crisis of accelerated modernisation which eventually destroyed it.¹ Imperial society was not able to conduct total war, especially at the peripheries. Different dynamics of friendship and enmity between the inhabitants of Russia are visible at the margins of the Empire. When examined with an eye to the protagonists, these can shed some light on the challenges faced by the tsarist regime, which threatened to swamp it. Based on the experiences of individual persons, this chapter explores how in the crisis of war the imperial cohesion of culturally diverse parts of imperial Russia's multiethnic society fell apart, focusing on the example of Central Asia and the revolt of 1916. I argue that in Central Asia friendship and enmity expressed themselves primarily through rumour, because the Russian and the native parts of the populations barely knew each other. Moreover, I am going to ask how the collapse of the Empire was conceived, how the war was perceived within Central Asia, how cruelty changed the local way of life and which were the most noteworthy forms of interaction between settled and nomadic people.

The “unpredictable” Empire: the Andijan uprising and its consequences

Since the beginning of the twentieth century various Russian colonial civil servants and officers had warned against possible uprisings in Central Asia. Although there had been resistance to Russian colonial rule in the form of regional revolts by nomads since the original conquest of the Asian steppe in the 1840s and 1850s,² the bureaucrats drew attention especially to one particular uprising, which proved to them that the natives were dangerous: in 1898, the Andijan uprising took the Russian military administration by surprise and cost twenty-two Russian

soldiers their lives. If we follow official Russian discourse, this uprising was a severe blow to Russian colonial sovereignty in Central Asia.³ The insurgents were mainly unarmed and their leader, Dukchi Ishan, was a charismatic religious man but no commander. The uprising failed. Dukchi Ishan and other leaders (six in total) were hanged after the suppression of the revolt. Hundreds of the other captives were exiled (mainly to Siberia). If Andijan was only an insufficiently prepared and equally badly conducted uprising of a few thousand people under the leadership of Dukchi Ishan, it became clear for a few advocates of a more rigorous colonial policy that the present Russian principle of non-interference in Islam had not really had the desired results, and that the vast colonial territory was dangerously difficult to control.

Andijan was used as leverage by officials to demand more financial and military efforts in St Petersburg's Central Asian policy. But the investigations that had been carried out immediately after the uprising could neither provide an exact strategy nor a coordination of actions against possible future insurgents.⁴ Some Russian authorities exaggerated the impact of Andijan and referred to the general Islamic antagonism towards Russia in Central Asia. Tsarist officials did everything they could to substantiate the idea that the Dukchi Ishan had been supported by the Ottoman Empire: even Tsar Nicholas II and the ministry of foreign affairs thought of the revolt as of decisive importance.⁵ Especially in the spheres of culture and educational policy, the Government authorities began to rethink their policies after the suppression of the revolt.⁶ But almost no practical measures were undertaken. The main effect was to increase official paranoia.

Whereas the Andijan uprising had come as a surprise, future revolts were supposed to be detected beforehand. The experience of Andijan and the suppression of the revolt allowed prognoses for the future, which were preceded by diagnoses.⁷ Since Andijan, the prognoses and expectations of the colonial officers were increasingly focused on a possible conflict with the inhabitants of Central Asia; a conflict which, they assumed, would have a religious motivation.⁸ As Oybek Mahmudov suggests in his chapter in this volume, this attitude indirectly determined many of their actions. The Russian administration wanted to know what was being discussed among the Russian and the native population – what rumours were current in the colony. Through focusing on rumours we can gain a better understanding of the complexities of colonial relations. Rumours had to be refashioned by the authorities into coherent and comprehensible narratives. "In attempts to create plausible explanations in the face of seeming disaster, chaos or violence, colonial authorities turned to [...] their own archives and existing prejudices about colonial peoples to frame and order flows of information."⁹

Warnings – gloomy prognoses for Russia's sovereignty at the periphery – were abundant. These were either not probed deeply by St

Petersburg or were ignored altogether. In a clear and analytical letter from 2 December 1907 to the Governor-General of Turkestan, N. I. Grodekov, the governor of Semirech'e, General V. I. Pokotilo, cautioned against imminent upheavals and uprisings in the colony that could be provoked by the increased numbers of Russian settlers:

In general the result of all these illegal (*nezakonnyi*) and superficial enterprises could be the following: a) the Kirgiz [Kyrgyz and Kazakhs], who are already in a panic, and seeing that they are really being deported from their native nest, will begin to riot; b) tens of thousands of new settlers, who cannot be catered for even in this slapdash manner will appear in the province as a threatening mob of hungry and destitute people and c) the Cossacks, feeling a bitter unearned injury, when land might be taken away from their *stanitsas*, will pass it into the hands of the settlers by an illegal route. The consequences would be disastrous.¹⁰

General Pokotilo described his negative expectations based on his own experiences. Like many other colonial officials, he took the views of the local population seriously, and even sided with them in anticipation of the uprising, writing that it was not they who were causing conflicts with the colonial power but the settlers themselves. The governor of Semirech'e was thus one of the many colonial officers who were opposed to the policies of the tsarist resettlement administration (*Perselencheskoe Upravlenie*), which governed the settlement of the colonists. Further letters with similar content were sent by other officers in the same month, but the officials of the Resettlement administration ignored the warnings and continued with the surveying and parcelling-up of "Kirgiz land".¹¹ Senator Count Konstantin von der Pahlen, who travelled to Turkestan at the behest of the Tsar in 1908/1909, already feared that the result of those actions would be a transition of the Kazakhs from their current feeling of panic into an uprising.¹²

These prognoses, dominated by daily confrontation between colonists and nomads, encouraged local officials, who were in constant conflict with the higher bureaucracy in St Petersburg on this question, to paint a doomsday scenario. In 1910 the authors of the "Military Strategy Declaration of Semirech'e Province" gave detailed instructions on how to quell upheavals with violence. They justified their thoughts on possible revolts because of the growing Russian colonisation of the region. However, the massive settlement of the "Russian element" would also be of importance to controlling the native population.¹³ Russian peasant colonists were both the cause of the problem and the solution. The authors of the military instructions wanted to create superiority in numbers with more colonists, to build a reserve of manpower in the event of an uprising. Furthermore, they suggested military intervention

when it came to an upheaval, to take hostages and to fight further resistance vigorously: "The remaining incorrigible element would either have to be exterminated or driven across the border."¹⁴

Nevertheless, only minor efforts were made to prevent an uprising and to protect the Russian population in this area. Russian settlers were armed on several occasions until 1911 but most arms were decommissioned (rather than taken away for the needs of the army) before the uprising because they were poorly serviced and out of order.¹⁵ It was only in July 1916 that tsarist officers began taking measures to fortify villages and towns – but by then it was already too late.¹⁶

The path to the uprising of 1916 through the lens of Okhrana

On 29 January 1915, a cavalry captain of the tsarist secret police (Okhrana) called Sokolov reported from his office in Vernyi (modern Almaty) that among the Kazakhs the following rumours prevailed:

that the Chinese consul in Kul'dzha asked the Russian authorities to allow the return of the refugees, [...] if Russia does not perform the demands, China will declare war on Russia. Since these rumors the Kirgiz hope that many immigrants would have to go back to Russia and that the Kirgiz would again get their land.¹⁷

Such rumours lacked any true and proven background but they fuelled disturbances and awakened the hope among the Kazakhs that soon they would be masters of their own land again.¹⁸ Hence, this information was potentially dangerous for the colonial authorities, if these rumours really were widespread among the Kazakhs and prompted them to act in a particular way.

The Okhrana was kept well-briefed by their networks of informants.¹⁹ Sokolov and his colleague Vladimir F. Zheleznyakov sent them out to gain information on what people were talking about, what they were whispering secretly and what was hawked around. Thus, they arrived at wide-ranging results, and premonitions of the upcoming conflict were openly formulated. For instance, Sokolov reported a conversation in July 1915 that one of his colleagues had overheard on 1 July, between the merchant Dmitry Shcherbakov and four clerks called Vesnin, Stendentsov, Konstantinov and Kraev. Sokolov had members of the lower Russian administration eavesdrop. The clerks in the local district administration offices were the people who heard the most from their regions because they were the ones who managed and supervised the tasks of their superiors and their entire correspondence. The administrative management of their districts took place from their desks. All the petitions from Russians and

natives were received there. Hence, the clerks were often better informed about what was going on in the colony than their superiors, and that inside view made them especially important for the Okhrana. To spy on them gave the gendarmes an insight into the Russian administration and its position towards the natives. Mostly they were focusing on political subversion within the Russian colonial administration rather than possible rebellion against it, meaning that, as with their obsession with “Muslim fanaticism (*musul'manskii fanatizm*)”, they were always looking the wrong way. The lives of Russian colonists, and the sorrows of the lower classes and the Kazakh nomads became tangible in these sources:

The conversation touched on the position of the Kirgiz, and the assembled people said that the position of the Kirgiz was hard, since all the places for nomadising were being taken away – the mountains were being taken over as state land, and the convenient valleys given over to Russian settlements or the treasury; and this despite the fact that the Kirgiz are a very useful people, that they carry out all sorts of work – they serve as coachmen and handymen, and work the fields for their Russian masters, but no-one stands up for them. The conversation also touched on the peasants, and it was said that it was hard for the peasants to live also, that many of them are in great poverty, that the local authorities forbid the poor, poorly dressed peasants even to show themselves to their eyes, in the case of a high-ranking official: amongst other things Shcherbakov and Kraev said that, we do not have Government, but a kleptocracy, and at every step, we must pay them a penny.²⁰

The clerks observed by Sokolov saw how the nomads were underprivileged and oppressed. The Kazakhs were hardworking people, yet they did not have a voice. No one took care of them; they seemed to be without rights. But the peasants lived in poverty, too. The clerks knew exactly what their superiors did when a commission came to visit: the poor peasants in colonist settlements had to hide. Moreover, everything had to be paid for. The corruption in Central Asia was obvious. The clerks thought that the reason for that lay not in the local administration, but in the governmental system. A “kleptocracy” (*grabitelstvo*) dictated the system, in which the masses could be exploited and deprived of their rights by local civil servants. Based on that anti-governmental attitude, maintaining surveillance over clerks and merchants was understandable. Revolutionary trends were seen more and more in Central Asia, and the Russian Government took action against them.²¹ A core responsibility of the Okhrana was to uncover hostile actions by the leftist political parties, and to arrest their initiators. Because they were mainly concerned with identifying revolutionary tendencies among the Russian population, they ignored or discounted the discontents of the “natives.”²²

Corruption and the seizure of *qystau* – cultivated and irrigated winter settlements – from the nomadic population for the use of Russian settlers generated the most resentment, but it was not the only reason for the outbreak of the uprising in Central Asia in 1916.²³ It required an impetus: On 25 June 1916, Tsar Nicholas II commanded the conscription of Central Asians for labour service behind the front lines (*tylovaya rabota*).²⁴ This marked the end of the exemption of Central Asians from conscription. Men aged between nineteen and forty-three were to be drafted from across Turkestan with the exception of the protectorates of Khiva and Bukhara.²⁵ On 30 June, General Mikhail R. Erofeev gave the more precise order to draft for now only men who were born between 1885 and 1897, thus nineteen- to thirty-one-year-olds.²⁶ The men had until 15 July to present themselves at the recruiting stations. This was, at least, what the planners of the Main Staff had in mind.²⁷ A few days later the colony was in a state of emergency, which the local authorities soon called a “state of war”. The Russian authorities as well as the Russian settlers were not able to handle this conflict.

The conscription of the Central Asian population was intended to release personnel in the war zone. As Tomohiko Uyama explores elsewhere in this volume, the civil and military staffs planned to recruit 390,000 *inorodtsy* (“aliens” from different native tribes in Siberia, the Caucasus and Central Asia) in total for this service.²⁸ The men were supposed to gather at different requisition points where a doctor checked their health and decided on their ability or disability for service.²⁹ Instead of putting them into the cavalry, which some Kazakhs had asked for (there is some evidence that they wished to serve on the same terms as Cossacks),³⁰ they were sent to serve behind the front lines.³¹

The extent to which the conscription decree generated opposition among the Muslims of Turkestan – not just among the nomads – is shown in a letter from Samarkand, which was intercepted by the Okhrana on 8 July 1916. It was sent to the editors of the newspaper *al-Islah* in Tashkent. Here a boycott of the conscription *ukaz* in Turkestan was demanded. They wrote that “there is great mourning in all houses because of the conscription since the government gave the order to walk through the door of death and throw those young men into the arena of death (*arena smerti*)”.³² Instead of information, rumours dominated the situation. General Erofeev reported to the Minister of War from Semirech’e on 20 July 1916 that a great number of Kyrgyz (“Kara-Kirgiz”) in the Naryn region were about to flee to China. According to other news, rumours went round in Semirech’e that the reason the Russians sent the best elements of the Muslims (*samyi zdorovyi element musul’man*) to the front was to let them be killed in the fight between Russians and Germans, and hence to exterminate the Muslims.³³

Fear and rumours among the Russian colonists

Not only were nomads and colonial bureaucrats concerned, but also the settlers who had already been involved in war-like actions with the nomads. The fears of the colonists were omnipresent.³⁴ They did not lend themselves to illusions after the first upheavals and the many bad premonitions and rumours that could be heard everywhere. Fear was the dominant feeling of the time.

After the uprising in Jizzakh (13 July 1916), A. Fal'ko from Samarkand wrote to Alexandr A. Stratonitskii in Simferopol that:

The Sarts³⁵ have pulled back into the mountains in order to creep back like cockroaches with white flags and to strike. But now the order is restored again. But there is still an uprising raging in Semirech'e. A commando to punish them is on its way. A new governor named Alexei Kuropatkin is in charge. [...] and the old Martson [...] even opened a school for native languages for POWs officers, [...].³⁶

Fal'ko went on to describe a common rumour of that time, relaying gossip from the streets of Samarkand: namely that German POWs were behind the uprising and had instigated the locals. Fal'ko claimed in his letter that this was possible because they were allowed to learn the language of the locals, and this latter fact was quite true. He blamed the old Governor-General Fedor von Martson (1914–1916) for treating the prisoners too well, and hence claimed that he alone was to blame for the outbreak of the uprising. Von Martson was a loyal Russian subject – but there is definitely a suggestion here that he was suspect because of his German name. A similar suspicion attached to Folbaum, the Governor of Semirech'e, who after his death was accused by one Lieutenant Golenko of the Semirech'e Cossacks of being “a pure German – he gave rifles and bullets to the Kirgiz, the bastard”.³⁷ Both these episodes smack of wartime anti-German hysteria and “spymania”.³⁸ By contrast, Kuropatkin was not portrayed negatively: as an ethnic Russian and old *Turkestanets* who had played a prominent part in the conquest of Central Asia, he seems to have been just what the settlers wanted. Also, in other documents, the former Minister of War seemed to have raised hopes for a more stable situation; maybe because he had known Central Asia since its occupation by Russian troops.³⁹ Fal'ko's letter also reveals a typical image of the Other that the Russians had of the Central Asian natives. Fal'ko described them as cockroaches. He compared Asians with vermin that needed to be exterminated. That was the reason why a punitive expedition was on its way to Semirech'e.

In the town of Kazalinsk in the Syr-Darya region, on 13 October 1916, one “Marusya” wrote some kind of a farewell letter to Samuel Vladimirovich Lev in Astrakhan.⁴⁰

There is no news, only the old. We are awaiting the conscription of Kirgiz on the 26th of this month and the district chief said, that he cannot care for their well-being when conscripting the Kirgiz, here we are waiting for a riot, and perhaps it will be before the 26th. Well, never mind, you die only once.⁴¹

The tension was clearly noticeable. Nothing new was reported by Marusya, only that she also might die soon. Desperation crept into the towns; irony was used to overlay settler fears about the uprising of the natives. The Okhrana noted not only that the colonists, as in the case of Marusya, gave themselves up to their fate, but also that the chief of the district was not regarded as a strong administrator by the people. He could not guarantee the well-being or, hence, the safety of society. Those rumours were not supposed to get around because they jeopardised the position of power of the colonial masters. And presumably they were also anxious that they should not circulate widely in metropolitan Russia, which must have been the reason why these particular letters were intercepted, as they were unlikely ever to be read by the local population. Meanwhile, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were gathering. A real uprising was expected every hour, so patrols were arrayed in town for security reasons.⁴²

On 22 October 1916, Vasily A. Micheev from Tashkent wrote a letter to Ivan I. Irmal (or possibly Urmal) in the remote Siberian village of Malaya Minusa in the Yenisei administrative district. He wrote that the First World War was now in its third year, but that this had not been felt in Turkestan so far.⁴³ The conscription of the natives (*tuzemtsy*) changed that and the land burned. Large numbers had been killed in Jizzakh. What the Sarts did to the Russians was terrible. Tashkent was full of refugees from the villages. The uprising also raged in Semirech'e. Incited by newspapers and German agents the "Kirgiz" attacked towns and villages. They were organised, had pistols, artillery and machine-guns. Eventually, the Russians struck. Kuropatkin was very good, he wrote. They could not have found anyone better in the bureaucracy. Micheev himself had volunteered for the army again; "you never know what is coming". "Chaos in the rear, chaos at the front and everywhere desperation."⁴⁴

Micheev, who obviously conveyed the prevalent rumours, blamed (Muslim newspaper) propaganda and the German agents – this is also seen in official reports, such as that from General Folbaum in Semirech'e.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the violence was omnipresent. Thousands of colonists fled to Tashkent for shelter. Micheev's letter expresses one expectation very clearly: with Kuropatkin the turnaround will come. But the instability of the times in Micheev's eyes, despite the appointment of the new Governor-General, is shown by his decision to re-join the army. The colony of Turkestan had descended into anarchy, hence he took up arms to help Russia in these difficult times.

The violence of the uprising and its suppression

One example of the manner in which the uprising spread is shown in a report by an official called Vserossiiskii who rode to the settlement of Zhambas in Semirech'e with soldiers in order to recruit divisions of workers.⁴⁶ The natives of one *aul* (a nomadic "village") were summoned on 3 August at 11am. One of the participants asked why other administrative districts did not follow the order. Vserossiiskii explained that the work they would have to do was behind the front lines.⁴⁷ At first all seemed quiet, but then all of a sudden a group of Kazakhs on horseback arrived, yelling and firing their weapons. Almost instantly, some of the participants of the gathering changed sides and joined the approaching Kazakhs. A "wild shootout" started that lasted almost three hours, and the Russians withdrew. One of them was killed in action and had to be buried *in situ*. In total, there were two more wounded in Vserossiiskii's troop; money and equipment had been lost to the Kazakhs who lost six men in action for their part.⁴⁸ The uprising raged through the colonial territory. Everywhere, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz spontaneously joined the groups of rebel fighters. For some the uprising may have offered a possibility to escape the imminent labour conscription, while for others it was an act of desperation, born of the sense that they would rather die there than at the front.

Kuropatkin telegraphed on 31 July that a few thousand Kirgiz – in mid-August the talk was about 10,000 to 20,000 insurgents in Semirech'e⁴⁹ – had raided the station of Syugata (Issyq-Ata, today in northern Kyrgyzstan). Russian peasants who were about to gather the harvest were killed.⁵⁰ Captain Zheleznyakov telegraphed on 7 August that the whole of Semirech'e had been seized by the uprising. The insurgents were deliberately destroying the telephone poles of the Russians; the line to Tashkent was already destroyed.⁵¹ On 9 August, three days after the turmoil had started in Semirech'e, all posting houses between Kurdai and Vernyi were destroyed.⁵²

There were numerous reports of destroyed telegraph poles.⁵³ It was obviously the aim of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz to weaken the communications of the Russian colonial power.⁵⁴ It seems that they had knowledge of their Russian colonial masters and their techniques of rule. In this one can see the fragile modernity of the Empire, because the telegraph had become a sign of sovereignty that marked the entry of Semirech'e into the modern age. For the Russians their sovereignty hung on the telegraph poles like a thread – this was even more the case for the people who worked at the telegraph offices.⁵⁵ For the locals, the telegraph pole stood for the ability of the Russians to vanquish time and space and to order supplies of soldiers and new settlers to the region immediately. The nomadic warriors had realised that in these new times fast and

effective action was necessary against a military opponent who enjoyed technological superiority. Obviously, there were insurgents who knew the workings of the administration offices from the inside and called for the destruction of the telegraph poles.⁵⁶ By the deliberate destruction of communication lines, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz gained some initial success. The steppe warriors shifted their attacks towards the railway stations and the workers assigned there because they realised the danger that came from the railway.⁵⁷ However, already by early September the uprising in Semirech'e was losing momentum, as the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz increasingly turned to flight in the face of Russian punitive measures.

After the violence inflicted by the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in Semirech'e on the Russian settlers in July and August 1916, as Niccolò Pianciola shows elsewhere in this volume, there was a still greater degree of violence from the Russian side. Military officials prioritised action rather than manoeuvring and observing. After a moment of shock, the military power organised itself. The Russian troops pursued nomad formations in order to encircle them. Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were forced to flee. This was difficult for them because they were often moving with their families and cattle herds.⁵⁸ Hence Russian punitive expeditions, made up of both troops and vigilantes, were successful in rounding up and killing large numbers – although, as Alexander Morrison shows elsewhere in this volume, they were rarely concerned with distinguishing the innocent from the guilty. On 25 August, General Erofeev reported that one corps had not only killed about 150 Kazakhs but also obtained 4,340 sheep and twenty-three camels.⁵⁹ The colonial power acted with the same speed when it came to investigating how many settlers had died and how many were missing. On 30 September, Kuropatkin stated that there were 1,803 dead and 1,212 missing Russians in Semirech'e alone.⁶⁰

The colonial power and with it many who before the uprising had called for a humane policy towards the nomads now turned to oppression.⁶¹ Officials and inhabitants who had warned against the explosion of violence had been ignored. Everywhere feelings of revenge were expressed.⁶² The military response to the crisis management gave the lie to the great claims made for a legitimate, enlightened and civilised tsarist regime in the periphery of the Empire. The counterinsurgency to crush the uprising was cruel.⁶³ The colonial regime came under pressure in the metropole for failing to offer an adequate justification either for the outbreak of the uprising or for the means used for its suppression. Duma representatives were dismayed by the incidents in Central Asia. Alexander Kerensky reported with consternation on his journey to Turkestan in a secret meeting on 13 December 1916. Russians as well as natives had been victims of horrific and tragic events.⁶⁴ Kerensky's critique was mainly about using the outbreak and suppression of the 1916 revolt as a weapon with which to castigate the Government. Yet, the Duma did not have any

real control over the events and the further course of the suppression of the uprising.⁶⁵

Not only had most of those conscripted defied the order of the Tsar to present themselves for labour service to relieve the front line, but regular troops from European Russia and the Caucasian front had to be withdrawn and sent to Turkestan in order to suppress the uprising.⁶⁶ On 11 August 1916, General Erofeev sent a report about the redeployment of troops. According to this, one cavalry brigade with a battery of artillery had been sent from Europe to Central Asia in order to quell the uprising in the districts of Semirech'e. On 28 August, Governor-General Kuropatkin informed the governor of Semirech'e about further redeployments of troops from Europe.⁶⁷

Collaboration and treason: the interrogation and prosecution of insurgents

At this point the colonial power took uncompromising action, both on a military level and a legal level.⁶⁸ At the command of General Folbaum on 24 August 1916, military courts were established. They were to sit in judgement on the uprising against the tsarist regime: treason, deliberate arson and the destruction of stocks and fodder, the devastation of the infrastructure such as bridges, telegraph poles and railway tracks, as well as the violence against and the murder of administrative officials and policemen. The investigations were meant to include a short description of the incidents, a conclusion, a list of witnesses and a personal hearing.⁶⁹ Already on 14 August 1916, the tribunal authorities had prepared themselves for the upcoming trials against the insurgents. The prosecutor of the District Court in Vernyi asked to be informed weekly about every trial that was related to the uprising.⁷⁰ Due to insufficient evidence, verdicts of not guilty were given to some alleged insurgents.⁷¹

The Russian response to the uprising was many-voiced. The desire for a violent suppression of the revolt was predominant but there were also voices who wanted to calm the situation down. Their propositions were not ratified, but they were tolerated by the regime. Alexander Kerensky had assured the people on his visits to Andijan at the time of the uprising in 1916 that there were people in Russia who were not indifferent towards Central Asians. The Tatar Duma representative K. B. Tevkelev advised the locals to await the events without disturbance or excitement. Those journeys and commentaries were eyed suspiciously by the tsarist secret service and military officers.⁷²

While suppressing the uprising, the colonial power received support from some natives who helped to free prisoners.⁷³ Also, some defectors from the insurgent groups joined the Russians.⁷⁴ During the evacuation

of the village of Stolypino in Semirech'e, that had been encircled and later destroyed by Kyrgyz, twenty-six Kyrgyz, primarily from the local administration, gave assistance, and these helpers were honoured.⁷⁵ For the troop leader Konstantin Bobrov who was moving towards Zhungal and Kochkorka where the village of Stolypino was situated, the locals organised the bivouacs, built yurts, took care of the food, slaughtered cattle and took care of forage for the horses. They also collected news from the region, and every administrative district had to provide 200 horses.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the revenge of the Russian troops took on violent features. Notoriously, a large group of more than 500 Kyrgyz was massacred in a valley near Pishpek (the Belovodskaya massacre) in the early stages of the uprising.⁷⁷ In Tashkent 10,000 people demonstrated against the "slaughter" in Semirech'e on 19 August 1916.⁷⁸ Even Kerensky had claimed as Duma representative after a trip to Central Asia that local inhabitants were "exterminated, by tens of thousands, in an organised and systematic manner".⁷⁹ In his speeches he complained about the misguided handling of the nomads and presented official documents: "Those Kirgiz who fell into the hands of the local administrations were rigorously punished, beaten or they fled into the desert where they died."⁸⁰ The German prisoner of war, the officer Fritz Willfort, reported in his diary about war crimes, that included a round-up of around 1,000 insurgents who were relentlessly shot down with machine guns.⁸¹

Duma delegates were also informed about disturbances in Semipalatinsk on the Irtysh in the northern steppe. Two telegrams sent on 11 December 1916 and addressed to two Muslim delegates to the Duma had been intercepted by the military.⁸² According to these, between 700 and 1,700 Kazakhs had been killed by punitive measures. On 17 December, General Manakin stated that while news about these incidents were not war secrets, the Minister of War should not allow telegrams of this kind to be published because they could be dangerous for the mood of society.⁸³ Tsarist policy aimed with all possible means for stabilisation because the turmoil at the periphery could not be kept from the centre.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, on 19 December, Manakin wanted to know what had really happened. Four days later, General Sandetskii, a Cossack commander, explained that no nomads had been murdered, and the investigation was thereby closed.⁸⁵ On 31 December, Manakin concluded that the incidents were just normal combat operations.⁸⁶ That Sandetskii had been lying could easily be seen from one of his reports to the general staff. For example, on 27 January 1917 he reported some apparently typical reprisal actions. Two Cossacks had been gruesomely killed by Kazakhs, whereupon their fellows attacked the Kazakhs with machine guns and artillery. About 100 dead were the result. Those who survived fled into the steppe where it was around minus 20 degrees and a blizzard was raging.⁸⁷

In the course of October 1916, the Russians brought the situation in large parts of Semirech'e under control again. There 1,300 homesteads had been destroyed and 1,000 had been burned. Kuropatkin declared that wherever Russian blood had been spilled, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were to be expropriated and expelled.⁸⁸ According to him, the natives had forfeited the right to live together with the Russians because of the uprising, and "proposed creating an ethnically-cleansed zone for Russian settlement on the best land in the region around Issyq-Kul, with Kyrgyz forcibly relocated to mountainous areas near Naryn."⁸⁹ The plans concerning this were already published in the *Semirechenskie oblastnye vedomosti* (no. 251) on 25 September 1916.⁹⁰ Some 37,355 Kazakh and Kyrgyz households and around 2,510,361 *desyatinas* of land were affected, according to this data.⁹¹ Sixteen per cent of Kazakh and Kyrgyz land was expropriated while the Slavic population grew to 23 per cent of the entire population.⁹²

While historical research has primarily concentrated on the ethnic cleansing (*chistka*) initiated by Kuropatkin in Semirech'e,⁹³ his attempts to rebuild the shattered province have received less attention.⁹⁴ Kuropatkin was ruthless, but he argued early on during the uprising for a possible return of the fugitives who had fled to China.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, succouring the Russian population was clearly a higher priority. On 5 November, he wrote to the Secretary of Agriculture that clothes for 62,000 people were desperately needed, especially because winter was around the corner.⁹⁶ On 22 September, Kuropatkin announced that he would be visiting Vernyi, Pishpek and the surrounding area early the following month to see the devastation for himself.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Premonitory rumours already showed that the atmosphere in the colony was extremely tense before the outbreak of the revolt. The uprising broke out because the colonial power did not listen to its critics or even to its supporters like Count Pahlen, disregarded old conventions and rights and acted without due consideration. Eventually, many Imperial civil servants demanded the conscription of the natives to serve behind the front lines. It seems to have had more to do with the perceived breach of a *Russian* guarantee not to recruit Muslims, so that people interpreted it as both a breach of the colonial order and a prelude to forced conversion or the expropriation of land. Vigilantism was the result. If at the beginning, the families of settlers fled from the insurgents, the nomads now saved their own lives by trying to migrate to China, which brought with it further deprivation and suffering. In the conflict between the settlers and the nomads, the Central Asians significantly lost ground: the uprising made nomads enemies of the tsarist regime. The land now was

free of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, who had impeded the Russian settlement movement.⁹⁸

Who was responsible for the revolt? When writing to their superiors, the colonial bureaucrats and military officers mainly held Islam and German agents to be responsible. But both factors played, if at all, a minor role. The uprising was a home-grown catastrophe, based on domestic political decisions such as the agrarian reform (1906/1907) of the former Prime Minister Petr Stolypin. Victims could be found on both sides. Even if it seems that Kazakhs and Kyrgyz constituted the biggest group of victims based on the immense number of victims and the 200,000 expellees, it should not be forgotten that the uprising of 1916 – as the debate in the Duma in mid-December 1916 showed – had a direct impact upon the domestic politics of the unstable Empire. The various protagonists, such as the colonist Micheev in 1916/1917, were aware that this would have far-reaching consequences. The revolt of 1916 took place at the periphery of the tsarist empire but the impact of it could also and especially be felt in St Petersburg.

Notes

- 1 Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution. Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Daniel R. Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).
- 2 Vladimir V. Korneev, "Upravlenie Turkestanskim kraem: realnost' i 'pravovye mechtaniya' (60-e gody XIX v. – fevral' 1917 goda)", *Voprosy Istorii* 7 (2001), 63; Steven Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 37–38; Andreas Kappeler, "Russlands zentralasiatische Kolonien bis 1917", in Bert G. Fragner and Andreas Kappeler (eds.), *Zentralasien. 13. bis 20. Jahrhundert, Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Wien: promedia, 2006), 155.
- 3 Baxtiyar M. Babadzhanov, "Dūkči İšan und der Aufstand von Andižan 1898", in Anke von Kügelgen and Michael Kemper and Allen J. Frank (eds.), *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* (Berlin: Schwarz, 1998), 167–191; Hisao Komatsu, "The Andijan Uprising Reconsidered", in Sato Tsugitaka (ed.), *Muslim Societies: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2005), 29–60; Alexander Morrison, "Sufism, Pan-Islamism and Information Panic: Nil Sergeevich Lykoshin and the Aftermath of the Andijan Uprising", *Past and Present* 214 (2012), 255–304.
- 4 Babadzhanov, "Dūkči İšan", 184 n. 73.
- 5 "Andizhanskoe vosstanie 1898g", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 38/3 (1939).
- 6 Babadzhanov, "Dūkči İšan", 190–191; Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar. Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 260, 288–299, 301; Alexander Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford

- University Press, 2008); Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, "Tsarist Educational Policy in Turkestan, 1867–1917", *Central Asian Review* 4 (1963), 382; Elena I. Kémpbell, "Musul'manskii vopros v Rossii: Istoriya obsuzhdeniya problemy", *Istoricheskie Zapiski* 122/4 (2001), 135–136.
- 7 Reinhart Koselleck, "'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont' – zwei historische Kategorien", in Reinhart Koselleck (ed.), *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 354–359.
 - 8 P. G. Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Izd. Sr.-Az. Kom. Un-ta, 1926), claims that the much more widespread distribution of arms to Russian settlers after Andijan made the massacres of 1916 possible. The other point is, while they certainly drew pessimistic conclusions about the likelihood of future conflict from Andijan, they mostly seem to have been convinced that the main danger came from "fanatical" Islam, which turned out to be quite erroneous.
 - 9 Harald Fischer-Tiné and Christine Whyte, "Introduction: Empires and Emotions", in Harald Fischer-Tiné (ed.), *Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings: Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11.
 - 10 Alexander Morrison, "'Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region': The Pahlen Report and Pereselenie in Turkestan, 1908–1910", *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2006), 14; P. N. Sharova, "Pereselencheskaya politika Tsarizma v Srednei Azii", *Istoricheskie zapiski* 8 (1940), 11.
 - 11 Land used for both pastoralism and agriculture by Kazakhs and Kyrgyz – under the Steppe Statute of 1891 the Russians refused to recognise any nomadic rights of ownership over this land.
 - 12 See Morrison, "Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region", 9–10, 22–24.
 - 13 Peter Holquist, "To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia", in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 120.
 - 14 In Holquist, "To Count", 121.
 - 15 My thanks to Aminat Chokobaeva for alerting me to this. See Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev*.
 - 16 RGVA F.1396 Op. 2 D.737 l.35.
 - 17 GARF F.102, DP o.o., Op. 1915g., D.20 ch.84 l B, l.16.
 - 18 GARF F.102, DP o.o., Op. 1915g., D.20 ch.84 l B, l.19.
 - 19 See Aleksandr Astashov, *Russkii front v 1914-nachale 1917 goda: voennyi opyt i sovremennoost'* (Moscow: Novyi khronograf, 2014), esp. ch. 3, pt. 2: "Russkii front v informatsionnom pole sovremennoi voiny". Astashov analysed the reports of the military censor, which used soldiers' letters to try to understand mentalities and material conditions at the front. See also William Rosenberg, "Reading Soldiers' Moods: Russian Military Censorship and the Configuration of Feeling in World War I", *American Historical Review* 119/3 (2014), 714–40.
 - 20 GARF F.102, DP o.o., Op. 1915g., D.20 Ch.84 l B, l.90.
 - 21 Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 134.

- 22 This was a case of government paranoia. See: Boris Kolonitskii, “The Desacralization of the Monarchy: Rumors and ‘Political Pornography’ during World War I”, in Igal Halfin (ed.), *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities* (London and Portland Or.: Frank Cass, 2002), 47–82; Corinne Gaudin, “Circulation and Production of News and Rumor in Rural Russia during World War I”, in Melissa K. Stockdale, et al. (eds.), *Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914–22: Political Culture, Identities, Mentalities, and Memory, Volume 2* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2014), 55–72; Corinne Gaudin, “Rural Echoes of World War I: War Talk in the Russian Village”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 56/3 (September 2008), 391–414; William C. Fuller, *The Foe Within: Fantasies of Treason and the End of Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).
- 23 Peter Holquist, “‘In Accord with State Interests and the People’s Wishes’: The Technocratic Ideology of Imperial Russia’s Resettlement Administration”, *Slavic Review* 69/1 (2010), 151–179.
- 24 A. V. Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 25–26; P. A. Kovalev, *Tylovye rabochie Turkestana v gody Pervoi Mirovoi Voiny (1916-Mai 1917 gg.)* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1957).
- 25 Seymour Becker, *Russia’s Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).
- 26 Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 717.
- 27 P. G. Galuzo (ed.), “Vosstanie 1916 g. v Srednei Azii. Iz dnevnika A.N. Kuropatkina”, *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 39–94, 48; Edward D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), 81.
- 28 Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall, zweite, durchges. Aufl.* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1993), 287.
- 29 TsGARKaz F.797 Op. 1 D.36 l.152; F.44 Op. 1, d. 5002; F.44 Op. 1 Tom 4, D.4990 l.337.
- 30 Dina A. Amanzholova, “Kazakhskoe obshchestvo v 1-i chetverty XX veka: problemy etnoidentifikatsii”, in Nikolai F. Bugai (ed.), *Rossiia i Kazakhstan: problemy istorii (XX – nachalo XXI veka)* (Moscow: Institut Rossiiskoi Istorii RAN, 2006), 34.
- 31 Rebecca W. Wendelken, “Russian Immigration and its Effect on the Kazak Steppes, 1552–1965”, in Andrew Bell-Fialkoff (ed.), *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe. Sedentary Civilisation vs. “Barbarian” and Nomad* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 83.
- 32 GARF F.102 DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365 ll.45–46ob.
- 33 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 ll.59-ob.
- 34 See, for instance, the classic work by Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 143–155. First published in 1932 as *La grande peur de 1789* (Paris: A. Colin), Lefebvre shows how France became politically polarised as rumours spread, while usually no one knew where they started. Once formulated and circulated, rumours engaged action.
- 35 “Sart” was a generic word for settled person or town-dweller, sometimes used as a self-definition, sometimes applied from the outside by nomads or Russians. Some spoke Tajik, some spoke Turkic, many were bilingual.

- 36 GARF F.102, DP o.o., op. 1916g., d. 365, ll.131a-131ob.
- 37 Zheleznyakov to Alekseev 01.10.1917 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D. 20075 ll.63-ob.
- 38 See Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Fuller, *The Foe Within*.
- 39 Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, 180.
- 40 GARF F.102 DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365, l.212. We do not have any further information about Marusya.
- 41 GARF F.102 DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365, l.213.
- 42 GARF F.102 DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365 ll.85–86.
- 43 Joshua Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 175–177.
- 44 GARF F.102 DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365 ll.218–220ob.
- 45 Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und zarische Politik. Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 160–175.
- 46 TsGARKaz F.41 Op. 1 D.327 ll.3–4ob.
- 47 TsGARKaz F.41 Op. 1 D.327 l.3ob.
- 48 TsGARKaz F.41 Op. 1 D.327 ll.4, 4ob.
- 49 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.231.
- 50 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.231.
- 51 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.232.
- 52 Kuropatkin to Nicholas II. In Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 89.
- 53 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546, l.255. See Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 181.
- 54 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.241.
- 55 GARF F.102, DP o.o. Op. 1915g. D.20 Ch.84 l B, l.132.
- 56 Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 733 n. 211.
- 57 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.296.
- 58 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.281.
- 59 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 ll.341, 406.
- 60 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.348.
- 61 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 196–203, 228–240.
- 62 Marco Buttino, *La rivoluzione capovolta. L'Asia centrale tra il crollo dell'impero zarista e la formazione dell'URSS* (Naples: L'ancora del mediterraneo, 2003), 69–85.
- 63 Jörg Baberowski, "Diktaturen der Eindeutigkeit. Ambivalenz und Gewalt im Zarenreich und in der frühen Sowjetunion", in Jörg Baberowski (ed.), *Moderne Zeiten? Krieg, Revolution und Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 49.
- 64 F. Bozhko, S. Volin and P. G. Galuzo (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii. Sbornik dokumentov* (Rossiiskaya gosudarstvennaya biblioteka, elektronnyi tekst, Moscow 2004 [Tashkent 1932]), 105–163; *Istoricheskii arkhiv 2* (1997): 4–22. GARF F.102, DP o.o. Op. 1916g. D.365, ll.127, 140, 164–158; N. E. Bekmakhanova, "Politicheskaya zhizn' v Tsentral'noi Azii posle 1905 g.", in S. N. Abashin et al. (eds.), *Tsentral'naya Aziya v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 277–292.
- 65 Jörn Happel, "Die Schande Russlands: Globale Perspektiven auf den Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916", in Martin Aust (ed.), *Globalisierung imperial und sozialistisch. Russland und die Sowjetunion in der Globalgeschichte 1851–1991*

- (Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2013), 182–203; S.V. Kuzina “Vosstanie 1916 g. v Kazakhstane i deyatel'nost' Gosudarstvennoi Dumi po uregolirovaniyu konflikta”, *Istoriya Kazakhstana: Prepodavanie v shkole* 6 (2006), 35; Omirzak Ozganbai, *Gosudarstvennaya Duma v Rossii i Kazakhstan, 1905–1917 gg.* (Almaty: Arys, 2000).
- 66 Manash K. Kozybaev et al. (eds.), *Istoriia Kazakhstana* (Almaty: Atamura, 2000), vol. 3, 649; Sandzhar D. Asfendiarov, *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane* (Rossiiskaya gosudarstvennaya biblioteka, elektronnyi tekst, Moscow 2004 [Alma-Ata and Moscow 1936]), 96–98.
- 67 RGVIA F.1396, Op. 2, D.546, ll.27–28.
- 68 Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 640; Norida Abdurakhimova et al., *Kolonial'naya sistema vlasti v Turkestane vo vtoroi polovine XIX – pervoi chetverti XX v.v.* (Tashkent: Universitet, 1999), 84.
- 69 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.5028 Tom 4 ll.21–22.
- 70 TsGARKaz F.818 Op. 1 D.6 ll.13-*ob.*
- 71 Pyaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 677.
- 72 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.294.
- 73 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.305*ob.*
- 74 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.306.
- 75 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1, D.5083 Tom 4 ll.45–46, 164–169, 177–179, 208–211.
- 76 TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 Kn.1, d.515 ll.26-*ob.*; F.44 Op. 1 D.5083 Tom 4 ll.118*ob.*, 119*ob.*
- 77 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 143–146.
- 78 Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, 197.
- 79 In Holquist, “To Count”, 121.
- 80 GARF F.102, DP o.o., Op. 1916g. D.365 ll.155*ob.*, 159.
- 81 Fritz Willfort, *Turkestanisches Tagebuch. Sechs Jahre in Russisch-Zentralasien* (Wien and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1930), 81.
- 82 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 4521 ll.78–79.
- 83 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 4521 ll.81–82.
- 84 Jörg Baberowski, “Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit: Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und in der Sowjetunion”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47/4 (1999), 495.
- 85 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4521 ll.86–87.
- 86 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4521 l.90.
- 87 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.330.
- 88 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 ll.363, 380.
- 89 “In effect, Kuropatkin wanted to impose what would have been a system of apartheid” – Alexander Morrison, “Central Asia: Interpreting and Remembering the 1916 Revolt”, <https://eurasianet.org/central-asia-interpreting-and-remembering-1916-revolt>.
- 90 Valentin S. Dyakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros vo vnutrennei politike tsarizma (XIX – nachalo XX vv.)* (St Petersburg: Liss, 1998), 933.
- 91 M. K. Kozybaev (ed.), *Qaharly 1916 zhil.* (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1998), vol. 1, 84–88.
- 92 Gulnar Kendirbai, *Land and People: The Russian Colonization of the Kazak Steppe* (Berlin: ANOR, 2002), 68–69.

- 93 Peter Holquist, "Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905–21," *Kritika* 4/3 (2003), 635; Manash K. Kozybaev, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'naya voina 1916 g. v Kazakhstane: kontseptual'nye problemy", in Manash K. Kozybaev et al. (eds.), *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Kazakhstane i Srednei Azii v 1916 godu: kharakter, dvizhushchie sily, uroki: materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-teoreticheskoi konferentsii* (Almaty: Institut Istorii i Etnologii im. Ch. Valikhanova, 1996), 17.
- 94 D. V. Vasil'ev, "Tsentral'naya Aziya vo vnutrennei politike tsarskogo pravitel'stva", in Abashin et al. (eds.), *Tsentral'naya Aziya v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii*, 129–131.
- 95 In a telegram to the Secretary of War General Dmitrii Shuvaev from 18 August 1916: RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.258.
- 96 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 l.397.
- 97 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1, Tom 4: D.4976, ll.1, 2, 6, 10, 16, 22, 32.
- 98 Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, 162.

6

When the nomads went to war: the uprising of 1916 in Semirech'e

Aminat Chokobaeva

In August 1916, the native nomads of Semirech'e rose in a popular rebellion that for weeks reduced the colonial presence in the region to several beleaguered towns and settlements. Although colonial authority was restored already in September 1916, the fragile balance between the settlers and the native population was profoundly shaken.¹ The loss of life on both sides and the scale of the uprising, which claimed over 3,000 victims in the settler society, and led to a massive famine among the native nomads of Semirech'e, cast a critical reflection on the nearly seven decades of Russian rule.²

The uprising – predicted by many of the Empire's own colonial administrators – came to be seen by most contemporary observers as an expected, if particularly violent, response to the dispossession of the native farmers and pastoralists and the occupation of their lands by the Russian settlers. Commenting on the causes of the uprising in November 1916, the Military Governor of Semirech'e, Alexei Alekseev, argued that “the seizure of some 200,000 *desyatinas* of land over the past 10 years ought to be regarded as [among] the chief reasons of the Kyrgyz discontent that led to an open rebellion”.³

To a considerable extent, this view of the origins of the uprising in the enmity engendered by the nomads' growing destitution transposed onto the social fabric of the ethnically segregated colonial society holds true to this day. An assessment of the uprising that I present in this chapter does not aim to refute this argument but rather to problematise and historicise it. The conundrum that this chapter will address is the lethality of the rebellion. Put simply, I set out to understand why the death toll of the uprising, in both the settler and native societies, was highest in Semirech'e.

I examine the uprising within the context of the World War I. I argue that the social and economic dislocation of the war made ethnic ties more salient and more important to group survival. Equally importantly,

I see in the experiences of communal violence perpetrated and suffered by the native population of Semirech'e the constitution of ethnicity and ethnic identity as the basis for mobilisation.⁴ As this chapter will demonstrate, it was the intersection of ethnic mobilisation and the fear of destruction in the hands of the "enemy" group that gave rise to the mass nature of violence. Both parties to the conflict were driven in their actions by what they saw as a threat to their livelihoods and indeed their lives. The matter of perception is critical here. Although the threat posed by groups and individuals was often exaggerated, perceptions of the threat were real. That this threat was embodied by the aggregate group – rather than certain individuals – was the chief reason behind the indiscriminate targeting of the non-combatant, civilian population by both the rebels and the colonists.⁵ In other words, fear – and the concomitant anticipation of violence from the colonial society – provides sufficient motivations for the rebels to target settlers for murder.

I draw on police reports, military correspondence and depositions of witnesses and native participants of the uprising. I used the archives of *istoricheskii fond 75 (i-75)* of the Central State Archives of the Kyrgyz Republic (TsGA KR). My other sources come mainly from collections of documents published before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as some native accounts of the uprising published in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the first decade after independence. To examine these events from as many different perspectives as possible, I analyse several different accounts of the same events as well as native testimonies and oral histories. My key native "witness" is the Russian-educated Kazakh administrator Muhammadjan Tynyshbaev.

"A clap of thunder"

The announcement of the Imperial decree recruiting native men for labour in the rear was the decisive factor in the escalation of ethnic violence in Semirech'e and colony in general. It would be safe to argue that it was the beginning of the rebellion proper, and Tomohiko Uyama explains in this volume why it produced this response in Central Asia. It is possible to distinguish two stages in the development of the initial phase of the rebellion in the Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts, the site of the worst violence in the region. During the first stage, from the beginning of June to the first week of August, the native population mobilised by staging peaceful protests and petitioning the authorities for exemption from the draft. The repression with which the administration responded to these protests constitutes the second stage of the uprising. It was during the second stage that the violent repression of the peaceful protests met with an increasingly violent response of the

native nomads, generating in turn an even more destructive wave of violence by the military and settlers.

The draft was a desperate measure intended to plug a gaping hole left by the war in the draft-eligible male population. Despite drafting only sons and physically unfit men, and dropping the minimum draft age by two years, the military was still short of a million labourers at the front. In part, this shortage of labour was caused by the policies of ethnic cleansing targeting ethnic Jews and Germans in the Western borderlands of the Empire, as well as the flight of civilians from the destruction, violence and hunger.⁶ In May 1916, the Council of Ministers resolved to draft the *inorodtsy* of Turkestan for labour service.

The Council expected to be able to draft at least 480,000 men aged between nineteen and forty-three from the colony; 250,000 from governorate of Turkestan, and 230,000 from the steppe governorate. The numbers were calculated to reflect the number of native men of eligible age in every province and were further adjusted to ensure a sufficient labour pool in the cotton-growing areas of the region in both the current and the coming year.⁷ To compensate for the decrease in the number of workers in Ferghana and other cotton-sown areas of the region, the Council increased the quota that had to be fulfilled by Semirech'e.⁸ In the end, the "natives" of Semirech'e had to furnish 60,000 workers, or 18 per cent of the total male population of the province.⁹

The decree was signed by Nicholas II on 25 June. The official announcement of the draft was made in Vernyi, Pishpek and Przheval'sk in the first half of July.¹⁰ Immediately, panic set in. Rumours had spread that the natives were drafted for active military service; that is, that they were "taken as soldiers".¹¹ Still others believed that they would "dig trenches under the enemy fire" and that "this is the most dangerous work".¹² Seemingly eager to upset the Muslims, some of the settlers poured oil on the flames of their anxiety. "Out of mischief" some of the settlers "taunted Muslims into believing that they were being taken to the slaughter, while others figured that if Muslims will not furnish the workers, their land will be taken away from them in punishment and given to Russians".¹³ Not a few colonists gloated about the extension of conscription to the natives, whose exemption from military duty was a frequent source of envy.¹⁴

Equally unfortunate was the wording of the decree itself. Short and vague, it drafted native men for "the installation of defensive constructions and military communications in the area of active service by the army" (*v raione deistvuiushchei armii*) giving an impression that the draftees would be transferred to the combat zone.¹⁵ Individual announcements did even more to rouse the population. An announcement made by the military governor of Semirech'e in mid-July stated explicitly that the natives are being conscripted for trench works.¹⁶ Some observers, including a

group of Kazakh intelligentsia, put the blame on “semi-literate” native translators who were unfamiliar with the terminology of the draft and translated it “incorrectly and unclearly”. “In their interpretation,” the group concluded, “it appeared that the Kyrgyz were conscripted as ‘soldiers’ and would be taken to the front without any prior training.”¹⁷

A native functionary compared the effect that the draft had on nomads to

a state not too dissimilar to that of cattle plagued by gadfly in the month of May, when, tormented by the intolerable pain, it jerks violently from side to side with its tail raised, and is unable to make out either pits or deep ravines that it can fall into.¹⁸

Another official described the draft as “thunder in a clear sky”.¹⁹

The storm gathers: the mobilisation of native society

As official announcements were made in Semirech'e in mid-July more than one family decided to vote with their feet and crossed the border into China.²⁰ The first crossings into China began, according to the native translator of the Przheval'sk district administration, Tulembai Diusebaev, immediately after the announcement of the draft in Przheval'sk district on 13 July. The majority of those fleeing were young unmarried men of draft age.²¹ The first exodus was followed days later by the flight of native farmhands who “under various excuses” left their Russian employers.²² By the end of the month, the exodus of the nomads to China took on a more organised form; families and entire clans crossed the border. Some observers noted the sudden rush of Kyrgyz buyers at the local markets and the steep rise in prices on horses and staple foods.²³ Horses in particular fetched four or five times the regular price.²⁴

Not everyone was able or willing to leave their animals and farms and move across the border. Naturally, apprehension about the draft and discontent with the mounting pressures and demands of the administration grew. As in the sedentary areas of the colony, the natives' anger was at first directed at the native administrators responsible for drawing up the lists. Fearing for their lives, some of these administrators approached the colonial authorities with the request for protection. Less than two weeks after the announcement in Przheval'sk, on 23 July, native *volost'* administrators informed the head of the district, Colonel Ivanov, that their native constituencies threatened to kill them if they gave the authorities the lists of eligible men.²⁵ They pleaded with Ivanov to put them into prison to both ensure their safety and to put an end to rumours that they were in cahoots with the administration. Ivanov refused the request.

Ivanov's dismissal of the native administrators, most of whom belonged to a small group of native elites, is the likely explanation for the elite's participation in and leadership of the rebellion in this region of Semirech'e. According to the Dragoman of the Russian consulate in Kashgar, Georgii Stefanovich, "in virtually every *volost'* the *volost'* heads were the leaders of the revolt".²⁶ A comparison of the lists of Ivanov's native supplicants, produced by Duisebaev, with that of the uprising's principal leaders confirms Stefanovich's claim; with the exception of the Ulakhol *volost'* head, the administrators of eighteen other *volosts* led the uprising in their respective *volost'*.²⁷

At about the same time, individuals emerged from among the nomads who opposed the draft and called on their communities to protest against it. The majority of these "agitators", as they were referred to by the colonial administration, were of humble background, but enjoyed a degree of popularity with local communities and were known as *baatyr*s – individuals of military prowess proven in daring exploits against enemies. Several of such *baatyr*s that figure prominently in police reports and witness depositions are Uzak Saurukov (Saurykov in contemporary Kazakh historiography) and Jamanke Mambetov of the Vernyi district and Alimqul Taubaldin (Alymkul Tabaldin in contemporary Kyrgyz sources) and Egemberdi Sarykov of the Pishpek district.²⁸ Wary of potential disruptions to the draft, the administration targeted these men and their supporters for arrest. In the second half of July, the authorities seized dozens of people suspected of agitation against the conscription. On 17 July alone, thirty-four "agitators" were arrested in three *volosts* of the Vernyi district.²⁹ Often, the arrests were made during the official announcements of the draft. Anyone who voiced their disagreement with the draft or expressed their doubts was at risk of being arrested. At Ivanov's announcement in Przhival'sk, one of the attending Kyrgyz was arrested after remarking that "the Kyrgyz will perish if they are sent to the labour *army*. In such a case, death at home would be preferable."³⁰ On 17 July, Ivanov dispatched Diusebaev to arrest an agitator in the area of Karkara.³¹

The wave of arrests failed to quell the discontent and angered native society.³² The deployment of armed police, Cossacks and, occasionally, soldiers to arrest the popular leaders and break peaceful protests had further alienated the nomads.³³ A report of the scribe of the Al'dzhanskaia *volost'* of the Zharkent district, Komarov (full name unknown), to the police head of the Narynkol area, suggests that a decision was taking shape at the *volost'* level to resist the draft. At a meeting with the *volost'* elders (*starshina*) and representatives of fifty households (*piatidesiatnik*) of the Al'dzhanskaia *volost'*, the attendees "unanimously declared ... that they did not wish to implement the draft" and maintained that "they would die here, at home, not on foreign soil. Even if all of them were

executed, they did not wish to work and would not give a single man.”³⁴ The crowd then forced the scribe to yield the lists of the drafted and demanded that the administration not detain the *volost*’ heads. Reporting on the same incident, the head of the Zharkent district, Nikolai Stupin, noted the resolve of the crowd to resist “to the last and kill anyone who assisted in the conscription.”³⁵

Similar instances of resistance to the draft were reported in other *volosts* of the province. On 7 July, the Dungan of the Dungan *volost*’ in the Zharkent district told Stupin that they “would rather die” than become labourers.³⁶ As tension was mounting, numerous communal meetings and gatherings were called by the native administrators and popular leaders to discuss the draft. Between 7 and 8 July, for example, such meetings were held in the areas of Issyq-Ata and Kegety, and the Dzhalil’myshevskaiia, and Chemalganskaia *volosts*.³⁷ The meetings were well attended; over 5,000 men and women gathered on 10 July in Ul’konzas.³⁸ Crucially, because the meetings took place outside the cities and towns they went largely unnoticed by the authorities, allowing the local communities to establish a popular base for the rebellion.³⁹ The decision to resist “coercion by the administration” by taking “violent and hostile measures ... against the government and the Russian population” was reached in the course of negotiations within and between the *volosts*.⁴⁰ A description of one such assembly – on the eve of the uprising – between the Atekinkaia and Sarybaghishevskaiia *volosts* is given in the deposition of a native Pishpek resident, Mulla-Sufi Konushpaev. According to Konushpaev, the first call to arms against the authorities came from Alimqul Taubaldin, who “vehemently agitated” against the draft, and took an oath, along with 100 other men of the Atekinkaia *volost*’, to “die fighting the Russians” in early August. The meeting of the Ateke and Sarybaghysh Kyrgyz took place on the day of the uprising, immediately after the first attacks of the Sarybaghysh Kyrgyz on the neighbouring Russian settlements, on 7 August.⁴¹ The dignitaries (or “honourable persons”, as they were known in colonial parlance, included figures as diverse as native administrators, community elders, popular leaders and religious figures), of the two *volosts* gathered on the bridge over the Kebin river and, after an exchange of vows, proclaimed the brother of the Sarybaghishevskaiia *volost*’ head, Makush Shabdanov, their khan.⁴²

The assemblies solidified opposition to the draft and ensured the cohesion of the future rebel army; here, agreements were reached, oaths of loyalty given, and sacrificial horses slain.⁴³ As the popular consensus for armed resistance to the draft took shape, the initial spur of mobilisation, triggered by the flight to China, gave way to comprehensive mass mobilisation of the native society. The would-be rebels raised an army by drafting men in each *volost*’ and forming military detachments led,

as a rule, by their respective heads (who, as has been noted above, were often in the service of the Colonial Government). Women, too, were not spared the mobilisation. Their role in the native protests was remarkably similar to that of the Russian women in the food riots half a year earlier. A few administrators noted their presence at the sites of the workers' registration. From what we know, there were no women in combat, but their indirect participation included cheering on men going into battle and keeping watch over the captives, who, in another gendered twist, were mainly Russian women.⁴⁴

Although the capacity for violence, engendered in the mass mobilisation of the native society, was fully realised in the course of the rebellion, it did not in itself cause the rebellion. The transition from mass mobilisation to mass violence occurred in the course of increasingly violent clashes between the native communities and the authorities. The threat perception that the punitive forces represented to the nomads was crucial to the escalation of violence. The repressive measures taken by the administration in response to the attempts of the native communities to negotiate the terms of the draft or evade it by fleeing galvanised resistance to the authorities and the colonial society at large. Animated by fear and a collective sense of victimhood and persecution, the native nomads sought not so much to right the injustices of colonial rule as to simply survive.

Numerous petitions and depositions convey the sense of desperation and entrapment prevalent among the Semirech'e's nomads. In explaining their flight to China – although carefully avoiding the subject of the rebellion – the Kyrgyz of the eight *volosts* of the Przheval'sk district indicate that the administration threatened them with execution if they failed to furnish eligible men. The execution of the arrested Kyrgyz in the Przheval'sk prison confirmed their worst fears.⁴⁵ A pointed remark by a native judge to the scribe Komarov that the authorities are mistaken in thinking that “the Muslims can be conscripted like sheep taken to slaughter” lends weight to the sense of apprehension among the nomads about the meaning of the draft and the intentions of the Government.⁴⁶ That the anxieties about the perceived impending massacre at the hands of the Colonial Government were central to the mobilisation of the native population is further evidenced in the telegram of the acting Governor-General of Turkestan, Mikhail Erofeev, to the Minister of War, Dmitrii Shuvaev, informing him that

at one of the Kirgiz meetings in the Semirech'e province, speakers claimed that Russians want to pick the healthiest element [*sic*] from among the Muslims and send them to the theatre of war before the Russian soldiers, where Russian and German troops will decimate them, thereby achieving the goal conceived by Russians of destroying the Muslim population.⁴⁷

That their fears were not unfounded was demonstrated to the nomads by the series of ethnic clashes between settlers and native traders. The first incidents of such conflict occurred in the sedentary areas of Turkestan, where the dependence of the largely urban colonist population on native farmers had prompted ethnic riots targeted at the native population, whose perceived control of food staples in the region became a rallying call for mobilisation. These food riots, which lasted throughout the winter and spring of 1916, reveal an emerging pattern of ethnic conflict.

The first incident of a so-called “women’s riot” (*babii bunt*) took place in Tashkent on the last day of February 1916.⁴⁸ Spurred on by rumours of potato hoarding by the native traders, a group of European women marched towards one of the markets.⁴⁹ By the time the women reached the market they were joined by other angry European Tashkenters, both men and women, who converged on the market, looting stalls and beating the native traders. As word of the pogrom travelled, crowds of European residents descended on six other markets in the city. The next day, the riots spread to still more markets. Similar – although considerably smaller – riots ravaged the markets of Cherniaev, Krivosheino and Perovsk days after the first *babii bunt* in Tashkent.⁵⁰ Several market rows were deliberately set alight in the town of Aulie-Ata in Syr-Darya province.⁵¹

By April 1916, the riots spread to Przheval’sk and Pishpek districts, where *soldatki*, the wives and widows of Russian soldiers at the front, openly looted the market stalls of native traders. According to a Russian witness, the riots impressed on the Kyrgyz that “the plunder of Sarts’ property today will turn into the plunder of Kirgiz tomorrow”.⁵² At the same time, he observes, “the Kirgiz could not but speculate about the impending danger that the Russians posed to them”.⁵³ The authorities downplayed the extent of the damage and few, if any, compensations were paid. The ramifications of the food riots were, however, significant. First, the ethnically targeted nature of the riots suggested a sharp rise in the settlers’ hostility towards the native population at large. Second, the leniency of the authorities in dealing with the protesters cemented the colonists’ belief that food could be extracted from the native population by force. Finally, the riots sent a signal to the native population that the administration protected the interests of European colonists at the expense of the native society.

“The reckless rebellion of the savage nomads”

The festering discontent of the nomads reached a point of no return in early August. The first violent clashes between the authorities and the nomads happened in the Lepsinsk district between 24 July and 1 August, when a border patrol attempted to detain families crossing the border.⁵⁴

The Kazakhs opened fire in response. Two incidents that followed in the wake of the events in Lepsinsk district mark the beginning of the Semirech'e rebellion proper, with attendant violence and targeted assaults on the settlers. What makes these incidents particularly noteworthy is the presence of two conflicting accounts, by a native administrator, the Kazakh engineer Muhammadjan Tynyshbaev and a Russian scribe, Petr Driupin. Although markedly different in their reading of the events, both accounts highlight the role of fear in the rise of violence. Read against each other, these two accounts offer an insight into how both groups interpreted each other's motivations and how they acted on them. They illustrate that the rebellion was as much a spontaneous response to the perceived threat, against which a defensive action had to be taken, as an act of organised resistance.

According to Tynyshbaev, the first incident took place on 3 August in the Kyzylboruk (Kyzylburovskaia) *volost'* in the eastern part of the Vernyi district, where the assistant head of the district, Khlynovskii, accompanied by the District Police Captain Kulaev and fifteen soldiers and policemen, took several Kazakh dignitaries hostage in an effort to force the *volost'* to produce the lists within five hours.⁵⁵ After approaching Khlynovskii on at least three different occasions with the request to release the arrested and to delay the draft, the crowd grew increasingly impatient. In what seems to have been an attempt to disperse the crowd, Khlynovskii fired into the air; mistaking it for a signal to shoot, his men fired into the crowd, killing two Kazakhs. As the angry crowd surrounded the station in response to the shooting, one of the protesters, armed with a hunting rifle, killed a policeman. A punitive expedition consisting of a Cossack cavalry squadron and a half-company was despatched to the area on the same day.⁵⁶

The second incident occurred in the Botpaev (Botpaevskaia) *volost'* of the Vernyi district three days later, on 6 August. The trigger in this case was the machinations of the native *volost'* head, who used the occasion to include only the Kazakhs of the rival party in the lists.⁵⁷ As Tomohiko Uyama notes in his paper in this volume, the absence of metrical books in Turkestan gave native administrators the opportunity to manipulate the lists of recruits. Seeking justice, the aggrieved party approached the District Police Captain Gilev. Gilev, however, sided with the *volost'* head who claimed that the rival group was plotting to revolt. To put down the disturbances, Gilev led a group of twenty policemen against the rival party in the area of the Samsy station. The arrival of armed men in the *volost'* alarmed its native population, which gathered in a large crowd. What happened next mirrors the earlier events of the Kyzylboruk incident. Angered by the presence of armed policemen, the agitated crowd of locals surrounded Gilev and his men forcing them first to retreat and then to fire into the crowd, killing twelve Kazakhs.

Driupin's version of events diverges from Tynyshbaev's at one critical juncture; in his reading of the precipitating events, Driupin focuses on the precedence of the nomads' hostile actions and the premeditated nature of the attack and fails to mention the hostile actions of the colonial administrators, such as the arrests of the Kazakh dignitaries. According to Driupin, Khlynovskii's visit to Kyzylboruk *volost'* was prompted by the reports of the refusal of the *volost'* to furnish the labourers. To ensure the timely submission of the lists, Khlynovskii arrived in the *volost'* on 1 August, two days earlier than suggested by Tynyshbaev. Here, he ordered the native *volost'* head to convene a meeting the next day to produce the lists. Despite the orders, no one showed up for the meeting on 2 August. The same evening, the District Police Captain Skluiev (Kulaev in Tynyshbaev's deposition) arrived with ten soldiers and two policemen (three men short of the fifteen men in Tynyshbaev's account). Apparently, Skluiev was acting on the reports of a native conspiracy to "massacre the Russians" at night, which in fact did not happen. The meeting was convened the next day, on 3 August. Sometime after the meeting commenced, a group of crying women threw themselves at the men compiling the lists but was led away. When the women rushed forward a second time, a group of mounted Kazakhs armed with spears, sticks, and a few hunting rifles rode out of the nearby forest and opened fire, killing one of the soldiers and wounding another. Khlynovskii and his men returned fire, but the crowd only grew thicker. As the Russians retreated they abandoned their belongings, which momentarily distracted the crowd and gave them a chance to cross the river and escape.⁵⁸

Driupin concludes his deposition with Khlynovskii's allegation that on 8 July, nearly a month before the events in Kyzylboruk and Botbaevo, "all the more or less influential Kyrgyz" of the Kyzylburovskaya (Kyzylboruk) and Siugatinskaia *volosts* held a council and resolved not to provide the workers "even if they have to die for that."⁵⁹ Contrast this with Tynyshbaev's contention that both incidents were "caused entirely by the actions" of the colonial administrators, namely Khlynovskii and Gilev, and his conclusion that "the identical actions of the administration's representatives led to identical results: 1) Khlynovskii came to the peaceful *kyzylboruktsy* with a detachment and provoked an assault; 2) Gilev came to Samsy with a detachment – the Kirgiz (Kazakhs) attacked the detachment."⁶⁰ It is inescapable that both Tynyshbaev and Driupin seek to assign guilt, but where Tynyshbaev points an accusatory finger at the authorities, Driupin holds the natives to account.

The question then boils down to who started the conflict. Both Tynyshbaev and Driupin attempt to answer the question by establishing the sequence of events, where the aggrieved party is forced to respond to the threatening actions of the offending party. It is ultimately of little relevance who fired the first shot. What these two accounts clearly

demonstrate is the importance of perceptions and emotions in the conflict. Both testimonies highlight the shared nature of fear. The nomads were intimidated by the soldiers' guns, but the soldiers were also intimidated by the large crowds. The violent clashes like the ones above escalated into a self-perpetuating cycle of violence where the violent suppression of protests by the authorities led to further disturbances, thereby triggering a new wave of repressions.⁶¹

Tynyshbaev's testimony stands out in particular because it succeeds in grasping the contingency of the conflict. His moment-by-moment account of the first violent engagements between the authorities and the nomads offers a clue into the motives, interests and fears at the heart of the conflict. He traces the turning point in the escalation of violence to the flight of the terrified Kazakhs of the Botpaevskaia *volost'* into the neighbouring Pishpek district between 6 and 7 August. Fleeing from a punitive expedition consisting of a Cossack *sotnia*, one infantry company, and a settler militia, groups of Kazakhs destroyed the telegraph, plundered the station and rustled cattle.⁶² In pursuit of the fleeing Kazakhs, the expedition seized and executed several Kazakh coachmen near the station of Otar.⁶³ The now rebellious nomads of Botpaevskaia *volost'* responded in kind, killing sixteen and taking thirty-five settlers captive.⁶⁴

The flight of the Kazakhs to the Pishpek district between 6 and 7 August triggered a series of events culminating in the launch of concurrent attacks on the settlements and the siege of the city of Toqmaq. The fleeing Kazakhs soon reached the Pishpek district. The arrival of panicky Kazakhs in the Pishpek district spread further panic among the Kazakhs of the Dzhanyshvetskaia (Dzhanysskaia in Tynyshbaev's account) and Chumichevskaiia *volosts* (of the Pishpek district), who "fearing that the punitive detachments will come after their Botpaevskaia kin" fled to the Atekinaia and Sarybagishevskaiia *volosts*. This fear was not unfounded, as the Pishpek district judge has noted, because "soldiers and Cossacks killed many Kirgiz as they passed through the Chumichevskaiia *volost'*".⁶⁵ From there, the rebellion spread and became increasingly violent.

One of the reports suggests that the runaway coachmen told the Kyrgyz of the Sarybagishevskaiia *volost'* about the transport of weapons dispatched by the administration from Verny to Przhval'sk.⁶⁶ On 7 August, a patrol set up by the Kyrgyz in the Boom gorge, between the Pishpek and Przhval'sk districts, seized the transport of about 200 Berdan rifles and 3,000 cartridges.⁶⁷ Some witnesses of the rebellion observed that the seizure of weapons "served ... as a signal and an instrument of transition from the passive resistance ... to the active, murderous one".⁶⁸ The timing of the first attack against a Russian settlement, hours before the seizure of weapons, gives reason to believe that the uprising would, in any case, reach its murderous stage, but it helps to explain the relative success of the rebels and their resolve.

The next day, on 8 August, a group of armed Kyrgyz attacked the post office at the station of Jal-Aryk.⁶⁹ From 8 August the uprising unfolded in all *volosts* of the Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts. The rebels launched a series of concurrent and carefully coordinated attacks against the settlements and the punitive forces. On 12 August, about 1,500 rebels engaged a Cossack *sotnia*, seventy soldiers, and 350-strong settler militia in a battle in the environs of Toqmaq. During the battle the expedition nearly lost a machine-gun to the rebels and was forced to retreat to Toqmaq.⁷⁰ The rebel army quickly swelled as more Kyrgyz joined the rebellion. On 13 August, 5,000 rebels besieged the city of Toqmaq, which was cut off from the authorities in Vernyi and Tashkent for nearly two weeks between 13 and 22 August.⁷¹ The city was able to repel the attacks thanks in no small part to the said machine-gun. The rebels in contrast were poorly armed; one of the eight *volosts* that laid siege to Toqmaq, for example, had only seven rifles.⁷² Siege was also laid to the large settlement of Preobrazhenskoe, which became a safe haven for the refugees from neighbouring settlements. The siege of Preobrazhenskoe lasted from 10 to 29 August. On 28 August, a punitive expedition lifted the siege and forced the rebels to retreat.⁷³

The pattern of attacks was identical across the two districts. Groups of rebels armed with sticks, axes, pikes and a few rifles rode into settlements, killing men and older women and rounding up women and children many of whom, including children, were then raped and killed or taken captive.⁷⁴ Horses were often stolen before the attack to prevent the victims from fleeing. Similar precautions were taken by the rebels to minimise their losses during the attacks. Houses were put to torch to weaken the settlers' resistance and to lure them out of their hideouts. Livestock was seized and fields trampled.⁷⁵

To prevent the administration from communicating messages to the punitive detachments and to hamper their movements, the rebels destroyed bridges and telegraph lines and poles, post offices and administrative buildings. In battle, too, the rebels exhibited strong organisation and coordination. At its peak, the rebel army had 5,000 active combatants.⁷⁶ The rebels formed detachments headed by military commanders drawn primarily from among a group of *volost'* heads. To distinguish between the individual formations, each commander carried a banner. For the same purpose, many of the rebels wore metal badges.⁷⁷ The rebels transmitted messages about the movements of the punitive expeditions by using lanterns.⁷⁸ During shootouts with the Russian forces, the rebels dug trenches.⁷⁹ Their resolve and daring was noted even by the colonial officials, who described them as reckless.⁸⁰

The settler society responded to the rebels' violence in kind. The mobilisation of the settler society ran in parallel to the native mobilisation. The first telegram ordering mobilisation – "if local conditions dictate

so” – of “peasant and Cossack militias for self-defence and protection of the settlements by special night watches” was sent from Verny to Przheval’sk already on 2 August. Less than a week later, on 8 August, the province’s military governor, General Mikhail Folbaum, ordered the “immediate formation of militias”⁸¹ Folbaum’s later telegram reminded the punitive detachments to “work in complete unity” with the militias, to “strike strong blows where there is danger”, and to “become masters of the situation”⁸²

At the same time, military forces were drawn from as far as Siberia. Despite the heavy losses suffered at the front, the Government diverted significant resources to suppress the rebellion. Not counting the settler militias, a total of thirty-five infantry companies, twenty-four Cossack cavalry squadrons, 240 mounted scouts, sixteen field-guns, and forty-seven machine guns were deployed in Semirech’e.⁸³ In addition to the Semirech’e Cossacks, troops were drawn from as far as the Siberian, Saratov and Orenburg provinces of central Russia.⁸⁴

Like the rebels, the punitive forces and the militias spared no spite for their Muslim victims. The punitive forces engaged in “marauding, rape, murders, and robberies”.⁸⁵ The treatment of the Muslims by the settler militias was equally heinous. A long-time resident of Przheval’sk, one Potseluev (who according to a report by an Okhrana agent took an active part in the plunder of the city’s Dungans), reported that the Dungans of Przheval’sk were “beaten with sticks and stones, stabbed with pitchforks, disembowelled with sickles and scythes”.⁸⁶ In short, the brutality of the settlers, remarked the Okhrana officer Jungmeister, matched that of the rebels.⁸⁷

This brutality was not incidental. The directives to kill and plunder, although not necessarily to rape, were not the personal initiatives taken by the leaders of the punitive forces or militias; they were given by the authorities. Rebel leaders were executed on the spot by field courts for state treason while the remaining men, women and children were subjected to summary slaughter.⁸⁸ Folbaum, for example, ordered the complete extermination of the entire native male population of the Atekinskaia and Sarybagishevskiaia *volosts*.⁸⁹

Other indirect means of targeting the native population included the seizure of livestock and exposure to elements. The authorities instructed the punitive forces to “drive the rebels vigorously to the most forbidding localities where they will soon succumb to the cold”;⁹⁰ to seize the rebels’ animals for “enormous numbers of cattle seized in many locations are a clear sign of the rebels’ defeat”;⁹¹ to “view the smallest of Kirgiz groupings as a rebellion, and suppress it with peasant militias”⁹² and to “strengthen the factionalism and to put the Kara-Kirgiz in the most unfavourable conditions”⁹³

The campaign of suppression that the authorities conducted against the nomads of Semirech’e was a concerted effort implemented

by the military, aided by the civilian population and overseen by the Government.

According to the most conservative estimates, the settler militias and the punitive detachments killed no less than 16,000 Kyrgyz and Kazakhs.⁹⁴ Many more died on route to China in the crossing that to this day is remembered as the *Ürkün* (exodus), the most traumatic event in the modern history of the Kyrgyz. Early blizzards, deep ravines and sharp cliffs, lack of grass and heavy livestock losses, coupled with chaos and stampeding of animals and people killed more people than guns and cannons.⁹⁵ Still more died in China and at home after the return to Semirech'e over the course of the civil war. Out of the 164,000 refugees in China about 130,000 were Kyrgyz and 34,000 Kazakh. By May 1917, 70,000 Kyrgyz and Kazakhs had starved to death.⁹⁶

Once the initial wave of violence against the nomads rendered the Chu Valley and the lowlands around Issyq-Kul largely free of its native population, the Colonial Government proceeded to legitimise and institutionalise the *fait accompli* of the forced removal of the native population.⁹⁷ The plan developed by the Governor-General of Turkestan, Alexei Kuropatkin, in the wake of the uprising envisaged the removal of 37,335 Kyrgyz and Kazakh households, or 190,000 men, women, and children, from the Pishpek, Przheval'sk and Dzsharkent districts.⁹⁸ The Przheval'sk district would be cleansed completely of its Kyrgyz and Dungan population. Altogether, the authorities expected to "recover" 2,510,361 *desyatinas* of land as the result of the removal.⁹⁹ The remaining nomadic population would be resettled in the Naryn district, adding to its original population of 60,000. The nomads – contained in the mountainous country of marginal agricultural value and fenced off from the settler population by mountains and a string of militarised Cossack settlements – would no longer present a threat, and would become a group from which the state could extract "millions of sheep for meat, wool, hides, etc."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

We tend to think of mass mobilisation and mass exterminations in connection with wars. Rebellions, on the other hand, are rarely seen as wars. What both the rebellion and its suppression demonstrate, however, is how the language of war permeated and justified the objectives of the groups in conflict. To the rebels, the forced conscription and the violent repression of the protests constituted the declaration of war on the Muslims of the region. By the same token, their actions were in response to the belligerent intentions of the administration and were therefore entirely justified. In their depositions and testimonies, the rebels speak

of the war. An explanation that one of the rebels offers for the uprising is revealing: “We started the war with the Russians because they wanted to [forcibly] recruit us as soldiers and because we would be killed by Germans.”¹⁰¹ A telegram of the head of the Turkestan military district, Mikhailovskii, corroborates this perception: “The Kirgiz refer to the actual rebellion as the war.”¹⁰²

The administration too saw the rebellion as an act of war. The telegram of the head of the Kazan military district, Sandetskii, for example, insists that

there was no murder of Kirgiz [Kazakhs] in the Turgai and Irgiz districts. The forces ... did not execute the Kirgiz, but engaged in battle with the organised hordes, which assumed military formation and set as their aim the resistance to the state power, the destruction of the cities of the province, communication lines, and the telegraph.¹⁰³

Perceptions, as I stated in the beginning of this chapter, are important. The perceptions of the war in Semirech'e suggest that we ought to view the rebellion as an integral part of World War I. The war in Semirech'e was a war on the domestic front brought about by the war fought on the foreign front. The rebellion in Semirech'e was all the more eventful for they marked “the beginning of the civil wars that would both destroy and then reconstitute the Russian imperial ecumene.”¹⁰⁴

Notes

- 1 The only monograph study of the uprising in English remains the 1954 volume by Edward Dennis Sokol. See Edward D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954). For more recent studies of the uprising, see: Tomohiko Uyama, “Two Attempts at Building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement”, in Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (eds.), *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 77–98; Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und zarische Politik: der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010); Cloé Drieu, “L’impact de la Première Guerre mondiale en Asie centrale: des révoltes de 1916 aux enjeux politiques et scientifiques de leur historiographie”, *Histoire@Politique* 22/1 (2014), 175–193.
- 2 Thanks to the records kept by the colonial administration we know the exact number of the Russian victims. How many Kyrgyz were killed remains, however, unknown; although some of the punitive expeditions reported on the number of “rebels” – including the non-combatant population – they killed, the information is patchy at best. It is possible to come to a rough estimate of the decline in the nomadic population by comparing the population statistics of the 1897 and 1925 censuses. The resulting number of 100,000–150,000 Kyrgyz (excluding Kazakhs) is an aggregate inclusive of the victims of violence

- and related starvation and disease. See G. Krongardt, "Demograficheskie aspekty istorii vosstaniia 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane", in V. Ploskikh and J. Junushaliev (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane (sbornik materialov nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 75-letiiu vosstaniia)* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1993), 49–53.
- 3 "Dokladnaia zapiska n. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti A. I. Alekseeva general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o prichinakh i khode vosstaniia v oblasti" (after 1 November 1916), in A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 374.
 - 4 On the mobilisation of ethnicity in the Russian Empire during the First World War, see Mark von Hagen, "The Great War and the Mobilization of Ethnicity in the Russian Empire", in Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (eds.), *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 34–57. Von Hagen argues that "the war was a watershed in relations between Russians and non-Russians and among non-Russians as well", 36.
 - 5 Kim Wagner makes a similar argument that fears and rumours of conspiracies – reflective of the growing distrust of and dissatisfaction with East India Company's rule – were among the chief reasons for the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Kim A. Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).
 - 6 For an analysis of how the advancing and retreating armies were among the main causes of the "social disaster", see Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 65–109.
 - 7 "Razrabotka plana provedeniia mobilizatsii kirgiz voennymi vlastiami kraia" (2 July 1916), in T. R. Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizstane. Dokumenty i materialy, sobrannyye L. V. Lesnoi* (Moscow: Sotsekgiz, 1937), 15.
 - 8 "Razrabotka plana provedeniia mobilizatsii kirgiz voennymi vlastiami kraia", in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 20.
 - 9 "Protokol chastnogo soveshchaniia kirgiz", in A. Chuloshnikov, "K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g.", *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, 3/16 (1926), 58.
 - 10 In the Przheval'sk district the labour conscription was made public on 12 or 13 July. In the Vernyi, Zharkent, and Pishpek districts the announcement was made earlier.
 - 11 "Vypiska iz pokazanii odnogo iz predvoditelei vosstaniia Kanaata Abukina – kirgiza Abail'dinskoi volosti Pishpekskogo uезда po voprosu o prichinakh, vyzvavshikh vosstanie, konets 1916 g.", in K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda. Dokumenty i materialy* (Bishkek: n.p., 2015), 63.
 - 12 "Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud'e 4-go uchastka Cherniaevskogo u. inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva ob istorii vzaimootnoshenii rossiiskoi vlasti s kazakhami, 5–25 fevralia 1917 g.", in M. K. Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ullt-Azattyq Kozghalysy* (Almaty: Otkrytaia biblioteka Kazakhstana, 2011), 106.
 - 13 "Doklad Aulie-Atinskogo uездnogo nachal'nika Kostal'skogo" (29 November 1916), in P. G. Galuzo (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii. Sbornik dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932), 45.

- 14 “Vypiska iz pokazanii odnogo iz predvoditelei vosstaniia Kanaata Abukina – kirgiza Abail’dinskoi volosti Pishpekskogo uезда po voprosu o prichinakh, vyzvavshikh vosstanie, konets 1916 g.,” in Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 65.
- 15 “Tsarskii ukaz o mobilizatsii ‘inorodcheskogo’ naseleniia Astrakhanskoi gubernii, Sibiri i Srednei Azii dlia rabot po ustroistvu oboronitel’nykh sooruzhenii v raione deistvuiushchei armii” (25 June 1916), in E. S. Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane. Sbornik dokumentov* (Bishkek: Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv KR, 2011), 6.
- 16 “Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud’ei 4-go uchastka Cherniaevskogo u. inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva ob istorii vzaimootnoshenii rossiiskoi vlasti s kazakhami” (5–25 February 1917), in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ult-Azattyq Kozghalysy*, 106.
- 17 “Pamiatnaia zapiska o kirgizakh”; “Protokol chastnogo soveshchaniia kirgiz”, in Chuloshnikov, “K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g.,” 62, 58.
- 18 “Pamiatnaia zapizka o kirgizakh”, in Chuloshnikov, “K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g.,” 63.
- 19 “Protokol chastnogo soveshchaniia kirgiz”, in Chuloshnikov, “K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g.,” 57.
- 20 “Doklad pomoshchnika voennogo ministra P. A. Frolova po Glavnomu shtabu o merakh po provedeniuiu mobilizatsii v Turkestanskom krae v sootvetstviu s ukazom ot 25 iunია 1916 g., priniatykh novym general-gubernatorom Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinym”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 39; “Donesenie voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti gen. Fol’bauma turkestanskomu general-gubernatoru” in Chuloshnikov, “K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 g.,” 68–69; “Donesenie atamana Malo-Alma-Atinskoi stanitsy Vernenskogo uезда v Voiskovoe pravlenie Semirechenskogo kazach’ego voiska ob ukhode s raboty batrakov-kazakhov v sviazi s ob’iavleniem prizyva na tylovye raboty”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 424.
- 21 “Protokol doprosa svidetelia Tulembaia Diusebaeva o polozhenii v Przheval’skom uезде Semirechenskoi oblasti v iuule 1916 g. – posle ob’iavleniia tsarskogo ukaza o mobilizatsii” (21 September 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 354.
- 22 “Raport chinovnika dlia poruchenii Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia Iungmeistera nachal’niku Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia M. N. Volkovu o vosstanii v Przheval’skom uезде i g. Przheval’ske” (30 December 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 397.
- 23 “Protokol doprosa mirovym sud’ei 4-go uchastka Przheval’skogo uезда svidetelei – zhitelei sel Semenovki i Grigor’evka o nachale vosstaniia i rassprave vosstavshikh s zhiteliami etikh sel” (11 November 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 149–150.
- 24 “Protokol doprosa mirovym sud’ei 3 uchastka Przheval’skogo uезда perevodchika Przheval’skogo uездnogo pravleniia T. Diusebaeva o sobytiiaikh vosstaniia v uезде” (21 September 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 78.
- 25 “Iz sudebnogo dela po Przheval’skomu raionu, Sbornik 1937, p. 31, Protokol doprosa svidetelia Tulembaia Diusebaeva o polozhenii v Przheval’skom uезде

- Semirechenskoj oblasti v iule 1916 g. – posle ob"iavlennia tsarskogo ukaza o mobilizatsii" (21 September 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 355.
- 26 "Iz dokladnoi zapiski dragomana rossiiskogo general'nogo konsul'stva v Kashgare kollezhskogo sekretaria Stefanovicha o volneniiakh sredi kirgizov Semirechenskoj oblasti i o begstve ikh v kitaiskie predely, nachalo 1917 g.," in Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 102.
- 27 For the list – incomplete by his own admission – given by Diusebaev, see "Protokol doprosa svidetelia Tulembaia Diusebaeva o polozhenii v Przheval'skom uezde Semirechenskoj oblasti v iule 1916 g. – posle ob"iavlennia tsarskogo ukaza o mobilizatsii" (21 January 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 355. For the complete list of the uprising's leaders, see TsGARUz, F.461, Op. 1 D.1888 l.63, available at Sheishekanov, Turdubek. "Sagaly Almataev kotorulush bashynda turgandardyn biri," www.azattyk.org/a/urkun_kyrgyz_chine_family_history/27708761.html.
- 28 Saurukov, Mambetov and Sarykov were arrested as leaders of the rebellion and murdered in prison. Taubaldin was far more fortunate. Not only did he evade execution at the hands of the punitive expeditions, he also joined the Bolsheviks during the civil war and lived well into his nineties. "Raport i. d. nachal'nika Dzharkentskogo uezda N. N. Stupina voennomu gubernatoru Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol'baumu o vystupleniiakh kazakhov, uigur i dungan protiv mobilizatsii na tylovye raboty" (1 8 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 329; "Raport chinovnika dlia poruchenii Turkestarskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia lungmeistera nachal'niku Turkestarskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia M. N. Volkovu o vosstanii v Przheval'skom uezde i g. Przheval'ske, 30 dekabria 1916 g.," in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 399; "Raport nachal'nika Pishpekskogo uezda F. G. Rymshchevicha i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti A. I. Alekseevu o khode vosstaniia v uezde i o merakh k ego podavleniiu" (28 November 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 387.
- 29 Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916*, 118.
- 30 Kushbek Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy* (Bishkek: Sham, 1997), 107.
- 31 "Iz sudebnogo dela po Przheval'skomu raionu," in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 30.
- 32 In fact, the Kazakh administrator, a railway engineer by education, Muhammadjan Tynyshbaev, drew a direct connection between the arrests and the later disturbances: "In all the aforementioned areas (Vernyi, Pishpek, and Przheval'sk districts) or in their vicinity the most serious events arose as the consequence" of the arrests. See "Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud'e'i 4-go uchastka Cherniaevskogo u. inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva ob istorii vzaimootnoshenii rossiiskoi vlasti s kazakhami, 5–25 fevralia 1917 g.," in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ullt-Azattyq Kozghalyssy*, 108.
- 33 Although no mass protests took place in Semirech'e, smaller peaceful protests did occur. One such Kyrgyz-Dungan protest in Przheval'sk was broken up by police on 4 August. Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 108.
- 34 "Raport pisaria Al'dzhanskoi volosti Dzharkentskogo uezda Komarova nachal'niku Narynkol'skogo uchastka A. Podvarkovu o nevozmozhnosti

- sostavleniia mobilizatsionnykh spiskov, 11 iuliia”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 324–325.
- 35 “Raport i. d. nachal’nika Dzharkentskogo uyezda N. N. Stupina voennomu gubernatoru Semirechenskoï oblasti M. A. Fol’baumu o vystupleniiaakh kazakhov, uigur i dungan protiv mobilizatsii na tylovye raboty”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 329.
- 36 Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 328.
- 37 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 82.
- 38 “Obvinitel’nyi akt po delu ob uchastii v vosstanii v Dzhail’myshevskoi volosti Vernenskogo uyezda Siata Niiazbekova i drugikh (vsego v chisle 23 chel.), dekabr’ 1916 g.”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 403.
- 39 Although the reports of the gatherings had reached the administration in late July, the administration had few means of establishing control over the largely native countryside. The martial law introduced by the military governor of Semirech’e, Mikhail Folbaum, on 28 July failed to curtail the assemblies. Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 35.
- 40 “Obvinitel’nyi akt po delu ob uchastii v vosstanii v Dzhail’myshevskoi volosti Vernenskogo uyezda Siata Niiazbekova i drugikh (vsego v chisle 23 chel.), dekabr’ 1916 g.”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 403.
- 41 The first attack on the Novorossiiskoe settlement was made on the same day, after the assembly.
- 42 “Raport nachal’nika Pishpekskogo uyezda F. G. Rymshvicha i.d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoï oblasti A. I. Alekseevu o khode vosstania v uезде i o merakh k ego podavleniiu” (28 November 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 387. The Shabdanov brothers were born to a wealthy and influential Sarybaghysh manap, Shabdan Jantaev – Shabdan Baatyr – who swore fealty to the Russian Empire in 1862, two years after Russian troops defeated the army of Khoqand at the battle of Uzun-Agach. Recognised by the colonial authorities as a capable administrator and a useful ally, Shabdan enjoyed certain privileges afforded by his good standing with the authorities. By the time of his death, however, in 1912, his prestige had largely faded and his family lost considerable tracts of land to the Resettlement Administration. Tynyshbaev sees the Shabdanovs’ participation in the uprising as the result of the land seizures and constant harassment by the authorities. In all fairness, he also notes that two of the brothers opposed the rebellion but were compelled to join when the rebellion spread into the eastern half of the Pishpek district. “Pis’mo inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva general-gubernatoru Turkestanского kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o deiatel’nosti brat’ev Shabdanovykh do vosstania i v nachale ego, 28 oktiabria 1916 g.”, in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ult-Azattyq Kozghalysy*, 371. For the translation and interpretation of the epic poem relating the life and deeds of Shabdan Baatyr, see Dan Prior, *The Šabdan Baatyr Codex: Epic and the Writing of Northern Kirghiz History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- 43 “Protokol doprosa mirovym sud’ei 3 uchastka Przheval’skogo uездного pravleniia T. Diusebaeva o sobytiiax vosstania v uезде” (21 September 1916) in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 76–69.
- 44 The presence – and role – of native women in the protests in the sedentary areas of Turkestan was noted by many Russian administrators. See, for

- example: “Otchet i. d. voennogo gubernatora Ferganskoi oblasti P. P. Ivanova, general-gubernatoru Turkestarskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o vosstaniia v Ferganskoi oblasti” (17 December 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 255; “Raport politstva “tuzemnoi” chasti g. Tashkenta A. Mochalova i. d. nachal’nika g. Tashkenta S. O. Kochanu o nachale vosstaniia v g. Tashkente” (11 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 263.
- 45 “Kopiiia prosheniia kara-kirgiz Przhheval’skogo uezda na imia rossiiskogo konsula v Kul’dzhe” in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 150.
- 46 “Raport pisaria Al’dzhanskoi volosti Dzharkentskogo uezda Komarova nachal’niku Narynkol’skoi uchastka A. Podvarkovu o nevozmozhnosti sostavleniia mobilizatsionnykh spiskov” (11 July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 325.
- 47 “Telegramma iz Tashkenta i. d. Turkestarskogo general-gubernatora Erofeeva voennomu ministru Shuvaevu o gotoviashechensia pobege Kirgiz v Kitai”, (20 July–2 August 1916), in Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 85.
- 48 Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven’ia, 2007).
- 49 For a comprehensive account of the 1916 “women’s riot” in Tashkent and a discussion of changing gender relations in colonial society during the war, see Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 170–176.
- 50 Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 61.
- 51 Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 61.
- 52 TsGAKR F I-75 Op. 1 d.45 l.69.
- 53 TsGAKR F I-75 Op. 1 d.45 l.69ob.
- 54 “Doklad i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti A. I. Alekseeva general-gubernatoru Turkestarskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o prichinakh i khode vosstaniia v oblasti”, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 371.
- 55 “Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud’ei 4-go uchastka Cherniaevskogo u. inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva ob istorii vzaimootnosheniia rossiiskoi vlasti s kazakhami, st. Cherniaevo” (5–25 February 1917), in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ult-Azattyq Kozghalysy*, 107–110.
- 56 “[T]elegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestarskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o nastroeniia naseleniia oblasti” (6 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 371.
- 57 As Tomohiko Uyama points out in [Chapter 1](#) of this volume, the absence of metrical books in Turkestan gave native administrators the opportunity to manipulate the lists of recruits.
- 58 “Pokazaniia svidetelia sel’skogo pisaria P. Driupina”, in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 78–80.
- 59 “Pokazaniia svidetelia sel’skogo pisaria P. Driupina”, in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 79.
- 60 “Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud’ei 4-go uchastka Cherniaevskogo u. inzhenera M. Tynyshpaeva ob istorii vzaimootnosheniia rossiiskoi vlasti s kazakhami, st. Cherniaevo” (5–25 February 1917), in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ult-Azattyq Kozghalysy*, 109.
- 61 A report – written, in all likelihood, by Tynyshbaev – based on interviews with the natives of the neighbouring Aulie-Ata district of Syr-Darya province

is particularly illustrative of these dynamics: rumours of summary executions of innocent Kyrgyz of the Pishpek district who took no part in the rebellion prompted the Kazakhs of the Aulie-ata district to flee. When the authorities resorted to force and threats to make the Kazakhs return, they responded with attacks on the Russian settlements. “Spravka, sostavlennaia iz rassprosov zhitelei Aulieatinskogo uezda dlia voennogo gubernatora Syrdar’inskoi oblasti A. S. Galkina, 30 sentiabria”, in T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane: dokumental’nye svidetel’sтва obshchei tragedii* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016), 228–229.

- 62 “[T]elegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechesnoi oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o nastroenii naseleniia oblasti” (6 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 333.
- 63 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 84.
- 64 “Dokladnaia zapiska i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoii oblasti A. I. Alekseeva general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkinu o prichinakh i khode vosstaniia v oblasti” (after 1 November 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 372. The punitive expedition caught up with the Botpaevskaia rebels on 10 August; the Cossack sotnia, led by Cossack captain (*khurunzhii*) Aleksandrov, “wiped out three native villages (*auls*) to the last man, burned down the camps, and rustled the cattle”, setting, according to the military governor of Semirech’e, Mikhail Folbaum, an example of “exemplary actions” for other punitive expeditions. “Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoii oblasti M. A. Fol’bauma lepsinskomu, pishpekskomu, kopal’skomu i dzharkentskomu uezdnyim nachal’nikam ob “obraztsovoi” rasprave karatel’nogo otriada khorunzhego Aleksandrova s vosstavshimi kazakhami” (14 August 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 662–663.
- 65 TsGAKR F I-75 Op. 1 d.49 l.13.
- 66 There are alternative explanations as to how the Kyrgyz learnt about the transport of weapons. Belek Soltonoev, for example, relates that the rebels learnt about the transport after one of the Shabdanov brothers dispatched a messenger to his *volost’* upon seeing a cart loaded with rifles depart from Pishpek. Belek Soltonoev, *Qizil Qirghiz tarikhii: tarikhyi ocherkter* (Bishkek: Uchkun, 1993), vol. 2, 66.
- 67 “Protokol doprosa svidetelia I. A. Potselueva” (21 September 1916), in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 47.
- 68 “Protokol doprosa svidetelia I. A. Potselueva” (21 September 1916), in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 47.
- 69 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 86.
- 70 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 103–104.
- 71 According to Kushbek Usenbaev, some of the native accounts claim that up to 20,000–40,000 rebels gathered in the environs of Toqmaq. It is likely that this number included the entire population of several districts rather than the share of population that took part in the military activities. Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 105.
- 72 “Protokol doprosa ochevidtza Kanata Abukina” (17 October 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 224.
- 73 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 110.

- 74 "Raport nachal'nika Przheval'skogo uezda V. A. Ivanova i. d. vitse-gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti A. I. Alekseevu o khode vosstaniia v Przheval'skom uezde" (26 September 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 358; "Vsepoddanneishii raport i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti A. I. Alekseeva Nikolaiu II o vosstanii v oblasti v 1916 g." (4 March 1917), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 414.
- 75 "Protokol doprosa mirovym sud'ei 3-go uchastka Przheval'skogo uezda V. N. Runovskim svidetelia – otstavnogo general-maiora Ia. I. Korol'kova o prichinakh i khode vosstaniia v Przheval'skom uezde" (1.10.1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 362; "Pokazaniia odnogo iz predvoditelei vosstaniia na iuge Semirechenskoj oblasti manapa Kanata Abukina, dannye im sudebnym vlastiam, 5 noiabria 1916 g.," in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 379.
- 76 "Vsepoddanneishii raport i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti A. I. Alekseeva Nikolaiu II o vosstanii v oblasti v 1916 g." (4 March 1917), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 411.
- 77 "Iz telegrammy i. d. nachal'nika shtaba Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga M. N. Mikhailovskogo voennomu gubernatoru Ferganskoj oblasti A. I. Gippiusu ob organizovannosti vosstavshikh na iuge Semirechenskoj oblasti – Iz Tashkenta v Skobelev, 26 avgusta 1916 g.," in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 45.
- 78 "Telegramma general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkina voennomu ministru D. S. Shuvaevu o khode vosstaniia na iuge Semirechenskoj oblasti, 17 avgusta 1916 g.," in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 28.
- 79 "Iz telegrammy i. d. nachal'nika shtaba Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga M. N. Mikhailovskogo voennomu gubernatoru Ferganskoj oblasti A. I. Gippiusu ob organizovannosti vosstavshikh na iuge Semirechenskoj oblasti – Iz Tashkenta v Skobelev." (26 August 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 45.
- 80 "Vsepoddanneishii raport i. d. voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoj oblasti A. I. Alekseeva Nikolaiu II o vosstanii v oblasti v 1916 g." (4 March 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 417.
- 81 "Protokol doprosa mirovym sud'ei 4 uchastka Pishpekskogo svidetelia – Belovodskogo uchastkovogo pristava I. Gribanovskogo o reaktsii korennoho naseleniia na rasporiazhenie o prizyve rabochikh v tyl deistvuiushchei armii" (21 October 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 122.
- 82 "Zapis' ukazanii, dannykh po priamogo provodu voennym gubernatorom Semirechenskoj oblasti M. A. Fol'baumom nachal'niku Pishpekskogo uezda F. G. Rymshchevichu, o metodakh podavleniia vosstaniia v uezde, ne pozdnee kontsa avgusta 1916 g.," in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 48.
- 83 Usenbaev, 1916: *geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy*, 119.
- 84 "Doklad Turkestanskogo general-gubernatora generala ot infanterii A. N. Kuropatkina voennomu ministru generaly ot infanterii D. S. Shuvaevu o polozhenii v Semirechenskoj oblasti" (18 September 1916), RGVA F.400, Op. 1 D.4546 l.334–334ob.
- 85 "Stenogramma zakrytogo zasedaniia Gosudarstvennoi dумы" (31 December 1916), in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 360, 381.
- 86 "Protokol doprosa sudebnym sledovatelem Vernenskogo okruzhnogo suda svidetelia Potselueva ob ozbienii russkimi kitaitsev-opiishchikov Przheval'skogo uezda, 21 sentiabria-4 oktiabria 1916 g." in Mambetaliev (ed.),

- Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 128. On Potseluev's participation in the plunder, see "Svedeniia Zavedyvaiushchego Vernenskimi Rozysknyim Punktom Agentura "Akhmet", Zapiska №50 po dvizheniiu tuzemtsev" (6 September 1916), in Qoigeldiev (ed.), *Qazaq Ullt-Azattyq Kozghalysy*, 71.
- 87 "Raport chinovnika dlia poruchenii Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia lungmeistera nachal'niku Turkestanskogo raionnogo okhrannogo otdeleniia M. N. Volkovu o vosstanii v Przheval'skom uезде I g. Przheval'ske, 30 dekabria 1916 g.," in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 398. According to Daniel Brower, the version of the report that was published in Piaskovskii's volume was abridged and censored. Daniel Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), 43.
- 88 As a rule, the authorities court martialled and executed the captured participants of the rebellion for "state treason." "Prigovor voenno-polevogo suda o kazni uchastnikov vosstaniia T. Karymshakova, B. Shavdambekova i B. Saltangel'dinova" (18 September 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 72–73.
- 89 I. A. Petrov (ed.), *Rossiiia v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny: ekonomicheskoe polozenie, sotsial'nye protsessy, politicheskii krizis* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2014), 746; A. P. Iarkov, *Kazaki v Kyrgyzstane* (Bishkek, KRSU, 2002), 45.
- 90 "Telegramma voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti M. A. Fol'bauma general-gubernatoru Turkestanskogo kraia o prodolzhaiushchemia volnenii miatezhnikov i predprinimaemykh merakh dlia otrazheniia vozmozhnogo povtoreniia miatezha – iz Vernogo v Tashkent" (9 September 1916), in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 65.
- 91 "Iz telegrammy Fol'bauma Kuropatkinu", in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 83.
- 92 "Zapis' ukazanii, dannykh po priamomu provodu voennym gubernatorom Semirechenskoi oblasti M. A. Fol'baumom nachal'niku Pishpekskogo uезда F. G. Rymshchevichu, o metodakh podavleniia vosstaniia v uезде, ne pozdnee kontsa avgusta 1916 g.," in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 83.
- 93 "Iz telegrammy Fol'bauma Kuropatkinu", in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 83.
- 94 D. D. Dzhunushaliev, "V epitsentre vosstaniia", *Vestnik KRSU* 15/9 (2015), 206.
- 95 A well-equipped and provisioned expedition of the Cossack sergeant (*starshina*), Piotr Bychkov, that set out from Semirech'e in early December reached Chinese Turkestan in a week. When crossing the border from the Naryn district to China, the expedition nearly froze to death. Salvation came in the form of thirty bottles of pure spirit. For Bychkov's account of their mission to Chinese Turkestan, see "Opisanie pokhoda komandira 1-I Semirechenskoi kazach'ei sotni starshiny Bychkova v Kitai v mestechko Uch-Turfana za russkimi plennymi i skryvaiushchimisia na kitaiskoi territorii rukovoditeliami Semirechenskogo vosstaniia" (15–28 January 1917), in Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 94–100.
- 96 Dzhunushaliev, "V epitsentre", 206.
- 97 Indeed, as Alexander Morrison argues in [Chapter 9](#) of this volume, the state-led ethnic cleansing of Semirech'e was carried out by regular forces, as well as armed Russian settlers and former soldiers, and continued throughout 1917.

- 98 The pastoralists of Semirech'e were not the only ethnic group to be displaced and expropriated for their presumed unreliability. Eric Lohr and Peter Gatrell, for example, examine the government policies towards the ethnic groups in the western war zone, including Jews, Poles, and Germans, who were subjected to forced removal into Russia's interior. Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003); Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999).
- 99 "Protokol soveshchaniia pod predsedatel'stvom general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkina o pereselenii kirgizov i kazakhov, priniavshih uchastie v vosstanii 1916 g., v Narynskii kraii o peredache ikh zemel' russkim pereselentsam" (16 October 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 685. Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 74.
- 100 M. Pokrovskii, "Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina," *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 1/20 (1927), 61.
- 101 "1 sentiabria – protokol doprosa Diushake Mamerbaeva," in Ryskulov (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 62.
- 102 "26 avgusta – iz telegrammy i.d. nachal'nika shtaba Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga M.N. Mikhailovskogo voennomu gubernatoru Ferganskoi oblasti A.I. Gippiusu ob organizovannosti vosstavshikh na iuge Semirechenskoi oblasti," in Kaptagaev (ed.), *Vosstanie*, 45.
- 103 "Telegramma komanduiushchego voiskami Kazanskogo voennogo okruga A. G. Sandetskogo nachal'niku Glavnogo shtaba M. I. Zankevichu o deistviiakh kazakhskikh povstancheskiikh otriadov v Turgaiskoi oblasti" (23 December 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 617.
- 104 Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 295.

Scales of violence: the 1916 Central Asian uprising in the context of wars and revolutions (1914–1923)

Niccolò Pianciola

Introduction

This chapter places the 1916 Central Asian uprising in the context of the longer “continuum of violence” that included World War I, the 1917 revolutions, and the “wars after the war” that took place during a period of competitive state-building.¹ With the possible exception of the violence committed by the tsarist army in Ajaria one year earlier, the 1916 uprising and its bloody repression entailed the first systematic mass killing of civilians in the tsarist empire during the war. According to contemporary official estimates, the Kazakh and Kyrgyz population of Semirech'è fell from approximately 937,000 in 1916 to 670,000 in 1917.² Many fled to China, but the extermination targeting Kyrgyz and Kazakh men, women and children claimed a number of victims that most probably reached the tens of thousands. The uprising and the ensuing massacres constituted the first episodes in a series of interlocking armed conflicts in Central Asia, which lasted until 1923.³ The 1916 events, therefore, can and should be considered the first act of the civil war in Central Asia and the Kazakh steppe.⁴

In contextualising the uprising and its suppression, I will focus on two extreme kinds of violence committed by armed groups against the non-combatant, or civilian, population: killings and forced migrations (expulsions from a territory). These were the types of violent actions that increased to an extraordinary scale during the period of wars and revolutions in the former tsarist empire. A leading scholar of violence during civil wars, political scientist Stathis N. Kalyvas, has distinguished between “selective” and “indiscriminate” violence against civilians, both of which are waged by armed groups trying to acquire control over a subject population – i.e., to maximise support and minimise defection. The relative use of selective or indiscriminate violence by an armed group depends on their degree of control over the territory, and the quality of

their information about the subject population they command: “indiscriminate violence is inversely related to the level of territorial control”⁵ Kalyvas considers the targeting of entire population groups on the basis of ethnic, religious or other collective markers a specific form of indiscriminate violence, but he explicitly excludes ethnic cleansing from his analysis. It may therefore be useful to narrow the definition of Kalyvas’ “indiscriminate violence” to signify the mass killing of civilians to achieve a political aim *other than* the elimination of specific categories of population from a territory. When, instead, the extermination or exodus of a specific social or ethnic group is itself the political outcome the perpetrators want to achieve, violence may be categorised as “eliminationist”⁶

During the period 1914–1923, the political and military actors in the succession of armed conflicts that ravaged Eurasia exerted selective, indiscriminate and eliminationist violence against civilians unevenly. The scale of violent events varied, both in terms of their intensity and the aims of the perpetrators, and spatially: some episodes of mass violence were geographically limited, while others were part of waves of attacks against specific groups spread over vast areas. What can explain this variation? Within broader and longer conflicts, short-lived episodes of extreme violence could be limited to relatively small territories. This was the case with Przheval’sk district, an area of tsarist Turkestan bordering Xinjiang, where violence against the Slavic settlers during the 1916 uprising was by far the harshest. How to make sense of the temporally and spatially circumscribed “peaks” of violence? In order to provide convincing answers, our analysis needs to be conducted at different scales. On the one hand, we must be attentive to possible connections between events in specific areas in the rear and the industrialised mass army warfare at the fronts of World War I. On the other hand, we must investigate the possible presence – at the regional, provincial, town or village level – of locally-specific factors that prompted the exercise of extreme violence against or between groups of civilians.

In the Asian part of the former tsarist empire, eliminationist episodes occurred mostly in the “southern colonisation belt”, which spanned the Caucasus, the Kazakh steppe and the Kyrgyz region. The settler colonial context is thus key to understanding a particularly intense “layer” of violence at the scale of this vast geographical swathe of the Empire. In dealing with the uprising in Central Asia, I will focus in particular on Semirech’e, the main zone of agricultural colonisation in Turkestan, where violence reached its highest points during 1916. Episodes of eliminationist violence were anti-colonial as much as colonial. However, given the uneven access to modern weaponry, colonial repression tended to be much more lethal than anti-colonial violence. Following Peter Holquist, I argue that there was a direct connection between the forms of military violence against non-combatants that became pervasive during World War I and

the “eliminationist” violence waged by the tsarist army against Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in particular areas of Semirech’e. My conclusions confirm the recent claim of Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham that the “extremity of the violence – even by Russian military standards – of the campaign of murder and dispersal against the ... populations of the Semirech’e region is ... only explicable conjuncturally, in the context of World War I”.⁷

The connections between the military fronts and the repression of the uprising are twofold. First, in 1916, tsarist army detachments imported into Central Asia forms of military violence against civilians that had been systematically applied on the Eastern European and, especially, the Caucasus fronts. Second, starting from 1917 but especially in 1918 and 1919, former tsarist soldiers formed Slavic settler militias – part of the pan-European phenomenon of post-war paramilitarism – that replicated wartime “eliminationist” practices during the “settlers’ revolution” and the civil war in Semirech’e.⁸ However, even within Semirech’e, the temporal and spatial variation of episodes of eliminationist violence was remarkable. By focusing on the main “peak violence” area during the 1916 uprising, Przheval’sk district, I will show the role that the cross-border opium trade with Xinjiang played in unleashing mass violence in the region.

The war comes home

Of a tsarist subject population that in 1914 stood at about 178 million, fifteen million were drafted during the war; by mid-1917, six million were at the front and 2.3 million in city garrisons across the Empire.⁹ Among them, tens of thousands of soldiers from Turkestan fought against Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The Turkestan population, along with a series of other groups in the Empire, was exempted from the military draft. Some Central Asians were accepted as volunteers, but their number was extremely limited. The only exception were the Slavic settlers of Semirech’e. Their exemption was waived by an 1887 law, when the province was still part of the Governor-Generalship of the Steppes (on the eve of the war, out of a total Semirech’e population of 1.3 million, there were about 290,000 Russians and Ukrainians in the region, including urban dwellers).¹⁰ Europeans living in other provinces of Turkestan were exempted, but only if they had migrated to Central Asia legally. Since a significant number of the Slavic settlers were *samovol’tsy* (illegal migrants), the army started to draft them from the beginning of the war in all Turkestan’s provinces, and even in the Bukhara protectorate. At the beginning of 1915, out of approximately 70,000 soldiers drafted from Turkestan, more than 25,000

came from Semirech'e, 16,000 from Syr Darya, and 9,000 from Ferghana, while the remaining 20,000 were those who had been drafted from the *samovol'tsy* and volunteers from Transcaspia, Samarkand province and the Bukharan Emirate.¹¹

The general staff formed the First and Second Turkestan Army Corps in 1899. During World War I, each was composed of three infantry brigades containing Semirech'e draftees, Cossack cavalry regiments from Transcaspia, Orenburg, and Ural, and one combat engineer battalion. A Turkmen (Teke) cavalry regiment (about 630 men) was attached to the Second Turkestan Army Corps. Semirech'e Cossacks mostly fought in other units; many served in Northern Persia.¹² A state-supervised People's Militia (*narodnoe opolchenie*), composed of volunteers, was created in various towns of the region (Vernyi, Przhval'sk, Zharkent, Kapal and Bakhty).¹³ The size of the tsarist Army Corps varied, but generally included 20,000 to 30,000 soldiers.¹⁴ It is therefore likely that eventually around half of the Semirech'e working-age male population was mobilised. A source cited by Marco Buttino confirms this: apparently, in 1917 49.3 per cent of the Slavic working-age male population of the region was in the army.¹⁵

The First Turkestan Army Corps, reinforced by the Teke regiment, fought on the Russian southwestern front, mainly against Austria-Hungary. In 1916 and 1917 it was included in the Special Army (the renamed Guards Army) and fought in Volhynia.¹⁶ The Second Turkestan Army Corps became part of the Caucasus Army, led by General Nikolai Yudenich. In February 1915 the corps came under the command of Mikhail Przhval'skii (1859–1934), cousin of the explorer Nikolai, after whom the town of Przhval'sk in Semirech'e was named.¹⁷ The Second Turkestan Army Corps was one of the two Russian army corps that defeated the Ottomans in January–February 1916 in Eastern Anatolia.¹⁸

On both the Eastern European and the Caucasus fronts, the tsarist army resorted to systematic policies targeting the civilian population, which were sometimes directed against specific groups. Beginning in 1914, the military authorities expropriated the land of tsarist subjects who belonged to ethnic groups perceived as unreliable, especially Germans, and promised to redistribute it to Russian soldiers and landless peasants (this redistribution was partially implemented during the war). This policy was premised on the forced expulsion of the former owners. Eventually, approximately 202,000 ethnic German peasants were expropriated and expelled from Volhynia, Podolia, Bessarabia, Livonia and certain regions in the Kyiv and Chernigov provinces. Another 520,000 ethnic Germans were expelled from the Empire's Polish regions. The anti-Semitic and anti-commerce prejudice of tsarist generals also

led to the forced removal of between 500,000 and a million Jews from the Pale of Settlement, which was implicitly abolished when they were allowed to settle in Central Russia.¹⁹

In the Caucasus, where General Vladimir Liakhov fended off the Ottoman invasion of Ajaria and Georgia in early 1915, his troops, aided by Armenian militias, massacred tens of thousands of Laz and Ajarian civilians from an area that had provided irregulars to the Ottoman army.²⁰ In Eastern Anatolia, as Peter Holquist has shown, mass deportations of civilians in occupied territories became a standard practice of the tsarist army, aimed at clearing areas of military operation (10,000 Kurds and Armenians were expelled eastward to the rear from the Erzurum area during summer 1916).²¹ Moreover, the tsarist army drafted the local male population for labour (clearing roads, burying corpses and digging trenches).²² The entire male population of occupied Erzurum aged between seventeen and forty-five (Armenians, Kurds and Turks alike) was assigned “to compulsory labour of a military nature”²³ in spring and summer 1916. The army also implemented more ethnically targeted expulsions of Kurds, whom the tsarist command considered particularly unreliable (ethnically homogeneous Kurdish units were fighting in the Ottoman army against the Russians). According to Viktor Shklovsky, who was in northwestern Persia with the Russian army during 1917, “the formula ‘the Kurd is the enemy’ deprived the peaceful Kurds, and even their children, of the protection afforded by the laws of war”.²⁴ Between 1915 and 1917, the army cleared entire districts of their Kurdish population, on the basis of decisions taken by commanders at the corps level or below. The army also resorted to extreme violence against civilians during “punitive expeditions” against specific Kurdish communities responsible for acts of insubordination. These expeditions paved the way for more indiscriminate violence against the civilian population.²⁵ In 1915, just a few months before the Russian advance in Anatolia, the Ottoman army had deported and exterminated the Armenian population. After the Russian invasion in February 1916, Armenian volunteer formations attached to the tsarist army (soon reorganised into regular rifle regiments) participated in the army’s “punitive expeditions” that resulted in marauding, pillaging and raping of local Muslim communities.²⁶ The legacy of genocide also influenced high-level proposals for “ethnic separation”. In August 1916, General Nikolai Peshkov, Governor-General of the occupied Ottoman regions of Eastern Anatolia, had suggested resettling the entire Armenian population east of Lake Van, and the Kurds and Turks south of the same lake. The rationale for the proposed measure was to separate the groups in order to avoid intercommunal violence. The option was not considered a punitive measure and was discussed publicly (Peshkov explained this idea during an interview with the *Manchester Guardian*).²⁷ The collapse

of state authority and of the tsarist army itself in 1917 (on the Caucasus front, the army *de facto* dissolved during the summer),²⁸ overlapping with a breakdown of the food supply, led to increased looting, pillaging and violence against civilians by military units that had abandoned the front and returned home.²⁹

The draft of the local population for “compulsory labour of a military nature”, localised uprisings in response, “punitive detachments” and massacres of the civilian population, mass expulsions, plans for “ethnic separation”: all these practices are very familiar to students of the 1916 uprising in Central Asia and its repression. This particular pattern of mass violence “was *imported* ... from the war fronts. The war had come home”.³⁰ Initially, in 1916 and early 1917, the army itself implemented these violent measures against civilians in Central Asia – especially in Semirech’ë. As early as the autumn of 1916, peasant-soldiers from the villages most severely attacked during the uprising were released from their army units at the front and organised into paramilitary militias (400 soldiers in Przheval’sk district alone).³¹ Later, starting from spring 1917, but especially as the Russian army disintegrated in late 1917 and early 1918, more and more “Turkestan riflemen” who had been drafted in Semirech’ë returned from the front. Their violent anti-Kazakh and anti-Kyrgyz “settlers’ revolution”, and their victory in the local civil war, was achieved by a continuation of the practices of “indiscriminate” and “eliminationist” violence that they had first implemented as soldiers of the Tsar.

The 1916 uprising and the civil war in Semirech’ë

In a recent contribution, Eric Lohr and Joshua Sanborn have convincingly shown that the main feature of the period 1914–1917 in the tsarist empire was a process of extreme – and unprecedented in tsarist history – state-led mobilisation of the population and the economy, followed by catastrophic demobilisation and state collapse. The most consequential aspects of the latter were mass desertion from the army and the dismantling of state policing institutions (the Provisional Government abolished the Department of Police and the Gendarme Corps in March 1917). In short, the state abdicated from its monopoly on violence. The Bolshevik takeover in November 1917 did not cause state collapse; rather, it was made possible by it – even if Lenin, once in power, actively encouraged the process as a way to break anti-Bolshevik resistance among state employees, bureaucrats, and military personnel.³²

The 1916 uprising in Central Asia was both the first major crisis of mobilisation – anti-draft disturbances had been common in Russia since 1914, but the Central Asian events were of a different magnitude – and

the first major episode of state collapse in the Empire. The administrative structure fractured at the juncture between the Imperial state and local society: the canton chiefs (*volostnye upraviteli*, an elected position), who were charged with selecting the men to be drafted, in some cases became the first targets of violence, while conscription lists were burned; in many other instances, they refused to implement the order and led the revolt in their district, as Aminat Chokobaeva's contribution to this volume explains. Of the planned "requisition" of 250,000 Central Asian men, eventually only 123,305 were sent to do forced labour for the army in the period 1916–1917, about 16,500 of them from Semirech'e.³³ In the areas where violence was most widespread, especially Semirech'e, there was no complete return to peaceful coexistence between settlers and the local population before the total state collapse in 1917, a process that led directly to the civil war in the region.

The fronts of the civil war in Semirech'e have often been described as a social war between different strata (or *sosloviia*, social estates) of local society.³⁴ The Cossacks, a separate social estate with collective property over vast tracts of land, were at the top. Next came the relatively well-to-do "Old Settlers", peasant immigrants from Russia and Ukraine who had arrived before the 1890s. Lower down were the poorer – often landless – "New Settlers" who arrived during the 1890s and, in much larger numbers, in the early twentieth century.³⁵ Finally, at the bottom of the social pyramid, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were collectively categorised as "nomads" (even if approximately one quarter of them did in fact till the land) and included in the estate of "aliens" (*inorodtsy*). Regional military governors did not look favourably on the arrival of peasants, as they created problems with the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz and risked provoking disturbances; Semirech'e was officially opened to immigration only in 1910. On the eve of World War I, Semirech'e Cossacks numbered approximately 45,000 (only 3.5 per cent of the total population). There were 70,000 Old Settlers and, thanks to the Stolypin reforms, 131,000 New Settlers (24,000 of them landless), while the Kazakh and Kyrgyz population of Semirech'e numbered 905,000. Finally, about 99,000 Taranchis and Dungans (Hui) also lived in the region.³⁶ A significant number of New Settlers did not have land, while those with land to till had much less of it than Old Settlers and Cossacks. This created tensions. An agrarian statistician, Pëtr Rumyantsev, described the friction between Old and New Settlers around 1910: "The early settlers (Cossacks and peasants) ... have a hostile attitude towards the new arrivals. Sometimes even more hostile than that of the Kirgiz, whose lands are expropriated as colonisation lands."³⁷

The 1916 revolt was anti-state and anti-colonial. The competition for land between settlers and nomads did not immediately cause the 1916 rebellion. However, the patterns of its violence were to some extent shaped

by this competition. Archival evidence shows that at least in some areas of Semirech'e, such as Pishpek district, localised conflicts over land drove the 1916 clashes. A special expedition organised by the Turkestan Soviet in Tashkent, which toured the Pishpek region in summer 1917, concluded that in districts where there had not been previous land disputes between settlers and Kyrgyz, the rebels did not target Slavic peasants and Cossacks during the uprising.³⁸ Only in Semirech'e were there episodes of "eliminationist" violence, with the systematic destruction of dozens of settler villages. However, this did not happen homogeneously across the territory, but mostly in one specific area (*uezd*) bordering China, the Przheval'sk district. Here, the level of violence was much higher than anywhere else in Central Asia: the overwhelming majority (87 per cent) of the European victims of the 1916 uprising in the entirety of Turkestan were concentrated in the relatively small Przheval'sk district. In this district alone, 2,179 Europeans were killed and 1,299 went missing (most of the latter being kidnapped women and children), compared to 146 killed and eighty-five missing in the other three districts of Semirech'e and 196 European deaths in the other provinces of Turkestan.³⁹ The uprising provoked retaliation from settlers and from the tsarist army. General Alexei Kuropatkin, promptly transferred to Central Asia from the German front, not only unleashed regular regiments sent from the Kazan' military district against the civilian population, but also brought local volunteers into the army and ordered the distribution of weapons among the Slavic civilian population of Semirech'e.⁴⁰ The repression led to tens of thousands of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz being killed, and pushed hundreds of thousands over the border into China. The moment for the landless New Settlers had come, and they seized vast amounts of land from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.

As Stephen Kotkin has noted, there was a strong continuity between tsarist wartime land expropriation policies in favour of "Russian" peasant-soldiers and the Black Repartition – effectively, the Empire-wide peasant revolution.⁴¹ When the state collapsed, these violent practices seamlessly morphed into the revolutionary violence of armed Russian and Ukrainian peasants. Semirech'e peasant-soldiers and Cossacks had already started returning home at the end of 1916. The first Semirech'e settlers to be released from the army were peasants whose villages had suffered most from the uprising. As previously noted, 400 arrived in Przheval'sk district during the autumn and formed a paramilitary militia. On 16 March 1917, General Kuropatkin released from the Tashkent garrison any soldiers with homes in Semirech'e villages that had been partially or entirely destroyed during the uprising. He also issued an order for soldiers on leave from the front to be able to remain in Semirech'e until mid-May, even if their period of leave had already expired.⁴² The dissolution of the tsarist army allowed many more settlers to return

home. The process was initially slow: between March and June, only around 200,000 soldiers left the army. However, it gathered momentum during the second half of 1917: between June and October, two million soldiers deserted – approximately a quarter of the standing army. Ex-soldiers fuelled the peasant revolution everywhere in the former Empire. At the beginning of 1918, especially after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the dissolution of the former tsarist army could be considered complete.⁴³ The situation in the city garrisons was also tense. Two-thirds of the soldiers in the Tashkent garrison, who briefly took power in the city in September 1917, were actually Semirech'e settlers.⁴⁴ In order to defuse tensions in Tashkent, Kerensky signed an order that allowed additional Semirech'e soldiers to demobilise from the garrison and go back home. This measure fuelled violence in Semirech'e, but eventually failed to avoid a "Bolshevik" takeover in Tashkent. Reports of violence against Kazakhs and Kyrgyz from soldiers on leave in Semirech'e had reached the army's command since the beginning of the year.⁴⁵ The situation was especially serious in Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts, where the Kyrgyz were "driven out into the mountains, where they starve[d] to death."⁴⁶ An official army count tells us that in October 1917 there were 5,438 soldiers serving in Semirech'e (the number includes paramilitary militias and Cossack battalions, but not soldiers on leave from units outside the region or, obviously, deserters).⁴⁷

At the same time, during 1917 between 70,000 and 100,000 Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who had fled after the uprising began returning to Turkestan from Xinjiang with amnesty papers issued by Russian consulates. An unknown number died of starvation and epidemics in the process, while Russian settlers killed thousands of them in cold blood as soon as they crossed the border. Justin Jacobs has described a particularly ferocious episode in which Russian peasant-soldiers killed about 700 Kyrgyz with machine-guns as they passed through an alpine valley on their way back home.⁴⁸ It is not unlikely that the landless settlers (*novosely*) who launched reprisals against Kyrgyz and Kazakhs in Semirech'e during 1917 saw their actions both as an ongoing wartime measure against treacherous ethnic groups and as part of the peasants' revolution in the Empire.

In general, historians have emphasised the exceptionality of the situation in Turkestan and its "neo-colonial revolution."⁴⁹ Bolshevik slogans and socialist phraseology have often been interpreted as instruments used by the European minority to maintain power at a moment when the democratisation of political life during 1917 threatened the colonial social hierarchy.⁵⁰ However, the Europeans who took power in Tashkent in late 1917 were not part of the colonial elite. They were peasant-soldiers from Siberia and Semirech'e, often from the lower strata of the Slavic settlers, as well as railway workers and Austrian, Hungarian and German former prisoners of war.⁵¹ The role of the latter in the revolution and civil

war in Turkestan represents a further way in which violence moved from the war fronts to the rear. In 1918, according to British intelligence, of 40,700 World War I prisoners in Turkestan up to 9,000 had joined the local Red Army; weeks before the armistice in Western Europe, almost a third of the Reds' fighting force in Turkestan was still made up of former soldiers of the Central Powers.⁵²

The revolutionary peasant-soldiers waged violence both against the former Russian colonial elites and European intelligentsia in the colony,⁵³ and against the Muslim population (the autonomist government in Khoqand, destroyed by the Tashkent Soviet's soldiers in February 1918, included Turkestan, Kazakh and Russian liberals and moderate socialists). The Slavic settlers' revolution was *both* a social revolution *and* a neo-colonial revolution. The simultaneous presence of socialist slogans and brutal colonialist actions is not so much a sign of the mere instrumentality of the former; rather, it indicates that the coexistence of socialist and European supremacist ideas was entirely possible. Turkestan settler-soldiers had been politicised at the front no less than other tsarist infantrymen. We know that Bolshevik agitators were present within the First Turkestan Army Corps, which was still at the front in late 1917. At this point the Corps was in a state of constant turmoil, "resulting in a chain of refusals to obey orders, abuse of officers, fraternization [with the enemy], and total indifference to military order."⁵⁴ On 2 October 1917, the assembly of the representatives of the Turkestan Army Corps units gathered to discuss whether to support the Pre-Parliament and the future Constituent Assembly, or an all-socialist government led by the Bolsheviks. Half of the delegates voted for the Bolshevik resolution.⁵⁵ It seems that "trench Bolshevism" was popular among Turkestan conscripts no less than in other units: in fact, Allan Wildman described the First Turkestan Army Corps as one of the few units of the southwestern front to be "dominated by conscious, party-oriented Bolsheviks."⁵⁶ When a Military-Revolutionary Committee for the southwestern front was formed in early December, the Bolshevik G. Razzhivin from the First Turkestan Army Corps became its president.⁵⁷

To summarise the argument so far, in order to understand the peaks of violence in Turkestan – especially in Semirech'e in 1916–1917 – we need to take into account both the social fault-lines caused by tsarist colonisation policies and the impact of World War I. The war shaped both widespread practices of violence against civilians and the politicisation of the peasant-soldiers. I have also emphasised that, according to the archival evidence, settler violence was far from being consistently "eliminationist" and was instead highly localised, including in areas of major violence such as southern Semirech'e. I will now conclude the analysis of the main area of "peak violence" during the 1916 Central Asian Revolt – Przheval'sk district in Semirech'e – by focusing on the

importance of cross-border connections with neighbouring Xinjiang in unleashing the revolt. Thus, episodes of “peak violence” can be explained only by taking into account both the specific social tensions and power relations in geographically limited areas, and their transnational connections.

Opium and violence in the Przheval'sk district

Eastern Semirech'e was the central region of tsarist opium cultivation, even more important than the Russian Far East. Originally, the opium poppy had been cultivated by many of the roughly 50,000 Taranchi and Dungans who had migrated to the region in the late 1870s and early 1880s after the Qing reconquest of Kashgaria and Dzungaria, the return of Ili from tsarist to Qing control, and the administrative creation of Xinjiang (1884). Over time, local Kyrgyz and Slavic peasants also started to produce opium, but Dungans (and, to a lesser extent, Taranchis) remained the main producers in the region. Each year thousands of migrants from China moved to tsarist Turkestan during the summer harvest time. The opium economy between Turkestan and Xinjiang was premised on a porous border: almost the entire opium production of Semirech'e was brought back to Xinjiang and sold to Chinese merchants. World War I changed this situation. Before the war, the tsarist empire had imported opium and opioids for medical purposes from the Ottoman Empire and Germany. During the war, Indian and Persian opium was imported instead. Prices continued to rise, since demand for morphine increased dramatically because of the millions of wounded soldiers. In 1916, the tsarist state attempted to create a wartime monopoly over opium, and decreed that all legal opium production must be concentrated in Semirech'e. Permits for opium cultivation were assigned to peasants, who were obliged to hand over their entire opium harvest to the state at state prices. A system of supervision over opium production and procurement was set up – eighteen district supervisors were hired – while the cross-border opium trade was to be stopped. The areas of opium production in Semirech'e were Zharkent, Przheval'sk and Pishpek districts, i.e., the precise districts where anti-settler violence in 1916 was the fiercest. Przheval'sk district was by far the most important of the three (eight out of eighteen opium supervisors worked there), and was therefore the centre of the entire tsarist empire's legal opium production.⁵⁸

Estimates for the extent of land cultivated with opium poppy in Semirech'e ranged from 6,000 or 7,000 to 35,000 *desyatinas*.⁵⁹ The state planned to collect 81.9 tonnes of opium in 1916. The uprising, as well as the much higher price that Chinese merchants from across the border with Xinjiang were ready to pay, made this impossible. During the revolt,

the rebels targeted guards and aides of Semirech'e opium supervisors, killing fifteen of them.⁶⁰ Dungans were heavily involved in the uprising and, as they were believed to be particularly violent, retaliation by Slavic settlers accordingly hit them with distinctive cruelty. At the beginning of 1916, 1,500 Dungans lived in the town of Przheval'sk; by the end of the year, only eight were left alive.⁶¹ The Kyrgyz, with Dungans and Taranchi, fled the region (as did the Kazakhs further north), while Russian and Ukrainian peasants seized their livestock and land. Chinese administrators estimated that about 80,000 Kyrgyz and 220,000 Kazakhs reached Xinjiang in the second half of 1916.⁶² Due to the uprising, the mechanism of state opium purchase collapsed, only a quarter of the forecast harvest being collected (1,300 *puds*, or 21.29 tonnes). Nonetheless, in absolute terms this was a considerable amount, which facilitated a sharp decrease in the cost of tsarist morphine production.⁶³

Why was the uprising so much more violent in Przheval'sk district than elsewhere? The character and timing of the agrarian colonisation in the area should be taken into account. The influx of Slavic settlers before the war had been unevenly distributed, both geographically and temporally. Most of the immigration to Semirech'e took place after the 1905 revolution, and most of the immigrant peasants headed to a limited area within the province, where the best agricultural lands of Semirech'e were concentrated: Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts.⁶⁴ In this period the local administration, under the pressure of the unruly migrants, had resorted to the requisition of Kyrgyz winter settlements to find land, which they had distributed widely since 1907.⁶⁵ Occupations of Kyrgyz lands were concentrated in the period 1905–1912; indeed, according to the head of the district Resettlement Administration, no requisition of land from the Kyrgyz had been carried out in the four years before the uprising.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the tensions created by the most recent, and most aggressive, wave of colonisation were higher in Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts than in the other areas of Semirech'e.

Another factor is the charismatic leaders of the uprising in the Issyq-Kul region, who managed to rally various Kyrgyz groups. In August, the Sarybaghysh tribe leader Mokush, son of the influential Shabdan Baatyr (Shabdan son of Jantai, 1839–1912),⁶⁷ seized about 200 rifles and thousands of cartridges by ambushing a Russian convoy heading to Przheval'sk on the western Issyq-Kul shore. A few days later, Mokush described this feat in a letter to the Przheval'sk Kyrgyz, encouraging them to join the uprising. In the letter, Mokush claimed that Pishpek and Toqmaq had been destroyed. This call by an influential Kyrgyz family, claiming that the elimination of the Russian presence in the region was both possible and imminent, may have been the spark that led many Kyrgyz groups, including those in Przheval'sk district, to join the violence (other letters were sent to other regions).⁶⁸

Finally, one might assume that the proximity of the border – and the opportunity to flee – made the prospect of open rebellion more likely in border areas such as Przheval'sk and Zharkent. However, violence was much more widespread in Przheval'sk district than in Zharkent district or in Lepsinsk district further north. Besides, we need to explain not just why the rebellion broke out, but also why it was so violent in Przheval'sk district in particular. It is further necessary to explain why the violence had such an "eliminationist" character, in comparison both with areas where Slavic agricultural colonisation had similar features, such as Pishpek district, and with other areas bordering China.

Kyrgyzstani historians Jamilia Madzhun and Salamat Malabaev have claimed that one of the main factors explaining the singularity of Przheval'sk was the cross-border opium economy.⁶⁹ They (especially Madzhun, who has researched the topic more extensively) point to three main factors. First, there was the presence of between 5,000 and 10,000 seasonal migrants from China during the opium harvest, many of whom took part in the uprising. Second, there was the influence of the Gelaohui (哥老會, "Brothers and Elders Society"), an anti-Qing secret society which had played an important role during the Xinhai revolution in Xinjiang and which was most probably linked to the opium trade⁷⁰ (Gelaohui members were present in Przheval'sk district just before the uprising, according to tsarist police reports).⁷¹ Third, by World War I, the region's Kyrgyz were involved in opium production and trade as much as the Dungans, meaning that the opium state monopoly was as detrimental to them as to the Dungans.

Madzhun and Malabaev further claim, on the basis of very shaky evidence, that German and Ottoman spies were behind the organisation of the uprising, and that the local military administration treacherously abetted the insurgents in order to have a pretext for exterminating the local population so as to make room for Russian settlers.⁷² But their main point, on the crucial importance of cross-border connections with Xinjiang, still stands. Kyrgyz were indeed involved in the opium trade, by far the most lucrative activity in the region at the time. Gelaohui members had indeed travelled to Semirech'e in the previous decades, and some tsarist Dungans were members of the brotherhood network (Russian archives preserve copies of the Gelaohui membership certificates of Semirech'e Dungans from the 1890s).⁷³ Although police reports claiming that the Gelaohui had organised the entire Kyrgyz rebellion are surely exaggerations, other documents showing that the Gelaohui had an active network of both tsarist and Chinese Dungans in Semirech'e are more credible.⁷⁴ Thousands of Chinese subjects did indeed cross the border every year at sowing and harvest times (at least 6,000 even in 1917, despite the widespread violence in the region);⁷⁵ and Chinese traders had invested large sums of money in poppy cultivation in Semirech'e, as Chinese sources confirm.⁷⁶

It seems highly plausible that the attempt to create a state opium monopoly, to turn poppy growers into a sort of “state peasantry”, and to close the border with China to the opium trade – the most profitable economic activity in the region – were all factors pushing Kyrgyz and Dungans to revolt. Indeed, some of the inhabitants of Przheval’sk district who were questioned after the uprising in the late 1916 government inquiry on its causes highlighted the opium trade issue as the main cause of discontent, underpinning the population’s decision to participate in the uprising.⁷⁷

The decrease in the area of Semirech’e cultivated with various kinds of grain between 1916 and 1917 offers a rough but meaningful indicator of the geographical gradient of the uprising’s violence. The Semirech’e office of the Resettlement Administration reported during summer 1917 that the decrease in the area cultivated with grain was 84 per cent in Przheval’sk district, 55 per cent in Zharkent, 34 per cent in Pishpek and 2 per cent in Vernyi; no decrease was recorded in Lepsinsk and Kopal’ districts. The combined figure for the entirety of Semirech’e was a 24 per cent decrease.⁷⁸ The geographical variation of violence was directly proportional to the importance of the opium economy in the different areas: very high in Przheval’sk district, high in Zharkent, low in Pishpek and non-existent in the other districts. We must then add to the picture the factor of conflict over land, which was relatively high in Przheval’sk and Pishpek, and much lower in Zharkent, Lepsinsk and Kopal’. It seems clear that Przheval’sk district was the area of peak violence because this was where the two main factors – opium economy and land disputes – combined.

During the civil war in the region, other episodes of “eliminationist” violence targeted another group of former immigrants from Xinjiang: the Taranchis. By March 1918, Semirech’e “trench Bolshevik” settlers had taken control of the main urban centres in the region. In May 1918, the Tashkent revolutionary government sent troops to help them in the local civil war. As Ablet Kamalov explains elsewhere in this volume, Red soldiers fought the Cossacks, but reserved the worst treatment for the Taranchis, the other main opium-growers of Semirech’e, who were killed by the thousands. David Brophy refers to White reports describing “gruesome scenes of Taranchi peasants being forced to dig their own burial pits before being mowed down by machine guns”; according to Brophy, the most reliable estimates of the number of Taranchi victims of the 1918 massacre are between 4,000 and more than 10,000. Many more fled to Xinjiang.⁷⁹ Overall, between 1913 and 1920, the Taranchi and Dungan population of Semirech’e decreased from 98,800 to 45,547.⁸⁰

After the extermination and expulsion of the main opium-growers, Semirech’e Bolsheviks controlled the opium harvest. In 1919, banknotes were printed in Vernyi on the basis of the opium preserved in the vault of the local branch of the State Bank. Vernyi Bolsheviks sent delegations

to Xinjiang to sell opium to Chinese merchants and, with the proceeds, to buy weapons, ammunition and goods needed by the Semirech'e population. A spy reporting to the Siberian White Government in early 1919 claimed that in December 1918 Semirech'e Bolsheviks travelling to Xinjiang had obtained 800 rifles and 40,000 cartridges in exchange for opium.⁸¹ White reports made it clear that two factors facilitated the isolated Semirech'e Bolshevik settlers' victory in the regional civil war: first, "most of the Red troops [were former] Turkestan riflemen" who had fought for a long time during World War I, and thus were "old soldiers, accustomed to fighting and discipline";⁸² second, they controlled the opium harvest, the main economic resource in the region.

Conclusion

Lorenzo Veracini, a scholar of comparative settler colonialism, has claimed that "settlers are inhabitants of a polity to come".⁸³ Indeed, the phenomenon of settler colonialism resembles revolutionary movements and events in certain crucial respects. As political projects and historical processes, settler colonialism and revolution share at least three features: the idea and practice of a shift in sovereignty over a land (by migrants in the case of settler colonialism, by disenfranchised social groups in the case of social and political revolution); the readiness to reshape the land's culture, its political institutions and the very structure of its society; and mass violence.

Settler colonialism, narrowly defined, depends on settler control of colonial political institutions. In comparison with other examples of settler colonialism (especially in the British Empire), Slavic settlers in Central Asia had very little, if any, control over local Imperial political and administrative institutions.⁸⁴ This changed with state collapse in 1917. The revolutionary years between the end of the tsarist regime and Frunze's Red Army conquest of Central Asia in 1920 formed the only period in the history of Russian settler colonialism when the settlers were independent political actors not subject to an authoritarian state. To a significant extent, 1917 in Semirech'e was a revolution by the settler-soldiers. This was a period of extensive land grabs and systematic violence targeting the local population, in retaliation for the 1916 uprising. The extermination was also perpetrated by refusing to sell grain to Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, thereby starving them to death.⁸⁵ There was no state to speak of in Semirech'e between 1917 and 1920. The power of the revolutionary settlers was limited to the batches of territory that they could control militarily during the civil war. In Semirech'e, by winning the local civil war and identifying themselves with the "trench Bolshevism" that had emerged at the front and in garrisons during 1917, the New Settlers operated a

peculiar social revolution, killing off and expropriating Cossacks, Old Settlers and nomads alike. They thus “simplified” the social structure of rural society in the region. In early 1920, the Red Army conquered Central Asia. Its commander was the most successful Bolshevik military strategist of the period, Mikhail Frunze, himself the son of Semirech’e settlers. The new Bolshevik military power, which came from outside, proceeded to pacify the region by introducing harsh “decolonising” measures. In 1921 and 1922, 30,000 settlers were expropriated in Semirech’e, plus an additional 10,000 in the other regions of Turkestan. However, only a minority of them were forced to leave the region.⁸⁶ The decolonising measures in the southern colonisation belt were implemented in parallel with the process of Bolshevik state-building in these areas, which came under Moscow’s control relatively late. Although the expulsions and redistribution of land to the returning Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were specific to the region, the process of disempowering local pro-Bolshevik groups occurred across the former Empire, as soon as areas were brought under “central” Bolshevik control during the civil war. Subjugating local soviets and nominally pro-Bolshevik provincial groups was a relatively slow process that started in central Russia. For instance, in the Nizhnii Novgorod province, Bolsheviks extended their control “to villages through 1919–20 with the help of armed squads, led by the Cheka, of 1,000 to 1,500 men systematically going to every settled point and installing loyalists”, shooting in their wake anyone who opposed the process.⁸⁷ The Bolshevik subjugation of Turkestan’s neo-colonialist settlers was one of the last pages of the cycle of state mobilisation, revolutionary demobilisation, administrative breakdown and, finally, Bolshevik-led military remobilisation and construction of a new state administration.

Settler power relations and the uneven impact of World War I on Central Asian society shaped an important “layer” of violence in Central Asia during the civil war. However, narrowing down the scale of analysis shows the importance of other crucial factors in some of the most violent events of the period. Local economic and social conditions, such as the cross-border opium trade between Przhval’sk district and Xinjiang, can help explain such circumscribed “peak violence”.

Notes

Research for this chapter was conducted in the framework of the project “Imperial Borderlands and Transnational Illegal Markets: Opium Trade and Migrations between Russia, Inner Asia and Northeast China (1881–1937)”, funded by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council (project code LU13600817). I would like to thank Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu, Antonio Ferrara, Tatiana Kotiukova, Alexander Morrison and an anonymous reviewer for their useful comments and suggestions.

- 1 See Robert Gerwarth, "The Continuum of Violence", in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume II: The State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 638–662.
- 2 "Statisticheskii otdel' Semirechenskoi oblasti" (15 August 1917), TsGARKaz F.9 Op. 1 D.11 l.49ob.
- 3 On 1923 as the last year of the Central Asian civil war, see Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 155; Sergei Abashin, *Sovetskii kishlak: mezhdru kolonializmom i modernizatsei* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2015), 150.
- 4 This is a point also made in the most recent synthesis of the civil war: Jonathan D. Smele, *The 'Russian' Civil Wars, 1916–1926* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 17–21.
- 5 Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Micro-Level Studies of Violence in Civil War: Refining and Extending the Control-Collaboration Model", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24/4 (2012), 661; Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- 6 The term is common in the historiography on modern genocides. See, for example, Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe* (London: Routledge, 2008).
- 7 Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham, "Genocide", in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Vol. II: The State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 596.
- 8 Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe After the Great War, 1917–1923", *The Journal of Modern History* 83/3 (2011), 489–512.
- 9 Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin: Vol. I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878–1928* (London: Penguin, 2014), 175.
- 10 "Glavnyi shtab – Proekt o privlechenii i otbyvaniuu voinskoi povinnosti nekotorykh chastei naseleniia, osvobodhdennago ot neia do nastoiashchago vremeni" (July 1914), AVPRI F.486 Op. 1 D.340b ll.5–5ob, online at "Sobytiia v Semirech'e 1916 goda po dokumentam rossiiskikh arkhivov", <http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/dokumenty-po-istorii-sobytyi-1916-g/otnoshenie-nachalnika-glavnogo-shtaba-voennogo-ministerstva>; for demographic data, see *Obzor Semirechenskoi oblasti za 1913 g.*, I–XXIII, cited in S. N. Pokrovskii, *Pobeda sovetskoi vlasti v Semirech'e* (Alma-Ata: Izd. Akademii Nauk Kazakhskoi SSR, 1961), 24. Semirech'e (renamed Dzhetyysu in 1921) was part of Tsarist/Soviet Turkestan from 1867 to 1882 and from 1899 to 1924.
- 11 Tatiana Kotiukova, "Vosstanie 1916 g.: shtrikhi k istoricheskomu portretu", in Tatiana Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane: dokumental'nye svidetel'stva obshchei tragedii: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: MGU i Institut Vseobshchei Istorii RAN, 2016), 25.
- 12 T. B. Mitropol'skaia, *Iz istorii semirechenskogo kazachestva* (Almaty: Edilet Press, 1997), 42.
- 13 Pokrovskii, *Pobeda sovetskoi vlasti*, 72.
- 14 General Staff, War Office, *The Russo-Japanese War: Part I* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), 28.

- 15 Marko Buttino [Marco Buttino], *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Srednaia Aziia mezhdru padeniiem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), 232, 405.
- 16 Prit Buttar, *Russia's Last Gasp: The Eastern Front, 1916–17* (Oxford: Osprey, 2016), 257, 260, 264.
- 17 On Nikolai Przheval'skii, see David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 24–41.
- 18 For a description of these military operations, see Joshua Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 119–120.
- 19 Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 130, 135–138, 215; Alexander Prusin, “The Russian Military and the Jews in Galicia, 1914–15”, in Eric Lohr and Marshall Poe (eds.), *The Military and Society in Russia, 1450–1917* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 525–544; Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 59–60, 254–256.
- 20 Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 143–144. Estimates of the number of victims ranged from 30,000 to 45,000.
- 21 Peter Holquist, “Forms of Violence During the Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territory and in Northern Persia (Urmia and Astrabad), October 1914–December 1917”, in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 334–361.
- 22 Compulsory labour at the trenches was common on many European fronts: both the German army in France and the tsarist army in Galicia employed hundreds of thousands of civilians as forced labour: Holquist, “Forms of Violence”, 344.
- 23 Report of the Russian Military Head of Erzurum region to the Quartermaster-General of the Caucasus Army (7 September 1916), quoted in Holquist, “Forms of Violence”, 344.
- 24 Viktor Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917–1922* (Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2004), 86.
- 25 Holquist, “Forms of Violence”, 347.
- 26 Holquist, “Forms of Violence”, 345.
- 27 Holquist, “Forms of Violence”, 343, 357. Peshkov referred to the population groups in religious terms, Christians vs. Muslims.
- 28 Jörg Baberowski, *Vrag est' vezde. Stalinizm na Kavkaze* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011), 122. For a first-hand account of the revolutionary year at the Caucasus front and the break-up of the army, see V.L. Levitskii, *Na Kavkazskom fronte Pervoi mirovoi voiny: Vospominaniia kapitana 155-go pekhotnogo Kubinskogo polka. 1914–1917* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2014), 508–587. See also Nikanor Ardzhevanidze, “Zapiski”, in S.A. Kharitonov et al. (eds.), *Pervaia mirovaia voina 1914–1918 gg. v dnevnikh i vospominaniakh ofitserov Russkoi imperatorskoi armii: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2016), 17–44.

- 29 Holquist, "Forms of Violence", 351.
- 30 Peter Holquist, "Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905–21", *Kritika* 4/3 (2003), 649.
- 31 A. N. Kuropatkin "Prikaz voiskam Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga" (25 March 1917), RGVIA F.1396 Op. 2 D.2071 l.32. Many thanks to Marco Buttino for sharing this document with me.
- 32 Eric Lohr and Joshua Sanborn, "1917: Revolution as Demobilization and State Collapse", *Slavic Review* 76/3 (2017), 703–709.
- 33 P. A. Kovalev, *Tylovye rabochie Turkestana v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny (1916–mai 1917 gg.)* (Tashkent: Gozizdat Uzbekskoi SSR, 1957), 82.
- 34 Georgii Safarov, Lenin's envoy to Turkestan in the period 1920–1921, was the first to call the civil war in Semirech'e a *soslovie* war. See Georgii Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia: opyt' Turkestana* (Petrograd: Gosizdat, 1921). On *sosloviia* in the tsarist empire, see Alison K. Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being: Social Estates in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- 35 "Old" and "New Settlers" were contemporary definitions.
- 36 Marco Buttino, "La terra a chi la lavora': la politica coloniale russa in Turkestan tra la crisi dello Zarismo e le rivoluzioni del 1917", in Alberto Masoero and Antonello Venturi (eds.), *Russica: Studi e ricerche sulla Russia contemporanea* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1990), 283; *Obzor Semirechenskoi oblasti za 1913 g.*, I–XXIII, cited in Pokrovskii, *Pobeda sovetskoi vlasti*, 24.
- 37 *Voprosy kolonizatsii*, 9 (1911), quoted in Mitropol'skaia, *Iz istorii*, 31.
- 38 Report of the Pishpek district group of the Turkestan Soviet expedition, TsGARUz F.R-1613 Op. 1 D.5 ll.186–188.
- 39 See "Report of Governor-General A.N. Kuropatkin to the Tsar Nicholas II on the causes of the uprising of 1916 and the measures taken by the administration for its repression" (22 February 1917), in A.V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vostanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 87–100; E. D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954), 120–121.
- 40 Marco Buttino, "Central Asia (1916–20): A Kaleidoscope of Local Revolutions and the Building of the Bolshevik Order", in Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov and Mark von Hagen (eds.), *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2014), 115.
- 41 Kotkin, *Stalin*, 189. Kotkin writes: "Total tsarist *government* confiscations of agricultural land during the war – which was seized with minimal or zero compensation from some of the empire's most productive farmers [ethnic Germans], and contributed to the severe shortage of grain in 1916 and the bread riots of 1917 – amounted to at least 15 million acres." (Ibid.)
- 42 A. N. Kuropatkin, "Prikaz voiskam Turkestanskogo voennogo okruga" (25 March 1917), RGVIA F.1396 Op. 2 D.2071 ll.31–32.
- 43 Nicolas Werth, "Les déserteurs en Russie: violence de guerre, violence révolutionnaire et violence paysanne (1916–1922)", in id., *La terreur et le désarroi: Staline et son système* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), 37–51; Andrea Graziosi, *L'URSS di Lenin e Stalin. Storia dell'Unione Sovietica 1914–1945* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 87, 90; Ettore Cinnella, *1917: la Russia verso l'abisso* (Pisa: Della Porta, 2012), 130–131; Lohr and Sanborn, "1917", 707. Earlier studies

- questioned whether the tsarist army really collapsed during 1917. See Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914–1917* (London: Penguin, 1998 [1975]), 300.
- 44 Mitropol'skaia, *Iz istorii*, 51.
- 45 “Rezoliutsiia ob'edinennogo soveta musul'manskikh predstavitelei Pishpek'skogo uezda” (18 October 1917), TsGARKaz F.9 Op. 1 D.22 l.367.
- 46 “Rezoliutsiia Komiteta vremennogo pravitel'stva v Turkestane, Tashkent (podpis': Nalivkin, Shendrikov)” (24 August 1917), TsGARKaz F.9 Op. 1 D.5 l.16.
- 47 “Kolichestvo voennosluzhashchikh v Semirech'e” (1 October 1917), RGVA, F.1396 Op. 1 D.34 ll.63–63ob. I thank Marco Buttino for sharing this document with me.
- 48 Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 149; Justin Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 55.
- 49 The first study in English to make this point was: Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 86–93.
- 50 Buttino, “Central Asia (1916–20)”, 109.
- 51 Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 199, 202.
- 52 “Situation in Russian Turkestan: résumé of reports from Col. Bailey”, from H. B. M. Consul-General, Kashgar, to the Foreign Secretary, Foreign & Political Department, Simla (3 October 1918). NA FO 228/3023. The main task of the British intelligence and diplomatic expedition to Turkestan in 1918, led by Frederick Bailey, was to ensure that the Central Powers soldiers who were freed from tsarist captivity would not become a threat to India. See F. M. Bailey, *Mission to Tashkent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992 [1946]), 40–47.
- 53 The Tashkent Soviet unleashed a wave of expropriations and violence that killed hundreds in Russian Tashkent between late October and early November 1917: Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, 200. Pavel Nazarov, a member of the city's Russian business elite, wrote a vivid account of the revolutionary violence in 1918 Tashkent in his memoirs: Paul Nazarov, *Hunted through Central Asia: On the Run from Lenin's Secret Police* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1932]), 1–47.
- 54 Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Road to Soviet Power and Peace. Volume II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 250.
- 55 Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 250.
- 56 Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 350.
- 57 *Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR* (Moscow: Gosizdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literaturny, 1958), vol. 3, 64.
- 58 I am summarising here what I analyse more in detail in Niccolò Pianciola, “Illegal Markets and the Formation of a Central Asian Borderland: the Turkestan-Xinjiang Opium Trade (1881–1917)”, *Modern Asian Studies* (forthcoming).
- 59 Transcript (*zhurnal*) of session no. 22 of the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan, 24.06.1920 TsGARUz, F.R-29 Op. 3 D.2098 l.15ob; TsGARUz, F. R-25 Op. 1 D.530 ll.608–608ob.
- 60 “Doklad V.I. Massal'skogo” (11 June 1923), RGAE F.3429 Op. 3 D.170 l.5.
- 61 Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 70.
- 62 Jacobs, *Xinjiang*, 54; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 75–78, 146–156.

- 63 “Doklad V.I. Massal’skogo” (11 June 1923), RGAE F.3429 Op. 3 D.170 l.6.
- 64 The concentration of peasant immigration in limited areas with the best lands was typical also of peasant migration to Siberia. See Alberto Masoero, “Autorità e territorio nella colonizzazione siberiana”, *Rivista Storica Italiana* 115/2 (2003), 459.
- 65 Gulnar Kendirbai, *Land and People: The Russian Colonization of the Kazak Steppe* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2002), 53.
- 66 Dzhamilia Madzhun, *Vosstanie 1916 g. v kontekste mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii v Tsentral’noi Azii i uchastie v nem dungan* (Bishkek: Natsional’naia AN Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, 2016), 200.
- 67 On Shabdan Baatyr, who had assisted the Russians in their conquest of the Ferghana valley and then became an important “imperial mediator” between the tsarist administration and the Kyrgyz, see Z. Abdyldabek kyzy (ed.), *Shabdan baatyr: épokha i lichnost’: dokumenty i materialy* (Bishkek: Sham, 1999); Tetsu Akiyama, “Why Was Russian Direct Rule Over Kyrgyz Nomads Dependent on Tribal Chieftains ‘Manaps’?”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), 625–649; Daniel Prior (ed.), *The Šabdan Baatyr Codex: Epic and the Writing of Northern Kirghiz History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- 68 “Iz protokola doprosa mirovym sud’eiu 3-go uchastka Przheval’skogo uezda V.N. Runovskim svidetelia generala-maiora Ya.M. Korol’kova o prichinakh i khode vosstaniia kirgizov”, (1 October 1916), in K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda: dokumenty i materialy* (Bishkek: Natsional’naia AN Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, 2015), 56.
- 69 Madzhun, *Vosstanie*; Dzhamilia Madzhun, “Vnedrenie kul’tury opiumnogo maka i ego vliianie na tragicheskie sobytiia 1916 goda v Semirech’e”, *Vestnik NGU. Serii: Istoriiia, Filologiiia* 16/1 (2017), 102–110; Salamat Malabaev, “Rol’ vneshnikh sil v eskalatsii tragicheskikh sobytii 1916 g. v Kyrgyzstane”, in T.V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Tsivilizatsionno-kul’turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral’noi Azii v nachale XX stoletii (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016), 119–126.
- 70 After the fall of Yaqub Beg’s polity and the Qing conquest of the region in the late 1870s, 30,000 demobilised Qing soldiers remained in Xinjiang. Some of them started to cultivate opium poppy and to sell it using Gelaohui networks: James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 164–165.
- 71 On the Gelaohui between Xinjiang and Semirech’e during the revolution and Civil War, see David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia–China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 116–117, 124, 127, 146–147, 167–168.
- 72 Scholars who have worked in German archives have conclusively disproved the suggestion that Germany had an active network of agents able to organise or even support an uprising in tsarist Turkestan. See Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010); David X. Noack, “Continuing the Great Game: Turkestan as a German Objective in World War I”, in Gearóid Barry, Enrico Dal Lago and Róisín Healy (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War I* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 230–244. Conspiracy theories were common at the time as “spy mania” was ubiquitous among tsarist administrators, in the army, and among the general population during World War I: see William C. Fuller

- Jr., *The Foe Within: Fantasies of Treason and the End of Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). Witnesses questioned after the uprising in Semirech'e sometimes suggested that the behaviour of local authorities before and during the revolt had been treacherous.
- 73 Communication from the Governor-General of the Steppes to the Ministry of the Interior, with attached copy of the Gelaohui membership certificates (14 March 1891), GARF F.102 Op. 46 D.135 ll.1–7.
- 74 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 147.
- 75 According to some estimates, the number may have been much higher. The Chinese Ili Frontier Commissioner claimed that 20,000 Chinese had crossed the border to Turkestan to sow opium poppies in early spring 1917. According to the Russian consul in Ghulja, in April 6,000 Dungans were heading to the districts of Zharkent and Przheval'sk (copy of a telegram from the Russian Consul in Ghulja, Brodianskii, to the Committee of the Provisional Government in Semirech'e and to the Military Directorate of Semirech'e, 04.04.1917 TsGARKaz F.9 Op. 1 D.9 l.46ob).
- 76 Telegram requesting the State Council and the Foreign Ministry in Beijing to negotiate with the Russian ambassador for the protection of the lives and property of the Chinese subjects on tsarist territory, 22 June 1917, *Collection of Governor Yang Zengxin's Decrees*, vol. 19, Gengji 3: Waijiao huibian 3 (Jinyan), 電院部請與俄使交涉對於在俄種煙華人保全生命資本文, 2334.
- 77 Among others: "Iz protokola doprosa meshchanina Aleksandra Zinov'eva", Przheval'sk (5 November 1916), TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.2 l.2.
- 78 To the Resettlement Administration: Preliminary report on the expected harvest of grain in Semirech'e province, data from the Statistics Division referring to 15 August 1917 (15 September 1917), RGIA F.391 Op. 6 D.682 ll.145–150.
- 79 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 149–150, here 149.
- 80 Turkestarskii Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, *Statisticheskii ezhegodnik 1917–1923 gg.* (Tashkent, 1923), 37–41; *Obzor Semirechenskoi oblasti za 1913 g.*, I–XXIII, cited in Pokrovskii, *Pobeda sovetskoj vlasti*, 24.
- 81 "Sekretno. Vyderzhki iz agenturnykh donesenii, kasaiushchikhsia vzaimotnoshenii mezhdu russkimi bolshevikami i kitaitami" (no date, but between February and April 1919), GARF F.R200 Op. 1 D.450 l.39.
- 82 "Sostoiaschchii v raspriazhenii General-Kvartmeistera Shtaba Verkhovnago Glavnokomanduiushchago Genshtaba, Kapitan Simonov, g. Omsk, svedenie: Bolsheviki na Semirechenskom fronte" (17 April 1919), GARF F.R200 Op. 1 D.450 l.45.
- 83 Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 14.
- 84 See Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).
- 85 Buttino, *Revolutsiia naoborot*, 236–238.
- 86 Niccolò Pianciola, "Décoloniser l'Asie centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)", *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49/1 (2008), 101–143.
- 87 Quote from Stephen Velychenko, *State Building in Revolutionary Ukraine: A Comparative Study of Governments and Bureaucrats, 1917–1922* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 165.

Violent acculturation: Alexei Kuropatkin, the Central Asian Revolt, and the long shadow of conquest

Ian W. Campbell

On 1 May 1868, Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin was far in rank and in distance from the heights his military career would later reach. The twenty-year-old son of Pskov province and recent military school graduate had got his first taste of real battle on campaign in the Central Asian emirate of Bukhara, en route to Samarkand. As he described the experience in his memoir fifty years later, he had not found it an edifying experience, still less a pleasant one. Returning to consciousness after sustaining a blow to the head, he noted with horror a dear friend next to him, lying dead. War, he wrote,

began to seem to me without beauty, and to hold only horror. Doubt crept in: is it good to serve such a bloody business, and should one rejoice at each opportunity to go on campaign, each opportunity to scrap? Doubts appeared, too, from the other side: do we have the right to forcibly encroach upon a land where another life had existed for millennia? Doubt extended to the soldiers; their zeal in battle seemed too animalistic. Is it worth loving such cruel people?¹

Ultimately, Kuropatkin managed to erase these doubts about the cruelty of war and the rights of the Russian Empire in Central Asia to a remarkable degree. He participated in notoriously brutal campaigns of conquest in the Ferghana Valley in 1875–1876 and Transcaspia in 1881. Far from rejecting the business of war, he made it his career, rising in the service hierarchy to become Governor of Transcaspia for most of the 1890s and Minister of War in the early 1900s. He was supreme commander of tsarist forces during the Russo-Japanese War and commanded the northern front of tsarist dispositions during World War I. It was from this last posting, in the summer of 1916, that he was reassigned to the theatre where he had first made his name. Appointed Governor-General of Turkestan, he was given the special task of putting down the

wide-ranging local revolt against labour requisitioning for the tsarist army that year. He pursued this goal with a vigour that suggested his qualms about violence were long in the past: the actions of his punitive forces against rebels, actual and suspected, and the flight of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz across the border to China, killed more than 100,000 of them.²

To be sure, much of the violence of 1916 was beyond Kuropatkin's control, and he would later testify that he found some flare-ups to be regrettable.³ It was the product of a steadily deteriorating economic situation, the revanchism of settler militias armed by the tsarist state, and, as Niccolò Pianciola argues in this volume, of soldiers bringing their wartime experiences on the Caucasian front back to Turkestan. As a result, scholars who seek to contextualise the Central Asian Revolt have focused on the novelty of the wartime circumstances surrounding it and its repercussions in later years.⁴ It fits naturally within what Peter Holquist famously called the "continuum of crisis" comprised by World War I, the revolutions of 1917 and the Russian civil war.⁵ Yet the suppression of the revolt was entrusted to Kuropatkin specifically because of his previous experience in the borderlands. His presence, therefore, invites us to also consider how much of what transpired was comprehensible, permissible and even desirable according to older ways of thinking about territory, population and violence. If the tsarist military hierarchy was not unanimous in demanding "merciless reprisals with the rebels" in 1916, Kuropatkin's case shows us that it created expectations that made such reprisals more likely than not.⁶

Kuropatkin was a graphomaniac, and the egodocuments he left behind help us understand both how he forged himself into the kind of person who could do the dirty business the Empire asked of its servitors on the borderlands and how that experience influenced his actions during the revolt.⁷ He was a prolific military historian and publicist, and his personal collections at the Russian State Military-Historical Archive hold hundreds of diaries. It was the diaries in particular that he worked into a rambling memoir, *Sem'desiat' let moei zhizni* (*Seventy Years of My Life*), composed at his estate southeast of Pskov in 1918, after revolutionary events had seen him removed from his last post as Turkestan Governor-General and rendered him a man without a country to serve. There is no clear evidence that Kuropatkin anticipated his memoir would be published imminently, although he certainly believed that what he had to say was likely to be of significant public interest. It seems more likely, rather, that its immediate purpose was as an exercise in confession and self-justification, attempting to make sense of a career that had ended abruptly and controversially, and of his own profoundly changed personal circumstances. Extending to more than 2,000 mostly typewritten pages, the memoir (also stored at the Military-Historical Archive) cuts off at his appointment to a high-ranking post in the Ministry of War at the end of

1897, depriving us of his further reflections on the Russo-Japanese War. The fresh and painful memories of his recent service in Turkestan, on the other hand, frequently creep into his older reflections.

Kuropatkin's egodocuments are a significantly underused source for explaining his behaviour in 1916 and 1917. His diaries are a classic account, but historians have only treated them as sources of empirical data concerning events on the ground during the Central Asian Revolt, and have not treated the memoir as relevant at all.⁸ Yet his egodocuments from the years around the revolt are vital to understanding his self-formation and memory practices. They show a man who had thoroughly absorbed a distinct set of values and practices from his earlier experiences on the borderlands.⁹ Although these sources have their limitations (notably, they exclude much of Kuropatkin's late-career experience with total warfare, and the memoir in particular invites a retrospective framing), the sense that Kuropatkin forged himself into an Imperial servitor and acted as such when suppressing the revolt is unlikely to be a product of the source frame. The memoir, although based on diaries, digresses regularly and haphazardly as Kuropatkin recalls events related to the subject notionally at hand; it seems significant in this sense that digressions about the Central Asian Revolt, and not about the Great War, fill its pages. Rather, his early years of Imperial service and what turned out to be his last assignment were connected in his mind – they occurred in the same place and were essentially similar. His plans to pacify Turkestan in 1916 were entirely compatible with a framework for service on the borderlands he had developed years earlier.

Kuropatkin's service memoir exemplifies what Esmerelda Kleinreesink, following Yuval Harari, has called the "growth plot", in which the central character experiences personal development, rather than disillusionment, through battle and service; this emplotment tracked well with the enviable career he had made, despite his early doubts and relatively obscure origins.¹⁰ Rising through the service hierarchy demanded adjustment to a culture that demanded exemplary and tutelary violence against racial and ethnic others when the interests of the Empire he served demanded it. This was a *condition sine qua non* for servitors of any colonial empire in the long nineteenth century, the Russian Empire no less than any other.¹¹ Kuropatkin's diaries and memoir reveal that, through significant mental exertion, he forged himself into the kind of person who could behave this way when he believed the circumstances required it – as he believed the 1916 revolt clearly did. Following in the footsteps of role models for his own behaviour, he willed himself to act as he believed his heroes and mentors would have. His sense of when the good of the Empire and the exigencies of his situation demanded violence, in turn, came from an archive of experiences that he had cultivated for himself over fifty years of service. During the summer of 1916, Kuropatkin believed, he was

only acting as he had learned to under vice-regal mentors during earlier service tours in Turkestan. The techniques and ideas that had made the Empire could restore it in a moment of danger, and Kuropatkin had developed an image of himself as the man to do the job.¹²

Viceroy's past and present

No individual figures more prominently in the Turkestan years of Kuropatkin's memoir than the first Governor-General of the region, Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman. This outsized role was in accordance with the length of Kaufman's tenure, the scope of his influence on the early years of tsarist rule, and his personal intervention in favour of the young Kuropatkin. The two men maintained a personal correspondence, and Kuropatkin fondly remembered his mentor's generosity and support of his climb through the service hierarchy.¹³ As the builder of Russian Turkestan, Kaufman was the subject of multiple panegyrics over the course of the memoir; the lessons that Kuropatkin believed he had learned were vital to his self-formation as an administrator.

Kuropatkin especially emulated the strong, personalised rule that Kaufman had embodied during his time in power, a mode of governance that Daniel Brower has described as "paternalistic, authoritarian", and vice-regal in concept, if not always in practice.¹⁴ Old Turkestan hands held up Kaufman as the model of what a governor-general ought to be, and Kuropatkin shared this view: Turkestan's first Governor-General was said to have treated the natives of the defeated khanates humanely, respected their customs and morals, increased their welfare, and kept the troops under him in good fighting condition.¹⁵ At some moments, perhaps, Kaufman might have been failed by lazy or ignorant subordinates, but when things went well in the new colony, praise accrued to him to the exception of all others.¹⁶ (Another old Turkestan hand, Gerasim Alekseevich Kolpakovskii, came in for similar praise in the memoir: as Kuropatkin recalled it, his lonely and energetic activity had done much to establish Russian rule in Semirech'e and improve the troops stationed there.)¹⁷ This was a model of Imperial power, Kuropatkin believed, that had already proven successful and could remain so in the right hands.

Indeed, Kuropatkin's memoirs evince a high level of concern with strong and unified power in the borderlands. He attributed early missteps during the conquest to "duality of power" (*dvoistvennost' vlasti*) – once power was concentrated in a single pair of reliable hands, the situation quickly turned for the better.¹⁸ On the other hand, once in a gubernatorial post in Transcaspia, he found it important to record that he had assured British guests that the miscommunications and lack of coordination with St Petersburg that had permitted "men on the spot" (most

famously Mikhail Grigor'evich Cherniaev) to carry out the conquest was a thing of the past.¹⁹ Thus there was no need to fear any further aggression on Russia's part, since all relevant parties were firmly under control. And certainly, while serving as governor of Transcaspia in the 1890s, Kuropatkin put this belief in the proper nature of administrative power into practice. His recollection of his activities immediately after arrival gives them a sweep and energy reminiscent of Kaufman himself. The new governor quickly set to consideration of economic development, of necessary revisions to existing legal codes, to bringing border issues under control, finally issuing an "enormous decree ... containing detailed directives" to his subordinates on the basis of all he had seen on New Year's Day of 1892.²⁰ He also took the bold step of curtailing investigation of several officials known to be seriously corrupt, in recognition of "the enormous services [they had] rendered to Russia."²¹ The problems were real, and demanded correction, but this could be done under Kuropatkin's vigorous oversight without losing irreplaceable officials. In general, it appeared to both Kuropatkin's contemporaries and modern historians that his administration of Transcaspia was a house of cards "dependent ... on [his] personal oversight and energy."²² This emphasis on personal authority was critical to Kuropatkin's story of his own career: that of a man able to be the arbiter between good and bad; licensed to criticise Imperial personnel and institutions when they came into conflict with his views; equally licensed to ignore bad behaviour when punishing it, in his view, would cause greater harm to the Imperial enterprise. The summer and fall of 1916, which brought him back to contemplation of his past in Turkestan even as it placed plenipotentiary powers in his hands, represented his opportunity to fill his heroes' shoes one more time – as, indeed, the Russian population of Tashkent seems to have expected of him.²³

The morality of violence

Kuropatkin wrote himself as a fundamentally moral being, a man who by implication could be trusted to make correct choices with the fearsome power the Tsar had sometimes placed in his hands. He appears to have been sincerely convinced, writing at the end of his career, that his years in service had consistently kept to fundamental principles he had adopted on the French seacoast as a young man: "love for nature, love for people, and faith in God's handiwork."²⁴ An easy enough case to make when discussing his civilian powers, this argument might have easily run aground during discussions of his military career. His actions in Turkestan had been the subject of investigation and political opprobrium less than two years before he composed the memoir.²⁵ Yet Kuropatkin

believed strongly that he had only applied violence when and in the measure it was justified. Since he viewed his earlier colonial career in this light, it took little extra effort to justify 1916 similarly.

Although he recovered from his initial shock at the bloody consequences of colonial war, Kuropatkin frequently presents himself in his memoir as a reluctant purveyor of violence to opponents and subordinates. He writes, for example, of giving a cowardly Cossack in his retinue the chance to redeem himself through zealous service, rather than the prescribed punishment of execution (or simply letting his fellow Cossacks deal with him, ultimately yielding the same result).²⁶ This reluctance extended, as he recalled it, to resisting the unsavoury wishes of men superior to him, even when those superiors were his role models. He defied a second-hand order to execute a young native during the Samarkand campaign, he recalled, only giving in when a direct personal order from Kaufman left no room for debate; the shame of unjustly killing a man who, he reasoned, was only trying to defend his home remained with him for years.²⁷ He had more luck with a figure closer to him in rank, directly intervening to prevent Mikhail Dmitrievich Skobelev (enjoying his first independent command during the Ferghana campaign) from hanging an innocent native.²⁸ Kuropatkin grew into a man who relished battle, but emphasised that he had stayed others' hands when their actions crossed the bounds of justice and morality. Such a record of restraint implied that the violence he *did* permit was acceptable.

Skobelev is Kuropatkin's bloody double in the latter's narratives of campaigning in Central Asia. The two were frequent companions on campaign, and friends of a sort. Kuropatkin considered him a significant enough presence in his life to devote a chapter of the memoir to his biography.²⁹ But while Kuropatkin certainly admired Skobelev's natural talents as a warrior, and regretted his premature death deeply, he was not a fully fledged devotee of the cult of Skobelev.³⁰ He had seen too much for that. Rather, Skobelev was a man whose behaviour during the Ferghana campaigns had regularly gone beyond anything justifiable by military necessity into outright sadism: punishing recalcitrant villages by burning them, killing unarmed inhabitants, permitting rapes and brutally beating native helpers (the so-called *jigits*).³¹ In this Kuropatkin suspected the malign influence of Baron Alexander Nikolaevich Meller-Zakomel'skii, a school friend of Skobelev's bestial in his "cruelty and depravity".³² Still, Skobelev had permitted himself to fall under these influences, and more besides. It was not this Skobelev whom he admired, but the later Skobelev of the Russo-Turkish War and Transcaspian campaign, who had "improved morally" and grown into a commander skilled in tactics and logistics alike.³³ Thus moderated, his gifts could shine through. But Kuropatkin tells the story this way not only to emphasise his association with a military celebrity, or to indicate positive models for his behaviour,

but to point out a type of officer and a set of behaviours he finds morally unacceptable, furthering his sense his own behaviour stayed within acceptable bounds.

Yet if Kuropatkin saw no reason to question the morality of his career, we need not take him at his word, for his memoir passes over many other questionable episodes either with silence or no sense of regret. Nowhere in pages of prose devoted to Kaufman, for example, does he mention the latter's responsibility for the brutal (and pointless, from a strategic point of view) slaughter of several thousand Yomud Turkmen after the Khivan campaign of 1873.³⁴ Perhaps Kuropatkin excluded this detail because he was studying in St Petersburg during the Khivan campaign and had not observed it directly. In other cases, he lacks even this cover. This is most notoriously the case during the Transcaspian campaigns, which culminated in the massacre of more than 14,000 Teke Turkmen at their stronghold of Geok-Tepe on 12 January 1881. Kuropatkin led one of the storming columns that day and happily presided over days of armed theft from the survivors (called "*baranta*" after the pre-colonial nomadic custom of mutual raiding – *barymta*).³⁵ He gloried in the lasting impact that a single decisive blow had produced on the Tekes, breaking their resistance and ensuring their peaceful behaviour as subjects of the Tsar.³⁶ There is no sorrow in the telling; it is hard to imagine anything further from his doubts about the morality of colonial warfare as a younger man.

How, then, can we understand the seeming contradiction between Kuropatkin's willingness to commit terrible violence and overlook it in others, on one hand, and his self-representation at other moments as the conscience of the army? How did it happen that, so frequently, the circumstances fell short of his threshold for moral revulsion – a threshold the existence of which he was at pains to emphasise? The memoir, again, provides an answer, and one that proves instructive for his actions in 1916.

Lessons learned

Kuropatkin believed that he had learned two vital lessons during his formative years in Turkestan, both of which reinforced one another when revolt or resistance left the security of the Empire in jeopardy. First, he developed a sense of the ethnic and racial hierarchy of the Russian Empire and the world, one that was broadly shared among Turkestan hands and across European empires. Asia, in his mind, was both a place of exception where violence impermissible between civilised combatants could be used, and a place where brutality could be particularly productive of good results.³⁷ Second, while the Russian Empire was a family, not all of its members had equal rights; at the head of Kuropatkin's list of what he

understood as Kaufman's principles was that the latter had placed the Russian "tribe" higher than all others in the region, and maintained its prestige at the expense of principles of legal equality.³⁸ Taken together, these ideas were sufficient not just to excuse the excesses of conquest, but any means that might be necessary to maintain order.

During the years of the conquest, Kuropatkin had passed through a school run by hard men, and both his memoir and his history of the conquest show that he had accepted their principles. Chief among these, in battle, were the importance of bold and decisive action against "Asiatic" opponents and the instrumental utility of excessive violence, both leaving a lasting moral imprint. These were principles contrary to Kuropatkin's instincts and to his reputation as a commander cautious and indecisive to a fault; they could only find their place in a theatre and against an enemy understood as exceptional in the world's spatial and racial hierarchy.³⁹ Skobelev was fond of an aphorism about the necessity of conquering the enemy's imagination when doing battle in Asia, while Nikolai Ivanovich Grodekov, the official chronicler of the siege and storm of Geok-Tepe, crowed that the blow the tsarist army had struck was so strong "that its impression will long remain indelible."⁴⁰ Kuropatkin had a close professional familiarity with both men – he had even helped Grodekov to edit the history of the Transcaspian campaign – and his memoir touches on similar themes.⁴¹ He wrote with evident pleasure of both Kaufman's "cruel punishment" of the Bukharans in 1868 and Skobelev's ability to inspire fear and trust in equal measure after the Geok-Tepe campaigns.⁴² Indeed, he reflected, Russia had only been provoked to expand to its natural frontiers in Turkestan because the independent khanates were troublesome and disobedient neighbours that "submitted only to strength."⁴³ As Governor in Transcaspia in the 1890s, he had sought to put these principles, too, into practice. Force had long since had its effect there; he ascribed the quiescence of the region during his time in power, above all, to the fresh memory of the siege and massacre at Geok-Tepe a decade before.⁴⁴ To keep that impression at the forefront of native minds, he ordered subordinates to keep to a form of rule that was "firm, but by no means cruel": "It is necessary that they respect and fear us. They will love us later."⁴⁵

Such disproportionate use of force was not only necessary, but morally justifiable, since Kuropatkin believed that the prerogatives of ethnic Russians necessarily trumped the claims of any other subjects of the Empire. Following, he believed, in Kaufman's footsteps, he put this principle into practice from his first days in power in Transcaspia. He recalled with pride his ceremonial reordering of the groups that had come to meet him in Ashkhabad: dismissing the Armenian deputation that had presumed to approach him with bread and salt first and refusing to appear until representatives of the Russian population were placed at the

head of the line.⁴⁶ He considered that this measure, both in accordance with his instructions to make the region a “Russian corner” and his own inclinations, would properly set the tone for his years in power.⁴⁷ The “Russian” policy that he had developed privately in the 1880s, and published at exceptionally tedious length after the Russo-Japanese War, was both expansionist and integrationist. Turkestan and some other borderlands were Russia’s natural frontiers, and occupying them was her historical destiny. But this expansion had come at the expense of a Russian tribe already vastly weakened by Peter the Great’s modernisation and European wars. These regions could not be allowed to bleed the centre dry, nor could natives be allowed to forget that the few Russians sent to govern them were utterly superior. Yet they were entitled to the fatherly concern of men like Kuropatkin, who were responsible for elevating them culturally, developing their economy, and protecting them from abuses.⁴⁸ Non-Russians, as subjects of the Tsar, had interests that deserved respect and protection; if they came into conflict with the good of the Imperial enterprise, or with the interests of Russians, they would have to take second place. If they chafed under Imperial rule and rebelled, if their revolt threatened the life of what Kuropatkin considered the leading nationality of the Empire, their grievances could only be heard after the threat was neutralised; in combination with stereotypes about “Asiatics” and the methods necessary for dealing with them, neutralising the threat was likely to involve excesses.

From memory to action

Kuropatkin’s view of colonial borderlands as places where exceptional violence was permissible or even necessary fit ominously with his growing sense of racial paranoia. His “profoundly pessimistic” view of the threat non-Europeans posed to imperialism had already informed his role in the Russo-Japanese War, and inspired a cautious and defensive view of Russia’s colonies.⁴⁹ It also fit well with the tsarist army and administration in Turkestan’s permissive attitude towards excessive and disproportionate violence against locals. World War I only intensified Kuropatkin’s longstanding fears of a coming inversion of the global racial hierarchy; a German victory, he believed, would be the first step in Europe’s decline and Asia’s inexorable rise.⁵⁰ Thus, when returning to Turkestan in 1916, he was placed in a situation that he could see as an especially serious threat within a ready-made cognitive framework. His diary, moreover, shows that returning to the colony constantly evoked reminders of the past in him.⁵¹ The Central Asian Revolt was nothing more, for him, than a particularly serious attempt to disrupt Imperial rule by unassimilated ethnic subordinates. The ideas and methods that had restored order

under comparable circumstances in Turkestan's Imperial past would do so again.

When giving instructions to subordinates about the disposition and behaviour of punitive forces, Kuropatkin drew on all the conventional tropes about warfare against "Asiatics" and explicitly cited earlier episodes of the conquest of Turkestan as models. His instructions to the military governor of Semirech'e, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Folbaum, emphasised the moral and tactical importance of the offensive, while a report to his superiors stressed that an "energetic" colonel had been appointed to command a punitive force.⁵² Folbaum responded in kind, reporting the energetic actions of his troops to his commander and laying out his plans to continue delivering "strong but short blows" to the opponent.⁵³ This was a language, clearly, that all soldiers on the scene were comfortable with. Kuropatkin's models for their behaviour came largely from the glorious martial past of the 1860s: the resistance of a single *sotnia* of Ural Cossacks against 10,000 opponents at Iqan was how a commander in 1916 ought to repel an attack, and Kolpakovskii's successful "bold" move against a large and well-armed native force during the campaign to annex the Ili Valley in 1871 left Folbaum in no doubt of the standards to which he was being held.⁵⁴ When this was effective in breaking local resistance, Kuropatkin crowed to his superiors about the efficacy of "severe and merciless punitive measures";⁵⁵ when success was slow in coming, he privately grouched about his commanders' unwillingness to deliver the blow.⁵⁶ Returned to the theatre where he had launched his career, Kuropatkin followed a script he knew well.

The most notorious of his measures responding to the revolt, confiscating the land of rebellious cantons and land "where Russian blood was shed", also drew on Imperial precedents. In 1898, the revolt of a Sufi leader called the Dukchi Ishan in Andijan district had been punished by seizing the lands where the revolt had occurred, "creat[ing] a constant reminder to natives about the punishment that threatens in case of a repeat occurrence of the mutiny (*miatezh*)".⁵⁷ The Andijan revolt left an indelible (and damaging) impression on tsarist military administrators in Turkestan, and in its wake these administrators appear to have accepted land confiscation as a routine punishment when the security of the Empire had been threatened.⁵⁸ Even before Kuropatkin arrived on the scene, figures from the bellicose Mikhail Rodionovich Erofeev (the Acting Governor-General of Turkestan, later Kuropatkin's assistant) to the pliable Alexander Ivanovich Gippius had either threatened to confiscate land or made plans to do so.⁵⁹ It is not clear if Kuropatkin came to the idea on his own or simply went along with ideas already circulating. At any rate, the policy suited his moral revulsion at the actions of natives who had "turned out unworthy to own [land]";⁶⁰ his sense of how best to inculcate useful fear in the surviving rebels;⁶¹ and his practical sense that

only physically separating Russians and ethnic groups could “put things right (*naladit'*)” in Semirech'e.⁶² Thus threats to confiscate land quickly figured in his public appearances, and he got far with plans to carry it out on a large scale.⁶³ This would have been monstrous in its humanitarian consequences, condemning tens of thousands of Kyrgyz already hungry and sick in the wake of the revolt to scratch out a living in the rocky and isolated Naryn region. The horror of the land confiscation plan stands in stark contrast with Kuropatkin's understanding that the rebels had well-founded grievances and had been provoked by the Government's inept handling of the draft order. But it was a widely accepted punishment in the wake of Andijan and dovetailed with Kuropatkin's long-held view that the safety, security and prerogatives of ethnic Russians took pride of place over those of any other group. Rebels' concerns could be addressed only once the proper ethnic hierarchy had been restored.

At the same time, in his role as Governor-General and arbiter of legality in the region, Kuropatkin actively criticised those institutions and people he thought had provoked the revolt, and tried to position himself as the figure with the wisdom (and performative mercy) to soften the harsh punishments for which martial law called. He had an old Turkestan hand's contempt for the actions of the tsarist Resettlement Administration – his views of it have much in common with Turkestan's famous critic of administrative abuse and advocate of paternalistic legality, Konstantin Konstantinovich von der Pahlen – and was forthright in condemning its role in provoking locals to revolt.⁶⁴ This organisation had taken from Kazakhs and Kyrgyz “enormous areas of land, some vitally necessary to them” and placed them into desperate conditions, priming them for revolt.⁶⁵ In general, tsarist administration in Turkestan in the decades leading up to the revolt had left much to be desired; by seizing their best lands and doing little for them, the Empire had failed to “bring the hearts of these simple but still primitive people closer to us”; a problem that demanded serious reform after the revolt.⁶⁶ Understanding popular grievances did not hold him back from bloody reprisals; these were separate problems, and the restoration of order, he believed, had to come first. But as the Tsar's man in the region he had to follow in Kaufman's footsteps, identify defects and remedy them.

Similarly, he took it on himself to rein in state and interethnic violence when he believed that it had crossed into being harmful to the restoration of order and the future of the region. In this he satisfied both his ideal image of a governor-general, using the awesome powers at his disposal to bind *and* to loose, and lived up to his self-conception as a reluctant warrior. He noted, when reporting to Nicholas II after the revolt, that he had commuted the vast majority of death sentences passed down by courts-martial.⁶⁷ This was in accordance with his general sense that it was possible to be “lenient (*sniskhoditel'nyi*)” towards

the masses, seized by a “herd mentality (*stadnym chuvstvom*)” during the revolt.⁶⁸ Exemplary punishment and exemplary mercy were both necessary prerequisites to rebuilding the colony and integrating natives to the Empire as its servitors had failed to prior to the revolt. Nor, despite the murderous actions of Kuropatkin’s punitive forces, could vigilantism be permitted to go unchecked, since it militated against the restoration of calm. Thus, seemingly in disagreement with Folbaum, he had a grave threat for the perpetrators of perhaps the most notorious atrocity of the revolt, the massacre of several hundred unarmed and innocent natives by peasants in the village of Belovodskoe: that anyone thinking of further such acts, Russian or native, would be strictly punished by the court-martial (i.e., executed).⁶⁹ Acting to the limits of his authority, combining brutality and mildness as he believed that only he knew best, he was the man to heal the Tsar’s colony and lead it into a prosperous and peaceful future. So he sought to convince his superiors, his subordinates, the population entrusted to him and himself.

Even after being ejected from power in Turkestan during the spring of 1917, Kuropatkin continued to rage to himself, in his diaries and memoir alike, that his replacements had lost in him the most likely means of resolving the numerous problems the revolt had left them to deal with. His successors were dealing much too softly with the surviving natives, he wrote, and uncertain authority (*dvoevlastie*) divided between the Tashkent Soviet and supporters of the Provisional Government generated harmful confusion.⁷⁰ The moderate Turkestan Committee that replaced him sought to introduce civil rights universally, he lamented, without differentiating among ethnicities or considering of the practicability of the measure.⁷¹ A lack of unified authority, a muddled ethnic hierarchy, and a failure to recognise the utility of brutality on the borderlands: what could have sounded worse to a self-professed disciple of Kaufman and a graduate of the school of colonial warfare that Turkestan had been in the 1870s? So thoroughly had Kuropatkin become the Empire’s man, fifty years after returning to consciousness on the road to Samarkand, that he could not consider any prescription for its ills other than one that had just proven to be expired.

Conclusion

Both Kuropatkin’s actions during 1916 and his plans for the following year, then, were fully consonant with a late-Imperial model for rule on the borderlands, emphasising the prerogatives of ethnic Russians over other, subordinate groups. He knew no different. In this sense, although the Great War and revolutionary threat may have intensified his worries, it seems that there was very little about suppressing the revolt that was

novel in Kuropatkin's mind. What were new were the tools he had in his hands: nearly fifty machine-guns to put down the revolt, and the formidable statistical apparatus of the Resettlement Administration to quantify and categorise lands suitable for seizure to punish the guilty.⁷² The Imperial archive, as Kuropatkin had cultivated it in his mind, already contained horrors enough to restore order and exact a fitting revenge for the shedding of Russian blood. His words during the pacification campaign of 1916 were virtually identical to those he had used during his early years in Transcaspia: "It is necessary to get them to fear and respect us first. They will love us later."⁷³

Notes

The research in this essay was carried out with the support of a Grant to Promote New Research Initiatives awarded by the UC-Davis Committee on Research, which I gratefully acknowledge. Thanks also to the editors of this volume, an anonymous reviewer and the participants of the Desert Russian History Workshop for their helpful comments on various drafts of this chapter. Any remaining errors of fact or interpretation are, of course, my own.

- 1 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 l.28. All archival citations, unless otherwise noted, come from Kuropatkin's memoir.
- 2 Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und zarische Politik: der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010), 15. S. D. Batyrbaeva has recently argued that such figures are significantly exaggerated and that the true number of deaths did not exceed 40,000; S. D. Batyrbaeva, "Teoretiko-metodologicheskie aspekty issledovaniia demograficheskikh posledstviu vosstaniia 1916 g. v Severnom Kyrgyzstane", in I. A. Petrov (ed.), *Turkestanskoe vosstanie 1916 g.: fakty i interpretatsii: materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, Moskva, 23–24 maia 2016 g.* (Moscow: IRI RAN, 2016), 38–51.
- 3 Cloé Drieu, "Situation révolutionnaire au Turkestan (février 1917–février 1918): les dynamiques locales des révolutions russes", *Vingtième siècle* 135 (2017), 90–91.
- 4 U. Tomokhiko [Tomohiko Uyama], "Vosstanie, rozhdennoe v voine: vliianie Pervoi mirovoi voiny na kataklizm v Tsentral'noi Azii v mezhdunarudnom kontekste," in Petrov (ed.), *Turkestanskoe vosstanie*, 77–86.
- 5 Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 6 G. S. Sapargaliev, *Karatel'naia politika tsarizma v Kazakhstane (1905–1917 gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1966), 297.
- 7 By "egodocument" I understand "a text in which an author writes about his or her own acts, thoughts, and feelings". See Rudolf Dekker, "Jacques Presser's Heritage: Egodocuments in the Study of History", *Memoria y Civilizacion* 5 (2005), 14. For Dekker's definition applied to military history see Esmerelda

- Kleinreesink, "On Military Memoirs: Soldier-Authors, Publishers, Plots and Motives" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2014).
- 8 The diaries were partially published in *Krasnyi arkhiv* in the 1920s; M. Pokrovskii (ed.), "Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 20 (1927), 56–77, and P. Galuzo (ed.), "Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii. Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina", *Krasnyi arkhiv* 34 (1929), 45–67. For research using the diaries as a main source see *inter alia* A. V. Papazov, "Sredneaziatskoe vosstanie 1916 goda i rol' general-gubernatora A. N. Kuropatkina v ego podavlenii", *Vestnik MGOU* 2 (2012), 109–112; V. N. Ponomarev, "Sobytiia v Turkestanom general-gubernatorstve 1916 g. v dnevnikh A. N. Kuropatkina", in Petrov (ed.), *Turkestanское vosstanie*, 214–221.
 - 9 My emphasis on the performative and constructive nature of the self draws on cultural approaches to biography exemplified by Jo Burr Margadant (ed.), *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000). My sense of what military memoirs may offer to the study of military history draws on the work of Yuval Noah Harari, e.g., "Military Memoirs: A Historical Overview of the Genre from the Middle Ages to the Late Modern Era", *War in History* 14/3 (2007), 303–309.
 - 10 Kleinreesink, "On Military Memoirs", 18. Yuval Harari emphasises the importance of professionalisation in encouraging growth narratives in military memoirs; "Martial Illusions: War and Disillusionment in Twentieth-Century and Renaissance Military Memoirs", *Journal of Military History* 69/1 (2005), 67–69.
 - 11 The *locus classicus* on tactics and strategy for colonial warfare at this time is C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899). Even historians who see significant differences over time and across empires see acquiescence to destructive warfare against racial others as common to European practices of colonial warfare. See *inter alia* Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Michael P. M. Finch, *A Progressive Occupation? The Gallieni-Lyautey Method and Colonial Pacification in Tonkin and Madagascar, 1885–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For an argument stressing continuity in one particular colonial situation, see Olivier le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser. Exterminer: sur la guerre et l'État colonial* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).
 - 12 Matthew Payne has recently argued that Kuropatkin had a fundamentally "imperial" perspective on his task in 1916, an insight this chapter develops further; Matthew Payne, "Do You Want Me To Exterminate All of Them or Just the Ones Who Oppose Us? The 1916 Revolt in Semirech'e", in Krista A. Goff and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, eds., *Empire and Belonging in the Eurasian Borderlands* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2019), 65–79.
 - 13 They corresponded directly, for example, during the Transcaspien campaign of 1880–1881; Kuropatkin to Kaufman, 2 January 1881, RGVA F.165 Op. 1, D.248 ll.76–80; title of file: "Perepiska nachal'nika Turkestanского otriada polkovnika Kuropatkina A. N. s komanduiushchimi voiskami v krae generalom Skobelevym M., generalom Grodekovym i s drugimi ofitserami po provedeniiu Akhal-Tekinskoi ekspeditsii". On career support, see RGVA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 l.187.

- 14 Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 36–38. For a worshipfully positive evaluation of Kaufman's service, see David MacKenzie, "Kaufman of Turkestan: An Assessment of His Administration, 1867–1881", *Slavic Review* 26/2 (1967), 265–285.
- 15 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1753 ll.113–114.
- 16 On subordinates, see RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 l.97.
- 17 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 ll.140–141, 182–183.
- 18 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1741 l.11.
- 19 The basic source in English on Cherniaev's life remains David MacKenzie, *The Lion of Tashkent: The Career of General M. G. Cherniaev* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1974). Alexander Morrison has cast serious doubt on the idea that Cherniaev acted against his government's wishes; Alexander Morrison "‘Nechto eroticheskoe,’ ‘courir apres l'ombre’? Logistical imperatives and the fall of Tashkent, 1859–1865", *Central Asian Survey* 33/2 (2014), 153–169.
- 20 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1766 ll.158–158ob.
- 21 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1766 ll.7–8.
- 22 Alexander Morrison, "The Pahlen Commission and the Re-Establishment of Rectitude in Transcaspia, 1908–1909", *Monde(s)* 4 (2013), 54–56, here 56.
- 23 Jeff Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 180.
- 24 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1743 ll.67–68.
- 25 *Inter alia* RGVIA F.1720 Op. 2, D.196, ll.210–211 (statements No. 227, 228, and 229, introduced to the Duma 19 November 1916). Title of file: "Zhurnaly boevykh deistvii i raporty nachal'nikov Turgaiskogo i Irgizskogo otriadov o prodvizhenii i podavlenii vosstaniia kirgizov".
- 26 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1753 ll.106–107.
- 27 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 ll.54–55.
- 28 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1, D.1753 l.84.
- 29 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1764 ll.126–166ob.
- 30 On Skobelev's popularity, which waxed after the Russo-Turkish War, see Hans Rogger, "The Skobelev Phenomenon: The Hero and His Worship", *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 9 (1976), 46–78.
- 31 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1753 ll.30–32. This portion of the memoir is an unedited diary, covering events of 29 and 30 December 1875.
- 32 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1753 l.14.
- 33 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1753 ll.12–14.
- 34 My sense of Kaufman's role here comes from Alexander Morrison, "The Fall of Khiva, 1873" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Central Eurasian Studies Society, Princeton, NJ, October 2015).
- 35 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1764 ll.72 (dispositions for the storm) and 77–78ob. (*baranta*).
- 36 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1764 ll.7ob-8.
- 37 See *inter alia* Elizabeth Kolsky, "The Colonial Rule of Law and the Legal Regime of Exception: Frontier 'Fanaticism' and State Violence in British India", *The American Historical Review* 120/4 (2015), 1218–1246.

- 38 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742 ll.92–93.
- 39 For criticism of Kuropatkin as a vacillating, cautious commander, see Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (1975; New York: Penguin, 1998), 228–230, and O. R. Airapetov, *Uchastie Rossiiskoi imperii v Pervoi mirovoi voine: 1915* (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 2014), 437; on cautious tactics during the Russo-Japanese War, John W. Steinberg, *All the Tsar's Men: Russia's General Staff and the Fate of the Empire, 1898–1914* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2010), 122.
- 40 N. I. Grodekov, *Voina v Turkmenii: pokhod Skobeleva v 1880–1881 gg.* (St Petersburg: Balashev, 1883), vol. 1, 194 and vol. 4, 74.
- 41 For Kuropatkin as an editor of Grodekov's work, see note by the Asiatic Section of the Main Staff, 3 September 1882, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.756 l.127; title of file: "Po raznym predmetam, a takzhe s bumagami k svedeniiu i rukovodstvu".
- 42 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1742, ll.17–18; RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1741 l.51.
- 43 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1741 l.14.
- 44 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1769 l.230.
- 45 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1766 ll.159–159ob.
- 46 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1766 ll.25–26.
- 47 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1765 l.200.
- 48 Here I summarise ideas that Kuropatkin presents in his memoir as "personal dreams" originally set down in his diary in 1885 (RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1765 ll.96ob–105), and that he develops in *Zadachi russkoi armii*, 3 vols. (St Petersburg: Bezobrazov, 1910).
- 49 David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois, 2001), 102.
- 50 D. B. Pavlov, "Mezhdu dvukh vojn: dilemmy vneshnei politiki i voennogo sotrudnichestva", in I. A. Petrov (ed.), *Rossia v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny: ekonomicheskoe polozhenie, sotsial'nye protsessy, politicheskii krizis* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2014), 49–50.
- 51 For recollections of the storm of Geok-Tepe and of the Ferghana campaign see, respectively, diary entry, 12 January 1917, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1967 ll.26ob–27. Title of file: "Dnevnik no. 36-yi Kuropatkina A. N. (Nachat' do revoliutsionnogo perioda.) Dekabr' 1916-Ianvar' 1917 g."; diary entry, 8 September 1916) RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1968 l.75. Title of file: "Dnevnik no. 64-yi Kuropatkina A. N.":
- 52 "Iz telegrammy Kuropatkina generalu Fol'baumu ot 11 avgusta 1916 g.", in L. V. Lesnaia and T. R. Ryskulov (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 g. v Kirgizstane* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1937), 80–81; "Otnoshenie Turkestanskogo general-gubernatora A. N. Kuropatkina v Tretii politicheskii otdel MID o polozhenii v Turkestane", Rosarkhiv, <http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/dokumenty-po-istorii-sobytiy-1916-g/otnoshenie-turkestanskogo-general-gubernatora-kuropatkina-v>.
- 53 "Iz telegrammy voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi oblasti Fol'bauma Kuropatkinu", in Lesnaia and Ryskulov (eds.), *Vosstanie*, 81–82.
- 54 "Iz telegrammy Kuropatkina generalu Fol'baumu ot 11 avgusta 1916 g." and "Iz telegrammy Kuropatkina general Fol'baumu" (undated), both in Lesnaia and Ryskulov (eds.), *Vosstanie*, 80–81, 82–83.

- 55 “Doklad general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia A. N. Kuropatkina voennomu ministru D. S. Shuvaevu o rezul'tatakh nabora na tylovye raboty, o vosstanie naseleniia i ego prichinakh i o karatel'nykh meropriiatiiakh vlasti”, in A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 80.
- 56 Diary entry, 3 September 1916 in Galuzo (ed.) “Vosstanie 1916 goda”, 50.
- 57 General Nikolai Ivanovich Korol'kov, “Konspekt otcheta” (undated), RGVIA F.1396 Op. 2, D.2203 l.122ob. Title of file: “O bezporiadkakh v Fergane i revoliutsionnom dvizhenii sredi tuzemtsev”.
- 58 On the pernicious legacy of the Andijan revolt, see Alexander Morrison, “Sufism, Pan-Islamism, and Information Panic: Nil Sergeevich Lykoshin and the Aftermath of the Andijan Uprising”, *Past and Present* 214 (2012), 255–304.
- 59 “Telegramma i.d. general-gubernatora Turkestanskogo kraia M. R. Erofeeva pomoshchniku voennogo gubernatora Samarkandskoi oblasti P. O. Palengutu o sozdanii komisii dlia opredeleniia stepeni vinovnosti uchastnikov vosstaniia i konfiskatsii ikh zemel' i imushchestva” (July 1916), in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 649–650; telegram from A. I. Gippius to Main Staff, 27/06/1916 RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546, ll.209–209ob. Title of file: “O volneniiaakh sredi tuzemnogo naseleniia Turkestanskogo kraia, vznikshikh na pochve rekvizitsii soglasno VYSOCHAISHEGO poveleniia 25 iunია 1916 g.”.
- 60 Report of Kuropatkin to Nicholas II, 22 February 1917, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1569 l.10ob. Title of file: “Raport Kuropatkina Nikolaiu II o vosstanii tuzemnogo naseleniia v Turkestanskom krae i zhestokom ego podavlenii v sviazi s raspriazhieniem pravitel'stva o privlechenii tuzemtsev k rabotam v tylu armii”.
- 61 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1569 l.10ob.
- 62 Diary entry, 12 October 1916 in Galuzo (ed.), “Vosstanie 1916 goda”, 60
- 63 “Rech' Turkestanskogo General-Gubernatora General-Ad'jutanta, Generala ot Infanterii A. N. Kuropatkina, skazannaia 21 avgusta 1916 deputatsiiam ot naseleniia g. Tashkenta”, in V. I. Nifad'ev (ed.), *Sredneaziatskoe (Turkestanskoe) vosstanie 1916 g.: istoriia v dokumentakh* (Bishkek: KRSU, 2015), vol. 4, 53–54; “Protokol soveshchaniia pod predsedatel'stvom Turkestanskogo general-gubernatora A. N. Kuropatkina po voprosu o vyselenii uchastnikov vosstaniia iz Przheval'skogo, Pishpeksogo, i Dzharkentskogo uezdov Semirechenskoi oblasti v Narynskii krai” (16 October 1916), in Nifad'ev (ed.), *Sredneaziatskoe vosstanie*, vol. 5, 123–126.
- 64 On the report of the Pahlen commission and resettlement, see Alexander Morrison, “‘Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region’: The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1910”, *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), 1–29.
- 65 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1569 l.6.
- 66 Telegram Kuropatkin to Shuvaev, 18 August 1916, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4564 l.258.
- 67 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1569 l.10ob.
- 68 Report from Kuropatkin to Shuvaev, 17 October 1916, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4564 l.380.
- 69 Diary entry, 12 October 1916 in Galuzo (ed.), “Vosstanie 1916 goda”, 59–60.

- 70 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1744 ll.508–509; diary entry, 13 May 1917, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1967 ll.55–56ob.
- 71 RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1744 ll.520–525.
- 72 Sapargaliev, *Karatel'naia politika*, 61.
- 73 Diary entry, 11 October 1916, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1970 ll.19ob.–20. Title of file: “Dnevnik Kuropatkina A. N. no.35-yi”.

Refugees, resettlement and revolutionary violence in Semirech'e after the 1916 revolt

Alexander Morrison

Few aspects of the 1916 Central Asian Revolt are more controversial than the measures taken by the Russian Imperial authorities for its suppression. The Russian military historian Andrei Ganin regards these as entirely justified by the violence inflicted on Russian settlers by “savage” Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in July and August 1916, while he also assumes that they were limited to operations of the regular army against armed groups of rebels.¹ By contrast, most historians working outside the former USSR have concluded that collective punishment of non-combatants, ethnically targeted killing and mass deportations were a prominent feature of the suppression of the revolt, the work not just of the army, but of groups of armed settlers bent on revenge.² The demographic consequences were severe: for many Kyrgyz and some Kazakh historians the death or flight of 270,000 people from Semirech'e in the aftermath of the revolt is nothing less than genocide, an attempt by the colonial administration to cleanse the fertile lands around Issyq-Kul and in the Chu Valley of their indigenous population to make way for a new wave of the Russian settlers whose presence had been largely responsible for provoking the revolt in the first place.³ At least one early Soviet account, by G. I. Broido, alleged that the revolt had been deliberately provoked to provide an excuse for punitive measures that would allow still more Kyrgyz land to be appropriated for settlers.⁴ Broido's allegation that the revolt itself was a deliberate provocation (*provokatsiya*) is typical of the wild conspiracy theories that circulated in the febrile atmosphere of First World War Russia and can be safely dismissed – 3,700 Russian settlers were killed in the early stages of the revolt, which burst unexpectedly on Russian colonial officials, many of whom were themselves deeply sceptical about the wisdom of peasant resettlement in Central Asia. As many have argued, the legal definition of genocide enshrined in the 1948 UN charter is often difficult to apply in varied historical settings, or as a means of characterising the many horrific mass killings

that have marked the twentieth century.⁵ Rather than trying to prove or disprove genocide, as Niccolò Pianciola argues in [Chapter 7](#), it makes more sense to situate the suppression of the revolt in a broader wartime context where collective punishment, mass deportations and the killing of civilians had become almost a routine form of statecraft among all the combatants, but particularly so in Russia. There is ample evidence that state-led ethnic cleansing of extensive territories in Semirech'e was in progress throughout the second half of 1916, and that it was accompanied by “eliminationist violence” directed against the Kazakh and Kyrgyz population of the region by armed Russian settlers and former soldiers, both as a means of seizing land, and in retaliation for the similarly brutal, eliminationist violence directed against European settlers in the early stages of the revolt. This did not come to an end with the February Revolution but continued in modified form throughout 1917 under the Provisional Government.⁶ However, even before the February Revolution it was accompanied by measures to resettle returning Kyrgyz refugees, which suggests that their extermination or permanent exclusion was not the goal. I also suggest that the continued violence of the period after the October Revolution, while ostensibly driven by revolutionary politics, was in fact a continuation of the by then well-established pattern of retribution by European settlers – soldiers and vigilantes – against the “native” population.

“Where Russian blood was shed”

In September 1916 the newly appointed Turkestan Governor-General Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin (1848–1924) issued a notorious order that all land “where Russian blood was shed” during the recent revolt be taken from the native population and reserved for Russian settlement, encouraging a violent land-grab by peasant settlers when the fateful decision was taken to give them arms.⁷ Kuropatkin was no stranger either to colonial violence, or to that of the First World War. As Ian Campbell explains in the [previous chapter](#), he was the quintessential old *Turkestanets*, who had first served in Central Asia as a junior subaltern in the 1860s, and had been Chief of Staff to the sadistic General Mikhail Dmitri'evich Skobelev during two of the most notoriously violent campaigns of the Russian conquest, Ferghana in 1875–1876, and Transcaspia in 1880–1881, the latter seeing the massacre of 14,000 Turkmen at the fortress of Gök-Tepe. Rising to become Minister of War, he was dismissed after Russia's catastrophic defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, during which he had been Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army in the Far East.⁸ After a long period of disgrace, he was called out of retirement in the autumn of 1915, and by April 1916 was commanding the northern sector of the eastern front against

the Central Powers, where he seems rapidly to have become popular with the men under his command.⁹ This area had seen a series of severe defeats for Russian forces in the summer of 1915, as the Germans under General Mackensen used huge concentrations of heavy artillery to pulverise their positions and forced a rapid retreat from all of Galicia and Congress Poland, while in Kuropatkin's Baltic sector they had been pushed back almost to Riga. Military defeat was accompanied by terrible suffering for the civilian population of the region, most of whom became refugees – and much of this was inflicted by the Russian military on their own subjects. The earlier Russian occupation of Habsburg Galicia had been marked by a complete breakdown of civilian administration and widespread pogroms against Jews, prompting condemnation for violations of international law.¹⁰ However the Russian central command, *Stavka*, was no more considerate of its own subjects. Joshua Sanborn has argued that the wounds Russia's military leadership inflicted on the Empire themselves were far worse than any blow struck by the Central Powers along the eastern front. Chief among these was the imposition of martial law along a vast swathe of territory immediately behind the front line. Normal administration collapsed, military violence against civilian populations (especially Jews) became commonplace, and attacks on merchants as "speculators" devastated local markets. Sanborn christens this combination of virulent anti-Semitism and anti-capitalist prejudice "Stavkaism", and identifies it with Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov, Commander-in-Chief of Russian forces, and his Chief of Staff General Yanushkevich. Thanks to their efforts, the Russian state had already effectively ceased to exist in its predominantly Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian borderlands long before the Germans marched in. This provoked a vast wave of refugees, some fleeing military violence, many deliberately driven out of their homes by the very army that was meant to be protecting them.¹¹ As Peter Holquist has argued, many of the tools of surveillance, deportation and violence that we associate with Bolshevism and post-war fascist and communist regimes actually predated 1917 and were a response to the pressures that total war had placed on the tsarist state.¹²

If this was the army's record in European Russia, towards civilians who were guilty of nothing more than being in the wrong place and (sometimes) of the wrong ethnicity, then it is hardly surprising that it behaved in an even more extreme fashion in the colonial periphery, which had its own history of exemplary violence, against a "native" population who were guilty of rebellion. While most of the troops who carried out the punitive expeditions in the steppe and Turkestan were Orenburg and Semirech'e Cossacks who had not necessarily been drawn from the front line, as settlers themselves they were unlikely to show any restraint or be reined in by their officers. In the course of 1917, as Niccolò Pianciola describes in [Chapter 7](#) of this volume, many settler-soldiers of the 1st and

2nd Turkestan brigades left the collapsing Caucasian front and returned home, where they would be at the forefront of a growing spiral of violence. The final ingredient that ensured a bloodbath was the issuing of arms to the settlers, and (as we shall see) the presence of groups of armed vigilantes who accompanied military expeditions and carried out raids of their own. The tendency to see the Kyrgyz and Kazakh population as collectively guilty, regardless of whether their *auls* had actually been involved in the rebellion, became firmly entrenched and would have horrific consequences.

Kuropatkin's own diary, one of the best-known sources on the revolt since its publication in the 1920s, makes it clear that he shared many of these assumptions. Together with many of Turkestan's administrators, he believed that the roots of the rebellion lay in the expropriation of land for Russian colonisation, about which he too had been sceptical, writing in a telegram to the War Ministry that

over a period of 40 years we did not win over the hearts of these simple, but primitive people. The over-zealous expropriation of land which had been at the disposal of the Kirgiz for centuries for the creation of Russian settlements called forth the dissatisfaction of the Kirgiz with the new administrative regime.¹³

However, this did not translate into leniency: the exigencies of war and the need to uphold what he saw as fragile Russian authority meant there could be no hesitation when it came to repressive measures. Kuropatkin recorded his rejection of the attempt by his interpreter, the Kazakh engineer Muhammadjan Tynyshbaev, to explain and justify the rebellion among the Kazakhs of the Aulie-Ata District in the southern steppe as follows:

The engineer Tynyshbaev, a Kirgiz, who is travelling with me as an interpreter, gave me an account of the reasons for the disorders among the Kirgiz of the Aulie-Ata District. According to the statements he has collected (through one-sidedly questioning the Kirgiz), the disorders sprang up owing to the fault of the administration and the Russian population. The administration did not explain to the population the essence of the demands made on them, and the Russian population persuaded the Kirgiz population not to send labourers [in response to the conscription decree]. They scared them into thinking they would be taken to fight, while saying to themselves that if the Kirgiz rebel then they will take the land away from them and give it to us. When the disorders began the Russians robbed and killed the peaceful Kirgiz population.

In reality the Kirgiz were the first to commit villainy: those called up for military service fell on unarmed *belobiletniki* [those exempted from military service, as many settlers were], and killed up to 30 people. They threw their bodies into a well.¹⁴

While we only have Kuropatkin's account of what Tynyshbaev actually said to him, in parts it does seem to smack of a similar kind of conspiracy theory to that put forward by Broido. Kuropatkin's own views, here and elsewhere in the diary, were clearer – the “Kirgiz” (here Kazakhs) were *collectively* guilty of villainy and treason in time of war and would be collectively punished.

Settler vigilantism

In Semirech'e, at least, it was not only the army which was inflicting violence on the native population in retribution for the revolt. Already on 9 August the Governor of Semirech'e Province, Folbaum, reported that “in view of the small numbers of the Vernyi Garrison” he had armed hunters from among the townsfolk to form a “*druzhina*” (vigilante squad) of 300 men.¹⁵ Echoing the judgement of the early Bolshevik historian and activist Petr Galuzo, Daniel Brower, Marco Buttino, Niccolò Pianciola and Jörn Happel have all argued that the settler population, once it had been armed by a panicking colonial regime, began to engage in vigilante-style murder, theft and seizure of land from the Kazakh and Kyrgyz population.¹⁶ A particularly unpleasant and instructive case comes from Pishpek district, where in mid-August 1916 a mixed force of soldiers and what were described as “Pishpek town vigilantes” (*druzhinniki*) under the command of a Lieutenant Bogashchev, attacked *aul* No. 4 of the Chumichev *volost'*. According to the testimony of Asan Tasbulatov, the region had been entirely quiet throughout the revolt, apart from the appearance of certain “foul-mouthed peasants, who appeared armed in the region of our nomadising at that time and demanded a formal ‘redemption’ (*vykupa*) in return for our lives”. At the end of August, a large group of forty of these, together with four or five soldiers under the leadership of one Alexei Ivanovich Kaplin appeared at his *aul*: “Kaplin used to trade in our *volost'* and knew many of us extremely well, he knew who had the means to make it worth dealing with them.” Kaplin used his knowledge to loot the *aul*, threatening Tasbulatov's family with pikes to their breasts, and stealing from him alone 195 roubles, five blankets, a silver-mounted saddle and a promissory note signed by him and another wealthy Kyrgyz for 10,000 roubles. Kaplin and his men then killed Tasbulatov's son and carried off 1500 sheep, forty horses, fifty cattle and two camels. Elsewhere in the *aul*, Tasbulatov continued, the raiding party killed another sixty people, and stole more livestock and cash.¹⁷ In fact the list of those killed produced by the official enquiry into the case had seventy-four names, including eighteen women and twenty children, the youngest just one year old.¹⁸ This case seems to have entered the archival record because Kaplin was put on trial as a scapegoat – he denied

the charges and claimed he had merely accompanied a raiding party of soldiers. Repeated requests for Lieutenant Bogashchev to testify were met with the diplomatic claim that he was on active service on punitive expeditions in the steppe. After three months in jail Kaplin was released, apparently without charge, in March 1917.¹⁹ It seems clear enough from the testimony above that the purpose of the expedition was theft and murder, and that the urban vigilantes of Pishpek and the troops acted in concert. As Happel and Pianciola have documented, the most notorious case of all was that of the Belovodskoe massacre in a large settler village near Pishpek. On 12 August, a band of *druzhinniki* captured 338 Kyrgyz prisoners, 138 of whom were killed while being transferred to the prison at Pishpek, ostensibly “while trying to escape.”²⁰ The following day another 517 Kyrgyz were killed in the village in reprisal for earlier attacks.²¹ When interrogated two months later, the Belovodskoe *Pristav*, Gribanovskii, noted that in early August he had formed a “*druzhina*” in the village, led by old soldiers, and distributed arms to the settlers, but disclaimed all knowledge of how the massacre had come about.²²

While these cases occurred when the revolt was still at its height, violence and robbery persisted long after its suppression in Semirech'e. In December 1916, the *Prokuror* of the Vernyi District Court noted a report from one Sub-Lieutenant Beik that a group of Cossacks from the *Jalanash stanitsa* had murdered and robbed ten “Kirgiz”, but they appear never to have been apprehended.²³ In January 1917, General Alekseev, the chief of the Main Staff, telegraphed Kuropatkin asking for details of an incident in which thirty out of thirty-six captured Kyrgyz had been murdered by their Cossack escort.²⁴ The following month there was a riot in the central bazaar in Vernyi, where the local police chief, Sokolov, reported that he had seen a soldier steal a fish from a Kirgiz seller and strike him to the ground. When he attempted to intervene “twenty soldiers surrounded me and one of them began to shout ‘why are you looking at the police! Disarm them! Break their swords! Beat the Kirgiz! Smash everything!’ At his cries a mass of people gathered from across the bazaar.”²⁵ Meanwhile Zheleznyakov, the head of the Okhrana in Vernyi, reported that the settlers of the village of Kliuchevo had demanded 35,000 roubles from the Kirgiz of the neighbouring *aul* in return for not bringing a punitive expedition to kill them all.²⁶ Interethnic relations in many parts of Semirech'e had clearly completely broken down, and Kuropatkin's order depriving the Kyrgyz of land was in many ways only a formalisation of what was already happening on the ground.

The violence and hatred between settler and native that had been unleashed by the rebellion and its suppression in turn led colonial officials to conclude that the Russian and Kyrgyz populations would have to be separated. Commenting on Kuropatkin's order a few days after it had been promulgated, Governor Folbaum of Semirech'e commented:

In order No.220 it is written that all land on which Russian blood has been spilled would be taken from the hands of the natives. Such retribution between the Russian and native population is very sensitive. We need a precise indication. For instance all of the shores of Issyq-Kul, the valley of Kebeň, the Northern slopes of the Kastek division have all been abundantly watered with Russian blood. Thus all of this area in the near future will be forbidden to the Kirgiz. Personally I propose that the steppe Kirgiz [Kazakhs] can be punished more leniently, but the Pishpek and Przheval'sk Kara-Kirgiz should be entirely withdrawn from the Toqmaq valley, the Kebeň valley and the shores of Issyq-Kul.²⁷

Folbaum's response to the rebellion, which was at its most violent in his province, had been particularly panicked from the outset. In his report on its causes he acknowledged the role of expropriation of Kyrgyz land, but nevertheless concluded that further retribution rather than restitution was the appropriate response.²⁸ Kuropatkin did indeed resolve on something very close to what Folbaum advocated here – in a diary entry three weeks later he wrote:

We are all considering how to settle affairs in Semirech'e, and restore peaceful life in this rich region, and how to reconcile the Russian population with the Kirgiz. I am coming to the conclusion that for a long time it will be essential to separate these two peoples wherever possible. We will need to create a Russian district around lake Issyq-Kul, taking away from the Kirgiz all the land around this lake for the evil they have committed; on the other hand we will need to create a special Kirgiz mountain district with a centre at the fortress of Naryn.²⁹

Presented partly as a punishment of the Kirgiz for "the evil they have committed", Kuropatkin did not explicitly acknowledge the most important factor governing this decision, which was that the region around Issyq-Kul was far more temperate and had better soil. Permanent deportation to the cold, stony soils of Naryn district would have rendered Kyrgyz transhumant pastoralism between lowland winter and highland summer pastures impossible, and destroyed the nomadic economy. Kuropatkin's proposal, formally approved on 16 October, amounted to an apartheid-style division of settlers and natives, which would have given the lion's share of natural resources to the former, a situation familiar from many other colonial contexts.³⁰

Many thousands of Kyrgyz and Kazakhs had already fled in panic across the Chinese border, leaving their lands to be occupied.³¹ In the case of Naryn, the mass exodus to China began even before the revolt and subsequent reprisals, fuelled by a rumour that the Russians were deliberately selecting the healthiest part of the Muslim population in order to have them work *between* the Russian and German front lines, where they would be

massacred.³² The main centres of the revolt, around Przheval'sk and the Chu Valley, also saw hundreds of thousands of Kyrgyz flee across the Chinese border, of which perhaps 120,000 died en route – as Jipar Duishembieva and Aminat Chokobaeva explain elsewhere in this volume, their suffering during what is known as the *Ürkün* (exodus) is a defining event in Kyrgyz history, commemorated in song and oral tradition to this day.³³ In late 1916 and early 1917, many of those who had fled began to return, and petitioned to be allowed to reoccupy their abandoned lands, only to run up against the new policy of expropriation and separation. In December 1916, the head of the Tynai *volost'* in the Chu Valley in Pishpek district, Diura Saurumbaev, wrote to the Semirech'e provincial administration that his lineage had at first not joined the revolt when the neighbouring Sarybaghysh rebelled, although some had taken advantage of it to steal settler cattle. In his account, some 800 men had eventually yielded to Sarybaghysh threats and joined the rebels, participating in the siege of Toqmaq, but they had left their *yurts* and families behind them. The Sarybaghysh, defeated before Toqmaq, had then fled to the summer pastures of the Tynai tribe, sowing panic among them; “we must flee, because the Russian forces are coming and will kill us.” While 473 households nonetheless decided to remain in the Chu valley, some 700 households fled to China, and another 500 scattered to the neighbouring summer pastures having been panicked by the warnings of the rebel leader Qanat Abukin. It was these latter who were now petitioning to be allowed to return to their

winter pastures in the Chu Valley, where there are foodstuffs, but the local commander *podesaul* Bakurevich³⁴ has sent them to Jumgal, where it is impossible to feed oneself, and from there they removed to the Kochkor valley [in Naryn District], where they are starving owing to the lack of grain and grazing.³⁵

The 473 households who had stayed put were no better off – two of those concerned, Kydyrali Kashkin and Mullah-Japar Kuramin, had appended a petition claiming their innocence and enclosing an affidavit from a Russian settler called Lavrentii Popov affirming that they had defended him and his son from the attacks of another group of Kyrgyz, but

at the beginning of September we petitioned to be allowed to descend to our winter pastures, but even by the 21st September we had not succeeded in entering our land, we remained in the mountains and were expelled by the commander of the 4th Cossack *sotnia* beyond the mountains, which is how we came to be in Kochkorka.

From there they had been moved to another mountainous region in the Och-Archa *volost'* of the Przheval'sk district.³⁶ The point here is

not whether Saurumbaev's claim that most of the Tynai Kyrgyz were innocent of rebellion is true (it may have been, but obviously he would say this) – it is that with the onset of winter the needs of those who had fled to mountainous regions became evermore urgent, and that it was clear that the Russian authorities were enforcing Kuropatkin's order by blocking the usual transhumant migration to winter pastures, thus transforming the more fertile lowland regions of Semirech'e into a Kyrgyz-free zone.

A still more telling case, once again from the Chu Valley, dates from early 1917. Tursunbai Aitbaev, a trooper in the Teke mounted regiment who was then serving on the southwestern front, wrote that his wife Hadip, his mother Kapymkan and his brother Kurman were all taken from their *aul* by force by a rebellious group of Kyrgyz, and had then been killed when a Russian punitive expedition caught up with the rebels:

[They were killed] as traitors to the fatherland – by punitive expeditions, and the property of my mother and brother are requisitioned, and in part stolen. With this I have lost everything of value to me in life, my wife and mother, and also all my property in the Shamshinskaya *volost'*, part requisitioned by the punitive expeditions, and part looted by the peasants of the settlement of Great Toqmaq in the Pishpek district ... and apart from this I have heard through private rumour, that all the land that was formerly used by the Kyrgyz of the Shamshinskaya *volost'* is to be transferred to the resettlement administration and state treasury and the Kyrgyz are to be expelled from the use of it in future – and my land is also included in this part, located near the tower of Borona, and consisting of 10 *desyatinas* of pasture, 4 *desyatinas* of alfalfa and one *desyatina* of decorative fruit orchard, and thus I will lose to the state treasury the only thing which remained to me after these events.

All this I place before your Excellency, as a loyal subject of his Imperial Majesty, a volunteer in the defence of the motherland and fatherland, who has already spilled his blood in the faithful and rightful service of the White Tsar, not counting my own life.³⁷

Aitbaev was certainly unusual as a Kyrgyz volunteer in the so-called wild division (*Dikaya Diviziya*), which was mainly made up of Caucasian troops (it would play a prominent role in the unsuccessful Kornilov putsch that summer). Notwithstanding this, his petition was rejected outright by the Governor of Semirech'e, who wrote that the decision to expropriate all the Kyrgyz of his region and deport them to Naryn was final and that no exceptions could be made.³⁸ The degree to which the suppression of the revolt had allowed ethnic categories to override older imperial, institutional or dynastic loyalties could hardly be made clearer.

The refugees return

It is well-known that Kuropatkin was ultimately responsible for this policy of deporting even peaceful and loyal Kyrgyz from their land to make way for settlers – what is less well-known is that it was also Kuropatkin who initiated the first measures of rehabilitation for returning refugees from China. In January 1917, he wrote to the War Ministry requesting the release of emergency funds to help combat a typhus epidemic among the Kirgiz who had fled to Ghulja, and also to support their return to Turkestan, where their labour was needed.³⁹ Kuropatkin's motive was thus not humanitarian, in the first instance, but a continued focus on the immediate needs of the war effort. They would be provided with a small amount of grain and some basic medical attention, paid for by the state: at the end of January, the head of the refugee commission in Przheval'sk telegraphed that he urgently needed another 2,000 roubles to meet the needs of those who had returned to the district.⁴⁰ This willingness to allow the return of Kyrgyz and Kazakh refugees did not indicate any slackening in the policy of excluding them from lowland, fertile regions. The Zharkent District Commandant reported that he was following his instructions not to allow those who crossed the border into his district to settle in their old lands in the Koldzhatskii division along the frontier – they were instead held in the Kegen valley to await their transfer to the Naryn District. The Kyrgyz of the Issyq-Ata *volost'* petitioned not to be sent to Naryn and asked to be able to return to their old lands in Pishpek district, but in vain.⁴¹ In early February the Main Staff authorised the release of half a million roubles for the rehabilitation of refugees, although it was only transferred to Turkestan in March, after the February Revolution.⁴² This amount would rapidly be spent on grain to feed returning refugees, and it was a fraction of the estimated claims for compensation as a result of the revolt that began to flow in from settlers, Cossacks and “natives” as the year progressed. The commission for establishing claims to compensation had first been set up in Semirech'e in October 1916, although initially it only considered claims from settlers and Cossacks, which were to be met through the confiscation and sale of the property of those Kirgiz deemed to be rebels – by March 1917 this had managed to raise 1.3 million roubles through the confiscation of cash and the sale of livestock and other property.⁴³

In December 1916, Alexander Kerenskii had delivered a fiery speech in the Duma, denouncing both the mistaken policies that had provoked the revolt, and the means used for its suppression in his native Turkestan.⁴⁴ The gradual return of the refugees in the first half of 1917 presented a delicate challenge to the new Provisional Government in which he would play such a prominent role. Kuropatkin was dismissed on 31 March,⁴⁵ and was

replaced by a new Turkestan committee led by the radical orientalist V. P. Nalivkin.⁴⁶ At the beginning of May 1917, a new rehabilitation commission for Semirech'e was established, chaired by O. Shkapskii, a local scholar (*kraeved*) who had played a prominent role in the pre-revolutionary administration, and by Tynyshbaev.⁴⁷ This had a broader remit to assess damages for the "Kirgiz" and settlers alike, and to begin the process of construction and resettlement. They calculated that 9,989 households had been destroyed in Semirech'e alone, and that the cost of restoring the damage would be 31 million roubles. They estimated that 300,000 "Kirgiz" (i.e., both Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) had fled at the height of the revolt and repressions, and that of these 250,000, or 50,000 families, were likely to return.⁴⁸ While Shkapskii and Tynyshbaev's commission publicly rejected Kuropatkin's repressive tactics, they also began to move towards the idea of a permanent segregation of the settler and local populations.

Documents from Zharkent, Pishpek and Przheval'sk illustrate attempts at rehabilitation and reintegration of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees with Russian Cossacks and settlers, but also the tensions that this produced. At Jananash, east of Vernyi, the land surveyor charged with resettling refugees reported that:

The population of Cossacks of the *stanitsa* of Jananash is still very far from being peacefully disposed towards the Kirgiz. The case of the murder at this time of two Kirgiz, who were found on the boundaries of the Cossack area, confirmed that the slightest and most insignificant grounds can invite undesirable consequences.⁴⁹

His Kazakh assistant, Ilyas Dauletbekov, had pretended to be ill in order to avoid accompanying him to the region, and he concluded that Kazakhs returning to the region would have to be resettled well away from existing *stanitsas*. In the village of Krasnoyarsk in the Bayankol' region he noted that:

At the current time the previous conditions of more or less mixed land use and water use of the Russians and Kirgiz are entirely impossible, as among the Russian population the impressions left by the distress inflicted on them by the rebellious Kirgiz last year is still fresh.⁵⁰

Once again, he suggested a separation of settlements:

In the interests of both the one and the other population, both in the given region of the Bayankol' – Ivanovsk *volost'* and in others with similar circumstances – it is recognised as essential to establish regions of temporarily isolated land use between the Russian and Kirgiz populations.⁵¹

He went on to recommend similar arrangements in the Narynkol, Al'dzhan-Kegen *volost'* and in the six southern *volosts* of Zharkent district. In this he was following the recommendations of the Shkapskii-Tynyshbaev commission that oversaw the refugee resettlement process, and had decided to exclude returning refugees from the whole of the Issyq-Kul region and a substantial portion of Pishpek district, separating them from the settler population entirely with the exception of a few regions where "the mood of the peasants is not so hostile."⁵² While the caveat "temporary" was included, it is hard to see how this division could have avoided becoming permanent once patterns of agriculture were re-established, particularly given that there would be few opportunities for the rebuilding of bridges between the two communities subsequently. What also remained unacknowledged was that these plans would significantly disadvantage the returning Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees, who would be forced to settle on marginal lands remote from existing peasant settlements and *stanitsas*, which in any case usually occupied the most desirable land, and which had significantly added to their holdings during the "land grab" that followed the rebellion. When a commission met in St Petersburg to examine Shkapskii and Tynyshbaev's findings (a commission that, significantly, included Grigorii Chirkin and A. A. Tatishchev, both officials of the Resettlement Administration, as the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture),⁵³ they noted that Kuropatkin's plan to permanently deprive the Kirgiz who had fled Semirech'e of their land and use it for the establishment of five new Cossack *stanitsas* was clearly unjust, but agreed to follow Shkapskii and Tynyshbaev's recommendations when it came to ways of resettling refugees and making peace between them and the Russian population. The policy of separation was not a deliberate continuation of Kuropatkin's plans, but a pragmatic recognition not only of the inability of the state to protect the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz from further settler attacks, but of its impotence when faced with the settler occupation of lands seized from or abandoned by them – the effects were, however, much the same.

The Provisional Government issued a general amnesty for those who had participated in the revolt, which they characterised as having been directed against the "old regime", possibly provoked by German spies, rather than as an ethnic conflict. The rehabilitation commission agreed that Russian households should get 500 roubles in compensation, and another 1,000 roubles towards rebuilding their homes, while the 50,000 returning families of Kirgiz would receive 100 roubles per *kibitka*, requiring a total budget of 11,150,000 roubles.⁵⁴ The proclamation to the people of Semirech'e that followed also laid stress on tsarist crimes, and the need for brotherhood in the new epoch of freedom which the Revolution had ushered in:

Rich Semirech'e, the granary of Turkestan, where Russians and Kirgiz lived peacefully and in contentment, is coming to ruin. Free *Semirechentsy!* Your wounds are grievous, your suffering is great, but there is a path to mutual reconciliation. Before you were estranged from each other, now you are free, equal and brothers. Shake hands with each other in a brotherly fashion and forget your wrongs, which were created by the hated old order.

Russian folk! Forgive the Kirgiz, who from now are your brothers, their blameless sin, as the Provisional Government has already done. Kirgiz! Your birthplaces await you. Your neighbours, the mild Russian people, are prepared to make peace with you, come up to them with confidence and offer them a brotherly hand.⁵⁵

Unfortunately this was wishful thinking. An early indication of the continued hostility between Cossacks and Russian peasant settlers on the one hand and the "Kirgiz" population on the other can be seen in a petition from the central administration of the Semirech'e Cossacks in May 1917, objecting strongly to what they saw as the mollycoddling of the "Kirgiz", whom they insisted were guilty of unprovoked attacks and terrible crimes, including murder, rape, the enslavement and abuse of prisoners, forced conversion to Islam, forced marriage, attacking churches and stealing horses – they asked why they were now being amnestied for these crimes instead of subjected to exemplary punishment.⁵⁶ In July 1917, the "Turkestan Muslim Soviet"⁵⁷ sent a telegram to Kerensky saying that in Semirech'e:

The Kirgiz are being mercilessly killed, the settlers do not allow the Kirgiz returning from China into their places ... the settlers are armed, the Kirgiz defenceless, there are no words to paint the situation of the Kirgiz, a mountain of sorrow, an ocean of tears.⁵⁸

In August the Przheval'sk *Ispolkom* also warned of deteriorating relations between Russians and Kirgiz, and the threat of anarchy, while Shkapskii, Tynyshbaev, Orlov (head of the peasant soviet) and Jainakov (head of the Kirgiz soviet) wrote from Vernyi that rehabilitation funds were urgently needed to prevent further outbreaks of violence.⁵⁹ Agitation spread to Tashkent, where Nalivkin reported demonstrations against the continuing violence in Semirech'e, and that a delegation of Kirgiz from Przheval'sk had warned they would take decisive measures against the Russian population there if the violence was not stopped.⁶⁰ Nevertheless well into late 1917 the archival record is full of instances of apparently casual killings: in mid-November twenty-five Kyrgyz were killed ten *versts* from Pishpek, prompting the head of the local "Kirgiz committee" to telegram to Vernyi that "massacres, thefts and the taking of the law into their own hands on the part of the peasants and soldiers has strengthened" and asking for stronger measures to be taken to prevent it, to which the prosecutor's

response was that the killing of Kyrgyz by discharged soldiers and peasants had indeed become commonplace, but that he lacked the military force to place them under arrest even if the guilty could be traced. In this instance, one of the dead was said to have been a wealthy “*manap*”, which in the then fresh post-October atmosphere seems to have been used as an excuse for not pursuing the case any further.⁶¹

It would be easy to believe that the February Revolution brought the repressive measures that followed the 1916 revolt to an end, as Kuropatkin and other colonial officials were dismissed, and the Provisional Government held out the promise of a brighter future in which Central Asia’s Muslim inhabitants finally became citizens of the Empire, with *zemstva* and an equal vote in the Constituent Assembly. However, a closer look at the situation on the ground reveals some uglier continuities: Kuropatkin’s plan to separate the settler and Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations in Semirech’e reappeared in a new guise as one of the recommendations of the Tynyshbaev-Shkapskii commission, the officials of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*, whose policies and practices had done so much to provoke the revolt, continued to pursue their resettlement agenda, and above all the low-level violence between settlers and local Muslims continued almost unabated. The October “Revolution”, when it came, caused further deterioration: given the extent to which the Soviets in Turkestan were identified with European settlers – above all soldiers and railway workers⁶² – it seems likely that much of the violence that followed in 1917 and 1918 actually grew out of the simmering colonial resentments and ethnic tensions of 1916, rather than any new type of revolutionary politics. As Ablet Kamalov argues in the next chapter, interethnic antagonism seems a more plausible explanation than ideological differences for the vicious massacre of Taranchis (Uyghurs) by “Red” cavalry forces in the region to the East of Vernyi in 1918. It was only after the reconquest of Turkestan by Mikhail Frunze’s Bolshevik forces, when the local Bolsheviks were purged and condemned for their “chauvinism”, that we see a new type of politics emerging, as the problems of poor interethnic relations in Semirech’e would be resolved by deporting large parts of the settler and Cossack population rather than resettling Kazakhs and Kyrgyz on marginal land.⁶³ Much more research remains to be done before we fully understand the intersection of revolution and colonialism in Central Asia during the 1916 Revolt, but it seems clear that interethnic conflict and settler *revanchism* continued after February 1917.

Notes

My thanks to Aminat Chokobaeva and Cloé Drieu for their comments on this chapter, and especially to Niccolò Pianciola for listening to it and reading it multiple times, each of which improved it significantly.

- 1 A. V. Ganin, "Posledniaia poludennaia ekspeditsiia Imperatorskoi Rossii: Russkaia armiia na podavlenii Turkestanskogo miatezha 1916–1917gg.," in O. R. Airapetov et al. (eds.), *Russkii Sbornik. Issledovaniia po istorii Rossii* (Moscow: Regnum, 2008), vol. 5, 152–214.
- 2 Daniel Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* 44/1 (1996), 41–53; Marko Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot. Sredniaia Aziia mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 2007), 80, 375–376; Niccolò Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera. Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia Centrale* (Rome: Viella, 2009), 98–111; Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 125–132.
- 3 Alexander Morrison, "Central Asia: Interpreting and Remembering the 1916 Revolt," *eurasianet.org*, 19 October 2016, <https://eurasianet.org/central-asia-interpreting-and-remembering-1916-revolt>.
- 4 G. I. Broido, *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916g. Moe pokazanie prokuroru tashkentskoi sudebnoi palaty, danoe 3-go Sentjabria 1916g.* (Moscow: Nauchnaya assotsiatsiia vostokovedeniya pri TsIK SSSR, 1925), 1–2.
- 5 See Norman Naimark, *Genocide: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–6.
- 6 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 307–310; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 146–156; Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*, 122–144.
- 7 P. G. Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Izd. Sredneaziatskogo Kommunisticheskogo Universiteta, 1926); Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 72–73.
- 8 On Kuropatkin's career see O. A. Airapetov (ed.), *Dnevnik generala A. N. Kuropatkina* (Moscow: Gos. Ist. Pub. Biblioteka, 2010), 3–76; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 86–91; John W. Steinberg, *All the Tsar's Men: Russia's General Staff and the Fate of the Empire, 1898–1914* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 37–74; Alexander Morrison, "The Turkestan Generals and Russian Military History," *War in History* (2018).
- 9 O. A. Airapetov, *Uchastie Rossiiskoi Imperii v pervoi mirovoi voine. 1916* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2016), 124; A. Astashov, *Russkii Front v 1914 – nachale 1917 goda* (Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2014), 165.
- 10 Peter Holquist, "The Role of Personality in the First (1914–1915) Russian Occupation of Galicia and Bukovina," in Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Nathan Meir and Israel Bartal (eds.), *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in European History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 52–73.
- 11 Joshua Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39–64.
- 12 Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 13 Telegram Kuropatkin to the War Ministry, 18 August 1916, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 Ch.1 ll.258-*ob*, in A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*

- v *Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 345–346.
- 14 Diary entry, 10 October 1916, by A. N. Kuropatkin in P. Galuzo (ed.), “Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii”, *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 56.
 - 15 Telegram Fol'baum to the staff of the Turkestan Military District, 9 August 1916, RGVIA F.1396 Op. 3 D.549 l.194ob, in A. Ch. Kakeev (ed.), *Sredneaziatskoe (Turkestanskoe) Vosstanie 1916g.* (Bishkek: Izd. KRSU, 2016), vol. 2, 3.
 - 16 Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev*; Brower, “Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers”; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*; Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontier*, 124; Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*.
 - 17 Petition from Asan Tasbulatov of No. 4 *aul* Chumilevskaya *volost'*, 30 November 1916, TsGAKR F.28 Op. 3 D.7 ll.23–24.
 - 18 “Spisok ubitykh vo vremya presledovaniya,” n.d., TsGAKR F.28 Op. 3 D.7 ll.63–4.
 - 19 Head of the Pishpek jail to the judge of the 1st Pishpek Magistrate's Court, 11 March 1917, TsGAKR F.28 Op. 3 D.7 l.189.
 - 20 Telegram, Semirech'e branch of the Tashkent Railway Gendarmerie to the Turkestan Okhrana, 13 August 1916; telegram, Kuropatkin to the War Minister, 15 August 1916, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 Ch.1 ll.253ob, 283ob, in Kakeev (ed.), *Sredneaziatskoe (Turkestanskoe) Vosstanie 1916g.*, vol. 2, 44–45.
 - 21 See Pianciola's contribution to this volume and Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 143–145.
 - 22 “Iz Protokol Doprosa svidetelya Belovodskogo Uchastkogo Pristava” (21 October 1916), TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.18 ll.27–32, in K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda* (Bishkek: Natsional'naia AN Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, 2015), 96–97.
 - 23 *Raport*, 11 December 1916; 14 January 1917 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 ll.1–2, 8, 81.
 - 24 Telegram, Alekseev to Kuropatkin, 20 January 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 l.84.
 - 25 *Protokol*, 4 February 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 ll.196–197.
 - 26 Zheleznyakov to Alexei Ivanovich [?], 13 February 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 l.257. Zheleznyakov features prominently in Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten* – see particularly 53–57, 295–302.
 - 27 Fol'baum to Kuropatkin and Erofeev, 18 September 1916, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.19370 l.1, in M. Q. Qoigheldiev, *Qazaq ult-azzatyq kozghalysy*. Vol. 2: *Zhetysu – Issyk-kul'skaya tragediya 1916–1920gg.* (Astana: Astana Poligrafiya, 2007), 42.
 - 28 M. A. Fol'baum, “Donesenie Voennago Gubernatora Semirechenskoi Oblasti”, in A. Chuloshnikov (ed.), “K istorii vosstaniia Kirgiz v 1916g.”, *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 3 (1926), 69–75.
 - 29 A. N. Kuropatkin, diary entry, 12 October 1916, RGVIA F.165 Op. 1 D.1970 l.22, <http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/iz-dnevnikov-kuropatkina/iz-dnevnika-komanduyushchego-voyskami-turkestanskogo-voennogo-okruga-0>; first published in Galuzo (ed.), “Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii”, 60; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 73–74.
 - 30 ‘Protokol Soveshchaniya’ 16 Oct 1916 TsGARKaz F.44 Op.1 D.20070 ll.106–8.
 - 31 Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 153–160.

- 32 Erofeev to Shuvaev 'o massovykh pobegakh Kirgiz v Kitai, 20 July 1916, RG VIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4546 Ch.I l.59, <http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/dokumenty-po-istorii-sobytyi-1916-g/donesenie-vrid-turkestanskogo-general-gubernatora-mr-erofeeva>.
- 33 See also Jipar Duishembieva, "Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856–1924" (PhD Diss., University of Washington, Seattle, 2015), ch. 5; Aminat Chokobaeva, "Born for Misery and Woe: National Memory and the 1916 Great Revolt in Kyrgyzstan", in Mariya Y. Omelicheva (ed.), *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 37–51; David Budyanskii, *Istoriya Bezhentsev-Kirgizov 1916–1927* (Bishkek: n.p., 2007), 28–60.
- 34 This appears to be the same Bakurevich whose son commanded the party of Russian soldiers attacked by Kyrgyz at K k-jon on the Qashqa-jol pass, as described in Musa Chaghatay-uulu's poem translated by Daniel Prior in this volume.
- 35 "Dokladnaya Zapiska Diura Saurumbaeva", 19 December 1916, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 ll.43–45.
- 36 Petition from Kydyrali Kashkin and Mullah-Japar in the name of thirty Tynai Kyrgyz heads of household to the Toqmaq Police Chief, 11 December 1916, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 l.47.
- 37 Petition from Tursunbai Aitbaev to the Pishpek DC, 5 January 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 ll.56ob.
- 38 Alekseev to the Pishpek DC, 12 January 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 l.58.
- 39 Telegram Kuropatkin to the War Ministry, 29 January 1917, RG VIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.1ob.
- 40 Telegram Kolosovskii to the Semirech'e Military Governor, 24 January 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 l.103.
- 41 Zharkent District Commandant to the Semirech'e Military Governor, 1 February 1917; Petition from the Kyrgyz of the Issyq-Atinskaya *volost'*, 7 February 1917, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.20075 ll.163, 174.
- 42 "Po telegramme Turkestanskogo General Gubernatora ob okazanii prodovol'stvennoi pomoshchi bezhavshim v Kitai kirgizam" (1 February 1917); Mikhailovskii to Kuropatkin, 15 March 1916, RG VIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.5–6ob, 37.
- 43 "Prikaz voennogo gubernatora Semirechenskoi Oblasti" (21 October 1916); Committee for the establishment of damages to Kuropatkin, 1 March 1917, TsGARKaz F.314 Op. 1 D.1 ll.1, 34–35.
- 44 Stenograficheskii Otchet Gosudarstvennaya Duma. Chetvertyi sozyv. Sessiya V. Zasedanie Shestnadsatoe, 13 December 1916, in RG VIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.68–75, also published as "Takoe upravlenie gosudarstvom – nedopustimo. Doklad A. F. Kerenskogo na zakrytom zasedanii Gosudarstvennoi dумы. Dekabr' 1916g.," *Istoriicheskii Arkhiv* 2 (1997), 4–22.
- 45 Buttino, *Revoliutsiya naoborot*, 108.
- 46 Budyanskii, *Istoriya Bezhentsev*, 78–109. On Nalivkin, see S. N. Abashin, "V. P. Nalivkin. 'budet to, chto neizbezhno dolzhno byt; i to, chto neizbezhno dolzhno byt, uzhe ne mozhet ne byt.' Krizis Orientalizma v Rossiiskoi

- Imperii?”, in Yu. P. Rodionov and A. V. Yakub (ed.), *Aziatskaya Rossiya. Liudi i struktury Imperii* (Omsk: Izd. OmGU, 2005), 43–96.
- 47 Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*, 122.
- 48 Shchepkin to the Provisional Government, 13 May 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.54–57.
- 49 “Do ustanovleniya granits kirgizskogo zemlepol’zovaniya zakonodatel’nym poryadkom vyrazheno, chto kirgizy ne dolzhny ostanavlivat’sya na mestakh, naibolee blizkikh k stanitse”, 23 May 1917, TsGARKaz F.19 Op. 1 D.55 l.36ob.
- 50 “Do ustanovleniya granits”, 23 May 1917, TsGARKaz F.19 Op. 1 D.55 l.38.
- 51 “Do ustanovleniya granits”, 23 May 1917, TsGARKaz F.19 Op. 1 D.55 l.38ob.
- 52 Shchepkin and Tynyshbaev to the Provisional Government, 22 April 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.65ob; “Protokol Soveshchaniya ... po voprosu uregulirovaniy vzaimo-otnoshenii russkago i kirgizskago naseleniya v Przheval’skom, Pishpekskom i Dzharkentskom uezdakh, a takzhe i o Dunganakh”, 4–6 May 1917, TsGARKaz F.19 Op. 1 D.55 ll.51ob; see further Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*, 125–126.
- 53 Tatishchev makes it clear in his memoirs that he was surprised and dismayed by the Turkestan committee’s apparent determination to restore land to the “Kirgiz” to the detriment of peasant settlers, but that ultimately things turned out “better” (i.e., better for the resettlement agenda) than he had expected. A. A. Tatishchev, *Zemli i Liudi. V gushche pereselencheskogo dvizheniya (1906–1921)* (Moscow: Russkii Put’, 2001), 259–261.
- 54 *Protokoly*, 8 July 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.102–106.
- 55 Proclamation from the Provisional Government to the people of Semirech’e, n.d. (August 1917), RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 l.107.
- 56 “Postanovlenie tsentral’nogo Voiskogo Semirechenskogo kazach’yago ispolnitel’nogo komiteta”, 15 May 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.67–70.
- 57 This was *Shura-i Islamiyya*, the body organised by those Adeeb Khalid has styled as Muslim reformists or “*Jadids*”: “Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan”, *Slavic Review* 55/2 (1995), 277–278.
- 58 Telegram from the Turkestan Muslim Soviet to Kerensky, 9 July 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 l.109.
- 59 Telegram, Przheval’sk *Ispolkom* to Kerensky, 28 July 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 l.117; telegram, Shkapskii, Tynyshbaev, Orlov and Jainakov to Kerensky, 20 August 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 l.135.
- 60 Telegram, Nalivkin to Kerensky, 20 August 1917, RGVIA F.400 Op. 1 D.4639 ll.150–154.
- 61 Telegrams, Pishpek *Prokuror* to Vernyi *Prokuror*, Tulin to Vernyi *Prokuror*, Vernyi *Prokuror* to Tulin, 12 November 1917, TsGAKR F.28 Op. 2 D.15 ll.3–4, 7ob.
- 62 Buttino, *Revoliutsiya naoborot*, 204–209; Khalid, “Tashkent 1917; Dov Yaroshevski, “Russian Regionalism in Turkestan”, *Slavonic & East European Review* 65/1 (1987), 77–100.
- 63 Niccolò Pianciola, “Décoloniser l’Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semirech’e (1920–1922)”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49/1 (2008), 101–143.

Links across time: Taranchis during the uprising of 1916 in Semirech'e and the "Atu" massacre of 1918

Ablet Kamalov

Introduction

In the Soviet historical narrative, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was presented as a distinctive watershed between the old world, which had been razed to the ground, and the new world, the Soviet system, which was built on its ruins. This revolution was considered the beginning of a new epoch in the history of not only Russia, but the whole of mankind. Accordingly, events that occurred on the eve of the revolution and those that took place immediately after were viewed as belonging to two different, unrelated epochs. Two such events in the lives of the Uyghurs of Semirech'e province were the 1916 revolt and the massacre in 1918 of the inhabitants of Uyghur villages by Muraev's Red Guard brigade. The Uyghurs living in Semirech'e province, known at that time as "Taranchis", were mainly settlers from the Qing province of Xinjiang, who had been permitted by the Russian Empire to settle in the area following the return to the Qing Dynasty of the Ili region, which had been temporarily occupied by the Russians. The occupied land was returned under the 1881 Treaty of St Petersburg. Soviet historians viewed the participation of Uyghurs in the 1916 revolt as their involvement in a national-liberation movement of local peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan against Russian colonialism. Meanwhile, they said nothing about the massacre of the Uyghur population (Uyghur: *Atu päjjiäsi*) by the Red Army. It was only during perestroika that the massacre became the subject of intense discussion in Uyghur mass media in Kazakhstan, and Uyghur civil society organisations erected monuments to victims of the massacre in Uyghur villages. Since then, a fair amount has been written in local Uyghur publications about the "Atu". It is interpreted either as a manifestation of the "Red Terror" or as a crime committed by the counterrevolutionary Muraev, who was posing as a Bolshevik. By placing them in the context of the policy of Russian colonisation of Semirech'e and Russian-native relations, this

chapter sets out to show that the two events were interconnected. It will be argued that the land question, which became a “bone of contention” in relations between two agricultural peoples, lay at the heart of both events. From the outset, when they settled in Semirech’e, the Uyghurs, along with the smaller number of Chinese-speaking Dungans (Chinese: *Hui*), became the Russians’ main competitors with regard to land use. When in 1916 they opposed the conscription of the male population for labour battalions behind the front line, the Uyghurs showed themselves to be unreliable subjects of the Russian Empire. The subsequent slaughter two years later of the male inhabitants of Uyghur villages in Semirech’e was a kind of “deferred” response by Russian settlers to the participation of Uyghurs-Taranchis in the 1916 revolt. In other words, the 1918 massacre of the Taranchis was in retaliation for their opposition to the Tsar’s conscription decree.

The research has been based on analysis of Russian archival documents and Uyghur folk songs (*qoshaq*). These sources complement one another. While the Russian archival documents describe the Uyghurs’ reaction to the conscription decree and the nature of their insubordination, the songs, through verse, convey the Uyghurs’ emotional response to the conscription, portraying it as a tragic page in their people’s history. Admittedly, the assessment of the events of 1916 in the Uyghur songs, and also the derogatory portrayal of Russian officials and Tsar Nicholas II, may have been a result of selection and recording of the songs made in the first decades of Soviet rule.

The resettlement of Uyghurs-Taranchis in Semirech’e

As recently shown by David Brophy, in the late nineteenth century, an identical process took place on both sides of the Russia-China border in Central Asia, whereby border districts were incorporated into Imperial territory. As Brophy writes, “an ... important by-product of Russian empire building was the strengthening of ties between Muslim communities in Eurasia”.¹ In the late nineteenth century, Taranchis and Dungans from the Ili region, which was ruled by the Qing Dynasty, were incorporated into the Muslim community of Semirech’e province in the Russian Empire. The majority of the Turkic-speaking Taranchis settled in Semirech’e under the terms of the 1881 Treaty of St Petersburg: when Russia returned the temporarily occupied Ili region to China, the local inhabitants were given the right to settle in Russia provided that they took Russian subjecthood. In 1881–1884, 45,373 Taranchis settled in Semirech’e province: 19,209 of them established settlements in Zharkent district, and the remaining 26,164 settled mainly in Vernyi district, and some in the town of Vernyi.²

This number does not include the inhabitants of Taranchi settlements to the east of the Borokhudzir River, which until 1871 was the Russia-China border. During the period of Russian control of the Ili region, the border of Semirech'e province was moved to the east, to Khorgos. This section of territory, inhabited by Taranchis, was transferred to Russia under the 1881 Treaty of St Petersburg.³ The settlers occupied a zone of piedmont river valleys, which was practically identical to the zone where they had previously lived in the Ghulja district. Five Taranchi *volosts* were established in Semirech'e: Zharkent-Taranchi, Aqsu-Charyn, Malybay, Qoram and Qarasu. In addition, the Taranchi population remained in Ketmen *volost'*, created from territory transferred to Russia under the Treaty of St Petersburg. The Zharkent-Taranchi, Aqsu-Charyn and Ketmen *volosts* were part of Zharkent district, while the Malybay, Qoram and Qarasu *volosts* were in Vernyi district. Initially, forty-two settlements were established in the six Taranchi *volosts*, and this had increased to ninety-nine settlements by the early twentieth century.⁴

At the time, Russian scholars said there were two reasons why Taranchis resettled in Semirech'e: the unpopularity of Chinese rule and the influence of Vali Akhun Yoldashev,⁵ a wealthy Ili man, who managed to persuade his fellow countrymen to resettle.⁶ As to whether the Russian Empire had a particular interest in the resettlement of inhabitants from the Ili region, it could be said that they wanted to have on their side Xinjiang inhabitants who were antagonistic towards Manchu rule. This is suggested at least by recently published archival materials indicating that the Russian authorities planned to locate a Dungan military unit on the border with China in case of military action.⁷ However, it is more likely that rather than pursuing any specific aims through the resettlement of Taranchis and Dungans in Semirech'e, the Russian Empire, as noted by David Brophy, was following international practice: it was common at that time to permit the population of disputed territories to choose their citizenship.⁸

Soviet and Chinese historiography gave diametrically opposed political assessments of the resettlement of Taranchis and Dungans. Soviet historians pointed to its progressive nature, claiming that a bright future awaited these peoples under Soviet rule.⁹ It was only during perestroika that publications appeared showing the negative aspects of Soviet policy towards the peoples of Xinjiang. Chinese historiography considers the resettlement of Taranchis and Dungans in Semirech'e to be a result of Russian aggression and notes its coercive nature, believing that the Russian authorities engineered the process in order to depopulate the region.¹⁰

The Taranchis' own feelings about the resettlement are reflected in Uyghur literature and folklore sources. Uyghur folk songs about the resettlement (Uyghur: *köch-köch qoshaqliri*) describe it as a dramatic

page in the people's history, involving hardship, deprivation and difficulties in pursuing a livelihood in the new environment. Although the extent to which the events are dramatised varies in written collections of songs in China and Soviet Kazakhstan,¹¹ they all portray the Russians in a negative light. In a collection of folk songs published in China,¹² we find verses highlighting how the Russians pressured the Taranchis into resettlement: "*Aq padishah läshkiri / altun kolap, tash kästi, / dihanlarni köch-köch döp, / qilich bilän bash kästi*" (A warrior of the White Tsar / dug for gold, cut through stone, / told the dehqans [peasants] they should move / and sliced off their heads with his sabre).¹³ In songs published in Kazakhstan, the Taranchis are described as victims of a joint Russian-Qing decision to resettle the population of the Ili region in Semirech'e. Although criticism of the Russians is less pronounced in these songs, they nevertheless display mistrust of the Russians, due to their "having blue eyes and a thatch of hair on their heads" and "not telling the truth". We gather from these songs that it was both an edict and people's own wishes that compelled them to resettle (*bizni munda kältürgän / buiruq bilän iradä*). The "edict" most likely refers to the initiation of the resettlement process "from above" by the Russian-Chinese Treaty.¹⁴

That the Ili region's Taranchi population felt such animosity towards the Russians, despite favourable conditions being created for them during the period of Russian rule, may be explained by recent events in Taranchi-Russian relations, namely, military conflict and the movement of Russian troops into the Taranchi sultanate. In a Uyghur song about the Battle of Ketmen (*Kätmän soqushi*), the Russians are called "enemies" (*yegha*), while those killed in the battle against them were warriors in a holy war against infidels (*sheyit/shahid*): "*Yegha bolidu desä, / Rus kelidu atliq*" (When they say there will be enemies here / Russians come riding up on their steeds); "*Rus yeghisi däidu / qara bala ekän*" (The Russian foes, / they say, are a black curse); "*Sheyit bolghan adämlär / beyish baghda yatqandu*" (Those who have fallen as martyrs / are sure to rest in the gardens of paradise).¹⁵

The Battle of Ketmen is also described in the poem "Shahr-i shekästä" (the Broken City) by Muhammad Sadiq Qashiy:

*Iradä birlä kälidi ul urus bizgä yegha bolup,
Bahadur köp atanghanlärki jäng qarap turdi.*¹⁶

With their intent, the Russians came to us as foes,
Those who were called heroes, just looked on as the battle raged.

Equally, during the conquest of the Ili region, the Russians viewed the Taranchis as foes and enemies. In his address to the population of the region before moving in his troops, General Governor G. A. Kolpakovskii called the Taranchis "oppressors" and "persecutors" of

other peoples of the region – the Solon, Sibo, Chinese, Manchu, Kalmyk and Dungan peoples.¹⁷ It should be said that immediately after taking Ghulja, the Russian authorities moved the Taranchi Sultan, Abil-Oghli, with his relatives and entourage, to the outskirts of Vernyi, where they founded a settlement, subsequently known as Sultan-Qorghan (“built by the Sultan”, part of modern-day Almaty). Overall, given the events preceding their resettlement in Semirech’e province, the Taranchis were not favourably disposed towards the Russian Empire. However, when given the choice to remain under the rule of the Manchu Empire or accept Russian citizenship, they still preferred the latter.

The Taranchis and land use in Semirech’e

The nature of the resettlement of the Taranchis in Semirech’e was determined by the traditional economic system, which was irrigated agriculture. The process of moving to Semirech’e and creating new settlements, or establishing hamlets in existing Taranchi villages, was not straightforward. The Taranchis, and likewise the Dungans, encountered new social problems in the new locations, including conflict with the local population over land use.

The settlers were allocated land in areas that were barely suitable. Rummyantsev says of the settlements to the east of Zharkent, “The whole terrain of the Taranchi land is a typical dry piedmont steppe, with poor grass cover”.¹⁸ In some cases, they were given a combination of “suitable” and “unsuitable” areas: in 1882–1883 the Taranchi villages in Malybay *volost’*, Vernyi district, had 31,357 *desyatinas* (d) of suitable land and 5,412d of unsuitable land, Karasu *volost’* had 19,711d of suitable land and 3,124d of unsuitable land, and Qoram *volost’* had 54,092d of suitable land and 9,206d of unsuitable land. In Zharkent district the figures were: 51,097d of suitable land and 11,982d of unsuitable land and, in Zharkent *volost’* alone 19,332d of suitable land and 3,088d of unsuitable land.¹⁹

Russian archival materials contain evidence that the Taranchis’ interests were at odds with those of the Russian settlers and also, to a lesser extent, those of the Kazakh population from whom they often rented land. The incomers could not always settle where they wanted to. According to Rummyantsev, the Taranchis had initially set their sights on areas on the northern slopes of the Ketmen Mountains, but “the Kirgiz [Kazakhs] and Russian Cossacks of the Podgornensk settlement would not allow them into Chushonai, Sumbe or Kirgiz-sai”, and a shortage of water in the areas available for settlement resulted in a large number of Taranchi families leaving for Zharkent district and some for Vernyi district.²⁰ David Brophy recounts instances when the Kazakh and Russian

population were opposed to Taranchis settling on neighbouring lands, forcing them to move from one *volost'* to another.²¹ We know of cases of Taranchis being expelled due to the construction of Cossack villages. This happened, for example, in 1887 in Verkhnyi Penjim, when the Taranchis had to leave their farmsteads and arable land to the Cossacks and move to new designated areas.²² Later, in 1891, as a result of the demarcation of Cossack and Taranchi land near Khorgos, the Taranchis' farmsteads and arable land went to the Cossacks, while the Taranchis received land in other places "on strange terms".²³

One of the Uyghur songs (*qoshaq*) refers to the difficulties that the settlers had in obtaining land: "*Yengi mayor yär bärmas / yol üstidä turghuzmas*" (The new Major does not give us any land / does not let us settle near the road).²⁴ Another reason for the difficulty in assigning land to the Taranchis was that they were not included in the laws on land use in Semirech'e province. The authorities recognised only "natives" (Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) and Russian settlers as having this right. According to the 1891 Steppe Regulations, it was these two groups of the population that had rights of possession in the land through use. In the 1880s, colonial policy in Turkestan became more oriented towards Slavs, as a result of which the Russian population of the region grew remarkably rapidly.²⁵ The Taranchis did not receive "native" status until 1899.

Given that the majority of Taranchi settlers were impoverished peasants, quite a lot of them were unable to work even the five *desyatinas* of land allocated to them by the Russian authorities, and they ended up joining the ranks of landless peasants. The *dehqans* lamented that, "a terrible fear had descended on them that they would not get even the five *desyatinas* of land" (*bashqa qattiq mung chushti / bäs huliqtin yär tägmäs*).²⁶ At the same time, while the number of landless peasants and peasants who were short of land increased, some large landowners became wealthier, such as Vali Akhun Yoldashev from Zharkent.²⁷

Many years after their resettlement, the Taranchis still had insufficient land, as evidenced by a petition submitted to a district commandant by a group of inhabitants who had settled in the locality of Jigdilik without authorisation. They requested permission to register in the village of Nagrachi, which they said had been founded by their fathers, who had moved there in 1882. However, on 13 March 1915, the village assembly rejected their request, "as the land ... is insufficient for our own native cultivators"; and it asked that these families be removed from this locality.²⁸

At meetings of the Land Committee in the first years of Bolshevik rule, Taranchis often asserted that Russians had taken land away from them on the eve of the collapse of the Russian Empire. One such statement was made at a session of the Land Committee on 1 February 1918 by a

Taranchi named Talipov. He asked that land taken from the Taranchis and Dungans “in recent years” be returned to them:

The representative of the district's Taranchi population, Talipov, reported that they had lived and farmed the land in the district long before the arrival of the Russians. In recent years, much of the land that they had cultivated and irrigated had been taken from them, and now the land at their disposal could not be considered adequate to sustain their livelihood. The district's Taranchi-Dungan population asked that they be recognised as lacking sufficient land, and that the lands taken from them, most of which they were now renting, be returned. The Taranchis could not count on being able to rent land in the future, as demand was increasing among landless Russians and Russians who were short of land. The speaker appealed to the District Land Committee to consider the land requirements of the Zharkent district's Taranchi-Dungan population and to take steps to ease their existence.²⁹

Although such statements made in the early years of Soviet rule might have exaggerated the conflict between Taranchis and Russians, they did reflect the competing interests of the Russian and Taranchi peasants with regard to land use. The impact of the land shortage intensified due to the hardening of the Russian Government's resettlement policy, which exacerbated relations between the Russians and the natives. Of course, as noted by Marco Buttino, this primarily concerned the removal of land from Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in favour of settlers: “Cossacks and Russian settlers began moving into fertile areas of Semirech'e, taking land from the nomads, and threatening the ecological balance on which the nomadic way of life depended.”³⁰ Conflict over land use increased between Russians and Taranchis also, but it was much less apparent. This was because the Taranchi population was relatively small; moreover, for a long time it had not had “native” status.

As new subjects of the Russian Empire, the Taranchis maintained their image as a loyal and reliable Muslim community for many years. The political reliability of the Taranchis was first shaken in 1910 by the uprising of Anayat Qurbanov. Qurbanov hailed from the village of Janashar in Qarasu *volost'*. In 1889, the Semirech'e District Court sentenced him to “deprivation of all rights to own property and to exile and hard labour for eight years”³¹ for the attempted murder of a wealthy man, Sofi Toqsunov. Sometime later (even the tsarist police could not determine the exact date), Qurbanov managed to escape from the labour camp to Vernyi province, where he “formed a gang and thieved and robbed.”³² In any case, in February 1905 he was imprisoned on charges of robbing a peasant, but by summer he had been acquitted and released, possibly because he had used a different name (Asan Yaqubov).³³ A report on his misdemeanours notes that he had attacked the *dacha* of a teacher named Fisher, stolen a horse

from a Vernyi petty bourgeois called Filimonov, and robbed a Taranchi by the name of Sofiev. As a result, he was characterised as “one of the most terrible criminals”, who, having organised a criminal gang, “roamed all over the province, committing theft, robbery, extortion, highway robbery and murder everywhere he went”.³⁴ It is noted that during the elections for the *volost’* administrators, Anayat Qurbanov tried to put forward his own protégé. There is evidence that he extorted money from wealthy Taranchis. In July 1910, he was arrested after murdering the Taranchi Nusredin Jarlabekov, from Qarasu *volost’*, in his home in Vernyi. On 23 March 1911, Qurbanov was executed by hanging.³⁵ The Russian authorities described his actions as those of a brigand and a criminal. However, they recognised his influence on the Taranchi population:

Criminal acts have not been enough for Qurbanov and his gang. On pain of death, they attempt to induce the population to disobey the lawful authorities and to refuse to comply with their lawful orders ... Roaming all over the province with his gang, everywhere he goes he recruits accomplices and accessories, who, in their turn, use this brigand’s reputation in an attempt to influence native officials. Consequently, the authorities are gradually being diminished in the eyes of the native population.³⁶

In Soviet publications, Anayat Qurbanov was regarded as “a natural peasant leader” and his actions were viewed as a rebellion.³⁷ In 1978 the Uyghur author Mashur Ruziyev dedicated a historical novel to Qurbanov.³⁸ In this novel and other writings, Anayat Qurbanov’s actions were viewed in the light of the class theory, as an example of the increased class conflict in Uyghur society, which were exacerbated by the Russian authorities’ colonialist policy. Although Qurbanov’s actions reflected the social stratification of local Taranchi society, they were not class-based in nature, nor were they a mass rebellion. They did, however, show the strengthening mood of protest among people who had recently become Russian subjects, which was unleashed during the 1916 revolt.³⁹

Participation of the Taranchis in the 1916 revolt

The earliest mention of the Taranchis of Semirech’e in connection with the 1916 revolt appears in the book *The History of the Taranchi Turks* (1922) by the famous Uyghur writer and historian, Nüzärghoja Abdusemätoy.⁴⁰ Having briefly described the opposition of the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Dungans to the Tsar’s decree on the conscription of men for labour brigades behind the front lines, the author refers to the conscription of 1,000 Taranchi workers from Zharkent district and the execution of nine people for resistance to the decree.⁴¹

The first article about the Uyghurs' participation in the 1916 revolt was written by the secretary of the Communist Party of the Sairam district in Chimkent province, Abdulla Abdullin. The article was written for a volume entitled *Rebirth of the Uyghur People*, produced in 1937. However, publication of the digest was banned, due to the arrest of members of the editorial board, and it did not see the light of day until 1989, during perestroika. An article by the Kazakh historian, Sanzhar Asfandiyarov, "On the History of the Uyghur People", also appeared in this digest. Both articles provide a similar assessment of the revolt: it is characterised as a "spontaneous dehqan war" in which "the Uyghur masses rose up against tsarism and against the *bais* who had sold out the people".⁴² In works by Uyghur historians, M. Kabirov⁴³ and M. Ruziyev,⁴⁴ the role of the 1916 revolt in the life of the Uyghur community in Semirech'e is described in line with the class war interpretation that was generally accepted in Soviet historiography.

The sparseness of publications about the participation of the Taranchis in the 1916 revolt creates the impression that the revolt had been forgotten. In fact, the revolt left a deep mark in the history of the community, and this was retained in the popular memory in the form of folk songs. Even more significantly, the story recommenced with the tragic events in the years of the revolution.

Our knowledge of the participation of the Taranchis-Uyghurs in the 1916 revolt is based on two sources: Russian archival materials and Uyghur folk songs. These are complementary sources, allowing us to obtain a fairly full picture of the events of that time. Let us take the following as a starting point for our discussion: the Taranchis and Dungans, having accepted Russian subjecthood in the 1880s, undertook to carry out all the national duties of their "new homeland", including military service, on the same basis as the other subjects of the Empire. As with the other "natives" of Turkestan they were exempted from military service. For almost three decades, the Russian Government had not required them to perform their obligations, giving them the opportunity to establish a livelihood in the new areas they had migrated to. As Tatiana Kotiukova shows, when the First World War began, the Government repeatedly considered introducing military service for "natives", including Taranchis and Dungans. In the first year of the war, a decree was drafted on the conscription of natives for military service. The justification for no longer exempting the Taranchis and Dungans was as follows:

The Dungan and Taranchi settlements have become permanent: they have been given specific parcels of land, a highly organised administrative system, and their own court; their rights and duties in respect of the state are the same as for all the other rural inhabitants of the Empire. The economic position of the majority of non-Russian (*inorodcheskii*) agricultural communities today should also be deemed acceptable.⁴⁵

A plan to require natives to perform military service was put forward in 1914 and 1915, but it was not adopted.⁴⁶ However, in June 1916 a decree was issued on the conscription of the native male population for labour battalions behind the front lines.

As in other provinces of Turkestan, the decree led to unrest in Semirech'e. Initially, the local population thought that people were being conscripted for war, and officials had to go to lengths to explain what the decree actually meant. The reaction of the Uyghur population in Semirech'e to the district commandants' orders that conscription lists be produced was described by officials as a "ferment" (*brozhenie*): people avoided the meetings held to compile family-based lists, but they did not take direct action. This "ferment" gradually became passive opposition: the heads of communities began asking the *volost'* administrators (Uyghur: *bolus*) not to compile any lists, and the population expressed their unwillingness to send people to labour battalions.

At a time of uncertainty, it was important to the Uyghurs to know how the Kazakh majority was reacting to the Tsar's decree. This is mentioned in a report by an official, who said of the Uyghurs: "If the rest, at least from Kirgiz [Kazakh] Alban *volost'*, embark on sending family lists, then they also won't delay in consenting to this."⁴⁷

The centres of Uyghur unrest were Aqsu-Charyn *volost'* in Zharkent district and Qoram *volost'* in Vernyi district. From archival documents, we can reconstruct events as follows.

Zharkent district: A telegram about the conscription of workers was received in Zharkent on 2 July. That same day, "officials, mullahs and persons that the natives respected from the Zharkent-Taranchi and Zharkent-Dungan *volosts*, and *raznochintsy* ... were called to the district administration, where the telegram was read out and explained to them."⁴⁸ They were instructed to explain at assemblies and in the mosques what the decree actually meant. Officials began compiling conscription lists of workers. In the following days, the same measures were taken for the inhabitants of Aqkent *volost'* and the neighbouring Kazakh *volosts*.

At the very first assembly of inhabitants of the Zharkent-Taranchi and Zharkent-Dungan *volosts*, convened on 4 July, the population's discontent was clear. On 6 July, the District Commandant convened an assembly in the Zharkent-Taranchi *volost'* in order to compile lists of workers. He sent a telegram to Vernyi about the outcome of the meeting, reporting that the population of the Kazanchi and Novyi Tyshkan settlements "refused to compile lists and the elected representatives left, taking the whole community with them."⁴⁹ Subsequent meetings held on 6 July for the urban population and the residents of certain villages ended with the elected representatives slipping away, "taking most of the community with them". And the next day, the inhabitants of these settlements did not even attend the meeting. That same day, about 100 people from Dungan

settlements turned up in Zharkent. They were also discontented, and they departed with the words, "Better to die here than to go there." The elected representatives were then relieved of their positions, and some were detained until it was decided what to do with them.

The speed at which events developed was evident from the telegrams sent by the Zharkent District Commandant to Vernyi. On 6 July he reported, "The natives are hostile to this government decree. I request instructions and orders."⁵⁰ On 7 July his communication was more urgent: "At the meeting places in Zharkent, Podgornyi and Karkara they are refusing to compile the lists; I am compiling the lists for these *volosts* myself. I am certain that the workers will have to be taken by military force."⁵¹

The District Commandant resorted to enlisting the help of influential members of the local population to explain the Tsar's decree. He invited

the mullah of Zharkent-Taranchi *volost'*, Masymkhandykov, the mullah of Aqkent *volost'*, Nadyr Sabirov; two Taranchis from Zharkent *volost'*, Husain Yunusov and Jalaletdin Yoldashev, and also Khojameberdi Ilimov from Aqkent *volost'*, and a Kirgiz [Kazakh] man from Satayev *volost'*, Dolubai Kartanov. He asked them to bring their influence to bear on the population.⁵²

Husainbai Yunusov's efforts stood out: he "gave speeches in the mosques, and cried"⁵³, and he wrote sermons for the mullahs.⁵⁴ The Russian authorities were clearly lacking an influential Taranchi leader like Vali Bai Yoldashev, who had died on the eve of these events.

On 10 July, representatives of various nationalities from Zharkent and neighbouring villages (Taranchis, Kazakhs and Dungans) met with envoys from the Przheval'sk, Vernyi and Kopal districts, and other *volosts* of Zharkent district (Ketmen and Aqsu-Charyn *volost'*). The meeting decided that they would not hand over people for labour brigades, and if anyone was removed by force, they would take up arms in resistance. A report by one of the Voluntary People's Guards on what he had seen on the road from Zharkent to Khorgos gives us an idea of how the Taranchis were armed:

On leaving Zharkent, by the Taranchi settlement of Mazar, we drew level with two Taranchis on horseback, whom we thought looked suspicious. They each had a sickle attached to a long stick. Just then, six people rode up from nearby. Three of them were armed with guns, and I spotted a Berdan rifle, while the other three had pitchforks and sticks ... I arrested all eight of them ... At that point a great many Taranchis appeared on the streets, and the eight people we had arrested went to join them. They were all on horseback and armed. Some had sticks, some had sickles, some had pikes. When we set off with a guide, we came across many groups of mounted Taranchis, who were also

armed. They were all travelling in the direction of Zharkent. Although we were travelling at night, Taranchi men were out in the streets in all the villages, armed and on horseback.⁵⁵

The situation became so tense that the District Commandant decided to ask Vernyi for military assistance. On 12 July, his dispatch said:

The thousand-strong crowd say they are resisting conscription; they won't hand over anyone for the labour brigades, they will die to the last man, and kill everyone who aids the conscription ... they have opened and partially destroyed the conscription lists. It is being reported that all the lists are being redone. Please send troops.⁵⁶

Then reports started coming in about unrest in the village of Ghalzhat (Rus. Kolzhat) and the murder of the administrator of Qoram *volost'* in Vernyi district.

The armed uprisings in Zharkent district peaked in mid-August, when Kazakh rebels seized Temirlik Postal Station, the Qarqara market and the village of Syntash. A little later, in September, the Taranchis began to openly rebel. As there were so few government troops in Zharkent, they felt unable to take decisive steps against the rebels. An official reported that on 15 September, the day when it was planned to requisition the workers, the unrest of the Taranchis and Dungans had become "plain to see".⁵⁷ A parish priest from the Russian church said of the situation in Zharkent district: "For over two months we've been hearing that the local people, and in general the Kirgiz, Sarts and Taranchis, want to crush and destroy the Russian inhabitants, and that they are making edged weapons, seemingly for this."⁵⁸

In June 1916, fifty-seven Uyghur dehqans were thrown into Zharkent Prison for resisting the Tsar's decree. On 4 August, there was a riot in the prison, during which thirty-three "rioters" escaped.⁵⁹

Aqsu-Charyn volost': Aqsu-Charyn was another flashpoint. The residents of the village of Bolshoye Aqsu (Uyghur: Chong Aqsu) were the first to express their displeasure with the Tsar's decree. From a report by the village elder, we see that as in Zharkent, the mood of the people of Bolshoye Aqsu was influenced by the actions of the Kazakhs:

We heard in late July that the Kyrgyz [Kazakhs] had told the authorities that they would not hand over people for labour brigades. This also influenced the Taranchis, and they started to take heed of the Kirgiz, and even if they didn't say openly that they wouldn't hand anyone over either, it was still obvious that they were interested in how the Kirgiz were responding.⁶⁰

At first, the villagers tried to force the elder to show them the lists of workers, but when on 31 July he was instructed to submit the lists, protests broke out. People from neighbouring villages (Srednee and Maloe Aqsu, Bayan-Qazaq and Dulat) started to flock in. About 500 people gathered and began demanding that the elder give them the list of workers. They were saying, "We won't give you people for labour brigades in any event".⁶¹ The village elder tried to persuade the villagers to obey the Tsar's decree, but to no avail: "They were yelling that they would take the lists from the Administrator by force." When the elder categorically refused to give them the list, "shouts rang out from the crowd that they would take the lists themselves",⁶² and that if he resisted, they would kill him. Then the crowd set off for the administrative office; they broke the locks and smashed it up. The names of the ringleaders from all three villages were ascertained afterwards.⁶³

To placate the residents of these villages, a *volost'* clerk was despatched from there. He was accompanied by two guards who had been in the village of Podgornoe. The clerk described their "crusade" as follows:

When the two guards and I arrived in the village of Bolshoe Aqsu, we saw a huge gathering of Taranchis near the native Russian school, many of whom were on horseback. When we turned towards the *volost'* administrative office, we saw a huge crowd of Taranchis there also. When the three of us stopped in the middle of the road, and I asked where the *volost'* administrator was, they asked me why I wanted him. I replied that I needed to get the necessary papers from the office, and he had the key. I also asked about the family lists. Voices rang out from the crowd, saying that they wouldn't give us any lists ... Seeing that they couldn't confront us directly, a large group of horsemen dashed into a nearby lane to cut off our escape route ... All three of us galloped away ... we were pursued on horseback and on foot, and they were throwing stones at us.⁶⁴

The attack on the clerk and the guards was stopped by armed Cossacks, who were in Bolshoe Aqsu at the time, escorting an opium collector.

Cossack punitive troops were soon called in to quell the uprisings in Aqsu, Avat and other neighbouring villages. As a result of clashes between Cossacks and local inhabitants, twelve people were killed at the Qaiqa Pass,⁶⁵ which put an end to the uprising in Aqsu-Charyn *volost'*.

Vernyi district: Disorder broke out in the village of Qoram on 12 July. The inhabitants gathered in small crowds, and then they set off towards the main mosque, and from there to the home of the *volost'* administrator, Arup Abdurasulov. They demanded that he give them the lists of workers. When Abdurasulov pretended to go inside to fetch the list, but instead hid in the house with his secretary Grigory Sokolov, the crowd forced their way in

and killed the Administrator.⁶⁶ An investigation into the murder revealed that the mob had removed money and items of gold from the house.

M. N. Kabirov, who in his time worked with the memoirs of the Uyghur Bolshevik Ismail Tahirov, used these to give an account of the events in Qoram:

In the evening, about 200 people, armed with axes, sickles and knives, surrounded the house of the *volost'* administrator, *bolus* Arup, demanding that he refuse at once to comply with the tsar's conscription decree. The *volost'* administrator, who was quite aware of the peasants' (*dehqans'*) mood, tried to use his trusted contacts to pacify the crowd with various promises. However, the peasants, who had known him for many years as a tyrant, despot and loyal servant of the tsar, did not believe his promises. They smashed up Arup's house, and they killed him.⁶⁷

The murder of the *volost'* administrator in the village of Qoram was the most sensational "case" of the 1916 revolt. Forty-eight people were arrested in connection with this case, and their names were read out in the Order to Troops of the Turkestan Military District of Tashkent. In addition, four villagers were charged with stealing money and gold from the murdered man.⁶⁸ A Taranchi man, Aznabakhi Mametbaqiev, was accused of spreading dangerous rumours about the conscription of Muslims: two Russian petty bourgeois testified that he had said, "the Muslim population will not go to war, but will fight the Russians."⁶⁹

Once the Qoram residents had been subdued, officials reported: "This was the first incident to result from the requisition of workers, but thanks to emergency measures, it was quashed immediately. All of the culprits were swiftly identified and rounded up."⁷⁰ Russian officials said that the murder of the *volost'* Administrator was "more likely the final stage of many years of factionalism rather than an obvious protest against the government directive."⁷¹ They had reason to draw this conclusion, as back in 1888 a scandal had broken out in Qoram about abuses committed by the *volost'* Administrator Abubakri, which the renowned Russian official and orientalist Nikolai Pantusov had been sent to investigate.⁷²

By October 1916, the revolt in Semirech'e had been suppressed for good. The tsarist authorities started sending workers to labour battalions. Over 1,000 Taranchis were sent from Zharkent district alone.

Opium merchants, among whom were quite a number of Dungans and Kashgaris, seem to have taken advantage of the unrest and disorder in Semirech'e. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the involvement of the Kashgaris, who were another group of Uyghurs. However, as shown by David Brophy, most of the Kashgaris, the majority of whom

lived in the Ferghana Valley, were Chinese subjects.⁷³ The Chinese factor in the form of the opium trade was repeatedly mentioned in reports by Russian officials. For example, one of them referred to the Ghulja “dark forces”, by which they meant that the “enormous opium business” in the Pishpek and Zharkent districts, and especially in Przheval’sk district, facilitated the influx of Ghulja and Kashgar natives, compounding the existing problem of high prices.

The so-called “opium duty” had been assigned to the Uyghurs and Dungans of Semirech’e. During the war, large quantities of opium were required for the front. Uyghur and Dungan dehqans, who had previously grown opium poppies on a small scale, were now forced to turn all their cropland over to this plant. The authorities, which controlled opium procurement, paid very little for the product. During the 1916 revolt, opium smuggling to China increased. As a result, the tsarist authorities, trying to ascertain the cause of the revolt, looked to external forces who might profit from unrest in Russia. This led to a conclusion along the lines of: “If we paralyse Ghulja and the elements fomenting rebellion, most of the Kirgiz will have second thoughts, just as individual groups of them are gradually doing now.”⁷⁴ Following the suppression of the revolt, some of the Taranchis fled to China, together with Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Dungans. However, the number of Taranchi refugees from Semirech’e was insignificant.⁷⁵

Uyghur folk songs (*qoshaq*) about the conscription of workers for labour brigades, provide valuable information about the involvement of the Uyghurs-Taranchis in the 1916 revolt. The Taranchis, in common with some other settled Central Asian Turkic peoples, called labour behind the front lines *lashman(liq)*. This word, which has German roots and is a borrowing from the Tatar language, referred to the social stratum of state peasants in Russia, predominantly Tatars, who logged wood for ships. During the First World War, this word began to be applied to the labour army working behind the front lines and the local population of Turkestan.⁷⁶ Until now, Uyghur *lashmanliq qoshaqliri* have been considered and analysed primarily as part of folklore. Yet they can serve as an important historical source. Songs about the 1916 revolt were gathered and recorded in the Kazakh SSR in the 1930s, and they were published in collections of oral lore in the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, we must keep in mind that Soviet ideology must have had some bearing on which versions of individual songs were selected, although their basic content would have been the same.

The *qoshaq* songs about the events of 1916 focus on the conscription of workers for labour battalions, which is referred to by the Russian word “*rabochi*” or the Uyghur word “*lashman/lashmanliq*”. The songs describe the sending of workers to labour battalions as a tragedy that affected many people. We do not find references in the songs to resistance to

the Tsar's decree, although antipathy to it was expressed everywhere. The decree marked the beginning of a new period, which overturned the existing social order (*qozghilip kätti jahan*), "ignited" people (*bizni köidürgän zaman*) and turned people into servants (*malay*). The latter was expressed in the words: "In the year '16 we all became servants" (*on altinchi yilida / malay bolduq hämmimiz*).⁷⁷ The attitude towards this era was in keeping with the image of Tsar Nicholas, who was portrayed as a very cruel person, a despot with evil intentions (*bu pärmanni chiqarghan Nikolai; Nikolai zalim baghri tash; dili qara Nikolai / yash ballarni almaqta* – Nicholas who issued this decree; despot Nicholas is cruel; Nicholas who has a black soul / is taking young men). The whole conscription drive was understood in the songs to be an act of the Tsar, who had inflicted a deep emotional wound on the people (*bu padishaning qilighi / ornap kätti juräkkä* – these affairs of the padishah/ deeply touched all hearts).⁷⁸

The songs that have been preserved were composed by the inhabitants of just two Uyghur settlements in Semirech'e: the town of Yarkend (modern-day Zharkent) and the village of Aqsu. They do, however, mention many other villages, such as Avat, Ghalzhat, Dulata, Osman-yuzi, Kirgiz-sai and Ketmen, and the thoughts and mood expressed in them pertain to the whole Uyghur population of Semirech'e. Although they are considered to be folk songs, in some cases the names of the people who composed them are recorded in the songs themselves, or they have been identified by researchers.

All of the songs available to us can be divided thematically and chronologically into the following cycles: 1) songs about the execution of Uyghurs at the Qaiqa Pass; 2) songs about the conscription, composed on behalf of the conscripts; 3) songs on behalf of the workers' grieving parents; 4) songs about working in coal mines and laying railway tracks. Thus, the cycle of folk songs about 1916 is preceded by songs about those who perished at the Qaiqa Pass and concludes with songs about the coal mines of Yuzovka (modern-day Donetsk).

According to the songs, the events of 1916 began with the promulgation of the Tsar's decree: "Nicholas gave the order to mobilise one thousand people for labour" (*buyruq bärgän Nikolay / ming lashmanchi alsun döp*).⁷⁹ This order was given to the District Commandant, referred to in the songs as "uyaz" or "oyaz" (from the Russian "uezd", meaning "district"). Next, the District Commandant (*oyaz*) gave an order to requisition each third man (*oyazdin buyruq kälidi / üchtin birini al döp*).⁸⁰ The songs give specific numbers of people conscripted from individual villages. For example, the elder of the village of Aqsu had to select forty *jigits* (*qiriq jighit beräy döp / qol qoyghan ällik beshi*),⁸¹ and later there is mention of sixty-five *jigits*, selected from a total of 600 people (*altä yüz*

ällik balini / bir birdin sanap qoydi ... Atmish bāsh balini / aldighu ilghap turup).⁸²

The largely impoverished population who had to bear the burden of conscription were angered and distressed. They tried to oppose the decree, wanting to avoid conscription for labour battalions. They even argued that they were not slaves (*kāmbāghällär jighlaydu / boluslargha barmay dāp*;⁸³ *rabichigha barmaymiz / nemā shunchā qiyneysän?*;⁸⁴ *lashmanliqqa barmaymiz / setip alghan qulur joq*).⁸⁵

The songs say very little about the armed clashes that occurred during the revolt. However, a song about those who perished at the Qaiqa Pass testifies that the conscription of workers was not a peaceful process. References to *shahids* (martyrs), spilled blood and those buried at the site of the confrontation feature in the song's recitative.

The Uyghur songs about the 1916 conscription clearly show the social conflict between the wealthy and the poor. One could assume that the emphasis on the social contradictions in Taranchi-Uyghur society, the exposure of the reactionary, wealthy population and their allies, Muslim religious figures, was due to the Soviet ideology of the period when the songs first started to be written down. In other words, the songs written down in the Soviet era were "made to fit" with the class war theory. However, archival materials show that this conflict did actually exist: ordinary people were angry with those (usually native officials) who were compiling the lists of workers, and they demanded justice. The songs recount how only the children of poor people were included in the lists of workers, while the wealthy people (*bai*) bought their children's freedom.

With access to the lists of workers, the *volost'* administrators, aqsqaqls and elders (*yuz bashi, ällik beshi*) lined their pockets, demanding money in exchange for removing names from the lists. These people are consistently portrayed in a negative light in the songs, and some of them have pejorative nicknames, such as "hajji tonghuz" (hajji-pig) and "hajji-qalmaq" (hajji-kalmyk i.e. Buddhist unbeliever).⁸⁶

It was not only officials and village elders who could be bought off, but also members of the medical boards who decided whether the conscripts were fit for physical work. With bitter outrage, the songs tell of doctors declaring the sons of *bais* to be unfit for work, while poor people were declared to be fit, even if they were clearly unwell.

For the poor sectors of the population, who could not afford bribes, conscription was inescapable. This gives the impression that they had simply been "sold" to the Russian authorities. The songs refer to oppressors selling poor people as workers for Tsar Nicholas (*Nikolaygha rabochigha / satti bizni zalimlar*)⁸⁷ or like cattle (*lashmanliqqa kätgänlär / mal ornida setildi*).⁸⁸ One song recounts that workers were sold for 500 roubles. That was most likely an approximate and symbolic sum,

reflecting the financial relationships that arose when selecting people for labour battalions.

The young men selected to provide support behind the front lines were sent off as though to war: it was clear that many of them would not return home (*qaytip kälmäyimiz deyiship / äziz zhandin ghäm yegän*).⁸⁹ Mullahs performed the Islamic ceremony of reading a funeral prayer, facing Mecca (qilva~qibla); this was traditional when sending people to a certain death. However, the ordinary people prayed that their children would return unharmed (*köp adäm duga qildi / aman-esän yansun däp*).⁹⁰

Groups of *lashman* workers set off from Zharkent and Aqsu for European Russia, travelling via Charyn, Alma-Ata and Pishpek (modern-day Bishkek). One of the songs refers to workers in “coal mines” in Pishpek (*biz Pishpekkä barghanda / ishliduq kömur khangda*).⁹¹ It appears that in the oral dissemination of the song, the place name “Pishpek” was substituted for the name of some Russian locality, as Pishpek was known to the ordinary people.

The journey was hard for the young workers, as they were too poor to have warm clothing (*soghlarda elip bardi / kämbäghälni qakhshitip*;⁹² *Yarkenttin chiqip kättuq / Almutigha berip yättuq / qishning kuni soghlarda / azapni tola tarttuq*).⁹³ The hardships included a three-month stay in Penza, where the authorities did not know where to send the workers (*qayan berishni bilmäy / Penzida uch ay turduq / zhandarma, politisiyadin / tugimäs azap körduq*).⁹⁴ From the memoirs of Mustafa Choqay, we know that even before the February Revolution of 1917, workers conscripted from Turkestan ended up stuck on sections of railway in Penza, Syzran, Samara and other Russian towns. The authorities did not know what to do with the workers, but they did not send them back home either,⁹⁵ and they were treated very badly in these towns. Admittedly, the police in Semirech'e also treated labour conscripts badly, whipping them as though they were criminals.

We know from the songs that it was intended to send the workers to areas behind the front lines to “dig trenches” (*bizni Nikolay alghanda / akop kolaysän degän*).⁹⁶ However, the Uyghur *lashman* workers were sent to Yuzovka (modern Donetsk), where they worked in coal mines and on railway lines. A man called Khesamdun was in charge of a group of workers from Zharkent. A description of the hard labour, written in his name, says that they were paid pennies (*aylighimgha bäshtängä*)⁹⁷ and given only dry black bread to eat (*qara sukhar nan*).⁹⁸ Lacking warm clothing, people froze to death (*kiyim kechäk yoqidin / bir munchilar tongliduq*).⁹⁹

A song about Yuzovka recounts the harsh working conditions, the lack of food, and the death of many young people down the coal mines (*lashmanliqqa kätkänlär / yatqan yeri saydadur; qizilgüldäk jigitlär/hanglarda ölüp kätkän*).¹⁰⁰ This song is the final part of the cycle of *qoshaq* songs about the events of 1916.

The *qoshaq* songs relate historical events from the point of view of the Taranchis themselves, unlike the archival documents, which are written from the Russian authorities' perspective. And we are, of course, talking about "emotional" information: in contrast to dry archival accounts, the songs tell us how people felt about certain developments and events; they convey feelings of outrage, pain, sorrow, compassion and love.

To sum up all the above, it is evident that the Taranchis' involvement in the 1916 revolt mainly took the form of sabotaging and resisting the process of compiling conscription lists in the villages. This went as far as episodic armed clashes with punitive divisions, and, in one case (in Qoram), the murder of a local official (a Taranchi). Compared to other groups of the native population, only a small number of Taranchis were arrested and killed. The conscription of the male population following the suppression of the revolt was a dramatic event in the life of the Taranchi community. Meanwhile, the revolt had shown that the Taranchis were no longer a Muslim community loyal to the Russian authorities. However, while other ethnic groups in Semirech'e were at the epicentre of the armed clashes and were promptly and severely punished for this, the punishment of the Taranchis came two years later, in the form of the massacre of inhabitants of Taranchi settlements.

The massacre of the Taranchis in 1918

Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the whole of Russia was gripped by civil war. The Soviet regime in Semirech'e, which was only established in early 1918, supported the peasant settlers. However, it was met with strong resistance from the local Cossacks. Profound schisms had appeared within the Russian-Slavic population in the province, which Marco Buttino believes were due to contradictions concerning land use. The more recently arrived, landless settlers saw "Soviet power" as a licence to seize land not only from the Kyrgyz population, but from Cossacks and relatively privileged old settlers, now recast as "kulaks".¹⁰¹

In February 1918, immediately after the declaration of Soviet rule in Vernyi district, the Cossack population living in the vicinity of Vernyi took up arms against the Bolsheviks, who had come to power in the town. The Cossack uprising was supported by the inhabitants of Taranchi villages, of which the closest to Vernyi was the village of Janashar. The movement in support of the Cossacks was headed by a wealthy Taranchi man from Talgar *stanitsa* called Ismailbai, and the Administrator of Qarasu *volost'*, Jamaldin Bushriyev. When the Vernyi Bolsheviks found themselves facing a prolonged siege by the armed forces of the Cossacks and their Taranchi supporters, they turned to Tashkent for military assistance, which the latter agreed to provide. To suppress the Cossack revolt, a brigade was

established under the command of Mitrofan Muraev. According to eyewitness accounts recorded in the 1960s, the brigade was initially only small, but the closer it got to Vernyi, the more its numbers increased, until it was 400 strong.¹⁰² On 20 May, Muraev's brigade took Vernyi, lifting the siege and forcing the Cossacks to retreat in the direction of China.

After suppressing the revolt in Vernyi, Muraev's brigade moved further east along the Ghulja road. It stopped in each Taranchi village and set about executing civilians. The first village in Muraev's path was Janashar. The population welcomed the Red Army soldiers, coming out to meet them "with bread and salt". On Muraev's orders, all of the villagers were herded together into a large cattle yard belonging to a wealthy local man. The women and children were released, but all of the men were killed by machine-gun fire. Once the Red Army brigade had left Janashar, Russian settlers appeared; they finished off the survivors, and they looted the village. Similar executions were carried out in other villages also, in Tashtyqara and Tashkensaz, and then in villages in the Qoram and Malybay *volost'*. The last village that the brigade came to was Aqtam. The whole population of the village hid in the mountains, but one person was killed. Muraev's brigade pushed on further, to Zharkent, where it engaged with the remainder of the Cossack troops, who, under pressure from the attacking Red Guards, were retreating to China. The Bolsheviks estimated the number of Taranchis fleeing to China with them to be 20,000.¹⁰³ When rumours began circulating that China might enter the fight against the Soviet regime, the Soviet authorities (the regional executive committee) decided to despatch a group of commanders to Chinese Ghulja to prevent this. The commanders, Muraev, Malinin, Vinogradov and Khopersky, were tasked with establishing diplomatic and economic relations with China and resolving the migrant issue. An attempt to replace the Russian consulate in Ghulja with Soviet representatives failed.

After that, Muraev returned to Vernyi, and from there he travelled to Tashkent. Very little is known about the subsequent events in his life. We know that he fought on the Bukharan and Transcaspian fronts, distinguished himself in Termez, and rose through the ranks to become an aide to the military commissar of the Republic of Turkestan. It is thought that he died in the Ferghana Valley. A petition for military awards noted his role in ending the Cossack uprising in Semirech'e: "In 1918, on the orders of the C[ouncil of] P[eople's] C[ommissars], as a commander of a separate brigade, he was sent to end the Kulak White Guard uprising in Semirech'e, and the uprising was liquidated by Muraev."¹⁰⁴

It is unknown how many Taranchis were executed by Muraev's brigade. Ilya Shendrikov, a member of the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government, who joined Kolchak's army in Omsk, says that 4,000 Taranchis were killed. White Russian sources give a figure of 20,000–25,000, and this number is also cited by contemporary Uyghur

authors in Kazakhstan. However, David Brophy considers this figure to be an exaggeration.¹⁰⁵ The makers of a documentary film about the massacre, who visited all of the villages affected, say that 6,000–6,500 people were killed, which is probably close to the reality. If we add in the number of refugees who fled to China, as stated above, it becomes apparent that many Taranchi villages were abandoned and deserted.

To this day, the local population refer to the massacre of Taranchis in Semirech'e as the "Atu" (the massacre) or the "*Atu päjiäsi*" (the tragedy of the massacre). This subject was banned in the Soviet era. In the 1960s, the Uyghur historian Malik Kabirov, while working on a profile of the Soviet Uyghurs, studied archival materials and eyewitness accounts about the Atu massacre, and these were reflected in the manuscript version of his monograph. However, in the book published in 1975, Kabirov mentions only "unlawful reprisals against a large swathe of the Uyghur population by external elements that had infiltrated the ranks of Muraev's red guard brigade, which came from Tashkent to help consolidate Soviet rule."¹⁰⁶ In 1977, one song about the Atu was included in a collection of folk songs.¹⁰⁷ During perestroika, the Uyghur community in Kazakhstan raised the issue of the Red Terror with respect to the Uyghur population of Semirech'e. Consequently, memorials to the victims of the massacre were erected in some villages in the Almaty region. Local histories of Uyghur settlements in Kazakhstan published in the post-Soviet period unflinchingly mention the massacre.¹⁰⁸ Literary works have been based on the Atu, including the novel *Kuldzhinskii Trakt* by Khamit Khamraev.¹⁰⁹

Thus far, the massacre has been interpreted variously in the literature. In his book *Ocherki istorii uigurov Sovetskogo Kazakhstana*, Malik Kabirov exonerates Muraev, blaming the reprisals on "external elements" that had infiltrated his brigade. However, in the manuscript for his book, Kabirov had written that Muraev was not a Bolshevik, but a member of the Social Democratic Party (SR), and that his brigade comprised "class enemy" elements.¹¹⁰ This version became very popular during perestroika, although there were also those who viewed the massacre as a manifestation of the "Red Terror". Both these scenarios concern themselves mainly with the identity of the commander of the punitive brigade, but present the Taranchis as innocent victims of an act of violence committed by either a Bolshevik (Red Terror) or a counterrevolutionary (SR).

We can see from the archival documents that Muraev's brigade was initially established as a "punitive" force, and that its Commander was sent expressly to end the Cossack uprising, and Muraev was authorised as the Emergency Commissar of the Semirech'e province. On 30 May 1918, the Vernyi authorities sent the following telegram to the Russian consul in Chuguchak:

Organise a red army of two hundred peasants from new settlements immediately. Arrest all the counterrevolutionaries. Shoot anyone who resists. The Tashkent punitive brigade under Muraev has left for Kopal, Lepsinsk, Bakhty and Sergiopol. Here in the Vernyi district the gangs of insurgent Cossacks, Kirgiz and Taranchis have been eliminated, some have fled. There is now complete calm and order.¹¹¹

The execution of the Taranchis was an act of violence such as was commonplace in a country gripped by civil war. But what is surprising is that it was directed solely against the Taranchis: there were only a few instances of Russians and Kazakhs being victims of the violence. Even taking into account that the Taranchis actively supported the Cossacks in their struggle against the Bolsheviks, and that some documents mention a “Taranchi revolt”,¹¹² the main instigators of the revolt, the Cossacks, were not “punished” to the same extent as the Taranchis.

This leads us to consider whether the causes of the massacre of the Taranchis lie in socioeconomic factors, rather than in the political positions of the Bolsheviks or Social Revolutionaries. It would appear to be no coincidence that documents about the revolt often mention “new settlers”; that is, recent Slavic settlers who required land, and so sided with the Bolsheviks. It was these settlers who looted the Taranchi villages. And it was they who actively opposed the Cossacks’ privileges regarding land use.

The land question was emphasised in the Missive to the Taranchi People of Semirech’e Province, written in Omsk on 16 July 1919 by the White leader, Admiral Alexander Kolchak. This short document, produced for propaganda purposes, praises “the Taranchi people, small in number, but strong in spirit”, who

did not take the wrong path, seeking to destroy the Russian state, but in accordance with the precepts of their glorious predecessors, and the teachings of their native Islamic religion, remained loyal to the fatherland and its laws, and in the fight against the Bolsheviks, this loyalty was sealed with the blood of many thousands of their best sons, and their heritage.¹¹³

While the rhetoric of the letter was intended to encourage the Taranchis to join the Whites, the rewards promised to the Taranchis for their contribution to the struggle against the Bolsheviks are of interest. The most significant promise concerned land use:

Upon the liberation of Semirech’e from the Bolsheviks, the Ministry for Agriculture intends to allocate to the Taranchis, from the state land reserves, arable land and other agricultural land, in accordance with the norms for the peasants of Semirech’e province. If, however,

the Taranchis are included within the Cossack estate of the Semirech'e troops, they will be assigned land in accordance with the norms for Cossacks.¹¹⁴

As is evident from the missive, the greatest reward promised to the Taranchis by Alexander Kolchak was that he would include them in the Cossack estate, which would give them larger parcels of land.

It is becoming apparent that the massacre of the Taranchis in 1918 was carried out by supporters of the new Soviet regime, among whom the most militant were the aforementioned "new settlers"; who needed land resources to be reallocated. Uyghur folk songs refer to the Slavic settlers' support for Muraev's men. One of the songs contains the words: "*Murayevlar chiqqanda, / izvushkilar qetildi*" (when Muraev and his men appeared, / the *izbushki* sided with them).¹¹⁵ The Russian word *izbushki* (hut-people) signifies Slavic settlers, and particular reference is made to the Ukrainians (*khokhly*): "The ataman's *khokhly* captured Lavar and Qoram" (*atamanning haholi / Lavar, Qoramni qaplighan*),¹¹⁶ "they slaughtered the Muslims and grew fat on the spoils" (*musulmanni öltürüp, / hohol toidi oljigha*).¹¹⁷ The Taranchis' support for the insurgent Cossacks provided grounds for reprisals against them, to be followed by acquisition of their land. However, in the years that followed, the Soviet regime had its own land reform plan and no longer needed to take the radical step of transferring Taranchi land to the new settlers. Moreover, in 1922 the Bolshevik Government of Semirech'e Province ordered that

all of the lands seized and alienated from the Kirgiz [Kazakh], Taranchi and Dungan working population in the period from 1916–1922 be returned to them, irrespective of whether the alienation of land resulted from unauthorised seizure, or allocations or mandates of government bodies in existence at that time, or private redemption, rental or coerced transactions.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

This study of two dramatic events in the lives of the Uyghur population of the Russian's Empire's Semirech'e Province, the 1916 revolt and the massacre of Uyghur (Taranchi) villagers in 1918, shows that, although separated by the collapse of the Russian Empire following the 1917 revolutions, these were two interlinking episodes in the history of Russian colonial policy in Turkestan. The Uyghurs' participation in the 1916 revolt, in contrast to the other group of settlers from the Ili region, the Chinese-speaking Dungans, consisted of spontaneous resistance to the conscription of workers. This resistance took the form of sabotaging the process of compiling conscription lists, demanding that lists be

produced fairly, attacking and even murdering local officials responsible for compiling the lists, and also armed uprisings, albeit limited in extent.

The main focal points of the Taranchi uprisings in Semirech'e were the town of Zharkent and its environs, Aqsu-Charyn *volost'* in Zharkent district, and Qoram *volost'* in Vernyi district. The battle at the Qaiqa Pass near the village of Bolshoe Aqsu, in which as many as twelve people were shot, was a tragedy for the local inhabitants. Those who perished were referred to in folk songs as martyrs (*shahids*), fighters for the Muslim faith. Quite a few Taranchi villagers were thrown in prison, charged with resistance to the government decree. Some Taranchis were forced by punitive divisions to flee to China, although in smaller numbers than Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Dungan refugees. After the revolt was suppressed, in Zharkent district alone, 1,000 people were mobilised for labour brigades behind the front line in European Russia. The events of 1916 became a traumatic memory for the Taranchi-Uyghur population, echoed in *qoshaq* folk songs. The songs refer to the victims of the clash between Taranchis and the Russian brigade at the Qaiqa Pass near Ketmen on the border with China, and recount how lists of workers were produced, and how the conscription of young men for labour brigades was organised. Russian archive documents describe the Taranchis' resistance to the conscription decree.

When the Taranchis joined the 1916 revolt, although their resistance took a less radical form than that of the Dungans, it indicated to the authorities for the first time since they became Russian subjects (1880s) that they were no longer trustworthy subjects of the emperor. At the same time the 1916 revolt exposed the conflicting economic interests of the Taranchis, and the Slavic settlers specifically, with regard to their agricultural needs. When the Taranchis settled in Semirech'e, they unintentionally entered into competition with the Slavic settlers over land use. In particular, this concerned the new settlers who had arrived since 1905, whose interests were incompatible with those of the Russian Cossacks in Semirech'e, who enjoyed privileges and had extensive land resources.

The revolutions of 1917 and the civil war in Semirech'e exacerbated the conflict between the new settlers and the Cossacks. When in 1918 the Semirech'e Cossacks rose up against the establishment of Soviet rule, the new settlers supported their opponents, the Bolsheviks. By supporting the Cossacks, the Taranchis incurred the wrath of the Bolsheviks, who despatched a punitive brigade, headed by the Red Commander Muraev, to quell the revolt. The brigade targeted civilians from Taranchi-Uyghur villages situated along the Ghulja Tract. The massacre in June 1918 resulted in the death of 6,000–10,000 Taranchis, and led to almost 20,000 people fleeing to China. As a result, the Taranchi villages became deserted. The Russian "new settlers" supported the Bolsheviks' punitive brigade.

The massacre of the Taranchis in 1918 was the climax of a long history of Russian-Taranchi conflict. It had previously manifested in armed clashes between the Taranchi sultanate (1864–1871) and the Russian Empire, and then in the Russian occupation of the Ili district. For a significant part of the Taranchi population, the latter ended with their resettlement in Semirech'e province.

The land question and water use became bones of contention in relations between the Taranchi and Russian populations in Semirech'e. Although sources say nothing about open conflict between Taranchis and Russians, the Taranchis had come to hold a resolutely negative opinion of the Russian authorities, which was reflected in folklore and literature. When the Taranchis received “native” status in 1899, it slightly improved the position of their community, within which a process of social stratification was underway. The image of Taranchis as “passive loyal subjects” of Russia (in contrast to the Tatar “active loyal subjects”)¹⁹ was first shaken by the banditry of Anayat Qurbanov in 1910, but then more significantly by events in 1916, when they supported the revolt of the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Dungans.

Translated by Emily Justice

Notes

- 1 David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 85.
- 2 P. P. Rumyantsev, *Materiali po obsledovaniuu tuzemnogo i russkogo starozhilcheskogo khozyaistva i zemlepolzovaniia v Semirechenskoi oblasti* vol.5 *Taranchi* (St Petersburg: Izd. Pereselencheskogo Upravleniya, 1914), 9, 12.
- 3 Rumyantsev, *Taranchi*, 83; Immanuel Hsü, *The Ili Crisis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 186–187.
- 4 G. Baratova, *Sotsialno-ekonomicheskaya istoriya uyghurov Semirech'ya na rubezhe XIX–XX vv.* (Aftoreferat kandidatskoi dissertatsiyi, Alma-Ata, 1988), 13; G. Iskhakov, “Zemledeliye uyghurov Kazakhstana v XIX – nachale XX v.,” in *Voprosy istorii i kultury uyguurov* (Alma-Ata: Nauka KazSSR, 1987), 98–101.
- 5 Also known as Vali Akhun Yoldashev (Uyghur: Velivai Yoldashev)
- 6 Rumyantsev, *Taranchi*, 4–5, 48; “The decision of the ‘bai’ [which was what the Taranchis called Yuldashev; *bai* means a wealthy man] to resettle in Russia encouraged the majority of his wavering fellow tribesmen to do so also. It could be said that Yuldashev built the city of Zharkent; to this day, a good half of the estates and buildings belong to him ... He said that the White Tsar would give the Taranchis arable land, water, forest, and most importantly, order and lower taxes. The Chinese wanted to keep the Taranchis there and promised them the same things as Yuldashev, but they did not believe them and they left ... the resettlement stemmed from fear that after the Russians left the region, the old Chinese ways would be restored.” Rumyantsev, *Taranchi*, 4–5.

- 7 T. V. Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane: dokumentalnye svidetelstva obshchei tragedii. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016), 134.
- 8 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 66.
- 9 Mashur Ruziyev, *Vozrozhdeniye uyghurskiy narod* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1976), 85.
- 10 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 66.
- 11 *Uyghur khäliq qoshaqliri*, Toplighuchilar Hezim Iskändärov vä Jalal Musayev (Almuta: Qazaqstan Dolät gözäl ädäbiyat nashriyati, 1963), 37–40.
- 12 Uchqunjan Ömär, *Uyghur khäliq tarikhiy qoshaqliri* (Qäshqär: Qäshqär Uyghur nashriyati, 1981).
- 13 Ömär, *Uyghur khäliq*, 40.
- 14 A. Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq qoshaqliri* (Almuta: Nauka KasSSR, 1977), 49.
- 15 Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq*, 44–45.
- 16 *Uyghur ädäbiyati. IX sinip uchun khrestomatiya* (Almuta: Mektep nashriyati, 1975), 340.
- 17 Vladimir Moiseev, “Iz istorii Iliyskogo krizisa (zanyatie russkimi voiskami Kuldzhinskogo kraya v 1871 g.,” in *Aktual'nye voprosy istorii, istoriografii i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii* (Barnaul: Izdatelstvo AGU, 1996), 104–107.
- 18 Rummyantsev, *Taranchi*, 9.
- 19 “Vedomost' po seleniyam taranchei i dungan v Semirechenskoi oblasti k 1 yanvarya 1884 goda,” TsGARKaz F.64 Op. 1 D.115 sv.9 ll.169–170.
- 20 Rummyantsev, *Taranchi*, 48.
- 21 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 69.
- 22 Rummyantsev, *Taranchi*, 8.
- 23 Rummyantsev, *Taranchi*, 8.
- 24 Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq*, 48.
- 25 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 69.
- 26 Ömär, *Uyghur khäliq*, 43.
- 27 Il'yas Ismailov, *Sovetskiye dungane v period stroitelstva sotsializma* (Frunze: Ilim 1977), 15.
- 28 “Zhurnal obshego prisutstviya Semirechenskogo oblastnogo pravleniya po 1 stolu 2 otdeleniya, oktyabr 1915g.,” TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 3 D.4090, sv.120a.
- 29 “Protokol 2-i sessii Semirechenskogo oblastnogo zemel'nogo komiteta 1 fevralya 1918 g.,” GAAO F.136 Op. 1 D.19 sv.1 ll.1–10.
- 30 Marko Buttino, *Revoliutsiya naoborot: Srednyaya Aziya mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 2007), 10.
- 31 “Raport prokuroru Vernenskogo gorodskogo suda,” GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56 ll.3–4.
- 32 GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56 ll.3–4.
- 33 GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56 ll.3–4.
- 34 GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56 ll.3–4.
- 35 “Protokol o privedenii v ispolneniye prigovora Vremennogo voennogo suda,” GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56.
- 36 “Raport prokuroru Vernenskogo gorodskogo suda,” GAAO F.76 Op. 1 D.1189 sv.56 ll.3–4; Malik Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii uigurov Sovetskogo Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata: Nauka KazSSR, 1975), 92–93; Ruziyev, *Vozrozhdeniye uyghurskii*, 88.

- 37 “Anayat Kurbanov”, *Kazakstanskaya Pravda*, 30 May 1937.
- 38 Mashur Roziyev, *Anayat* (Almuta: Zhazushi, 1978).
- 39 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 69–70.
- 40 Ablet Kamalov, “Birth of Uyghur National History in Semirech’ye: Nāzāryoja Abdusemätov and His Historical Works”, *Oriente Moderno*, 96/1 (2016), 181–196.
- 41 Nazarghoja Abdusemätov, *Taranchi Türklarning Tarikhi* (Almuta: Uyghur Kommunistlirining vilayät byurasi, 1922), 39; Nazarghoja Abdusemätov, *Yoruq sahilar* (Almuta: Zhazushi, 1991), 58–59.
- 42 S. Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq. Yanglivashtin tughulghan Uyghur khälqi* (Almuta: Qazaqstan, 1989), 38.
- 43 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 108–109.
- 44 Ruziyev, *Vozrozhdeniyyi uyghurskii*, 96.
- 45 Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 124–125.
- 46 Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 151.
- 47 “[Raport] Zharkentskomu uezdnomu nachalniku”, #1059, 20.07.1916 TsGARKaz, F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.21 l.9.
- 48 “Raport Voyennomu Gubernatoru Semirechenskoi oblasti ot 6 Iyunia 1916g. ot i.o. Zharkentskogo uezdnogo nachalnika” (6 June 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16921 sv.266 l.157.
- 49 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16921 sv.266 l.157.
- 50 “V Vernyi Voennomu gubernatoru. Telegramma iz Tashkenta #142” (6 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16928 sv.267 l.32.
- 51 “Voennomu gubernatoru v Vernyi iz Zharkenta” (7 July 1916), TsGARKaz, F.44 Op. 2 D.16928 sv.267, l.44.
- 52 “Iz raporta Zharkentskogo uyezda nachalnika Semirechenskomu Voyennomu gubernatoru”, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 sv.2 D.16921 ll.157–168.
- 53 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 sv.2 D.16921, ll.157–168.
- 54 A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 328.
- 55 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 106–107.
- 56 “Telegramma Vernenskomu Voennomu Gubernatoru iz Zharkenta” (12 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16926 sv.267 l.9.
- 57 “Voennomu gubernatoru Semirechenskoi oblasti. Telegramma” (15 September 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 4 D.16269 sv.256 l.14.
- 58 Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 335.
- 59 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 108.
- 60 “Protokol, sostavlennyyi starshinoi sela Bolshoi Aksu Aksu-Charynskoii volosti na imya st. Podgornenskoii mirovogo sud’i 4-go uchastka Zharkentskogo uyezda” (18 September 1916), TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.21 ll.39–40.
- 61 TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.21 ll.39–40.
- 62 TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.21 ll.39–40.
- 63 The ringleaders of the uprising were as follows: from the village of Bolshoe Aqsu – Khojamniyazov, Mansur Amerov, Tulegen Osmanov, Ziam Islambaqiev; from the village of Srednoe Aqsu – Jarulla Tajallayev, Alyaakhun Syratjirdinov; from the village of Bayan-Qazaq – Karimakhun Adylayev, Musa Izizov, Mansur Nasirov, Akhiyarov. “Protokol, sostavlennyyi starshinoi sela Bolshoi, Aksu Aksu-Charynskoii volosti na imya st. Podgornenskoii mirovogo

- sud'i 4-go uchastka Zharkentskogo uyezda" (18 September 1916), TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.21 ll.39–40.
- 64 "Protokol pisarya Aksu-Charynskoi volosti" (31 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.2116 sv.2 ll.10–11.
- 65 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 105.
- 66 "Raport tovarishu prokuroru Vernenskogo Okruzhnogo suda po Vernensko-Tokmakskomu uchastku, Zaitsevskogo uchastkovogo pristava Vernenskogo uyezda" (16 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.204 sv.21 l.10.
- 67 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 108.
- 68 "O vosstanii taranchei seleniya Karam i ubiistve Karamskogo volostnogo upravatelya Aripa Abdrasuleva i pisarya Grigoriya Sokolova. Raport prokuroru Vernenskogo okruzhnogo suda ot Zaitsevskogo selskogo starosty" (12 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 1 D.204 sv.21 l.3.
- 69 "Raport Voennomu gubernatoru Semirechenskoi oblasti ot politseimeistera goroda Vernogo" (14 July 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16067 sv.255 l.1.
- 70 "Turkestanskomu general-gubernatoru" (7 August 1916), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16921 l.31.
- 71 TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16921 l.31.
- 72 "Kopiya raporta #3271 starshego chinovnika osobykh poruchenii pri Voennom Gubernatore Semirechenskoi oblasti" (11 February 1888), TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 8 D.26-a ll.48–49.
- 73 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 160–161.
- 74 "[Raport] Generalu v Tashkent, po voennym obshchestvenno-politicheskim otnosheniyam", TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 2 D.16922, sv.266 ll.149–151.
- 75 A recently released collection of documents and materials about the 1916 revolt contains an explanatory note written in 1924 by the plenipotentiary of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in Ghulja, Z. I. Pechatnikov, in which he puts the number of Taranchi refugees from Semirech'e at approximately 8,000. Evidently, most of these refugees were Taranchis that fled to China following the massacre, rather than after the 1916 revolt: Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 450.
- 76 *Tatarsko-russkii slovar' v 2 tomakh*, tom 1 (Kazan: Magarif, 2007), 717.
- 77 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 71; *Uyghur folklorining antologiyasi* (Almota: "Nauka", 1988), 32.
- 78 *Uyghur ädäbiyati*, 296.
- 79 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 63; *Uyghur folklorining*, 30.
- 80 *Uyghur ädäbiyati*, 298.
- 81 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 68.
- 82 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 69.
- 83 *Uyghur ädäbiyati*, 298.
- 84 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 61.
- 85 *Uyyur folklorining*, 298.
- 86 Qalmaq or Kalmyk was the term Muslims used to describe non-Muslim Oirats.
- 87 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 61.
- 88 *Uyghur ädäbiyati*, 298.
- 89 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 63.

- 90 *Uyghur folklorining*, 30.
- 91 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 66.
- 92 *Uyghur ädäbiyati*, 375.
- 93 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 62.
- 94 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 67.
- 95 T. V. Kotiukova, “Vosstanie 1916 goda: shtrikhi k istricheskomu portretu”, in Kotiukova (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 93.
- 96 *Uyghur folklorining*, 30.
- 97 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 65.
- 98 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 65.
- 99 Aspandiyarov, *Uyghur khälqining tarikhi toghriliq*, 65.
- 100 *Uyghur folklorining*, 33.
- 101 Buttino, *Revolutsiya naoborot*, 233.
- 102 Memoirs of G. K. Kaurov, former Commissar of the political department of the Northern Semirech'e Front, recorded by Malik Kabirov. Malik Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii uigurov Sovetskogo Kazakhstana* (typescript, Alma-Ata, 1960), 165.
- 103 “Protokol #9 Zasedaniya 1-go Semirechenskogo Oblastnogo s'ezda rabochikh, soldatskikh, krest'yanskikh i dehkanskikh deputatov” (16 October 1918), GAAO F.489 Op. 1 D.27 sv.3 l.20, paragraphs 5–6.
- 104 “Spisok aktivistov uchastnikov Turkestanskogo Sovetskogo fronta perioda s 1917 po 1920 gg.,” TsGARUz F.25 Op. 1 D.1333 ll.8–9.
- 105 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 150.
- 106 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii*, 149–150.
- 107 Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq*, 70–72.
- 108 Asim Qasym, *Uyghur nahiyisi – dostluq vadisi* (Almuta: Mersal Basma Uyi, 2005), 74–78.
- 109 Khamit Khamraev, *Kuldzhinskii trakt* (Almaty: Mir, 2014).
- 110 Kabirov, *Ocherki istorii* (typescript), 182–183.
- 111 “Telegramma Chuguchakskomu Konsulu” (30 May 1918), GAAO F.489 Op. 1 D.91 sv.7 l.21.
- 112 “Protokol Narynkolskogo uchastkovogo s'ezda sozdannogo po initiative Krasnoyarskogo selskogo obshchestva 22 Iiunya 1918 g., selo Krasnoyarsk”, GAAO F.353 Op. 1 D.4 ll.42–44.
- 113 Salavat Iskhakov (ed.), *Grazhdanskaya voina v Rossiii i musulmane. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: Tsentr strategicheskoi kon'unktury, 2014), 204.
- 114 Iskhakov, *Grazhdanskaya voina v Rossiii*.
- 115 Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq*, 71.
- 116 Älakhunov, *Uyghur khäliq*, 71.
- 117 A. Älakhunov, “Zhudaliq qoshaqliri”, *Arzu* 7 (1993), 83.
- 118 “Prikaz #1 Semirechenskogo Oblastnogo Ispolnitelnogo Komiteta Sovetov 23 marta 1922 g., g. Alma-Ata”, TsGARKaz F.136 Op. 38 D.18 ll.16–12; on land reform, see Niccolò Pianciola, “Décoloniser l'Asie centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semirech'e (1920–1922)”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49/1 (2008), 101–144.
- 119 Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 146.

Making political rebellion “primitive”: the 1916 rebellion in the Kazakh steppe in long-term perspective (c. 1840–1930)

Xavier Hallez and Isabelle Ohayon

Introduction

Since the 1920s an extensive historiographical corpus (syntheses, testimonies from participants, anthologies) has been published on the 1916 rebellion in the Kazakh steppe.¹ Even though many studies dealt with local events, the revolt was primarily examined within a larger historical context through three frames of reference: the other revolts that took place in 1916 across Russian Central Asia, the Kazakh struggle for national or “people’s” liberation, underway since the nineteenth century and, for more recent studies, World War I.

In this study, the revolt is examined within the framework of a long history of opposition that pitted Kazakh society against first the Russian state, and then the Soviet state. This study chronicles three significant historical sequences of violence against the ruling authorities in the Torg hai region (Aktobe and Kustanai provinces of modern Kazakhstan): the 1838–1847 war led by Kenesary Kasymov, a descendant of the last Khan of the three Kazakh hordes, the 1916 revolt, and the 1929–1931 insurgencies in which a population of herders and farmers, who would not comply with the requisition rules of collectivisation, confronted a predatory Soviet state. We ruled out analysing the issue through the angle of national liberation, which views the events as a long-term process leading to the revolution, the building of a Kazakh nation or the creation of Kazakhstan. Instead, we chose to follow Korine Amacher’s lead and her studies of Russian revolts: “It is of the utmost importance to avoid viewing the history of revolts and revolutionary movements in Russia as portents of an inevitable revolution.”²

A connection between these three rebellions that span nearly a century, from Russian colonisation to the second wave of Sovietisation, was maintained by the thread of collective memory and its sets of references to previous experiences and narratives. An analysis of past insurgencies

and how the Kazakhs used their experience during each of these three sequences in order to create modes of action and political references reveals both continuity and rupture. The main focus of this research is placed on the evolution of Kazakh society as a whole, and not through speeches and initiatives spearheaded by an elite educated in Russian institutions and madrasas. The foundations of the struggle against colonial pressure rested on pre-colonial forms of politics, whose transformation and disintegration will be described through these three historical moments.

As Yves-Marie Bercé showed in his studies of peasant revolts in France: “it is no longer a history of moments of insurgency [...] but an observation of the status of collective violence in a certain type of society”.³ The use of collective violence by communities who were conquered or recognised the sovereignty of a state over them finds legitimacy when the colonial power violates their mutual agreement or the political and social equilibrium. The legitimacy given to protest in the face of injustice competes with that of the state. “The spirit driving the revolt knows full well what it is fighting against. Generally, it has a very precise idea of the forces of oppression it is facing.”⁴

There is a lot at stake from a political and historiographical perspective in choosing the terms used to name these revolts. The Kazakhs used two words: *soghys* (war) and *köterilis* (uprising). In this study, we chose to use a declination of war, rebellion and insurgency. Each of these three words evokes a specific scale and framework and illustrates the evolution of the revolt within the Kazakh society. The term “people’s” was not used by either the Kazakhs or the Russians at the time of these violent events. The revolutionary rhetoric had not penetrated the Kazakh population and the idea of anti-colonial struggle was not clearly expressed. However, the Kazakh events are comparable to many other cases of revolt in unrelated colonial empires, such as the Guarani wars of 1754–1756, that broke out in reaction to “an immediate threat to their way of life or a violation of the reciprocal exchanges and obligations they had established with the Spanish colonial state”;⁵ the 1908 and 1916 revolts in Annam, where modernist elites played a similar role;⁶ or the 1917 Kanak war, triggered by conscription for a faraway war and whose memory was preserved in a significant oral corpus.⁷

The quintessential political entity in the Kazakh geographical space before the Russian conquest was the khanate.⁸ This term, invented by seventeenth-century European orientalist, was used to label a political entity ruled by a khan, and was generally referred to in source material from Central Asia as *Ulus-i Qazaq* or *Khan-i Qazaq* or, less frequently, *Qazaqstan*.⁹ Structurally, the Kazakh khanate was made up of a hierarchy of khans, supposedly descended from Chinggisids. Each ruled over a section of the Kazakh population, since each of the *zhuz* (hordes),¹⁰

among which all the tribes were distributed, had elected its khan, whose authority was usually dependent on the consent of a broader aristocratic elite, the *töre* or sultans, but also the lineage leaders¹¹ – a phenomenon the anthropologist David Sneath has controversially labelled “the headless state”.¹² Occasionally a particularly charismatic or successful khan was chosen to rule over all three *zhuzes*, creating a form of nomadic confederation. Our study will show the fundamental evolutions that the initially dominant ideology of the khanate underwent. In the culture of lineage-based societies recognising the Chinggisids’ legitimacy in Eurasian lands, the construction of a political structure headed by a khan was the culmination of any given form of tribal or supra-tribal alliance.¹³ Examining the events of 1837–1847 alongside those of 1916 and 1929–1931 enables us to understand the new conditions that structured the political discourse in a context where colonisation, and then Sovietisation, radically reassigned the locus of political legitimacy. Through a comparison of three defining moments of historical rupture for Kazakh society, this chapter investigates over a long period of time how political authority evolved and changed hands. It will thus analyse the effects induced by the colonial presence in the Kazakh steppes and their consequences for the means of resistance used by the nomadic population until its eventual forced sedentarisation during the collectivisation period.

Kenesary Kasymov and the last war of the Kazakh khans (1837–1847)

Kenesary Kasymov’s (1802–1847) war against the Tsar was waged several decades after the assertion of Russian sovereignty over the Kazakhs in the northern steppes.¹⁴ The khans of the middle and junior *zhuz* had made nominal submission to Russia by the mid-eighteenth century. However, the Kazakhs and the Russians had a different understanding of what this implied.¹⁵ To the Kazakhs, it was an alliance on broadly equal terms, which was not supposed to entail administrative integration to the Russian Empire. It was a move in the political game played by Kazakh *töre* lines, serving internal designs and used to achieve a balance of power between several Central Asian political entities: the Kazakh steppe, the Junggar confederation (until its destruction by the Qing in 1755), the khanate of Khiva, the khanate of Khoqand and the emirate of Bukhara.

The slow Russian penetration, which accelerated in the nineteenth century, brought to the Kazakhs profound challenging changes. The various *töre* lines were constantly negotiating with the tsarist authorities with a view to strengthen their power on the steppes. While still collaborating, they would also use armed conflict as a strategic tool to pressure

the authorities into shelving unwelcome measures or promoting their interests. Kenesary Kasymov’s actions against the Tsar between 1837 and 1847 are the perfect illustration of this ambivalence. Military operations were interspersed with lengthy peace talks during which Kenesary claimed he submitted to the will of the Tsar.

Kenesary’s endeavours can be considered as a continuum of struggles, which started in the 1820s with the last Khan of the middle *zhuz*, Gubaidullah (1770–1852) and then with his own father, Kasym (1756–1840) – both were sons of Ablai khan (1711–1781), the last Khan to have ruled over the three Kazakh *zhuz*. The 1822 Statute on *inorodtsy* and the building of Cossack forts and administrative centres (*prikazy*) in the Kazakh steppes marked a clear dispossession of the Khan’s sovereignty over the nomadic population.¹⁶ The Kazakhs were never consulted on these changes. Several *töre* balked at this loss of authority. They tried to force Russia to recognise the legitimacy of their power over the Kazakhs and, at the same time, to preserve their territorial integrity.

Kenesary’s war was more significant and had a greater impact than his predecessors’ rebellions. This came as much from his personality as from a pervading atmosphere of latent insurgency in the junior *zhuz*.¹⁷ This is illustrated in a legend reported in the Kazakh press in the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁸ Kenesary was famous for his heroism and the leadership skills he had honed over the many years spent under the command of his father and elder brother, Sarzhan (?–1836). Like them, Kenesary constantly referred to his birth rights as a descendant of Ablai khan. He considered himself a legitimate heir to power and refused to be robbed of it by the Russians. He particularly took issue with the abolition of the title of khan, enacted in 1822. Ideologically, his discourse hinged on the authority of the Kazakh khans and, more specifically, on Chinggisid legitimacy. There was no religious element in his demands: except for a Tatar mullah at his side, none of the main protagonists in this revolt had any religious status. He did not call for *ghazavat* (holy war) either, a strategy often used in the Caucasus and Central Asia to mobilise the people against the Russian authorities.

In his first letter sent to the Governor-General of Western Siberia, Kenesary promised to “free the Kirgiz [*sic*] from the Russian yoke, since all Kirgiz were his people by the law conferred by his grandfather Ablai khan”.¹⁹ Kenesary wanted to preserve a specifically Kazakh dominion, where he would have unified all of the populace. He was not, however, disputing the Russian sovereignty *de jure*, but he wanted Russia to refrain from intervening in the administration of the Kazakh population and to recognise his full authority over the steppes. The khanate model was also used by Kyrgyz and Turkmen trying to federate their peoples and to increase their political weight in a Central Asia marked by an era of conflicts and conquests.²⁰

The war began in 1838 with Kenesary's attack on a Russian caravan but was preceded by two events in 1837. The tsarist authorities imposed a tax on Kazakh households and inaugurated the defensive line connecting Akmolinsk to Kokshetau, on Kenesary's territory. On top of his project to reinstate the Kazakh khanate, Kenesary's claims against land expropriation and tax collection found an echo in numerous lineages. In one of his letters to the Governor-General of Siberia he wrote:

I have the honour to inform you of my desire for both of our peoples (*vladenii narod*) to live in peace. You claim I am commandeering your subjects, but I would say that, on the contrary, you are building a regional *divan*²¹ on the lands we inherited from our grand-father, Khan Ablai, and you are collecting taxes from the Kirgiz. Therefore, you are oppressing them.²²

The attacks were thus justified as protest against Russian interference in two sovereign domains: the control over territory and tax collection.

Kenesary sent emissaries to enlist tribal elites in his fight against the Russian authorities. He managed to federate Kazakhs beyond the Arghyn, Kerei and Uaq lineages of the middle *zhuz*, under his authority in the Kokshetau and Akmolinsk regions.²³ The territories involved in the insurgency spread to the Torghai region and the western part of what would later be Semipalatinsk province and then reached the territories in Semirech'e and the Syr-Darya valley claimed by Khoqand. Kenesary struck alliances with the Alimuly (Shomekei, Shekti and Tortqara) and Zhetyru (Tabyn, Tama and Zhaghalbaily) lineages, from the junior *zhuz*. They joined the fight after spectacular battles – one ended with the destruction of the Akmolinsk *prikaz* at the beginning of summer 1838. Qipchaq lineages of the middle *zhuz* also joined in large numbers after savage repression by Russian Cossack forces in autumn 1838. Most of the Baiuly tribe from the junior *zhuz*, located in the western part of modern Kazakhstan, and of the Naiman tribe of the middle *zhuz* in the east, did not participate. Prominent Arghyn lineages also refused to join or only very briefly engaged in combat. The two reasons for this lay in the Russians' military might and the advantages these lineages enjoyed from their collaboration with the tsarist authorities. Ahmet Kenesarin, one of Kenesary's sons, relayed the declaration from the Kazakh tribal elites, explaining their reluctance to stand at Kenesary's side:

Russia is a powerful State. We cannot rise up now and nomadise with you (Kenesary), furthermore, our people would not be able to join you as the territory between Russia and Khoqand is too small to settle into. This is why, as long as you have not gained strength, we shall remain Russian subjects, we shall however pay the *zakat* [tax on livestock] to support you.²⁴

Kenesary ruled with the help of a *qurultai* (council or assembly), made of prominent *batyrs* (heroes) and *biis* (political leaders and judges) who represented the lineages rallied to his cause. The *batyrs*, many of whom had already successfully participated in confrontations with the Russian authorities, were a driving force in bringing in lineages. They then took military command and, as such, became the second major actors of the war after the Khan. One of them, *batyr* Iman (1780–1847) from the Qipchaq tribe, joined Kenesary in 1839 and his whole Beimbet lineage followed suit. Born from a line of *batyrs* who had fought the Junghars, he became one of Kenesary’s closest lieutenants. He participated in his retreat to the south and was killed with him, not far away from the modern town of Toqmaq, in Kyrgyzstan.

Surrounded by his *qurultai* and intent on increasing his legitimacy and power in the steppes, Kenesary was elected Khan in autumn 1841. He tried to get his status and title recognised by the Empires of China and Russia and regional leaders, except for the khanate of Khoqand. After his father was assassinated in 1840, Kenesary had broken off contact with Khoqand and was launching expeditions against their positions. At the same time, he was building closer relations with the khanate of Khiva, where his support was sought in a fight against the emirate of Bukhara and, with Bukhara itself, as the emirate was also at war with Khoqand. The Emir was in fact the only one to officially recognise Kenesary’s title of Khan of the Kazakhs.²⁵ The Russians refused to do so, but the years 1841–1843 were marked by peace talks. These diplomatic relations were all the more essential now that Kenesary was in need of weapons. Aside from the spoils of war, all weapons (rifles and sabres) and ammunition were provided chiefly by the emirate of Bukhara and, to a lesser extent by the khanate of Khiva.

Kenesary targeted the symbols of the Russian presence and the expansion of the khanate of Khoqand in the Kazakh steppes. Attacks were led against Russian forts and institutions and against cities under Khoqandi control. However, the greater part of the military operations consisted in holding caravans to ransom, taking prisoners and livestock. Punitive raids were planned against Kazakh lineages who had refused to recognise Kenesary’s authority or to pay *zakat*. Refusal to form an alliance with Kenesary was considered an act of treason to the Khan. Kenesary also led several attacks against the *töres* who had refused to join the war or collaborated with the Russians.²⁶ According to the military authorities’ estimates, Kenesary’s forces had about 20,000 combatants, known as *jigits*, and the potential for mobilisation from the tribes of the middle and junior *zhuzes* was about 50,000 men.²⁷ However, the number of Kazakhs participating in the conflict fluctuated greatly over the decade the war lasted. In the first years, many lineages pledged their support, but in the face of increasing Russian military pressure, some disengaged

over time. Kenesary was rapidly forced to leave his lands and seek refuge on the Torg'ai plateau, which then became the core of a territory he would control over many years. His main support came from Qipchaq lineages, and, to a lesser extent, from the Shomekei, Tortqara and Tabyn lineages.²⁸ After 1845, he was forced to retreat to Semirech'e, where he was murdered by Kyrgyz attackers in 1847. Kenesary thought the Kyrgyz were bound to recognise the authority conferred by his status of Khan.²⁹ They refused, considering he was pillaging: "The Kenen khan [Kenesary] came to plunder the Kyrgyz, to slaughter them and steal their livestock, their goods and their orphans."³⁰

The Russians viewed Kenesary and his troops as bandits and many descriptions insist on the looting of caravans and capture of livestock, labelled as *barymta* or cattle-stealing. This image of criminality coexisted with a very contrasting portrait in songs and tales. In a Kazakh song dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century and collected in 1918, Kenesary is depicted as a defender of the people: "the steppe breathed red fires: the steppe was burning with revenge and war, not a single *jatak*³¹ committed treason, only the wealthy, used to selling out, had to bear the brunt of Kenesary's actions."³² Another example, from a tale, has more laudatory undertones: "Kenesary, who was khan, always collected laurels, from all three *zhuzes*, his name rose high in the sky, Kene's miracles were many, my life is dedicated to you."³³

Kenesary Kasymov's war was the last widespread Kazakh mobilisation against Russian domination until the 1916 revolt. The memory of these events was kept alive in oral tradition, through tales and songs,³⁴ legends and stories told with genealogies, like the many battles against the Junghars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It featured strongly in the genealogies of lineages who had taken an active part in the war.

Khan and *batyr*: two political figures undergoing a change of perception

Following Kenesary's failure to rebuild Kazakh khal authority, the Russian authorities sought to further integrate the steppes and the Imperial legal system gradually transformed the whole political landscape through the implementation of new statutes. Between 1822 and 1845, with the abolition of the title of khan, the Kazakhs were progressively deprived of a unifying figure and, compelled to rethink and redefine the idea of community. This also affected the *töre's* specific status. Political power among the Kazakhs previously resulted from the relations and balance of power between the khans and the tribal elites and from a khan's capability to assert his authority. The *töre* were stripped from their

privileges³⁵ by the Tsar’s policy on Kazakh administration, especially the regulations of 1867 and 1868, which weakened their position within Kazakh society.³⁶

The policy of the colonial regime towards the *inorodtsy* led to the advent of two categories of public figures who transformed the Kazakh political landscape: one emerged through elective office (*volost’* administrators, elders (*stareishiny*) and *biis*³⁷) and the others were Kazakhs educated in Russian institutions and referred to as the *intelligentsia*. After the 1867–1868 reforms, the highest level of representation available to the Kazakh population was at the *volost’* level.³⁸ The political life of tribal lineages was marked by an increasing focus on the balance of power within these *volosts*, which acted as a centrifugal force on the *zhuzes* and tribes as political entities. The Kazakhs did not question the *volost’* as an institution and some lineage-based groups sought to obtain the creation of new *volosts*, where they could hold a majority and play a political role with respect to the colonial power. After 1917, the constitution of Kazakh governing bodies also followed the Imperial administrative division of the land. The tsarist era was characterised by the interaction between a pre-colonial Kazakh model and the colonial administrative legislation, which resulted, among others, in a political fragmentation of the Kazakhs. In the absence of research on this topic, it is difficult to determine what the balance of power between the two had become since the mid-nineteenth century in Kazakh society.

This situation finds an illustration in the strong ambivalence that characterised the activities of elected “native” administrators. The *volost’* administrators were frequently denounced and even removed from office by the tsarist authorities for their refusal to collect taxes and for many forms of passive resistance. This reluctance to accept Russian governance, of which they were an offshoot, came with a desire to perpetuate former practices, including *barymta*, of which they were the principal instigators. On the other hand, the duties of their office and rampant corruption in the colonial administration put them on the frontline of popular discontent.³⁹ The second category, the *intelligentsia*, civil servants working in the district and provincial administrations (interpreters, secretaries, etc.), but also new figures in the Kazakh political sphere who were the product of Russian acculturation (teachers, lawyers, doctors and publicists) played an increasing role. Their political view was not shaped by practices in place prior to the Russian colonisation. They considered tribal boundaries to be an obstacle to a unified Kazakh political future. They absolutely did not want to recreate a Kazakh khanate. The figure of the khan did not correspond to the progressive forms of politics of the early twentieth century, even if it remained a reference.⁴⁰ After the 1905 revolution, the Kazakh *intelligentsia* enjoyed an increasing influence and gained prominence through legalist political actions, aimed at defending

the Kazakhs against arbitrary decisions and the consequences of colonisation and at making the tsarist regime take heed of their claims. The intelligentsia did not base their model for action on violence, which they knew was bound to fail. Therefore, they did not take part in the revolts, even if some may have approved of them.

Yet, this did not mark the end of the violence resulting from power struggles between lineages and of movements of protest against the colonial administration's decisions. However, they were now deemed illegal. They became partially marginalised, while maintaining their pre-Russian prestige. The status of *batyr* evolved, and his range of action was reassessed. Initially, this status was bestowed after acts of heroism, such as successful attacks or feats in defending relatives (mostly from one's lineage or, in some occasions, one's tribe or the whole Kazakh people) against an enemy.⁴¹ The integration of the Kazakh people into the Imperial administrative and legal systems, as well as the exemption of *inorodtsy* from military service minimised the chances of a *batyr* revealing himself. The *batyr* was turned into a *barymtashy*, a person who would steal livestock as revenge, which paved the way for the emergence of the "social bandit". As Eric Hobsbawm theorised in *Bandits*:

Social bandits are peasant outlaws whom the Lord and State regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders for liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported.⁴²

Kazakhs who successfully managed and mastered cattle-stealing (*barymta*) became *barymtashy*. The *barymta* would intervene in the regulation of conflicts opposing lineages or tribes and was even a major tool for resolution. The Imperial authorities did not recognise this social function and viewed it as thievery, a prosecutable and punishable offence.⁴³ The confusion around what *barymta* entailed lasted until the Soviet period and was instrumental to struggles over power and place among the Kazakhs.⁴⁴ The *barymtashy* played an important part in the power struggles between lineages and in the various forms of resistance against the colonial administration. They could interact with Kazakh *volost'* administrators but could also be in open conflict with them. In the same way, their actions could be viewed as banditry or become a source of prestige if they were aimed at counteracting an action or decision considered unfair.⁴⁵

For instance, at the end of the nineteenth century, *barymtashy* Rysqul, the father of Turar Rysqulov, one of the leading Kazakh Bolshevik leaders, was invited to settle in his district by a *volost'* administrator who wanted to benefit from his talents. A conflict later ensued and Rysqul murdered

the *volost*’ administrator. It led him to his death during exile to Siberia. His celebrity was widely advertised in many legends and stories, where this episode was depicted as an act of resistance against the oppression of a native official.⁴⁶

The shift from *batyr* to *barymtashy* was already perceptible in local uprisings resulting from the 1868 statutes and the creation of the Governorate-General of Turkestan and the steppes. Bakhytzhan Qarataev (1863–1934), a Kazakh lawyer and political leader thus described the birth of the movement: “The turmoil caused by the Kazakhs’ rejection of the new reform translated into the formation of *barymtashy* gangs, who then gathered forces into substantial, well-armed groups, each with their own leader”.⁴⁷ As opposed to the previous revolts, where the *batyr* was the driving force, this time, it was the *barymtashy*. Violence resulted from the implementation of new laws, injustice or the corruption of the native and Russian administrations. Armed opposition forces were finding it hard to express a clear political project and building a national state was no longer the protest’s political horizon.

As the revolt was taking shape, the figures of the khan and the *batyr* were re-emerging. Qarataev’s description continues with a quote from a witness to the 1869 revolt in the Ural’sk region:

First, the participants threw their hats at the feet of *batyr* Sengirad and asked him to become their khan, but he refused and explained that he would follow the path of his *batyr* ancestors and that he was ready to lead his *jigits* to battle. For him, this was enough. [...] The participants then threw their hats at the feet of *bai* Shemish. He too declined, stating that [...], just like his rich ancestors, he preferred to give horses, clothes and food to the combatants. [...] Finally, the participants threw their hats at the feet of Berkin Syrymov shouting that he was the illustrious Syrym’s⁴⁸ great-grand son and it would be a shame for him to refuse to be their khan while the Tsar was threatening to rob the Kazakhs of their lands and Russify them, and when the Baibaqty and Tana [two lineages of the Baiuly from the junior *zhuz*] needed a leader in order to fight. Berkin Syrymov sweated profusely, not knowing what to do. The participants shouted for him to raise his hands for prayer as a sign of consent. Berkin raised his hands, a prayer on his lips and was made khan of these two Kazakh lineages.⁴⁹

Every Kazakh revolt was organised according to the same notional model of an overarching khan, and a *batyr* assuming command of battle, but these figures and the role they played in the course of the war were increasingly muddled by Russian colonisation. Kazakh society was progressively freeing itself from the influence of *töre* lineages on the political, social and economic levels and was also gaining empowerment during these movements of resistance.⁵⁰ Even though the reluctance to accept

the title of khan demonstrates the symbolic legitimacy of the Chinggisid lineage, no revolt after 1867 was ever led by a *töre*, aside from one known exception.⁵¹ In their absence, the position and title were given to an influential member of the rebel lineage, by conjuring up a glorious ancestor who had shone in battle against the Russians.

What could be called the *habitus* of the *batyr* and *bii* – personal characteristics attached to their social position and role – had a tendency to be reproduced in each line, as defined by the *zheti ata*.⁵² The prestige inherited by their descendants commanded the apparition of a new *batyr* and *bii* among them. It was their duty to carry on the legacy and show their worthiness to their line and lineage. Historical events (the Junghar wars, Kenesary, etc.), memorialised in the genealogies, served as an essential tool in securing the legitimacy of resistance. They determined the position of an individual within his lineage and established the political order of lineages. These memories, however, were not completely fixed; they were pliable according to the context. The evolution of their role in nineteenth-century Kazakh society raises several questions. Was one's eligibility for *volost'* administration dependent on one's position within the lineage and on the balance of power between lineages? Could one's election lead to the creation of new historical memories within the lineage? Were these new memories superseded by the authority vested in a political career in the tsarist, and then Soviet, administration?

Between 1848 and 1916, there were two coexisting modes of ideology and political action. One was based on pre-colonial practices, specific to the tribal structure of the Kazakh social world, but these were already undergoing change. The other borrowed ideas of progress and modernity from the Russian, Ottoman and British Empires. In the first case, the political subject remained the lineage or the tribe, but in the other it was the nation. The Kazakhs had two alternatives when dealing with the Russian authorities: collaboration and the adoption of Russian regulations – used to defend their rights – or rejection of measures perceived as forced and, as a result, armed conflict.

The 1916 rebellion on the Torghai plateau: friction between the local and the “national”

The 1916 revolt drew on the two politically legitimate figures of pre-colonial armed conflict: the khan and the *batyr*. In this context, historical narratives played an important part, as they embedded the legitimacy of the rebels in a Kazakh political model. This is perfectly illustrated by the example of the Torghai district.

While the uprising against the Tsar's edict of 25 June 1916 – ordering the mass mobilisation of *inorodtsy* – started in the summer in Turkestan

and was brutally quelled in September, the chronology of events was very different in the northern part of the territory, especially in Torghai province, the rebellion’s northern stronghold.⁵³ The summer marked a turbulent time for the steppe, reflecting the concern of its inhabitants and their refusal to comply. Protest was, however, limited to shredding the registration lists and preventing them from being drawn up, which resulted in the mobilisation being postponed to 15 September in the Aktiubinsk and Kustanai districts and to 15 October in the Torghai and Irgiz districts. Only a few *volosts* from the Aktiubinsk and Kustanai districts rebelled in September. Several native civil servants, including some *volost’* administrators, were murdered, revealing the level of tension within the Kazakh population. In the other *volosts*, tribal elites and the intelligentsia succeeded in mollifying the nascent rebellious sentiment. An *aqsaqal* (an elder, a figure of authority in an *aul*) from an Arghyn *volost’* intervened to ease the tensions:

this is the worst time to rise against the tsarist authorities. If soldiers in the 1840s were merely armed with flintlock rifles [...] the Tsar’s army is now equipped with rifles, machine guns and cannons, the Kazakhs have none of those and even their warlike spirit has receded.⁵⁴

The authorities came down hard on them and a punitive strike at the end of September put an end to attempts at rebellion. The mobilisation started as early as October–November, but many Kazakhs chose to go and work in the province’s mines in order to be exempted.

However, in the province’s two other districts (Irgiz and Torghai), in October, neither the young Kazakhs, nor the majority of the *volost’* administrators, attended the planned days of mobilisation. Three *volost’* administrators in the Irgiz district – who were Kazakhs – were beaten up by rebel groups on the eve of 15 October, while they were trying to draw up the conscription lists.⁵⁵ In the Torghai district, the *volost’* administrators abstained from executing the official orders. The rebellion, which had been festering since the summer, broke out in both districts. The situation was more favourable to an uprising than in Aktiubinsk and Kustanai, as the Russian presence was not as marked and the garrisons were further apart. The Torghai district was particularly isolated from lines of communication. *Barymtashy* launched attacks against Russian outposts, cutting telegraph lines, plundering villages and official buildings. There were several skirmishes between the rebels, who had control over the roads, and the Cossacks.

In the Torghai district, the rebellion was dominated by the Qipchaq lineages who had already supported Kenesary’s revolt in the first half of the nineteenth century. In November, these lineages elected Abdigapar Zhanbosynov (1870–1919) as their Khan. He was a descendant of the

famous *batyr* Tleuly (1695–1760) and of *bii* Niyaz (1735–1783), who had been raised by Ablai-khan to the rank of sultan (a title reserved to the *töre*).⁵⁶ Zhanbosynov could draw on his illustrious ancestors' legacy to lead the rebellion, even if he didn't belong to the *töre* order. He was the face of enduring resistance to the Russian authorities. Some legends place *bii* Niyaz at Kenesary's side,⁵⁷ situating him in a more recent event by virtue of historical memory, and associating him to a political figure more in tune with the 1916 rebellion. Zhanbosynov's line was greatly influential in local politics. His father, Zhanbosyn (1847–1895) had been the *volost'* administrator for many years, and so were he and his brother Sadman (1888–1930). Each served one term, but both failed to return to office in the last elections before 1916. He was also known as a *barymtashy*.

Even if Abdigapar was named Khan by the population and kept being identified as such in collective memory and in a large part of the historiography, he preferred to call himself an Amir. This choice can be explained by his search for another kind of legitimacy that came from the religious charge attached to this title and the influence of the emirate of Bukhara. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Islamic influence in the public and political spheres of the Kazakh society had increased, especially that of Kazakh *ishans* and their disciples. Abdigapar, well-known for his piety, was close to Murza and Faizullah Satybaldin, sons of *ishan* Satybaldy (1826–1898), a holy figure of the Torghai region, who was from Batpakar, like Zhanbosynov's line.⁵⁸ His mausoleum had become a place of pilgrimage and his sons had taken over as local religious leaders. If *a posteriori* a call to *ghazavat*, or more specifically to its Kazakh equivalent, the *qazattyq*, was mentioned in some testimonies, neither Zhanbosynov nor the other leaders of the rebellion in the Torghai region made reference to it. Religion was only mentioned in passing and there was no allusion to an Islamic state. There are as many tales of imams using Islam to encourage obedience to the Tsar as there are of imams calling for rebellion.⁵⁹

Zhanbosynov's choice of the title of Amir was in fact an exception. It was more the rule to designate oneself khan in the Torghai region in 1916 and there were at least ten of them. Their authority remained local and temporary. As Tomohiko Uyama has noted, the khan only had real power over his own lineage.⁶⁰ Apart from Zhanbosynov, two other khans were prominent during the rebellion. A part of the Arghyn lineage in the Torghai district elected their own khan: Ospan Sholakov (1854–1930), a descendant of *batyr* Janibek (1693–1753), who was the first Kazakh *tarkhan*:⁶¹ “not only his ancestors, but also his courage spoke for him.”⁶² In conflict with his *volost'* administrator, during the summer, he seized the mobilisation list that the latter was refusing to destroy. The Shomekei lineages in the Irgiz district did the same when they chose Aizharkyn Qanaev (1855–1930), the Kendzhegary *volost'* deputy administrator.

Even though historiography sometimes mentions a Qipchaq or Arghyn khanate when referring to them, these elections were not driven by a desire to re-establish pre-colonial ideas of Kazakh khanal sovereignty. Beyond the rejection of the Tsar’s edict, the struggle’s political endgame was ill-defined and seemed beyond the rebels’ control. Unlike Kenesary’s project, there was no ideological speech from the rebels outlining the idea of building a state. The rebels used Kazakh political institutions and the figure of the khan as defender of the Kazakh people to secure their legitimacy. The nature of the khan’s election as a unifying institution for Kazakh tribes was altered by the choice of candidates on the one hand, and its political value on the other. Coming from the tribe who had elected them, none of the three khans mentioned belonged to the *töre* order. The Kazakh unitary political entity could no longer be incarnated by a khan who had become a mere rebel lineage leader, and these local khans did not pretend they were representing the whole Kazakh population.

In the same way as before, the figures of khan and *batyr* working in pairs were used by the rebels: Amangeldi Imanov (1873–1919) stood behind Amir Abdigapar as his military leader and *batyr*. He was a descendant of Iman Batyr (1780–1847), a close lieutenant of Kenesary Kasymov. Like his ancestor and his father Uderbai (1829–1879), Amangeldi Imanov had become a prominent figure in the Torghai district and was known in the whole province. A distinguished *barymtashy* and hunter, he had garnered fame for his actions against the Russians before 1916 and his political activities during the election of *volost’* administrator. Kharlampovich, who compiled oral testimonies for his retelling of the rebellion published in 1926 wrote: “Amangeldi was raised to this position as he was a fine shot and, more importantly, had a well-established and well-deserved reputation for *barymtashy*, recklessness, and because no fight nor raid could have taken place without him in the *volost’*.”⁶³ He was arrested many times but always managed to escape deportation thanks to the support of his people and Kazakh civil servants. He was always accompanied by Qipchaq *jigits* and sufficiently empowered to oppose the *volost’* administrators and refuse to obey the arbitrary decisions of the Russian local authorities. He carefully cultivated an image of defender of the weaker lineages and of the Kazakh people against the colonial administration, as shown by the many legends about him passed on orally over the years.⁶⁴ In 1916, in order to assert his status as *batyr*, he gave up his last name, Uderbaev, to take Imanov in honour of his illustrious ancestor.⁶⁵ He was only able to claim the title of *batyr* during the 1916 rebellion, and not for his previous feats.

In the Torghai and Irgiz district, the rebels amounted to up to 15,000 men,⁶⁶ called *jigits* but also *sarbaz*,⁶⁷ but such an impressive assembly was

very rare. The troops, more or less stabilised and organised according to the usual model in groups of tens or hundreds – a quasi-military organisation activated during relatively significant mobilisations⁶⁸ – were not as big: Kanaev had around 2,500 men, Ospanov had 3,000 and Zhanbosynov had 3,500. Outside the *volost'* under the three khans' control, smaller groups of insurgents coming in various shapes and sizes had also formed. The number of Kazakhs who could potentially join the ranks of the rebellion amounted to about 50,000 men for the Torghai province, which corresponds to a tenth of its population.⁶⁹

In November–December 1916, the rebel groups representing the Qipchaq, Arghyn and Shomekei lineages joined forces during the attack and the siege of the city of Torghai. During these events, Zhanbosynov's authority was recognised by the other khans. The assault led by Amangeldi Imanov resulted in the destruction of institutions reflecting the Russian presence (buildings, infrastructures and villages) and the capture of livestock. They had much less fire-power than Kenesary's *jigits*, with only 200 rifles for their whole force, while the Cossacks and their troops were much better equipped. Losses on the battlefield reveal the extent of the discrepancy: there was one Cossack fatality for several dozens of Kazakhs, sometimes hundreds. The rebellion did not receive deliveries of weapons from either the khanate of Khiva or the emirate of Bukhara and their seizures from the enemy were too small. Alibi Zhangil'din (1884–1954), a Qipchaq from the Torghai district who was a close ally of Imanov, and the first Bolshevik Kazakh, went to Bukhara at the beginning of February 1917 to try to buy weapons.⁷⁰

The uprising of two districts of Torghai province was criticised in *Qazaq*, the only Kazakh newspaper circulating throughout the steppes. An article written by a collective of the province's Kazakh *intelligentsia* called for the rebellion to stop and for the acceptance of the mobilisation.⁷¹ Describing the bloodshed in Turkestan following the repression against the rebels at the end of summer 1916, they warned the Torghai insurgents of the fate awaiting them. The might of the Russian military forces was, again, one of the main deterrents. They also argued that the conscripts had satisfactory living conditions and that the fears of the insurgents were not justified. Although some criticism was levelled against the edict and its terms of application, the authors were choosing to collaborate.

For the same reason, in January 1917, Alikhan Bukeikhanov opened an office for *inorodtsy* (*Inorodcheskii otdel*) in the Minsk *zemstvo*, in order to help the Kazakhs and others who had been brought to the western front. He was joined by many young students, school teachers and Kazakh civil servants. The rebellion in the Torghai district inevitably complicated their lives and their relations with the authorities. It did a lot of damage to

the image Bukeikhanov and many of the intelligentsia wanted to convey of well-integrated Kazakh subjects, worthy and deserving of becoming full-fledged citizens. Nobody could imagine then that the demise of the Tsar was so close, and it was therefore essential to differentiate oneself from the rebels and disown their actions. This was a consensus across the intelligentsia, whether they had chosen to become public servants or had developed an anti-colonialist political stance that had put them under pressure from the Russian authorities. Both sides felt that defending the Kazakhs could not be achieved through violence or armed conflict, as it would only lead to failure.

On the eve of the February 1917 revolution, the situation had become critical: only Zhanbosynov's and Imanov's lineages had not laid down their arms. Punitive expeditions had taken their toll on the rebels. Many *auls* had been destroyed, goods confiscated and all gatherings brutally disbanded. There were about 1,000 Kazakh fatalities over December and January. The rebellion was quashed in the Irgiz district in January and Aizharkyn Kanaev was arrested. The Arghyn rebel lineages of the Torghai district had to show submission to the Imperial authority at the end of the same month. Ospan Sholakov surrendered to the authorities and returned an important amount of money he had stolen from a post office. An imminent attack threatened the last rebels who were surrounded by Cossacks. The tsarist authorities had confidently set the mobilisation date in the Torghai and Irgiz district to 15 February and 15 March, depending on the remoteness of the *volost'*. As for Zhanbosynov and Imanov, in desperate positions, they were devising plans for an escape to China or Afghanistan.

The regime change gave an unexpected respite to the last Qipchaq rebels. Pacification operations in the district were suspended and the rebels benefited from an amnesty granted by the Provisional Government on 6 March 1917.⁷² Those who had been arrested were released and there were no executions. The insurgency ended by an edict of the Provisional Government on 14 March 1917. Kazakhs from the Torghai and Irgiz districts were not sent to the front.

Zhanbosynov and Imanov took drastically different routes from the future leaders of the national Kazakh movement, Alikhan Bukeikhanov (1866–1937), Ahmet Baitursynov (1873–1937) or Mirzhakyp Dulatov (1885–1935). Zhanbosynov and Imanov were primarily motivated by tribal and local perspectives, while the others espoused national and unitary concerns. The firsts did not object to the use of force and to acts deemed illegal by the tsarist authorities, while the others were committed to follow a legalist and democratic line. After the 1917 revolution, this distinction became all the more political.⁷³

What was remarkable in the Torghai district, as opposed to the usual models of popular revolt, is that neither Imanov nor Abdigapar

stood against modernisation. Both had opened schools in their *auls* and promoted agriculture and settlement. They had also joined forces with Alibi Zhanġil'din, an essential figure in the creation of the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan. Imanov and Abdigapar joined the Soviets but did not become members of the Communist Party and were killed in 1919 by Kazakhs hostile to the new regime.

The 1929–1931 insurgencies: a *modus operandi* based on the 1916 experience

The adoption of stringent economic policies and increased repression in 1927–1928 marked a turning point, which paved the way for a wave of insurgencies in the Kazakh rural society of the Torghai plateau. In the same way as in 1916, measures implemented by what was perceived as external authorities were deemed unfair and illegitimate. Baikadam Karaldin (1877–1930), who came from the same Qipchaq lineage as Amangeldi Imanov and had been arrested in 1916 for rebellion, described this situation in a letter to Zhanġil'din, where he anticipated the commotion caused by the “de-baiisation” campaign:

as we speak, they are preparing an action to confiscate livestock which will take place in a few days. Before I came to Torghai, I was absolutely not aware of it. There were multiple rumours. [...] the plenipotentiary, who just arrived from the district centre and does not know anybody, will be ill-advised. Local civil-servants and persons of interest, for various reasons, will give him wrong information. As a consequence, people who should not have been affected by the edict will be included in the list of displaced people, just like in 1928–1929, when the article on the agricultural tax came into force.⁷⁴

Indeed, the first riots started after a series of requisitions of agricultural products – livestock, cereals – and a tax increase. In some *auls* of the Batpakkar district, these measures, alongside zealous local tax officials, raised the level of tension to its maximum between summer 1928 and autumn 1929. Over these eighteen months, 188 people were arrested and convicted in extra-judicial judgements for resisting tax collection or the delivery of wheat and livestock.⁷⁵ At the same time, the Soviet authorities launched three campaigns of repression against alleged enemies of the regime: they confiscated goods and displaced several “feudal *bais*”, they tried former members of Alash-Orda and led a crackdown on religion. There was mounting discontent against a form of repression that was political, socioeconomic and religious. This would have strong future implications for the forms of resistance of Kazakh society.

The Soviet administration and Party organs lacked control over Kazakh rural areas, and concerned Soviet authorities claimed that resistance to Sovietisation was the result of a tribal or lineage-based solidarity. They viewed it as a consequence of the persistent influence of the Kazakh elites (*bais*, imams, former tsarist civil servants or Alash-Orda members), whose social rank and political ideas conflicted with the principles promoted by the new regime. They saw proof of this in the election results for the local Soviets, and decided to weaken these elites by taking away their livestock or displacing them. The 1928 elections were postponed to 1929 in order to enable the completion of the displacement of the most powerful lines in 1928.⁷⁶

In February 1929, in the Batpakkar district, a wave of arrests was prompted by the “discovery” of an alleged plot aiming at getting elected candidates sponsored by prominent “*bai*, mullahs or *aqsaqals*”.⁷⁷ The brothers of former Khans Qipchaq Zhanbosynov, Valii Zhalmagambetov (1887–1930) and Sadman Zhanbosynov (1888–1930) were arrested. They had actively participated in the 1916 rebellion and their arrest was very poorly welcomed. So were those of other charismatic local figures: Baikadam Karaldin was put on the list of feudal *bais* and accused of having helped the Cossacks fight the insurgents in 1916, even though he had been arrested and sentenced to death by the Tsar for his participation in the rebellion; Askar Dulatov (1865–1932) (Arghyn), a former *bii* and the elder brother of one of the main members of Alash-Orda, Mirzhakyp Dulatov, saw his belongings confiscated and was arrested as an “enemy of the people”, so were the brothers Murza (1861–1930) and Faizollah Satybaldin (1888–1959).⁷⁸ All were accused of preventing tax collection and the redistribution of agricultural land and of plotting against the Soviet authorities. The Satybaldins were charged with leading the conspiracy and their religious influence was heavily alluded to.⁷⁹

Movements of resistance crystallised in early November 1929, when the administrative centre of the Batpakkar district was taken. Like Kenesary’s destruction of the Akmolinsk *prikaz* in 1838 and the siege of the city of Torghai in November 1916, this exploit sparked an insurgency that spread across the whole Torghai plateau in winter 1929–1930. Between 400 and 500 men from the *auls* of Batpakkar and originating from the Arghyn and Qipchaq tribes gathered together – only fifty were armed – and took over the district’s administrative centre, where they maintained their position for almost a week. They fulfilled their primary objective and freed the prisoners, they then set the administrative buildings on fire and destroyed documents and archives of the Party, the *Prokuratura* (procuracy) and the militia. They held all the representatives of the Soviet authorities hostage and then put up posters listing their demands and shouted slogans condemning the Soviet authorities and the communists, demanding the reinstatement of mosques, the return of all

the displaced *bais* and of the confiscated goods.⁸⁰ They also requested the end of tax collection.

The insurgents came from various backgrounds: there were former and current Soviet civil servants (presidents of the local Soviet executive committees, heads of district militias, former members of local revolutionary committees or *aul* Soviets, etc.), literary figures from Alash-Orda sympathetic to the cause, and rebels from the short-lived Qipchaq “khanate” (formed in 1916). The main political leaders were represented and Omar Barmakov (?–1930) was elected Khan by the insurgents. A well-respected merchant from the Qipchaq tribe, he had taken part in the 1916 rebellion under Zhanbosynov’s lead and had been convicted twice for embezzlement in the 1920s.⁸¹ It seems there was no *batyr* to lead this short insurgency, whose only feat was the capture of the district’s capital.

According to the political police, the insurgents had aimed at raising an army of 1,000 men recruited in groups of fifty in each administrative *aul*.⁸² This type of military organisation relied on experience garnered from 1916 and, as the Kustanai Region Committee’s report shows, the population was calling the new insurgents “*sarbaz*”, a word first used in the region in 1916, that had become widespread in 1929–1930 in place of *jigit*. The Torghai revolt is remarkable because some participants in the 1916 events were still active in 1929–1930. This can be explained by a lack of generational renewal during the thirteen-year interval between the two episodes and by the fact that the memory of the 1916 events was actively maintained. The involvement of the same figures and the references to 1916 were *de facto* a pivotal instrument of mobilisation. Undoubtedly, the *modus operandi* – based on the recruitment of groups from each *aul*, and their military mobilisation – but also the nature of the attacks, belonged to the same repertoires of contention as in 1916. The insurgents targeted representatives of the state, even if they were Kazakhs, in the same way as thirteen years before when they killed and attacked Kazakh *volost’* administrators and *aqsaqals* who had delivered lists of mobilised men.⁸³ As in Kenesary’s war and the 1916 rebellion, the insurgents targeted Kazakh civil servants whose loyalty was to the state more than to their community and who were thus responsible for implementing policies from the central authorities.

Therefore, it is quite telling that the Soviet authorities had a differentiated treatment of the insurgents depending on whether they had been active in 1916. An analysis of the date of birth of participants in the insurrection who were eventually convicted⁸⁴ shows two generational categories: one, by far the biggest, made up of men born between 1850 and 1900 who had participated in or been direct witnesses to the 1916 revolt, and another, made up of younger individuals born between 1900

and 1910. In these partial lists featuring several dozens of names, men from the former generation were systematically sentenced to death (as active rebellion leaders and representatives of the former order), while the younger men were almost all condemned to deportation. Notes in OGPU reports in 1929 and 1939 show the political police paid extra attention to the rebels’ pasts. The Soviet authorities resorted to a tried practice and used a predefined conviction to sentence opponents from diverse political backgrounds, who did not necessarily meet the profile of the charge. The main accusation relied on ties or membership to Alash-Orda, now labelled a bourgeois nationalist movement, but many had never even been members or had strongly opposed it.

Bolstered by popular support, the autumn 1929 insurgency that started with the Batpakkar events had extra sporadic outbursts in various areas of the Torghai and Kustanai regions and ended with a brutal crack-down in November 1929, after less than a month. The insurgents had even less firepower than in 1916 and their troops could not be called an army, as they were too fragmented, fewer numbered and ill-organised. A total of 530 people were convicted, among whom 115 were shot by order of the OGPU troikas.⁸⁵

A political language transformed by the revolt’s religious stakes

This first Torghai uprising set a precedent for the following broader movements of insurgency in the neighbouring region of Irgiz in February 1930 in reaction to the beginning of collectivisation. The resistance started in the districts of Irgiz and Zhetigar – where confiscation from *bais* had been particularly severe in 1928.⁸⁶ Insurgents fleeing the Torghai and Kustanai regions following the repression and other armed groups from the cities of Kustanai, Aktiubinsk, Torghai, Troitsk and Akmolinsk joined the rebellion’s ranks.⁸⁷ They were mainly driven by lack of food and resentment against the ban on the killing of livestock for consumption or sale.⁸⁸ OGPU plenipotentiaries had issued threats of evicting from the district those who refused to participate in the collectivist system “in the same way as *bais* and mullahs”, as only 36 per cent of the Irgiz district had formed *kolkhozes* (collective farms). In addition, they had to grapple with the fateful obligation of shearing their sheep and goats in the middle of winter, in order to meet the plan’s requirement for wool deliveries, and sanctions due to poor harvests and insufficient tax collection.⁸⁹

A parallel can be drawn between these insurrections and the Torghai episodes. The sequence of events started on 26 February 1930, by an act against symbols and representatives of institutional power. Coming from everywhere, the troops surrounded the district centre and peasant villages.⁹⁰ Their leaders were either former participants in the 1916 revolt

or religious figures (*ishans*, *hazrats* and mullahs). They had elected Aizharkyn Kanaev as their leader, who, after his 1916 election, was thus reinstated as Khan.⁹¹

This episode was marked by the increasing use in the mobilisation and political discourse of an element previously rarely mentioned in the Torghai revolt: Islam. Archival documents about these armed rebel movements make many references to Islam when detailing the reasons for insurgency or describing their leaders. The closure and destruction of the region's mosques in 1929 was conducive to the emergence of a religious figure, Mukantai Samatov (1875–1930), who became second in command to Khan Kanaev. A former imam of the Qarasu mosque, he had been educated in one of Bukhara's madrassas and was appointed to take military command of the rebel army, an honour usually bestowed on the bravest *batyr*. Aizharkin Kanaev and Mukantai Samatov's partnership was reminiscent of the traditional khan/*batyr* pair who, in this case, represented the Bozgul lineage, the most prominent in the Shomekei tribe. Together, they succeeded in raising more than 700 men, going from *aul* to *aul* to recruit in public meetings, calling for insurgency, using the term *ghazavat*.⁹² After several incursions, the insurgents were unsuccessful in their effort to take over the hamlet of Irgiz on 20 March 1930; they were defeated on the following day by the 8th division of the Red Army's cavalry – where Slavs made up 85 per cent of the troops. Their ethnic composition made them as alien in the eyes of the Kazakhs as the Tsar's military forces had been in their time. Kanaev and Samatov were killed in action.

The resistance was revived by a new group of rebels from the Toqa lineage (Shomekei tribe), led by Tomenbai Nurlybaev (?–1930), who was elected khan, and his advisor *ishan* Isatai Satybaldin (?–1930; no relation of Murza and Faizullah Satybaldin). The rebels who were to the south of Irgiz led an attack on 23 March and were crushed a week later, due to insufficient fire power.⁹³ A similar fate befell *ishan* Zhumagazy Baimbetov (1874–1931) who led another rebel group at the end of March. If some mullahs and *ishans* had been in the background of the 1916 rebellion, documents from the OGPU show that there were more of them in the 1929–1930 insurgency. Yet, this information should be treated with caution. As Niccolò Pianciola has indicated in his article on the Suzaq rebellion in 1930 (a region in the south of modern Kazakhstan), OGPU reports were ideologically more prone to accentuate the role of religious figures in order to justify the repression. References to the involvement of mullahs and *ishans* and to religious demands in 1929–1939 might in fact stem from a bias of the Soviet authorities.⁹⁴

The final report from the Kazakh section of the OGPU shows that about 2,500 people⁹⁵ were involved in the Irgiz insurgency, which ended with 300 rebel fatalities and the escape of most of the others.⁹⁶ After the

rebellion was quashed, the combatants dispersed and joined the gangs hiding in the Qara-Qum desert near the Aral Sea.⁹⁷ This first led to increasing skirmishes in the area and then to the emergence of a new insurgency. The combatants had joined other groups originating from southern areas like Suzaq and Qizil Orda, where the rebellion had also been crushed. In an area filled with places of worship and holy sites of Islam, religion was assuredly a core element of mobilisation. Therefore, the dissemination of the religious message most likely benefited from the movement of combatants between both sites of resistance – the Torghai plateau and the Suzaq region. Afghanistan occupied, in the Kazakh geo-political perspective, the role formerly played by the emirate of Bukhara.

The rise of the modern state as a condition for the revolt’s “primitivisation”

The primitive revolt as defined by Hobsbawm in his essay on “primitive rebels”⁹⁸ is a series of social protests with the same central feature: “social banditry”. It can lead to peasant revolutions, like in Mexico, where rural banditry played a major part in the revolutionary dynamics. Hobsbawm makes a distinction between the “social bandits” and the “ordinary bandits”, who are plain criminals. The social bandit was recognised and supported by the rural community as an authentic repository of the primitive revolt; these peasant outlaws were viewed by their peers as avengers fighting for justice and the rights of the oppressed, attacking detested external authorities guilty of imposing their will and control over the population. The ordinary bandit was a misfit, uprooted from his/her community, whose actions were rejected by society.

The Marxist historian’s interpretative model, if strictly applied to our case study, has limits. Indeed, Hobsbawm looks at social banditry or primitive rebellion within the framework of a history of capitalism from the beginning of the modern era to the beginning of the nineteenth century in the West European world and its (ex-)colonies, leaving aside the Russian space. Yet, the chronology of events he chose for his thesis corresponds to the rise of the modern state, defined by Michel Foucault as a sophisticated mechanism of governance and social engineering. The history of primitive revolt and social banditry in the Kazakh steppes is only of meaningful significance if it is compared to a history of power, marked by the desire of the Imperial, and then Soviet, state to secure increased control over societies and territories, a state bent on limiting or even eradicating autonomous marginal figures and very mindful of the borderlands and edges of its territory. Therefore, elements of governance such as institutional justice, taxation, civil and military administration of the territories and the creation of a constitutional body for non-Russian

representatives of the state seem to form the conditions presiding over the emergence of a primitive revolt. The modern state in its tsarist and then Soviet form was confronted by revolts as soon as it was perceived to be “predatory” or as negating the rights of the Kazakh community: abolition of the title of khan, attempted control over pastureland, creation of taxes and partition of the steppe by administrative divisions, change of status for political figures, mobilisation of men and agricultural goods in 1916, deportation of members of the local elites, large-scale confiscation and collectivisation in the 1930s.

In rural areas, the waning influence of political structures and practices and the disintegration of the social fabric and former economic operating modes accelerated in 1928–1932. Therefore, as the grip of the modern state on the Kazakhs grew stronger, the resistance became more primitive: the “traditional” society in which historically potent political tools had been rendered useless no longer had the ability to formulate a political project going beyond a reactionary revolt against changes and measures that were branded illegitimate and unfair.

Kazakh society was indeed increasingly drained of its institutions and denied an ideological future. A new colonial system of governance was imposed as a superseding political structure, whose integrating requirements were at the core of Kenesary’s reasons for rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century. More than fifty years later, the 1916 revolt used it as a symbol, but rather than requesting political autonomy on the basis of norms associated with the Khan’s power, the rebels fought the state as a constraining body forcing upon them conscription and contributions in kind. The rebellion was only defined by protest and violence as radical tools of negotiation. The rebels targeted civil servants who were loyal to the official authorities and refused to join the Kazakh intelligentsia in the search for a compromise with the Russian authorities.

Our analysis differs from research by Tomohiko Uyama and Niccolò Pianciola, as they see in the 1916 rebellion the attributes of a state for Uyama and a quasi-state for Pianciola, which he also calls “micro-state characteristics”. Pianciola also interprets the 1929–1930 insurgency in the same way. Uyama’s argument lies chiefly with the election of khans, which he describes as an action “directed at forming a State”, while recognising that this intention was not expressed in the political discourse. However, we argue that the figure of the khan underwent a transformation during the revolts, and became dissociated from the form of state that was the khanate. Pianciola argues that there was “the presence of an alternative idea of State and of legal order”, that is to say of specific practices (the organisation of a revolt through the election of a khan, the implementation of a commanding structure and the application of local conscription and taxation) and the use of administrative frameworks

inherited from the tsarist era (what he calls “the authority networks” – *volost’* administrators). The use of Kazakh symbolic political figures and the reproduction of some traditional practices to organise the revolts were not accompanied, however, by a state-oriented discourse. They were more meant to ease the transmission of modes of resistance and to confer legitimacy to the revolts. The opponents of the 1916 rebellion, future members of Alash-Orda, were the ones who developed the idea of political autonomy for the Kazakhs and envisioned the building of a state, to which many former rebels would come to adhere.

Conclusion

The study of the 1916 revolt in a long-term perspective highlights how decisive the armed movements opposing the Russian colonisation and then Sovietisation were in reconfiguring Kazakh society’s political landscape. The successive revolts that spanned over a century relied on a political language and an organisation predating colonisation. In 1916, they became inadequate in many regards. They were insufficient to structure the movement in a sustainable manner and paled in comparison to the new dominant forces of governance and political practices driven by the modernity of the Imperial and then Soviet state and a Kazakh intellectual elite that had distanced itself from a lineage-based structure and the khanate model. This process is one of “primitivisation”; the revolt, rising from the bottom, was no longer driven by a concrete political project and did not succeed in regaining political traction in the face of new dominant references. It became primitive in Eric Hobsbawm’s sense of the term. Under this configuration, the revolt still found resonance with other political dynamics, as it was at the core of society’s concerns, but the imaginary it projected seemed out of touch compared to the powerful modern state. Therefore, the primitive revolt marks the end of a process of decline and should not be reduced to a product of social and political marginalisation, resulting from a lack of access for a segment of society to means of political expression. In Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of banditry, the peasants have long been under the yoke of feudal lords and cannot project themselves into a political future. In the Kazakh steppe we are dealing with a society recently deprived of its institutions and trying to adapt and rehabilitate them. It failed in enforcing an ideology rendered obsolete by the colonial change, and lost out to the embodiment of modernity found in national and progressive statist ideologies. Yet a pressing need for ideological renewal came with raising awareness of the degradation affecting the institutions inherited from the Kazakh khanate. This renewal was marked in particular by the penetration of Islam in the discourse and among the active participants in the 1916 revolt, and more

importantly in the 1930s, without triggering any change to the *modus operandi*. Unlike Hobsbawm's model, these revolts were not part of the revolutionary process, even though they seemed to accompany it during the initial phase between 1917 and 1920. Zhanbosynov, Amangeldi Imanov and Karaldin backed the Soviets and occupied prominent positions in the Soviet administration, but they did not become members of the Bolshevik Party. Those who survived the civil war kept to their region and local activities after 1920. Keeping to the local community is true to the characteristics of "social bandits", whose force lay in their solidarity with the population. This "primitivisation" of the Kazakh revolts is also reflected in the way they unfolded: Kenesary led a ten-year war over a large territory, involving forces gathering many tribes from the three *zhuz*. The 1916 rebellion only lasted six months and was divided according to lineages, the 1929–1930 insurgencies were even sparser and more short-lived, lasting from one week to a month. The number of participants also decreased sensibly between these three episodes, even if the revolts of 1916 and 1929–1930 were part of larger movements of resistance: that of Central Asia in 1916 and of the USSR in 1929–1930. However, the revolt's *modus operandi* remained the same with violent reactions to measures deemed illegitimate, "*batyrs*" leading feats of glory, the constitution of armed groups, the election of a khan and an attempt to set up a structure to organise the revolt.

The recourse to violence is one of the main modes of reaction from rural Kazakh communities against measures they deemed unfair and imposed by the authorities. Violence was viewed as a marker of opposition and a tool of resolution in conflicts against the official authorities. The tsarist authorities led negotiations with Kenesary in order to appease tensions in the steppes but their propositions were limited to offering positions within the indigenous colonial administration. Afterwards, the Russian and Soviet authorities reacted by crushing the revolts. Punitive expeditions were led in the regions where the revolts took place and their leaders, khans and *batyrs*, were either killed in battle or arrested and sentenced to death. The February 1917 revolution saved the leaders of the 1916 rebellion from this fate. The only outcome from a standoff with militarily superior opponents was to retreat and take refuge in territories such as China, the emirate of Bukhara, the khanate of Khiva and Afghanistan, depending on the times.

The pair formed by the khan and the *batyr* underwent profound transformations. The *batyr*, as a figure, succeeded in maintaining his status throughout the colonial period even though he was marginalised by the tsarist authorities. Only in the last phase did the figure veer from its pre-colonial model. The *batyr* helped in mobilising men and inspired bravery on the battlefield. In 1929–1930, the call for Islam served this mobilisation and gave a new life to the khan/*batyr* pair by having religious figures

take on the *batyr* role, especially *ishans*. The title of *batyr* was very little used during the revolts of 1929–1930, as the events were too brief and the role was played by various religious personalities. After 1930, Soviet propaganda redefined the function of *batyr* and tried to draft a revolutionary history integrating the non-Russian populations. Mikhail Pokrovskii, who shaped the writing of history in the USSR in the 1920s–1930s, posited the central part played by the struggle of the classes in the evolution of societies. Marked by this teleological interpretation, he reconstructed a genealogy of peasant revolts until 1917 and identified popular leaders for the Russians. The Kazakhs, meant to be included in this historical construct, chose the figure of the *batyr* and conferred on him a national dimension that was no longer limited to his tribal group.⁹⁹ Amangeldi became the iconic *batyr* and popular leader – which clearly distanced him from the *barymtashy* whose activity remained illegal and challenged by the Soviet regime.¹⁰⁰ During World War II, the epitome of heroism, the Red Army soldier, glorified in the Soviet patriotic discourse, was also called a *batyr*.¹⁰¹

The khan embodied the revolt’s legitimacy and a legitimate use of violence. His election repeatedly occurred in each group who opposed the power in place as soon as the revolt gained ground after an epic victory. After Kenesary Kasymov’s war, the khan was no longer a unifying element prompting a common response and evoking a potential Kazakh political entity. As a result, the khan was no longer required to come from the *töre* and his choice was, in fact, a reflection of a tribal or lineage-based anchoring, and therefore garnered a local dimension. The figure of the khan, a feudal symbol, raised more issues with the Soviet regime and its ideology. An important and well-known controversy took place around Kenesary Kasymov: Kazakh historians wanted to integrate him within the genealogy of national revolts.¹⁰² This was briefly the case when he was included in the list of famous *batyrs* produced by the Soviet regime, but it was his role as popular leader that was highlighted and not the fact that he was a khan. The commemoration for the 550th year of the “Kazakh khanate” in 2015 gave him back his status of last Kazakh Khan. Zhanbosynov benefited from a similar symptomatic treatment: even though he was elected Khan in 1916, the Soviet and post-Soviet historiography links the 1916 insurgency in the Torghai region to Amangeldi Imanov. Zhanbosynov is always referred to in his shadow and his role remains fairly unknown. No study has been devoted to Aizharkyn Kanaev, made Khan in 1916 and 1930 in the Irgiz district. The connecting thread between episodes of violent protest (war, rebellion, insurgency) was maintained through different forms of orature (epics, songs, legends or genealogical tales) dedicated to historical transmission.¹⁰³ The increasing prominence of Soviet discourse and the human loss of figures of transmission in the 1930s due to famines and repressions broke off the modes of resistance and revolt of the Kazakh

society. In the protests of the 1950s and 1980s, the Kazakhs did not return to the *modus operandi* described in this study and neither the figure of the khan nor the *batyr* were resuscitated.

Translated by Delphine Pallier

Notes

- 1 Ainagul' Nurseitova and Aliya Saidembaeva, *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishikh vremen do nachala XX veka: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel'* (Almaty: Mektep, 2008), 135–142; Cloé Drieu, “L'impact de la Première Guerre mondiale en Asie centrale: des révoltes de 1916 aux enjeux politiques et scientifiques de leur historiographie”, *Histoire@Politique* 22 (2014), 175–193.
- 2 Korine Amacher, *La Russie 1598–1917: Révoltes et mouvements révolutionnaires* (Gollio: Infolio éditions, 2011), 9.
- 3 Yves-Marie Bercé, *Croquants et nu-pieds. Les soulèvements paysans en France du XVIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 14.
- 4 Pierre Miquel, *La révolte* (Paris: Bordas, 1971), 9.
- 5 Barbara Ganson, *The Guarani Under Spanish Rule in the Rio de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 94.
- 6 Thé Anh Nguyẽn, “1908 et la remise en question du rôle de l'élite dirigeante des lettrés”, in Gilles De Gantès and Phuong Ngoc Nguyen (ed.), *Vietnam. Le moment moderniste* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2009), 197–204.
- 7 Alban Bensa, Kacué Yvon Goromoedo and Adrian Muckle, *Les sanglots de l'aigle pêcheur. Nouvelle-Calédonie: la guerre kanak de 1917* (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2015).
- 8 Irina Erofeeva, “Kazakhskoe khanstvo i vlast' v traditsionnom obshchestve kazakhov”, in Nurbulat Masanov et al. (eds.), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: Narody i kul'tury* (Almaty: Daik-press, 2000), 113–190.
- 9 Joo-Yup Lee, *Qazaqliq, or Ambitious Brigandage, and the Formation of the Qazaqs: State and Identity in Post-Mongol Central Eurasia* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
- 10 Each of the three *zhuzes* (senior, middle and junior) occupied its own geographical zone, respectively the south, the centre and east, and the west of modern Kazakhstan. The Torghai region was inhabited by lineages from the middle and junior *zhuz*. For a detailed description of the tribe breakdown per district at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Marat Mukanov, *Qazaq zherinij tarikhy* (Almaty: Atamura, 1994)
- 11 *Töre* lineages claimed descent from earlier Kazakh khans, and through them from Chingis Khan. They were the only ones with a legitimate claim to the title of khan. They were not part of the Kazakh tribal structure but formed a separate aristocracy, the White Bone or *aq suyek*. Ordinary Kazakhs were members of other tribal lineages and known as the “black bone” or *qara suyek*. See Irina Erofeeva, *Rodoslovnye kazakhskikh khanov i kozha XVIII–XIX vv.* (Almaty: Print-S, 2003).
- 12 David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). See, however, Devin DeWeese's critique of Sneath's work in *The International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16/1–2 (2010).

- 13 The word “lineage” refers to a political unit within the Kazakh tribal structure. It can be applied liberally to the tribe or to much smaller groupings and corresponds to the Kazakh word “*ru*”. The word “line”, however, refers to a family’s genealogy or to a dynasty. In Kazakh, it corresponds to the word “*äulet*”.
- 14 *Soghys* (war) is the word frequently featured in Kazakh sources from before 1917 to describe Kenesary’s feats.
- 15 Isabelle Surun, “Une souveraineté à l’encre sympathique? Souveraineté autochtone et appropriations territoriales dans les traités franco-africains au XIXe siècle”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 2 (2014), 313–348.
- 16 The Statute of 1822, enacted by lawmaker Mikhail Speransky created social estates (*soslovie*), and defined the “alien” population, as a special category of subjects of the Russian Empire, with specific rights and rules of administration differing from the other categories. This category was made up of the non-Europeans and natives from Siberia and Central Asia including the Kazakhs. They had a similar status to peasants in terms of tax collection and benefited from some rights: exemption from military service and their own local administration.
- 17 Kazakhs from the junior *zhuz* were the first to be affected by the construction of the defensive lines in the steppes, which deprived them of grazing land and access to water. Their emergence throughout the first half of the nineteenth century triggered revolts: the Novo-Iletsk line (1822), the Emba line (1826), the New line (1835). In the 1820s, Zholaman Tlenshiuly, a *batyr* from the Tabyn tribe of the Zhetyru tribe, opposed the erection of forts on the Novo-Iletsk defence line in the north of the Torghai region, as they were encroaching the Tabyns’ pastureland. In the 1830s, Jankhoja Nurmuhamedov (1774–1860), a *batyr* from the Shekti lineage of the Alimuly tribe, located near the Aral Sea and the mouth of the Syr-Darya, was at war against the khanates of Khiva and Khoqand.
- 18 “While they were still teenagers, Kenesary and Nauruzbai [his younger brother] showed boldness on many occasions and surprised not only their parents, but also the older and respected *aqsaqals* by their courage. [...] Their courage helped them achieve pride of place among their father Kasym-khan’s commanders [...] and Kenesary roamed the steppe at the head of a brave and faithful army.” I. A., “Kenisara i Nauruzbai (Kirgizskoe predanie)”, *Turgaiskaia gazeta*, 21 (1901), in Irina Erofeeva (ed.), *Istoriia Kazakhstana v russkikh istochnikakh XVI–XX vekov. Tom IX: Narodnye predaniia ob istoricheskikh sobitiiax i vydaishchikhsia liudiakh kazakhskoj stepi (XIX–XX vv.)* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2007), 257.
- 19 Kenesary Kasymov to Petr Gorchakov (1837), TsGARKaz F.64 Op. 1 D.13 l.542.
- 20 In 1842, for the first time, some Kyrgyz lineages chose to elect a khan, Ormon (1792–1854), who came from the Sarybaghysh tribe and, therefore, was not a Chinggisid. Some Turkmen tribes followed suit in 1853 with Govshut-khan (1823–1878) who came from a Teke lineage.
- 21 An equivalent to the Russian *prikaz*, but in terminology borrowed from khanates of Central Asia.
- 22 Letter from Kenesary Kasymov to the Governor-General of West Siberia, Gorchakov, dating from 1838, TsGARKaz F.82 Op. 1 D.164 ll.15–16.

- 23 Mentions in sources of the lineages who joined Kenesary enabled us to draw these conclusions: Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, *Kazakhstan v 20–40-e gody XIX veka* (Almaty: Qazaq universiteti, 1992), 170–173.
- 24 Akhmet Kenesarin, *Sultany Kenesary i Syzdyk* (Almaty: Zhaly, 1992 [1889]), 19.
- 25 Report from Lieutenant Karl Gren, dated 1845, TsGARKaz F.4 Op. 1 D.2621.1929.
- 26 It was the case of Vali-khan's line (1741–1819). He was the son of Ablai-khan and his descendant, Choqan Valikhanov (1835–1865), was the first prominent member of the Kazakh intelligentsia. The same is true of Baraq's line (?–1750) from which also came Alikhan Bukeikhanov (1866–1937), leader of the Kazakh national movement at the beginning of the twentieth century.
- 27 Various Russian sources assess the amount of potential forces to 100,000 men for the junior and middle *zhuz*. If the contribution of the Baiuly and Naiman tribes is deducted, as they did not participate in Kenesary's war, the number drops to 50,000 since, combined, they made up for half of the total population of these two *zhuzes*: Ian Campbell, *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731–1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 25.
- 28 El'toka Dil'mukhamedov, *Vosstanie Kazakhov pod rukovodstvom Kenesary Kasymova v 1837–1847 gg* (Almaty, 2012 [1946]), 396–412.
- 29 Chinggisid legitimacy was widely recognised across Central Asia. Khan Ormon, however, who had been elected Khan of the Kyrgyz in 1842, could not claim such ancestry, which gave grounds for Kenesary's claims.
- 30 Daniel Prior (ed.), *The Shabdan Baatyr Codex: Epic and the Writing of Northern Kirghiz History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 148.
- 31 *Jataks* were impoverished nomadic herders; with no cattle, they were forced to work in the fields or the mines.
- 32 Bekmakhanov, *Kazakhstan*, 183.
- 33 Epic tale entitled “Kenesary”, in S. Qosan (ed.), *Babalar sözi: zhuz tomdyq Tarikhi zhyrylar* (Astana: Foliant, 2006), vol. 29, 290.
- 34 A. D. Nesterov, “Khvalenaia pesnia Doshodzhi v chest' Sultana Kenesary Kasymova”, in *Izvestiia obshchestva arheologii, istorii i etnografii Kazanskogo universiteta* (1900), vol. 16, series 1, 38–57; Petr Rasponov, “Pesnia o Kenesare”, in *Obraztsy kirgizskoi poezii v pesniakh epicheskogo i liricheskogo soderzhaniia, pereložhennykh v russkie stikhi* (Orenburg, 1885), 368–408.
- 35 There were various kinds of privilege: some were inherited from the khanate such as *zakat* collection, *töleñgit* – authority over the lineages at their service, ownership over grazing land. Others were given by the tsarist authorities, in particular exclusive access to public office through elections or appointment to local governorship for the *töre*. This regulation, not always enforced in practice, was abolished in 1868.
- 36 Yet, in this challenging context the *töre* managed to maintain their unifying role and their political pre-eminence until the beginning of the twentieth century. On the eve of 1917, the two main Kazakh leaders were Bakhytjan Qarataev and Alikhan Bukeihanov – both were *töre*.
- 37 The 1868 statute limited the Bii's authority to judicial issues and their name was changed to “People's court” (*narodnyi sud*) by the 1886 statute. The stareishin was in charge of an administrative aul, the lowest level of the tsarist administrative divisions in Kazakh regions.

- 38 A short period between 1906 and 1907 was the only exception: representatives from the Kazakhs were elected in each province to the First and Second Dumas of the Russian state, which breathed new life into the tribes’ political role.
- 39 Xavier Hallez, “Instauration et évolution des pratiques électorales dans la population kazakhe de l’oblast’ du Semirech’e (1868–1917)”, *Working Paper* no. 19 (IFEAC, 2017), <http://ifeac.hypotheses.org/3428>.
- 40 This aura was particularly notable in the case of Ablai-khan, whom the Kazakh people continued to celebrate, especially in the middle *zhuz*.
- 41 Radik Temirgaliev, *Epokha poslednikh batyrov (1680–1780)* (Almaty: Aspandau, 2009).
- 42 Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 17.
- 43 Virginia Martin, “Barimta: Nomadic custom, imperial crime”, in Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzarini (ed.), *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 249–270.
- 44 Karlygash Useinova, *Institut barymty i ego mesto v obychno-pravovoi sisteme Kazakhov* (Aftoreferat kandidatskoi dissertatsiyi, Almaty, 2007).
- 45 These two sides can be seen in a Kazakh’s description of two barymtashy: “who benefited for a long time from the blaze of glory attached to exceptional thieves”, TsGARKaz F.44 Op. 1 D.5549 l.8.
- 46 Xavier Hallez, “Turar Ryskulov: The Career of a Kazakh Revolutionary Leader During the Construction of the New Soviet State, 1917–1926”, *Colloquia Humanistica*, 3 (2014), 120. Kazakh writer Mukhtar Aueзов’s short-story “Qarash-Qarash”, published in 1927, used this story as its model. This short-story was highly successful. See Mukhtar Aueзов, *Qarash-Qarash / Vystrel na perevale / The Shot on the Mountain Pass* (Almaty: Zhazushy baspasy, 2008).
- 47 Bakhytzhan Karataev, *Obzor materialov iz istorii kolonizatsii Kazakhskogo kraia v sviazi s vosstaniem Kazakhov Orenburgskogo kraia v 1869 godu i v nachale 1870-kh godov* (Aktobe: Nur-Print, 2006), 61.
- 48 Syrym Batyr (1753–1802) (Baibaqty [Baiuly] tribe, junior *zhuz*) led an uprising against the Russian authorities in 1783 and 1797.
- 49 Karataev, *Obzor*, 66.
- 50 Virginia Martin, “Kazakh Chinggisids, Land and Political Power in the Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of Syrymbet”, *Central Asian Survey* 29 (2010), 79–102.
- 51 Kudiarkhin Tezekov – a descendant of the Tezek *töre* from one of Ablai-khan’s lines, but a different one from Kenesary’s – was elected Khan of several *volost’* of Semirech’e, home to the Alban tribe from the senior *zhuz* during the 1916 rebellion.
- 52 The *zheti ata*, which literally means the seven fathers, corresponds to a direct family line running from the seventh generation ancestor to the last son.
- 53 Marat Myrzaghalilyu, *1916–1917 zhyldardaghy Torghai Qazaqtarynyng köte rilisi* (Almaty: Atamura, 2005).
- 54 Konstantin Kharlampovich, *Vosstanie Turgaiskikh Kazak-Kirgizov 1916–1917gg. (po rasskazam ochevidtsev)* (Kzyl-Orda: Izd. Obshch. Izucheniia Kazakstan, 1926), 4.
- 55 Protokol of the Bel’kopinskaia, Taldyskaia and Temir-Astauvskaia *volost’* administrators from the Irgiz district, dated 13 October 1916, in A. V.

- Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 590–591.
- 56 Myrzaghaliuly, *1916–1917*, 42.
- 57 Kazakh historian Manash Kozybaev explains that Zhanbosynov was “the grandson of a prominent *bii* from the Niyaz middle *zhuz* who enjoyed the status of khan by the will of Kenesary”. Manash Kozybaev, “Natsional'no-osvoboditel'naia voina 1916g. v Kazakhstane: Kontseptual'nye problemy”, in Manash Kozybaev, *Kazakhstan na rubezhe vekov: razmyshleniia i poiski* (Almaty: Ghylym, 2000), vol. 1, 191.
- 58 In his article about 1916, Tomohiko Uyama mentions Murza Satybaldin, or more specifically “*ishan* Myrza” who, according to a Kazakh source from the Soviet era, had made a call for obedience to the Tsar's decree, based on the *shariat*. The information on the position adopted by these Kazakh spiritual figures is fragmented, it could have been presented as the exact opposite to serve another dominant ideology. Tomohiko Uyama, “Two Attempts at Building a Kazakh State: The Revolt of 1916 and Alash Movement”, in Stéphane Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (eds.), *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)* (London: Paul Kegan, 2001), 84.
- 59 “Even those who supported a jihad did not explicitly call for creating an Islamic State in Qazaqstan. [...] Islam provided Qazaqs with an ideology of resistance, but not an ideology of State building”, in Uyama, “Two Attempts”, 84.
- 60 Uyama, “Two Attempts”, 83–84.
- 61 The title of *tarkhan*, of Turkic-Mongolian origin, brought certain privileges in the Golden Horde and the Empire of Timur, including exemption from taxes. The Russian Empire arrogated to itself the title and bestowed it essentially on Tatars and Bashkirs who had rendered exemplary military or diplomatic services to the Empire.
- 62 Kharlampovich, *Vosstanie*, 12.
- 63 Kharlampovich, *Vosstanie*, 12.
- 64 *Amengeldinskaia èkspeditsiia Kaz. Filiala AN SSSR*, 1943.
- 65 Kharlampovich, *Vosstanie*, 12.
- 66 The figure of 50,000 men often comes up in historiographical research, but it comes from reports by a Russian officer who based his estimation on one soldier (*asker*) per home or yurt, which seems overestimated. The amount of attackers recorded for the raid in the city of Torghai in November–December would be closer to reality. This operation gathered troops from the provinces three main zones of rebellion. Report from Chief of Staff to Nicholas II dated 2 December 1916, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 612.
- 67 This word, coming from Persian, was used to designate a soldier. It was also used with the word *jigit* during the Torghai revolt and its definition became fixed to designate the insurgents in 1916.
- 68 Aibolat Kushkumbaev, *Voennoe delo kazakhov v XVII-XVIII vekov* (Almaty: Daik Press, 2001).
- 69 The Russian Home Ministry estimated that 50,000 men could be mobilised in Torghai province according to the 25 June 1916 decree.

- 70 Alibi Zhangil'din, *Dokumenty i materialy (k 125-letiiu Alibi Zhangil'dina)* (Almaty: Ana tili, 2009), 162–163.
- 71 Ahmet Baitursunov, Mirzhakyp Dulatov, Kadirbaev Tungachin, “Torghai häm Yrghyz halqyna” 207 *Qazaq*, (1916), in Äbdimälik Nysanbaev (ed.), *Qazaq gazeti* (Almaty: Qazaq Äntsiklopediyasy, 1998), 348–349.
- 72 Report from the Chief of Staff to the War Minister from 6 March 1917, in Piaskovskii (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 629–630.
- 73 Xavier Hallez, “Le ralliement des Kazakhs au pouvoir soviétique (1917–1920): convictions politiques, système tribal et contexte russe”, *Cahiers du monde russe* 56/4 (2015), 705–752.
- 74 Karaldin to Zhangil'din, 16 September 1928, TsGARKAZ F.135 Op. 1 D.439 l.4.
- 75 Kaidar Aldazhumanov, “Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie soprotivleniia”, in *Deportirovannye v Kazakhstan narody: vremia i sud'by* (Almaty: Arys, 1998), 67.
- 76 Andrei Kuchkin, *Sovetizatsiia kazakhskogo aula 1926–1929 gg.* (Moscow: Izdat. AN SSSR, 1962).
- 77 Protokol no. 5 from the OGPU troika meeting of 25 May 1930, in Ardak Berkimbai, “Batpakara köterilisi”, *DAT-obshchestvennaia pozitsiia* 10 (2011).
- 78 Aldazhumanov, “Krest'ianskoe”, 67.
- 79 Zhangel'dy Otarbaev, “Batpakkarinskoe vosstanie. Delo n°648”, *DAT. Obshchestvennaia pozitsiia* (2011), <https://planetanyne.ru/batpakkarinskoe-vosstanie-delo-648/>.
- 80 KNB RK archives, 101/9/12–13, report from the Kustanai *okrug* committee addressed to all of the *raion's* committees, in *Nasil'stvennaia kollektivizatsiia i golod v Kazakhstane v 1931–1933 gg., sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Almaty: XXI vek, 1998), 48.
- 81 *Nasil'stvennaia*, 49.
- 82 KNB RK archives, 101/9/12–13, in *Nasil'stvennaia*, 49.
- 83 *Qaharly 1916 zhyl (Quzhattar men materialdar zhinaǵy)*, vol. 2 (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998); TsGARKaz F.76 Op. 72 D.33 l.293, in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*.
- 84 “Memorial”, <http://Lists.memo.ru/> and <https://ru.openlist.wiki/>.
- 85 Aldazhumanov, “Krest'ianskoe”, 67.
- 86 TsGARKaz F.135 Op. 1, Central Commission on confiscation.
- 87 Aldazhumanov, “Krest'ianskoe”, 67.
- 88 TsGARKaz F.5 Op. 21 D.13 l.103, in *Nasil'stvennaia*, 67–68.
- 89 Isabelle Ohayon, *La sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline. Collectivisation et changement social (1928–1945)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2006), 182–185.
- 90 TsA FSB RF, 2/8/23/122–134, in *Nasil'stvennaia*, 251.
- 91 Alexis Berelowitch and Viktor Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK, OGPU, NKVD, dokumenty i materialy, t. 3 (1930–1934), kn. 1, 1930–1931* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 322–326.
- 92 CA FSB RF, 2/8/53/2–28, in Berelowitch and Danilov, *Sovetskaia*, 322 and 326.
- 93 Aldazhumanov, “Krest'ianskoe”, 73.

- 94 Niccolò Pianciola, "Interpreting an Insurgency in Soviet Kazakhstan: The OGPU, Islam and Qazaq 'Clans' in Suzak, 1930", in N. Pianciola, P. Sartori (eds.), *Islam, Society and States across the Qazaq Steppe (18th – Early 20th Centuries)* (Vienna, 2013), 297–340.
- 95 TsA FSB RF/2/8/329/198–212, in Berelowitch and Danilov, *Sovetskaia*, 521.
- 96 Aldazhumanov, "Krest'ianskoe", 72.
- 97 Desert located at the north-east of the Aral Sea, namesake of the great Turkmen desert.
- 98 Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Norton & Company, 1965).
- 99 Harun Yilmaz, "The Rise of Red *Batyr*s in the Kazakh Steppe", in Harun Yilmaz (ed.), *National Identities in Soviet Historiography: The Rise of Nations under Stalin* (London: Routledge, 2015), 87–108.
- 100 This practice was labelled as a daily crime "*bytovye predstupleniya*", in the 1924 RSFSR criminal code. See Zailagi Kenzhaliev and Sof'ia Dauletova, *Kazakhskoe obychnoe pravo v usloviakh sovetskoi vlasti: 1917–1937 gg.* (Almaty: Nauka, 1993), 103. After 1991, changes in historiographical paradigms revived the identification of Amangeldi to a *barymtashy* in order to denigrate the Soviet Pantheon.
- 101 Roberto Carmack, "History and Hero Making: Patriotic Narratives and the Sovietization of Kazakh Frontline Propaganda, 1941–1945", *Central Asian Survey* 33/1 (2014), 95–112.
- 102 See the controversy surrounding the works of historian Bekmakhanov, whose doctoral thesis on Kenesary Kasymov was defended in 1947. He was arrested in 1952 and condemned for his "bourgeois and nationalist views". Sattar Mazhitov, *Istoriik Ermukhan Bekmakhanov* (Astana: Foliant, 2005).
- 103 Orature is a term created by Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o in the beginning of the 1970s encompassing all spoken and musical oral traditions.

From rebels to refugees: memorialising the revolt of 1916 in oral poetry

Jipar Duishembieva

In early 1917, T. F. Stefanovich, the Dragoman of the Russian consulate in Kashgar, described the dire condition of Central Asian refugees in a lengthy report to the Russian Consul General.¹ He estimated the number of refugees from Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts in Semirech'e province at 100,000 to 120,000, and wrote:

[I]n order to support themselves, the Kirgiz began to sell their household items, such as felt rugs, cauldrons, tea pots, saddles, bridles, etc. The steep prices for necessities in Uch Turfan and Aqsu led masses of Kirgiz to face death from starvation: as a result of malnutrition, epidemics of typhus and scurvy appeared. In order to shed the extra mouths and burdens, the Kirgiz began to leave their underage children behind at their rest camps, and to sell their girls and boys over the age of twelve to local Sarts, for 30 to 40 rubles. In such conditions, their future looks grim and hopeless.²

Close to 250,000 people are estimated to have perished during the revolt and the subsequent escape to China.³ Active participants in the revolt were captured, tried and sentenced either to death or to the hard labour camps. Almost all of the Russian settlements in Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts were razed to the ground and burned during the revolt. Settlers took refuge in the cities of Toqmaq, Pishpek and Przheval'sk, which were protected by small army detachments. According to figures compiled by the district administrations, Russian civilian casualties in the revolt numbered ninety-eight people killed and sixty-five missing in Pishpek district, and 2,179 killed and 1,299 missing in Przheval'sk district.⁴ Losses among the Muslim insurgents were much higher. According to some sources, 123,000 people from Przheval'sk district and 47,000 from Pishpek district perished during the revolt.⁵ Thus, although the uprising of the northern Kyrgyz in Pishpek and Przheval'sk

districts against the labour conscription order started considerably later than in other parts of Turkestan, it was ultimately bloodier and longer-lasting than in other areas, with dire consequences for both Kyrgyz and Slavic peasant settlers.

The Russian Imperial administration retaliated by killing the insurgents indiscriminately, executing their leaders, and driving the Kyrgyz people off their lands and across the Chinese border. The devastation the Kyrgyz experienced during and after the revolt would continue to be felt for years to come; thousands of Kyrgyz died in the fighting itself, and many more perished while trying to escape the Russian punitive expeditions. Those who made it to the cities of Kashgar, Uch Turfan and Ghulja in Chinese Turkestan were extremely impoverished, and had to sell themselves, their children and their belongings to the locals in order to survive.

Russians and Kyrgyz continued to inflict brutality and pain on each other in the aftermath of the revolt. With memories of the uprising still fresh in the minds of everyone involved, and examples of ongoing conflict before them, Russian Imperial officials deemed it impossible for Kyrgyz nomads to continue to coexist alongside Russian settlers. In this context, the proposal of A. N. Kuropatkin, appointed as Governor-General of Turkestan in July 1916, to separate the Kyrgyz into a newly created Naryn district seemed a rational idea.⁶ According to this ambitious plan, the area around Lake Issyq-Kul was to be emptied of Kyrgyz, and given over entirely to peasant settlers and Cossacks, as a horse breeding region which might attract “foreign capital”.⁷ As Alexander Morrison shows in [Chapter 9](#), this proposal to separate the population persisted even after the February Revolution of 1917, although from January of that year some Kyrgyz and Kazakh refugees were able to resettle in Semirech’e. This was a gradual process, however, and lasted several years.

Drawing on archival documents, memoirs, oral poetry and published secondary sources, this chapter examines the revolt as a turning point in the history of Central Asia, focusing particularly on its impact on the lives of the northern Kyrgyz and its implications for subsequent developments in the region. It views the revolt of 1916 as an experience of displacement for the northern Kyrgyz and sets out to analyse the reality of this displacement in the aftermath of the revolt of 1916 by taking a closer look at the refugees’ survival and daily existence in the Chinese territories.⁸ It aims to move beyond the view of displacement as a human tragedy and concentrates instead on its social aspect – that is, displacement as a lived experience. It does so by exploring the subjective experience of the revolt among the Kyrgyz through the poems of the Kyrgyz *aqyns*, or oral poets, composed shortly after the revolt. A larger goal of this chapter is to integrate the story of the Central Asian refugees into the studies on displacement and refugedom following World War I, to put it in dialogue

with the works of Peter Gatrell, Eric Lohr and Josh Sanborn who wrote extensively on refugees, displacement and history of World War I within the Russian Imperial context.⁹

The Northern Kyrgyz and the revolt

On the morning of 8 August 1916, Lieutenant Colonel F. G. Rymshovich, the head of Pishpek district, received a message from the Pishpek post office. It reported that the mail, which had been on its way to Przheval'sk containing a large sum of money, had been seized by the Kyrgyz.¹⁰ Upon arriving in Toqmaq, Rymshovich learned that the disturbances had begun when the Kyrgyz of Atake and Sarybaghysh *volost'* received a secret message from Vernyi district signalling the beginning of the uprising.¹¹ In the succeeding days, crowds of Kyrgyz from across Pishpek district attacked Russian settlements and postal stations. Russian cavalry fended off their attacks as best they could, but they were too few to deflect the attacks effectively. During the first days of the uprising, Rymshovich had only twenty-six cavalymen with which to face attacks by hundreds of Kyrgyz.¹² Caught off-guard and completely unprepared for the uprising, the Imperial administration at first lost quite a few soldiers. A number of peasant settlers were also either killed, or else captured and led away to the mountainous areas near Naryn and Kochkor.¹³

Later Rymshovich would learn that at the meeting of the Kyrgyz of Atake and Sarybaghysh *volosts*, Shabdan's son Möküş Shabdanov had been elected khan of the Kyrgyz.¹⁴ Among the other prominent figures were Belek Soltonoev, the newly elected leader of Atake *volost'*, and another of Shabdan's sons, Kemel Shabdanov, then head of Sarybaghysh *volost'*.¹⁵ The Kyrgyz uprising in these two *volosts* set an example that was quickly emulated by the rest of the northern Kyrgyz. Mass disturbances engulfed the mountainous areas of Pishpek district, including Zhumgal, Kochkor, Abaiylda, Kurmanqozho and Cherikchi *volost'*,¹⁶ as well as the greater part of Przheval'sk district, along the northern and southern shores of lake Issyq-Kul.¹⁷ Among those leading the disturbances in these *volosts* were northern Kyrgyz *manaps*. One of them, Qanat Ybyke uulu [Abukin] of Abaiylda *volost'*, led several effective attacks on Russian settlements.¹⁸ Yet not all of the Kyrgyz *manaps* supported the revolt. Among those who chose not to participate was Dür Sooronbaev, leader of the 400 households of Tynai *volost'*.¹⁹ Several Kyrgyz *volosts* in the Talas region, then part of Aulie-Ata district, were also persuaded by their leaders not to take part in the revolt (in part because news of the punitive responses undertaken by the Russian army had begun to reach them).²⁰ Even Shabdan's son Kemel Shabdanov was at first opposed to the uprising, and he warned his people about the Russian army's might.

But he was soon swept into the revolt by the pressure of other influential figures, including his own brother, Mokush Shabdanov.

In his study of the revolt of 1916 among the Kyrgyz nomads, Daniel Brower argues that “inter-ethnic relations were a key factor in the uprising” in this region.²¹ He suggests that while the labour conscription order provided the proximate cause, the deeper reasons for the uprising lay in the socioeconomic changes brought by the Russian conquest of the region.²² Archival documents corroborate Brower’s observations on the interethnic character of the disturbance. The cruelty, violence and hatred that the Kyrgyz and the Slavic settlers displayed toward each other during the revolt shocked both sides, as well as Imperial officials.²³ It was especially hard for the Imperial officials to reconcile the extent of the revolt among the northern Kyrgyz, with the enthusiasm and willingness they had previously shown in sacrificing their money, livestock, dwellings and clothing for the war effort.²⁴ When Kuropatkin toured Semirech’e in September 1916, and stopped in Chimkent to address a group of soldiers bound for the front, he expressed his disappointment with Shabdan’s sons, who had led the uprising in Pishpek district. Evoking the memory of the *manap* Shabdan, Kuropatkin said: “If my friend Shabdan was still alive, would any of this have happened?”²⁵ The attitude of many Imperial officials towards the Kyrgyz nomads was that of paternalism, *otecheskaia zabolivost’* in Kuropatkin’s words, and when the Kyrgyz revolted against the Russian Empire, these officers felt utterly betrayed.²⁶ But were there other factors that provoked the Kyrgyz to rise up against the Empire?

By 1914, the Kyrgyz had lost much of their land to Slavic settlers, and been forced to retreat toward less fertile, mountainous areas. Moreover, as land had become less plentiful, the tsarist administration in Semirech’e had begun mixing together the newly arrived settlers (*novosely*), old settlers, Cossacks and those Kyrgyz who wished to settle, all in the same district.²⁷ This practice increased the friction between Russian settlers and Kyrgyz nomads, since they now had to negotiate with each other over scarce resources on a daily basis. Land and water deficits resulted in many impoverished and displaced Kyrgyz, who were hired by Russian peasants as low-wage farm workers.²⁸ The reliance of peasant settlers on Kyrgyz labour increased still further with the beginning of war, as many capable male members of the peasant households left to fight. A new obligation was imposed on Kyrgyz *volost’*, to send groups of workers to help soldiers’ families during the harvest, a burden that was compounded when these workers found themselves poorly treated by the soldiers’ wives.²⁹ In addition to paying their usual taxes, the Kyrgyz of each *volost’* were expected to cover any “unexpected” administrative expenses incurred at both the district and *volost’* levels, which included hosting visits by the district administration, requiring lodgings, food and entertainment for numerous officials.³⁰ Nor did the burdens end with Russian

government officials. The Kyrgyz were also exhausted by the demands of the native *volost'* administrators, who used their positions to enrich themselves, as well as to recoup the costs of an election process in which fraud and corruption were rampant.³¹ Thus while the labour conscription order may have lit the fuse, the powder-keg of the revolt, and the anti-Russian sentiment that infused it, had been built up over the course of decades of impoverishment, inequality and exclusion experienced by the Kyrgyz. Once this force was unleashed, its violent consequences were wide-ranging and indiscriminate.

By mid-September the revolt had begun to collapse under the weight of the Imperial response. Kyrgyz of the Bughu and Sarybaghysh lineages, especially those in Przheval'sk district and in the mountainous regions of Naryn and At-Bashy to the south of Pishpek district, had to flee in the face of Russian punitive expeditions arriving from Zharkent, Andijan and Vernyi.³² Leaving most of their belongings, people from thirty-nine Kyrgyz *volosts* escaped to China. The first wave of refugees arrived in Chinese Turkestan at the beginning of September, and great numbers of them continued to file in until November.³³ Many died along the way, unable to survive the cold that had begun to settle in the high-altitude mountain passes by September. Those who did make it to Kashgar and Ghulja led a tragic and impoverished existence.

The February Revolution of 1917 and the collapse of the Imperial regime favoured the Kyrgyz and Kazakh refugees, who were able to return to Semirech'e in an effort to reoccupy the lands they had fled the previous year. But as with everything else related to the revolt of 1916, the journey back from China and resettlement of their lands was no easy task. This was to be the last act in a sweeping dramatic journey that encompassed resistance, flight and return. As the next section will relate, the epic resonances of this journey were not lost on the Kyrgyz intellectuals and *aqyns* and they would soon begin to create literary works which would retell this story, shaping how it would be remembered by subsequent generations.

The revolt in Kyrgyz oral poetry

Among the sources that reveal the lives of the refugees are the poems composed by Kyrgyz and Kazakh poets during or shortly after the revolt which were recorded from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, but remained unpublished until the 1990s. These poems provide an opportunity to see the revolt from the point of view of the participants. Most of the archival sources on the revolt were left by people in power, who were capable of recording their side of the story. Some Kyrgyz and Kazakhs do appear in the colonial archives, but usually only in interrogation materials and

witness testimonies. Forced to testify under pressure and through an interpreter, these informants had little opportunity to convey their own emotional and perceptual experiences of the revolt. The poems of the Kyrgyz *aqyns* represent an important tool to address such limitations. Speaking of oral societies more generally, Jan Vansina reminds us:

One cannot emphasise enough, that such [oral] sources are irreplaceable, not only because information would otherwise be lost, but because they are sources “from the inside.” In oral and part-oral societies, oral tradition gives intimate accounts of populations, or layers of populations, that are otherwise apprehended from the outside point of view.³⁴

It is the Kyrgyz *aqyns*' poems on the revolt that offer us a glimpse “from the inside.”³⁵

In Kyrgyz popular memory, the revolt came to be called the *ürkün*, a word normally indicating the commotion caused by being suddenly startled.³⁶ Poems on the revolt of 1916 came to constitute a special genre in the Kyrgyz literary history, known under the name *ürkün yrlary*, or the songs of the *ürkün*. Most of the *aqyns* who composed on the theme of the revolt were born in the 1870s and 1880s in Pishpek and Przheval'sk districts of southern Semirech'e *oblast*, and were in their mid-thirties or early forties during the revolt. They all had *maktab* (*mektep* in Kyrgyz) education and generally went on to become teachers.³⁷ This group of poets escaped persecution in the 1930s, and most of them lived into the 1950s. Some even benefited from state patronage, and served as messengers of socialist ideas and advocates for the Soviet way of life.³⁸

The poems on the revolt followed a standard script. They began with the announcement of the labour conscription order and the people's reaction to it. Then they described episodes from the revolt itself. Finally, they included a section on the Kyrgyz flight to China, the difficulties they endured on their way there and on their return. Most of the poems ended by praising Lenin and the revolution. All of these elements are present in the revolt poems composed by Aldash Zheenike uulu (also known as Aldash Moldo, 1874–1930) and published in the *Muras* collection.³⁹ Aldash was teaching in Przheval'sk district when the revolt broke out, and soon joined those fleeing to China. Judging from their content, Aldash composed some of these poems in China, and others after his return. Aldash's poems communicated a strong sense of Kyrgyz identity, by stressing the differences between the Kyrgyz and the other ethnic groups of Semirech'e, and by expressing deep longing for the lands of Issyq-Kul and Zheti Suu, which Aldash considered the land of the Kyrgyz. Thus he wrote of the Dungans that they had “a heart of grass [denoting weakness], eat chives and other herbs, garlic and onions”, and sent their sons to China to avoid conscription.⁴⁰ Here Aldash differentiated the Dungans

and Kyrgyz, not by language, but by diet, and thus implicitly by lifestyle. The foods attributed to the Dungans highlighted their agricultural orientation, and contrasted with the traditional Kyrgyz diet of meat and dairy products, and reliance on animal husbandry. By painting the Dungans as weak and unsteady, Aldash also sought to employ them as a negative example by which to motivate the Kyrgyz. Aldash encouraged the Kyrgyz to stand strong and united against conscription, saying:

Don't be deceived by the *bais* and *manaps*,
 Don't give your sons to the army.
 Take away their signs and stamps,
 And tear apart their lists.⁴¹

For Aldash, the key difference between the Dungans and the Kyrgyz was that the Dungans did not have a land to call their own, and so were willing to flee at the first sign of danger. The Kyrgyz, by contrast, had a land to lose, Issyq-Kul, which Aldash described as *kasiettüü* (sacred). Through his poetry, Aldash hoped to inspire the Kyrgyz to fight for the chance to stay in this scared place. In another poem on the theme of the revolt, Aldash wrote about the Altishahr region in Chinese Turkestan:

We fled to Alty Shaar (*Ürküp keldik Alty Shaar*),
 Poor people you became desperate,
 And filled with sadness and sorrow.
 Having no house to spend your winter in,
 You froze in the winter's cold.⁴²

Here Aldash sang of human suffering, humiliation and destitution; about the plight of the women and children who were the innocent victims of the conflict. Women suffered at the hands of wealthy Chinese and *taranchi*, who took them as wives against their will. When they appealed to the local Muslim courts, they found no help there, only further injustices. Aldash was appalled by the people of Altishahr: by the deceit and avarice of the merchants, by the high-handedness of the city officials, and by the false piety of the Muslim officials. While in Altishahr, Aldash was detained by Chinese officials for spreading news about the Russian Revolution. Expressing his anger, Aldash sang:

We are people of the Russians,
 Our land is Zheti Suu [Semirech'e]
 Because of the contemptuous Germans, and
 Because of people like you [local officials],
 We suffered from conflict and came here for a time.
 Altishahr will not be our land,
 Its people do not see us as fellow-countrymen.⁴³

Aldash still considered himself to be connected to the Russians, but by this he meant those Russians who had come to power after “Nicholas descended from the throne.”⁴⁴ As with his *zamana* genre poems, Aldash’s poems on the revolt contained many details about the personalities of Kyrgyz, Dungan and Russian society of the time, as well as accounts of specific events, such as the meeting of the Bughu Kyrgyz to discuss the conscription order and a letter from Shabdan’s sons asking them to join with the Sarybaghysh.⁴⁵ Aldash ended this poem by expressing his gratitude to Lenin for the *uruia*t (freedom) he had brought, and by revealing his hopes to return to his native land of Issyq-Kul and Zheti Suu (Semirech’e).

Themes of human loss and suffering are explored in depth by Isak Shaibekov (1880–1957), who was born in the village of Chong Kemin in Pishpek district. Among his many works describing the calamity of the revolt and displacement are his three major poems, *Azghan el* (*Wandering People*), *Qairan el* (*Desperate People*) and *Qaitkan el* (*Returning People*), which were composed while still in China. This trio surpassed other poems on the revolt in their refinement and complexity. Although all of the poets who described the revolt stressed its raw emotions, Isak’s description of the Kyrgyz people’s suffering beat them all. This was especially true in his second poem, *Qairan el*, which told of his people’s plight in China. He sang that the old could not walk because they were sick, and the young could not walk because they were too young; having no water to wash themselves, people turned into a dark-brown mass; they sold most of their belongings for nothing:

Their horses worth hundred *soms*, they sold for one *seer*,⁴⁶ those
desperate people,
The *seer* they received, they paid for a place to stay one night, those
desperate people,
Having no felt rugs, no bedding, they slept on the ground, those
desperate people,
Unable to provide for their children, they sold their posterity, those
desperate people,
They sold the dowry of their sons and daughters, those desperate
people,
They sold into marriage the widows, who survived their husbands’
deaths, those desperate people.⁴⁷

However, despite all their difficulties, Isak writes, the Kyrgyz somehow went on with their lives. They found ways to survive; some made materials (*uuk*, *tündük*) for yurts and sold them, some embroidered, some sold a drink made from cornflour. They sold everything they owned – their dishes, buckthorn roots, *kymyz*, wood, wool, saddles, and *shyrdaks*.⁴⁸ Even a leg of lamb could be traded for more immediate necessities:

They sold a cooked leg of lamb at the bazaar, those desperate people,
Singing “here is a cheap leg of lamb,” those desperate people.⁴⁹

One of the dominant emotions here is shame – an emotional dimension of suffering that compounded the physical. The Kyrgyz, who had never considered selling goods as an occupation, were degraded to such a degree that they had to go to the bazaar, sing and hawk their goods in order to survive. Another disgraceful marker of this loss of nomadic freedom and wealth for Isak was the fact that “for a smooth-gaited horse they made do with a mincing donkey.”⁵⁰

Gripping scenes from the revolt are also described by another poet, Abylqasym Zhutakeev (1888–1933), who was born in Pishpek district, acquired a traditional education with a *mullah*, and began performing his poems at local gatherings when he was just fourteen. Abylqasym never wrote down his own poems, but they were later collected and recorded. Several of these poems discussed the uprising. In *Qachaq turmushu* (*Life of a Refugee*), he described the Kyrgyz people’s lives after they fled to China. According to Abylqasym, the people of Zhumgal, Qochqor, Chui, Toqmaq and Kemin (mostly of the Sarybaghysh and Bughu lineage) escaped to China, leaving their livestock and belongings behind. Their most difficult trial was crossing the Bedel Pass: many died, children were left without parents, young men lost their wives and the livestock was abandoned. Like other poets, Abylqasym sang about how the wealthy took advantage of the poor. Once the people reached China, Abylqasym continued, the Kyrgyz poor found that the poor of China were no better off than the newcomers. Abylqasym concluded by singing about the people’s longing for their own land:

The soles of my feet are bleeding from rocks.
Jeti Suu [Semirech’e], you are always in my mind.
I wonder if we will reach the meadows carpeted with snowdrops,
to ride fast horses with braided manes and tails.
Jeti Suu of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, when will I reach you?⁵¹

One other poem that is particularly important to this study is Taghay Emilov’s *Akhval-i Qirghuziyya* (*The State of the Kyrgyz*). One of the lengthiest poems on the revolt, it has never been published. A handwritten copy, along with a transliteration into the Cyrillic alphabet, is held in the Manuscripts Collection of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences.⁵² Little is known about the author,⁵³ only that he was from the Sayaq Kyrgyz of Zhumgal region but lived in Issyq-Kul.⁵⁴ *Akhval-i Qirghuziyya* was written in the style of the reformist intellectuals, stressing the importance of knowledge and enlightenment. He wrote that all other Muslims – the Noghoys (i.e., Tatars), the Sarts and even the

Kazakhs – were knowledgeable; only the Kyrgyz held back and watched their progress from a distance. He then turned to the Russian Imperial administration, writing that when the Russian Empire gained dominion over the Kyrgyz, it promised not to touch their land and water, to bring justice, and not to conscript the Kyrgyz:

[They] said, we won't take your livestock by force,
 [They] said, you are not to serve in the army.
 [They] said, pay us taxes from each household,
 [They] said, live peacefully after that.⁵⁵

When Russians came, he continued, instead of giving knowledge, they gave titles and ranks (*chin*) to their chosen agents, and introduced the election system. This, in turn, encouraged further corruption among Kyrgyz tribal leaders: whoever was elected as *volost'* leader would take bribes, and demand *chygym* (tribute) from the people. Thus, Taghay wrote, the Kyrgyz were deprived of their land and water, and were unable even to protest because of their ignorance. Then in 1916 the mobilisation order came from the Tsar:

In his order our tsar said the following:
 We [the Kyrgyz] will compete with the other advanced peoples.
 We will perform [military] exercises with machine-gun and cannon,
 and in that way we will be introduced to the world.⁵⁶

Ultimately Taghay blamed the Tsar for the calamities that befell the Kyrgyz. If the Tsar had taught the Kyrgyz science, Taghay said, then the people would have been prepared and willing to fight for him, and would not have resisted the order.

Taghay was the only poet to depict in detail, and at length, the conflict between the Russians and the Kyrgyz at the beginning of the revolt.⁵⁷ Other *aqyns* saw the revolt as a reaction to the tsarist mobilisation order, and they presented the enemies of the Kyrgyz people as being the Tsar, Russian officials and local native administrators. None of them described the rebellion as a clash between ordinary Russian and Kyrgyz people. One reason for this is that these poems were collected in the 1920s and 1930s, at a time when the state was exerting pressure to portray the revolt as anti-colonial, rather than anti-Russian. Taghay's case was different; according to Khusein Karasaev, he wrote his poems between 1916 and 1918,⁵⁸ a period when the conflict remained fresh in the minds of the participants, and the Kyrgyz continued to fear Russian retaliation.

Taghay wrote that the fight between the Russians and Kyrgyz started with livestock. The Kyrgyz began to drive off the Russians' livestock from their fields. When the Russians heard of this, they responded angrily,

saying they should destroy Kyrgyz and taking up their rifles (*bardangke*, from the Russian *berdanka*). Meanwhile the Kyrgyz had begun to kill Russian officials. Some Kazakhs joined them in destroying Russian settlements and driving away their livestock. Fights erupted in Vernyi and in different parts of Semirech'e *oblast*:

Przheval'sk is a border town [inhabited by] Russians.
It borders with Zharkent, Ghulja, and China.
Naryn, the fields of Zhumgal, Chui, Oluyata.
Those are the places where the fight erupted.⁵⁹

Taghay observed that because of their ignorance, the Kyrgyz did not know the size of the province, nor that the Russian population was enormous:

Let alone us, not even Germany could take [the Russians],
whom we disturbed so suddenly.
We do not know anything, we are ignorant,
so why are we speaking up?⁶⁰

When the Russian army arrived, Taghay wrote, they were ordered to wipe out Kyrgyz. Meanwhile, the Kyrgyz tribes continued to destroy towns and settlements. They did not commit these acts because they were brave, says Taghay, but out of fear of being conscripted. Taghay was critical of his own people's motives for the revolt. In his mind, the Kyrgyz found themselves in this desperate situation due to their own ignorance and weakness. They had overestimated their own strength, and went blindly to their death.

Taghay wrote that once the Kyrgyz heard of the approaching Russian army, they decided to flee to China, leaving behind their belongings and livestock. Taghay counted fifty Kyrgyz tribes that had escaped to China. He described the experiences of the Kyrgyz who went to different parts of China. Some had heard that Tekes was good for cattle-breeding, so they moved there and settled in various towns and villages. Others moved through the Bedel Pass and arrived in other Chinese towns. Everywhere they experienced difficulties and died in great numbers.

Unlike many *aqyns*, Taghay also told the story of those who decided to stay behind. He described a scene in which several soldiers came and gathered the Kyrgyz, and asked them about the whereabouts of those who had dared to stand up against the Tsar:

[The Kyrgyz] answered: They moved to China.
Who could stay and tolerate all of this?⁶¹

At that point the soldiers killed the guilty and innocent indiscriminately, destroying entire households. The people of Qanat, from Qochqor,

were among those who suffered the most. Taghay wrote that Russians continued to impose punishments on those Kyrgyz who remained. They were burdened with various fees, their livestock was slaughtered, and they were interrogated in a government “field court”:

At that time they interrogated the Kyrgyz,
They asked questions and wrote down their words.
They found many guilty
And hung some of them.⁶²

Taghay wrote about Governor-General Kuropatkin’s project to physically segregate the Kyrgyz. The Russians gathered the Kyrgyz, appointed several *volost’* leaders, and drove everyone out to the newly formed Naryn district. They placed soldiers in each *volost’*, united various tribes into a single unit, and continued to tax the people heavily. Those who had remained in Turkestan began to regret staying, wrote Taghay, while those in China regretted fleeing. They could not get used to living in a foreign land, and their hopes of uniting with the Chinese people remained unfulfilled. After three months some of them began to leave China for their own land. Upon their return, they did not find any trace of their previous life:

There is no prosperity as it used to be among the people,
All of the wealth floated away in a flood.
Cities were closed off and trade stopped.
Great calamity fell on the people.
On the other hand, disease fell on them,
And wheat was scarce that year.⁶³

Taghay wrote that many died of starvation. They could no longer sustain themselves with their traditional meat diet, and they did not have enough grain to make up the difference. Men abandoned their wives, unable to support them, and many young men sought to be adopted just to be fed. Theft and robbery became rampant. Once other nations heard of the disaster, they began sending help to the Kyrgyz, in the form of food and clothing. Yet Taghay revealed that corruption remained endemic, as what little aid did arrive was divided up by the Kyrgyz officials overseeing the distribution of relief. Taghay claimed that only a small portion of the donations were ever given to ordinary people in need.

Only in the third year after the revolt were the Kyrgyz able to return to a fairly normal way of life again. However, Taghay sang, Kyrgyz society would never be the same:

[T]he Kyrgyz people have suffered a great deal.
Many of them are scattered in different lands and oblasts.

I would be mistaken if I said there are none left,
But there are only one-tenth of them left.⁶⁴

Taghay ended his poem by calling on his people to become literate, educate themselves and learn skills. He also stressed the importance of knowing one's religion. "We do not have anyone in the 'spiritual institutions' because we do not have knowledge," lamented Taghay. He sang hopefully about recent changes, and welcomed the fact that young men were beginning to take up studies.

The revolt of 1916 and displacement and refugeedom experienced in its aftermath united the northern Kyrgyz in their grief. By depicting the sorrow and losses endured during the uprising as a unique Kyrgyz experience, Kyrgyz *aqyns* reinforced and added new depth to the sense that the Kyrgyz constituted a coherent cultural and ethnic identity. They used images of ethnic others – the Chinese, Taranchi, Dungans and Russians – to emphasise what, in their opinion, made the Kyrgyz distinct and unique. They stressed such specific qualities as their attachment to land, their distinct way of life and worldview, and their outlook on the things they recognised as alien to their own society. In most cases, they connected the experience of displacement to the feeling of longing for one's homeland, by evoking romanticised images of Jeti Suu, Issyq-Kul and its surroundings.

If we see the Kyrgyz *aqyns* as reflecting the views of the northern Kyrgyz of that period, it is evident that the Kyrgyz believed they had suffered injustices under the Russian colonial regime. These injustices resulted from the administrative division of the nomads, in ways that disregarded their existing social structure and lifestyle; from Slavic peasant settlement and the attendant land shortages; and from the corruption of Kyrgyz tribal leaders, the *manaps*. Staying true to their profession, the Kyrgyz *aqyns* continued to serve as social critics, pointing out the shortcomings of both the Imperial administration and their own society even during these turbulent times. Likewise, they also continued to preserve the stories of their people, singing about the revolt in an effort to keep its memory alive for the next generation of Kyrgyz.

Notes

Research for this chapter was supported by an American Councils Title VIII Research Scholar Program Fellowship (2016). I would like to thank the editors of the present collection, Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu and Alexander Morrison, for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this chapter. I am especially grateful to Daniel Prior for his insightful and detailed comments on the final draft. Needless to say, I take sole responsibility for any errors found in the text.

- 1 T. F. Stefanovich, "Dokladnaia zapiska dragomana konsul'stva v Kashgare Stefanovicha Gospodinu rossiiskomu imperatorskomu general'nomu konsulu v Kashgare", in L. V. Lesnaia and T. Ryskulov (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizstane: dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Gosotsekiz, 1937), 109–130.
- 2 Stefanovich, "Dokladnaia zapiska", 115.
- 3 Scholars have tried to determine the exact number of the Muslim population of Semirech'e that perished during the revolt. According to Marco Buttino, the number of victims ranges from 150,000 to 270,000. Whereas, the lower end does not include those who escaped to China, the higher end includes all those who were killed at the hand of the Russian colonists, as well as those who escaped to China. The total number of deaths in Semirech'e region thus can be estimated at approximately 150,000. See Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziiia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), 80.
- 4 "Raport A. N. Kuropatkina na imia Nikolaia Romanova", in P. Galuzo (ed.), *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 70–71.
- 5 A. A. Anson, "Vosstanie kazakov", *Sibirskaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 1, 531. Cited in Edward Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1954), 159.
- 6 Przheval'sk district was cleared of Kyrgyz, and their lands were confiscated for use by the Cossacks. It was to become a "pure" Russian district. The mountainous parts of Przheval'sk district were transferred to Naryn district, creating a "pure" Kyrgyz district in the Naryn region. Kuropatkin explained his decision by citing the Kyrgyz as a security risk. A. N. Kuropatkin, "Raport", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 3 (1929), 88.
- 7 "Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina", *Krasnyi arkhiv* 3 (1929), 60.
- 8 Analysis of the revolt during the Soviet period was shaped by the state ideology of the moment. Thus in the 1920s, the revolt was used to expose the "true" face of the tsarist regime toward the non-Russian peoples of the Empire. See L. V. Lesnaia and T. Ryskulov (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizstane: dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Gosotsekiz, 1937); G. I. Broido, *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916 godu. Moe pokazanie prokuroru Tashkentskoi sudebnoi palaty, dannoe 3-go sentiabria 1916 g.* (Moscow: Nauchanaia assotsiatsiia vostokovedeniia pri Ts.I.K SSSR, 1925); Petr Galuzo, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Ob'edinenie gosudarstvennogo izdatel'stva Sredneaziatskogo otdela, 1932); Petr Galuzo, "Vosstanie 1916 g. v. Srednei Azii", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 39–45.
- 9 Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Joshua Sanborn, "Unsettling the Empire: Violent Migrations and Social Disaster in Russia During World War I", *The Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005), 290–324.
- 10 TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.8.
- 11 TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.8.
- 12 TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.8ob.

- 13 The insurgents set fire to settlements, killed the Russian men, took the Russian women and children captive, and drove off the livestock. TsGAKR, F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.10ob.
- 14 Shabdan Jantai uulu (1840–1912), an influential Kyrgyz *manap* (a term used for the native Kyrgyz ruling aristocracy) from the Tynai lineage of the Sarybaghysh tribe. He actively participated in the conquest of the khanate of Kokand in 1876 and the southern Kyrgyz tribes shortly thereafter. During his military campaigns, Shabdan personally met with the Governor-General of Turkestan, K. von Kaufman, and received an honorary robe and monetary rewards from him. He also accompanied General M. Skobelev on his military expedition to pacify the Alay Kyrgyz. For his excellent service, Skobelev recommended Shabdan for the rank of *voiskovoi starshina*, or Lieutenant Colonel, which Shabdan declined. On Shabdan see, Zhangyl Abdylidabek kyzy (ed.), *Shabdan Baatyr: Epokha i lichnost'* (Bishkek: Sham, 1999); Daniel Prior, *The Šabdan Baatir Codex: Epic and the Writing of Northern Kirghiz History* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013). Tetsu Akiyama examines the authority of the Kyrgyz *manap* Shabdan through his funeral ceremony. See Tetsu Akiyama, "On the Authority of a Kyrgyz Tribal Chieftain: The Funeral Ceremonies of Shabdan Jantai", 29 August, 2017, www.orientphil.uni-halle.de/sais/pdf/2009-12-11/On_the_Authority_of_a_Kyrgyz_Tribal_Chieftain.pdf. See also Tetsu Akiyama, "Why Was Russian Direct Rule over the Nomads Dependent on Tribal Chieftains 'Manaps'?", *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), 625–650.
- 15 TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.12ob.
- 16 In these *volosts*, the insurgents killed the heads of the police and several Russian settlers, including some women. They also took some police officers captive. TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.13ob.
- 17 Along with Kyrgyz, the Dungan population of the district played a major part in the revolt. TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.2 ll.9–12, 16–17. Russian officials were shocked by the Dungan unrest. When they had come to Turkestan in the 1860s as refugees, following the Muslim rebellion in China, the Russian Empire took them in and helped them to settle. The Russian administration believed that since then the Dungans had made a good living for themselves in Turkestan, and the animosity they displayed during the 1916 revolt baffled them. See, for instance, the report of Captain Jungmeister, Turkestan officer of Imperial Okhrana, which states "the insurgency of the Dungans of Mariinskoe, who were cherished (*oblaskany*) by the Russian government and became wealthy since their migration from China to Russia, is incomprehensible". A. V. Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 398.
- 18 Some witnesses reported that the Kyrgyz of Abaiylda *volost* elected Qanat as their khan. But during his interrogation, Qanat said that he was not elected khan, but only *volost'* leader. TsGAKR, F.97 Op. 1 D.1 ll.25ob–26. Qanat was later betrayed by Iskak Lepesov, a fellow tribesman, who gained his own freedom by promising to capture Qanat and his son for the Russians. Qanat's son was executed immediately, and Qanat himself was subsequently captured in Naryn, tried in Vernyi, and executed. TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.34 l.44. Qanat Abukin's interrogation by the Okhrana is discussed in detail in Jörn Happel, *Nomadische lebenswelten*

- und zarische politik: der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 183–306. See also Qanat's deposition from 17 October 1916 at Przheval'sk district court. TsGAKR F.97 Op. 1 D.1 ll.24–26ob.
- 19 Reminiscences of Mergenbaev Meder (b. 1896) on the revolt of 1916. In K. Usenbaev et al. (eds.), *1916-zhylky Kyrgyzstandagy kötörülüş* (Bishkek: Kyrgyzstan, 1996), 223–227. Mambetaaly Muratalin, a *volost'* administrator and translator (who referred to himself as "*chinovnik, gubernskii sekretar*" in his interrogation: TsGAKR F.97 Op. 1 D.1 l.31), at first joined Sooronbaev in rejecting violence, but later got caught up in the disturbances. He was captured and tried alongside Qanat Abukin in Naryn on 19 October 1916. TsGAKR F.97 Op. 1 D.1. He was released on a bail of 1,000 rubles, and almost immediately began serving as a court translator on cases related to the revolt. TsGAKR F.28 Op. 2 D.3 l.7ob.
- 20 Reminiscences of inhabitants of the Talas region, Nurmambet Nasarov, Imanbek Shygaev, Zhamankul Tynystanov and Sake Turdaliev. In K. Usenbaev et al. (eds.), *Kyrgyzstandagy kötörülüş*, 240–245.
- 21 Daniel Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916"; *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), 43. See also an excellent analysis of the revolt within the framework of violence by Aminat Chokobaeva, "Frontiers of Violence: State and Conflict in Semirechye, 1850–1938" (PhD dissertation, Australian National University, 2016), ch. 2.
- 22 Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads", 44.
- 23 Many Russian fields were burned and settlements were razed; women and children were taken prisoner, and some were forced into marriage as the "younger" wives of Kyrgyz men. Some reports from the time, most notably the diary of a priest named Shemanovskii, contained graphic depictions of the brutality of Kyrgyz and Russians alike. See "Dnevnik nastoiatel'ia Issyk-Kul'skogo monastyr'ia o vosstanii kirgizov", TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.45 ll.25–26, 57ob–58. An excerpt from the diary was published in Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 418–420. In all the diary consists of seventy folios (*listy*). Also, Piaskovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 405. Russian settlers, angered by the actions of the Kyrgyz, responded in kind. Angry Russian mobs tortured and killed Dungans and Kyrgyz who had been captured during the riots. One deposition reads: "[P]eople took revenge with blood and horror of their own. Mariinka [Mariinskoe, a settlement that is believed to have been destroyed by Dungan insurgents] sent us cartloads of fresh flesh; inside the fortress, the crowd, primed by animal instinct, prepared the same dish from Chinese, Dungans, and Kashgarians." L. V. Lesnaia (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizstane, dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Sotsekgiz, 1937), 44. The actions of Russian peasants toward Kyrgyz captives, containing description of torture and killings, are filed under the title *Mest' russkikh* at TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.49, ll.111–131.
- 24 Piaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 407.
- 25 U. Subkhanberdina et al. (eds.), *Qazaq gazetii* (Almaty: Kazak entsiklopediiasy, 1998), 332. It is important to note that the statement by A. Kuropatkin was published in the pages of the short-lived Kazakh-language newspaper *Qazaq*, which was an important voice of the native Kazakh, and to a lesser degree Kyrgyz, intellectual elite of the time.

- 26 A. V. Pokrovskii (ed.), "Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina," *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 4 (1929), 57.
- 27 Piaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 406.
- 28 Almost all of the accounts of the revolt by Russian settlers pointed out that the Kyrgyz started leaving their jobs in the middle of July, under the pretext of visiting their relatives. A priest at the Preobrazhenskoe monastery in Przheval'sk district recalled in his diary that all the Kyrgyz workers and students had suddenly departed "towards the mountains" in early August. TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.45 ll.7ob-8.
- 29 Broido, *Vosstanie*, 102.
- 30 Piaskovskii, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, 396. Ivanov, the head of Przheval'sk district, was particularly notorious for his extravagant demands and large entourage during his visits to various *volosts*.
- 31 The "party games" of which Kyrgyz oral poets complained in the early twentieth century referred to the elections for the *volost'* administration. Each candidate for office recruited a group of people, or "party", who would spend their energy and wealth to get him elected.
- 32 "Raport A. N. Kuropatkina na imia Nikolaia Romanova", in P. Galuzo (ed.), *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 70.
- 33 Sokol, *The Revolt*, 131-132.
- 34 Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 197.
- 35 This is not to say, however, that oral sources should be taken at face-value without critical analysis. Information may be distorted or lost during the transmission of oral sources. That some of these poems may have been altered in this way is suggested by cases in which one poem exists in several versions, or one poet's work resembles another's. Some of these poems were also composed only later, after significant amounts of time had passed, raising concerns about the reliability of memory. Finally, these poems, like all historical sources, reflect basic human subjectivity. As human beings, these poets interpreted events based on their own emotions and perceptions, as well as facts and evidence, all the more so because of the life-changing and traumatic nature of the disturbances.
- 36 E. Abduldaev and D. Isaev (eds.), *Tolkovyi slovar' kirgizskogo iazyka. Kyrgyz tilinin tushundurmo sozdugu* (Frunze: Mektep, 1969), 662. It is also possible that the Kyrgyz only began to refer to the 1916 revolt as the *ürkün* in the late 1980s and 1990s. Belek Soltonoev, known as the first modern Kyrgyz historian, refers to the rebellion as *buzuq* (break-up) and *urush* (fight), but the chapter title "The Kyrgyz Revolt of 1916" uses the term *kötörülüş*, which is equivalent to Russian word *vosstanie*. This reflects the political and academic culture of the 1930s, when Soviet research on the topic tended to refer to it as *vosstanie 1916 goda*. Belek Soltonoev, *Qizil qirghiz tarikhi* (Bishkek: Mamlekettik Uchkun kontserni, 1993), 2 vols.
- 37 On *maktabs* in Central Asia, see Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 22-28.
- 38 Daniel Prior notes that patronage patterns in Kyrgyz society shifted between the imperial and Soviet periods. In place of the *manaps* who had supported

- the *aqyns* and *zhomoqchus* before 1917, Soviet (and later Kyrgyz national) state institutions took over the roles of guardians and patrons of cultural production. See Daniel Prior, *Patron, Party, Patrimony: Notes on the Cultural History of the Kirghiz Epic Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Research for Inner Asian Studies, 2000). The poems on the revolt were never published during the authors' lifetimes.
- 39 Abdylfazhan Akmatalliev (ed.), *Kyrgyz adabiiatynyn tarykhy: baiyrky zhana kol zhazma adabiiaty* (Bishkek: Kyrgyz respublikasynyn Uluttuk Ilimder Akademiiasy, 2002), vol. 4, 313.
- 40 Melis Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras: Qalyghul, Arstanbek, Moldo Qylych, Aldash Moldo, Zhengizhok, Toqtoghul zhana bashkalar* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1990), 200. Since I did not have access to the texts of the poems at the Manuscripts Collection of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences during the earlier research phase, texts of the poems on the revolt in the *Muras* collection became the basis for this chapter. I am also grateful to Dan Prior for bringing to my attention another publication on the revolt, the book edited by S. Egemberdieva and A. Akmatalliev, *Tarykhyi yrlar, koshoktor, zhana okuialar* (Bishkek: Sham, 2002), which also has a section (74–198) on the poems written on the revolt by several Kyrgyz poets.
- 41 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 200.
- 42 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 201.
- 43 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 213.
- 44 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 213.
- 45 *Zamana* from Arabic, "time, epoch". Debates persist as to whether *zamana* was a movement, or a specific genre in Central Asian oral poetry, developed especially among Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. *Zamana* poets criticised the social and economic changes that occurred after the arrival of the Russians, and how these had, in turn, affected native social norms and morals. Some of the *zamana* poets offered solutions in the form of resignation and Islamic mysticism, while others called for struggle against the social and economic injustices imposed by the tsarist administration and the newly appointed Kyrgyz administrative elite. On *zamana* poets, see Abdysalam Obozkanov, *Tokmoluktun bashaty, kalyptanuu etaptary zhana sinkrettuu tabiiaty* (Bishkek: Sham, 2006); Abdysalam Obozkanov, "Zamana" poeziiasynyn genezisi (Bishkek: Zhamaat Press, 2008); K. Koilubaev, "Zamana adabiiatynyn salttuu belgileri", *Kyrgyz tili zhana adabiiaty* 6 (2004), 90–93.
- 46 *Seer* in Kyrgyz, or *sar* in Russian. Currency in Eastern Turkestan. In 1920, one *sar* was equal to one ruble forty kopek. TsGAKR F.75 Op. 1 D.44 l.5.
- 47 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 426, 428.
- 48 Embroidered felt rug.
- 49 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 429.
- 50 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 430.
- 51 Abdylzaev (ed.), *Muras*, 440.
- 52 The manuscript is located in the archives of the Manuscripts Collection of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic (RF NAN KR) in a folder/file no. 803. It is written in Kyrgyz using Arabic script on a "notebook" (*tetrad'*) no. 62. The manuscript starts with page 3 and ends with page 34 (in Arabo-Persian numerals). The poem consists of 924 verse

lines. A separate note by M. Mamyrov (no page number) in the same folder indicates that the poem “was written by the author himself”, but further research to confirm this claim would be necessary. The same folder contains a version of the poem transcribed in 1984 into Cyrillic script by Khusein Karasaev (1900–1998), a prominent Kyrgyz linguist. Along with transcribing and typing up Emilov’s work, Karasaev also collected information on his life. He typed bits and pieces from Emilov’s life on paper at different times; one in 1969 and another in 1984. Although, Emilov himself mentions at the end of the poem that he “gave his poem the title *Akhvāl-i Qirghuziyya*”, the title is officially typed up in the Cyrillic version of the poem only. Throughout the text, I will be using the Arabic-script Kyrgyz text of the poem.

- 53 Karasaev stated that Emilov was a close relative of Ishenaaly Arabaev. RF NAN KR, D.803, l. Not numbered.
- 54 Khusein Karasaev, *Khusein Naama (bashtan ötköndör)* (Bishkek: Kyrgyzstan, 2001), 65.
- 55 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.4.
- 56 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.4.
- 57 This may also explain why his poem was excluded from the collection of Kyrgyz poems on the revolt. His work exceeds the others in its complexity, and provides a much more realistic depiction of events.
- 58 RF NAN KR, D.803, list not numbered.
- 59 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.9.
- 60 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.10.
- 61 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.18.
- 62 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.19.
- 63 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.28.
- 64 RF NAN KR, D.803, l.32.

A Qırghız verse narrative of rebellion and exile by Musa Chaghatay uulu

Daniel Prior

Among numerous historical poems written in Qırghız (Kyrgyz, Kirghiz) about the 1916 anti-tsarist uprising in Semirech'e, one in Arabic script bearing the title *Qırghın (The Slaughter)* was written by Musa Chaghatay uulu. This was the same poet who in 1909 or 1910 dedicated an extended composition of epic-like historical poems, which I have called the Shabdan Baatır Codex, to his patron, the Tinay Saribaghış *manap* Shabdan Jantay uulu. In my 2013 edition, I incorrectly asserted that the Shabdan Baatır Codex was Musa Chaghatay uulu's only known work. The present contribution is an attempt to make good on my having overlooked the *Qırghın* poem in my earlier research.¹ Taken together, the two works cast useful light on the poetic practice, historical memory-making, and patronage relations of a little-known Qırghız author working in the years just before and after the 1917 Russian Revolution (or, to use a periodisation for Central Asia that we ought to use more, before and after the 1916 Turkestan Revolt). Musa's talent alone would be sufficient justification for presenting his work in an edition and translation. An additional attraction is the opportunity his body of work presents to study continuities and changes in an ecosystem of Qırghız poets, patrons and audiences through several consequential years in Central Asian history.

Information about Musa's standing and popularity as a poet, let alone his biography, seems to have been lost in the ruptures of Stalinism. He was not mentioned in Soviet-era works on pre-revolutionary Qırghız literature, and in independent Kyrgyzstan he is still barely known. The information we can glean about Musa's patronage relations, however, shows that he was an important poet. The Tinay chiefs held dominant positions in Qırghız affairs in the Chu valley, and Musa's family, Qıpchaqs originally from the Talas valley, had served them since the mid-nineteenth century. In 1909 or 1910 Musa adapted, compiled and composed a set of oral historical panegyric poems about the deeds of

mid-nineteenth century Tinay Sarıbaghish heroes; Shabdan was the patron and honouree of this poetic work, the Shabdan Baatır Codex. *Qirghın* finds Musa once again using poetry to express partiality toward powerful Tinay leaders and people in their orbit. Yet in comparison with his earlier poems about heroic exploits in the mid-nineteenth century, the diction and versification of *Qirghın* draws less on epic, and the social frame widens somewhat. The Qirghiz common people in *Qirghın* appear with and under the Tinay Sarıbaghish leaders as a collective protagonist. This is an understandable point of view in a writer who, already in the Shabdan Baatır Codex c. 1910, had begun to examine Qirghiz ethno-national particularity in a sharper way than any poet we know of up to that time. To that extent Musa was far-sightedly or luckily in line with early Bolshevik thinking on nationalities. He did not, however, foresee that his ideas on religion, class and the pernicious dominance of Russia would damn his work in the eyes of the Stalinist state. The fact that he handed his poem over to government-employed ethnic Turkic folklorists in 1927 shows that still in that year he was confident enough that his views like “The rich men were generous and good” or “When Russians come searching for you they take away your dignity” would be taken at face value. Moreover, Musa appears to have been unconcerned about depicting the Qirghiz as he saw them, a pathetic mass at the mercy of the state or the rich for their meagre well-being, and with no agency besides eruptive violence. Such ideas, of course, had no future in the Soviet Union, and that is why Musa and many of his contemporaries are still relatively unknown.²

Two better-known literary contemporaries of Musa Chaghatay uulu are in their different ways important touchstones for interpreting the *Qirghın* poem. Belek Soltonoyev (1878–1938), the first Qirghiz proponent of modern historical research and writing who compiled his masterwork, *Qirghız tarıkhı* (History of the Qirghız) between 1895 and 1934, was a participant in the uprising of 1916 and took temporary refuge in China along with many other Qirghız. His own experiences and a number of contemporary accounts are the basis of the chapter on those events that he included in his history. It would be possible to compare the text of Soltonoyev’s work and the numerous narrative poems about the 1916 events to look for evidence that these authors heard or read each other’s works; the present edition should make one such comparative exercise easier. We know that Soltonoyev had an interest in Musa Chaghatay uulu’s historical poetry, as he was the main copyist of the Shabdan Baatır Codex. He was killed in the Terror in 1938.³ Qayum Miiftaqov (Abduqayım Muftaq oghli, d. 1948 or 1949) was a Jadid-trained Bashkir folklorist and educator who laid much of the foundation of Qirghız folkloristics from the 1920s to the 1940s. It is by his hand that the text of Musa’s *Qirghın* poem was copied and

preserved in what became the manuscript archives of the National Academy of Sciences.⁴

The poem edited and translated here was copied in April 1928 by Qayum Miftaqov from a lost Arabic-script original manuscript. Internal textual evidence and a note by Miftaqov in his copy imply a date range of 1918–1927 for the creation of the original poem; it was most likely composed in the first couple of years of that time period. The Miftaqov Arabic ms. text is accompanied in the archives by a typed Cyrillic transliteration, which contains many errors and baseless emendations.⁵ Another flawed witness to the text is a popular edition in Cyrillic script published in 2002, which likewise contains several unexplained gaps and emendations.⁶

The Miftaqov copy of *Qirghin* (The Slaughter) consists of 427 lines, with title and author in the first two lines, then four numbered sections: 1. *Qozgholong* (The uprising) (lines 3–100 [98]), 2. *Urush* (The fight) (lines 101–213 [113]), 3. *Ürkün* (The flight) (lines 214–314 [101]), and 4. *Ürkündön eldin qaytqanı* (The people's return from their flight) (lines 315–427 [113]). Contrastive indentation separates successive blocks of verses into runs of two to fourteen lines related by rhythmico-syntactic parallelism (rhyming effects produced by Turkic grammatical structure) and sense. Four-line runs are the most significant structural feature of the versification, and resemble stanzas. There are thirty-nine of them, the great majority of which are in the rhyme scheme *aaba*; about a quarter of the four-line runs occur in series of two to five at once. Although the meter is epic-like, this structural style resembles the Qazaq written *qissa* and *dastan* genres more than Qırghız oral epic poetry. Miftaqov's Arabic-script text and punctuation are fairly precise and readable. I have normalised the spellings of a number of names in the text, and have corrected a few minor spelling inconsistencies without comment; on the other hand, several features of Musa Chaghatay uulu's spellings seem to reflect his dialectal and supra-dialectal verbal habits, and I have retained these.⁷ A number of emendations of Miftaqov's text, in different inks and hands, are visible on the ms. pages. Mostly these are deletions of lines and changes of wording that are very easy to understand as attempts to sanitise and otherwise appropriate the text to Soviet thinking. It is possible to see through and under most of these markings, and I have rejected the great majority of them; instances where I followed an emended form are noted.

This edition preserves the contrastive indentation of successive runs of verses, and the accompanying prose translation reflects this precisely in the division of paragraphs.

Text

- [p. 17]
II.
1. Qirghın *)
Musa Chaghatay uulu **)
1. Qozgholong
Jırghap jatqan jerimden
5 jılas qıldı Nekeley.
Köngülüngdü buzuq
sözüngdü
ıras qıldıng Nekeley.
Oydo joq saldat alam dep,
eldi buzdung Nekeley.
10 Orusqa alıp berem dep,
jerdı buzdung Nekeley.
Murungqu ötkön
zamandı
bayqap köröm
chamamdı.
[p. 18] Saldat alam
degen söz,
15 on altınchu jilında
iyun ayda taraldı.
Chong jandıralı kep ayttı,
chochqobay üyöz
teng ayttı.
Padıshanın jarlıghı
20 saldat alam dep ayttı.
El bashchısı kel dedi,
tezinen joop ber dedi.
On jeti menen
qırq jashtı
saldat alam men dedi.
25 Toqmoqqo jurttun baarı qısıldı.
külkülörü tıyıldı.
Aylasın tappay bul sözgö
jurtun baarı qısıldı.
Ar türlüü aqıl bashtashıp,
30 köngüldörü buzuldu.
Küldü Qirghuz qarısı
ong bilgichtin baarısı
jaqshılıqcha kengeship,
bir tolu pikir alıshtı.
35 “Qıtaydan qabar al dedi,
barıp jerin chal dedi.
Köp jürügön al elde
Samudun bar dedi.
Sarıbaghış Tinay keteli,
- 40 tınchıraq jerge jeteli.
Chırqıratıp baldardı
saldatqa berip ne eteli.”
Ol söz menen el taradı,
üylörünö baradı.
45 Ar qaysı jerden boz baldar
quralıshıp aladı.
Boz baldarı jeligip,
qaghılargha terigip,
barbayız dep saldatqa
50 ooz darı birigip.
Urushuugha qamdanıp,
el ichinde chang salıp,
baldarının ishinde
qarılar qaldı sandalıp.
55 [p. 19] Nekeleydin chongdughu,
birinchi qılghan qordughu.
Jeribizden ayırdı,
abalqı qılghan zordughu.
Andan song alam maldardı
60 ispiskege sal dedi.
Üch bölügünün malıngdın
bir bölügün al dedi.
Ushu sözgö jurttun qamdanıp,
ürküügö bashtap shaylanıp,
65 eer toqum jabdıghın
ar kim özü qamdanıp.
Qulaghıbiz sereyip,
eki jaqqa eleyip.
Segizinchi aghusta
70 jatır ele deldeyip.
Qara-qastek jerinen,
kün chughush Qastek elinen
Eding aajı bir Qazaq
qabar berdi chetinen:
75 “Qazaq urush saldı dep,
Almatı jalghız qaldı dep.
Chelek bashtıq tört qalaa
tegiz talap aldı” dep.
Dürbüp Qirghuz attanıp,
80 Jetigen, Qıpchaq qamdanıp,
Qazaq Orus jaylatqan
böksödö jatqan maldı alıp.
Bashtıq boldı Borombay,
Berdike menen Otorbay.
85 Qıpchaqtan chıqqan
bashtıghı
Küntuughan uulu
Chaghatay.

- Kün chıgharda bashtadıq,
 beshimge cheyin
 qachpadıq.
 Malın alıp Orustun
 90 eki üçün baylap tashtadıq. 130
 Chaptırıp adam jiberdik
 Möküş menen
 Sultangha.
 Qatılıp alıp Orusqa
 qaran izdep quu jangha,
 95 [p. 20] Ürküp qaldıq bölünüp, 135
 tün kirgen song quptanda.
 Ürküp barıp ne qıldıq?
 Bel-sazdı bettep burulduq.
 Tün boyuncha Sultandın
 100 üyünö barıp jıyıldıq. 140
2. Urush
 Tang ata saldıq urushtu,
 urush qılıp turushtu.
 Bal chelekchi Orustan
 105 ancha-mıncha qırıştı. 145
 Chong Keminge
 quraldıq,
 ay tuyaq soyup tuu aldıq.
 Qan kötörüp Möküştü
 asker jıyıp quraldıq.
 110 Baarı elge Möküş 150
 bash boldu,
 ashkere öngköy jash boldu.
 Bütkül el saldat berbeym dep,
 Nekeleyge qas boldu.
 Qozgholduq jer
 115 saldattan, 155
 tüngülüp kettik
 mal-jandan.
 Shol ishterdin jönünön
 muruntan Qırghız
 qamdanghan. 160
- Aalıkeni jiberdik,
 Almatı üyöz Qazaqqa.
 120 Erkek adam qalghan joq, 165
 çıqpay qalghan jasoogho.
 Eki kishi jiberdik,
 künggöy-teskey Sayaqqa.
 Künü-tünü jol jürüp,
 125 barghan keldi aragha.
 Barcha Qırghız qozgholdu
- toghuzunchu aghus
 chamada.
 Bir bolushtun ichinen
 on besh mıltıq tabıldı,
 qaraghaydan jardırıp
 nayza qılıp chabıldı.
 [p. 21] Mıltıq qarmap
 İbrayım,
 abiyiribiz jabıldı.
 Azıq qılıp ayrandı
 qanjıghagha baylandı.
 Tobuna bir uy soyushup,
 ooqat mintip jaylandı.
 Kötmaldının jerinen,
 Kök-moynoqtun
 belinen
 140 Tülönün uulu İbrayım
 tört araba mıltıqtı
 körgön oshol chetinen.
 Eki ekiden arbagha
 olturghan eken saldatı
 145 soqu bash mergen janında.
 İbrayım jandadı,
 Balıqchinın aq chiyden
 atmaqqa mıltıq
 qamdadı.
 Kötmaldıdan ata albay,
 150 atuugha jalghız bata albay,
 mıltıqtı körüp qayran er
 toqtop chıdap jata albay.
 Astırtan chaap barışıp,
 chiy jaminıp alışıp,
 kele jatqan saldatı
 155 aldına bughup qalışıp.
 Arıldatıp attarın
 saldat kelet tüyülüp.
 Ööktördü qara jol
 menen
 160 kirip keldi tüyülüp.
 Atın atıp öltürdü
 toqtoldu arba urunup.
 Bir saldatı atqanı,
 jıghılıp saldat jatqanı.
 165 Tüşö qalıp bashqası
 Balıqchıgha qachqanı.
 Saldattardın shashqanı
 bir jüz seksen bar-dengke
 İbrayım basqanı.

- 170 Bar-dengke qolgho tiygende
anan Qirghız shashpadi.
[p. 22] Miltıq qolgho
tiygen song,
anan Orus boldu chong.
Almati, Toqmoq saldatı
- 175 kelip qaldı aa da mol.
Kök-jon degen jerinde,
Qashqa-joldun belinde
atıshıp qaldıq betteship,
saat toghuz cheninde.
- 180 Bögürüböshtün balası
kemiser saldat sarası.
Toqson saldat erchitip
kelgen jerin qarachi!
Otuz saldat bölünüp,
- 185 Jol-bulaqqa kirishti.
Eki jol menen kirgenin
Qirghızdar abdan bilishti.
Möküş, Tülöö, Chaghatay,
Bayımbet, Belek, Borombay
- 190 Qashqa-joldo bettedi,
Otuz mergen eerchitip
aldın tozup eptedi.
Atqan mergen oqtoru
biri zaya ketpedi.
- 195 Bögürüböshtün balası
oq tiyip attan jıghıldı.
Bashqası atın tashtashıp,
jol buudaygha tıghıldı.
Sultangha oq jangıldı,
- 200 kemiseri janınan
qatuu buyruq tabıldı.
Jeti saat qırghın dep,
jandıralı qılghan amırdı.
Amırı eki bolboghon,
al joldo Orus ongboghon.
Jol-bulaqta Orustu
qalınq Qirghız torghoghon.
Aydap tamgha qamaltıp,
anı da Qirghız qoyboghon.
- 210 Üch saattay atıshıp,
bir dalay qırghın tabıshıp.
[p. 23] Pömüşnüktör
bosh bolup,
qayra ketti qachushıp.
- 215 Buyruqtu Qirghız uqqanı,
esibizdin chıqqanı.
Qıtaydı közdöy bet alıp,
ürküp köchüp chıqqanı.
Jönödük ürküp sharaqtap,
közdörübüz alaqtap.
- 220 Kölügü joq nacharlar,
ee qılbay baydı qaraqtap.
Qısımchılıq tartqanı,
üch jerde saldat qaptadı.
- 225 Qarshı turup atıshıp,
qayran Möküş saqtadı.
İbırayım, Möküş
bolboso,
qıyratat ele al kezde.
Qatın menen balanı
ıylatat ele al kezde.
- 230 Miltıq menen jıgha atıp
sulatat ele tar kezde.
Qirghızda mal qalghan joq,
kördük dalay qızıl choq.
- 235 Orustun malın soyup jep,
qarınımız boldu toq.
Tigilüü boydon üy qaldı;
tanguuluu boydon
bul qaldı;
Alda bashqa salghan song,
anıq beyish Chüy qaldı.
- 240 Bara jatqanda barcha el,
bay-jardısı teng boldu.
Küdör üzüp malınan
baydın peyili keng boldu.
- 245 Baylar jaqshı mart boldu.
Körbögön murun al chöldü
mal tursun jandan tüngülüp,
[p. 24] köngülünö
dart toldu.
Aqılduu elder qamdanbay
el ashuuda sandaldı.
- 250 Ottoruna chöbü joq,
achqadan dalay mal qaldı.
Oshondo maldı
jengdedik,
öltürüp köbün
tengdedik.
- 255 Jıyırmanchu aghusta
oshondo ashuu belde elek.
Bedeldi ashıp tüshkönü,

- qara tashti süzgönü.
 Jerin körüp qayran el
 260 jandan küdür üzgönü.
 Qarasang jeri qızıl tash, 305
 körgön song köngül
 boldu mas.
 Ayaghında körörsüng
 baarın körgön ushu bash.
- 265 Qulansarı degeni
 quyqalangghan jer eken.
 Shol jerdegi Cherikter
 birinchi quu el eken.
 Jalghız etek samangha
 270 bir qoy alam deer eken.
 Aqırı alat bir qoydu,
 berbesti bizge
 kim qoydu.
 Alsıraghan Qırghızdı
 alıp Cherik qup toydu.
- 275 Delbe degen chöp çıqtı.
 Dushman bizge köp çıqtı.
 Jılqı maldan ayırıp,
 320 uulatıp delbe qup çıqtı.
 Sarttan kördük qorduqtu
 280 jerime maling tüshtü dep,
 chırqıratqan zorluqtu.
 Chong baylar ketti
 bölünüp,
 Qash-köngüz degen
 jerine.
 Orto bay, nachar qalıshtı,
 285 Turpan Aq-suu eline.
 Aydap jürgön malımız,
 jetpedi qishtın tengine.
 [p. 25] Mal jetpedi üç
 aygha
 tentip kirdi ar jaqqa.
 290 Bir-birine qarashar
 murungquday kün qayda?
 Orto baydın baldarı
 nachar boldu aldarı.
 Andan tömön nacharlar
 295 qan-etip qalat jandarı.
 Ooqat izdep betinen,
 tentip ketti qayran el.
 Ölö berip chetinen
 kemip ketti qayran el.
 300 Bir sarı teri jamınıp,
 keyip ketti qayran el.
- [p. 38] Tamaq üçhün malaygha
 jürüp ketti qayran el.
 Arzan satıp bütürdü,
 aydap jürgön maldarın.
 Chırqıratıp ıylatıp,
 aqırı sattı baldarın.
 Bashuna qısım tüshkön
 song,
 asıradı jandarın.
 310 Orto baydın baldarı,
 ketkenden song aldarı,
 bozo sattı bayqushtar.
 Kesme qılıp qazangha
 qosho sattı bayqushtar.
- 315 4. Ürkündön eldin
 qaytqanı
 Qayran el jerin saghındı,
 Qudaygha ıylap jalındı.
 Uryat degen jaqshı söz,
 shol kezekte jayıldı.
 320 Uqqan song el qubandı—ay
 bash ayaghı qura albay.
 Bet betinen jönödü
 degdep chıdap tura albay.
 [p. 26] Qazan qarmap
 murzalar,
 325 eki qolun köö bastı.
 Minerine kölük joq,
 etegin türüp jöö bastı.
 Uryat dep qubanıp,
 azıqqa talqan un alıp,
 330 joldo oorup köbübüz,
 sandalıp qaldıq chubalıp.
 Oorughanın jetelep,
 ashuunu közdöy tötölöp,
 a Quday jerdi körsöt dep,
 335 jürö berdik entelep.
 Ashuunun kördük
 chongdughun,
 arqayghan toosu moldughun.
 Ayta bersem, tügönböyt,
 joldo körgön qordughun.
 340 Shaqıldatıp tash basıp,
 Kök-irim, Bedel zorgho
 ashıp,
 joldo ölgön ölüktü,
 qoyo albadıq kör qazıp.
 Qara tashti oyorgho,

- 345 jabdıq joq bizde qoyorgho.
Jetishtüü tamaq bizde joq,
ashıqpay ichip toyorgho.
Jürörünö shayman joq,
tirüülöy qaldı ölügü.
- 350 Joq bolghon song
qan-etet dep,
mine turghan kölügü.
Orus çıqtı aldınan,
el tüngüldü janınan.
Basmachı Orus ayırdı
- 355 birin-serin malınan.
Qayra aytuugha al barbı?
Körgöndön song Orustu,
öz erkinche bolushtu.
Bir shıpıra Qırghızdı
- 360 basmachı Orus
soyushtu.
Andan aman qalghanı,
chubap Chüygö barghanı.
Acharchılıq kez boldu
bir Qudaydın salghanı.
- 365 [p. 27] Bet-betinen qangghırıp,
tentip ketti qayran el.
Achqalıqtan qırılıp,
kemip ketti qayran el.
Izdep jürüp Orustar,
abiyiringdi ketiret.
- 370 Anıq Orus taanisa,
achuuu kelse, öltüröt.
Malingdı alıp kething dep,
tepkilep jatıp bütüröt.
- 375 Eki ooru bir kelse,
ajalingdın jetkeni.
Eki doochu bir kelse,
abiyiringdin ketkeni.
Achqalıq, Orus birigip
eki jaqtan eptedi.
- 380 Al ubaqtın jamanı
Kereniskey zamanı.
Achqalıq menen Orustan
ölböy qalghan amanı.
- 385 Qırghız, Dungghan,
Qazaqqa
tarap ketti tamaghı.
On segizinchi jılında
- Sa-bet bulas ongolup.
Zorduqchu Orus jogholup,
390 nasip bolup bizderge
qudura çıqtı orolup.
Achqalargha ashqana
achıp,
Sa-bet bulas jayladı.
Sartqa kelse, kething dep,
395 kötöngö chaap aydadı.
Dungghandın Bolor
baatırı
oshondon kördük
paydanı.
Ökümöttön suranıp,
qalghanıbız quralıp,
400 Kichi Kemin oozuna
jıylıstıq quralıp.
Jıylıshıp barghanı
ölümdön aman qalghanı.
Bir jüz elüü üy bolduq,
405 sözümdö joq jalghanı.
[p. 28]Qashqar, Turpan,
Aq-suudan
qalıp qalghan qancha jan.
Jıyıp keldi Shabdanup,
dal ushunday bizden
qalghanın.
- 410 Balsha-bekke sıyındıq,
bashında jaman qırıldıq.
Adilet zaman bolghon
song,
aqır tübü jıyıldıq.
Köz menen kördüm baarısın,
415 Küntuughandın Musası
on altınchu jil zamandı
oylop jazghan qızası.
Tamam qılıp qoyoyun,
bul Turpandın qızasın.
- 420 Adil bolsong balalar,
aqrında ustasıng.
Köngülüngüzgö alıngız!
Chaghatay uulu Musasın
Qıpchaqtan özüm taraymın,
425 öz jashımdı sanaymın.
Adabiyat joluna
buyursang baldar jaraymın.

Translation*The Slaughter*

Musa Chaghatay uulu

1. The uprising

Nicholas made a desolation of my happy land! Nicholas, at your pleasure you turned thought into wicked words! Nicholas, out of the blue you drafted soldiers, and ruined the people! Nicholas, [10] you took our land for Russia, and ruined it!

I'll hark back, if I can, to those bygone days:

The draft of soldiers was announced in 'Sixteen, in the month of June. The Governor-General ordered it, and the district and uyezd commanders as well: the Emperor's decree [20] was to draft soldiers.

They ordered the native leaders to come and to give an immediate reply: the decree was to draft all men between the ages of seventeen and forty.

The people gathered at Toqmoq; their snickering stopped. With no idea how to comply with the decree, everyone was in distress. People led in with every sort of counsel, [30] which got them quite discouraged.

Then all the Qirghiz elders – all those with actual wisdom – held council secretly, and exchanged opinions in depth. “Bring news from China,” they ordered. “Have the country there reconnoitred. Samudun, you have been there a lot; you go. We Tinay Saribaghish should leave [40] and seek a safer place. How could we give our sons up to be soldiers and make them wail?”

Having said that, the people broke up and went home. The youths from each place then formed their own groups.

The youths, in their excitement, were feeling offense at being so meanly treated. “We won't go be soldiers!” they said, [50] and collected muzzle-loaders and powder. Ready to fight, they kept the people on edge; the old were dumbfounded at the doings of the young.

His Majesty Nicholas committed the first act of contempt. The original outrage he inflicted was that he parted us from our land.

After that he ordered a [60] registration and requisition of cattle; we were allowed to keep only one-third of our cattle.

At this announcement, the people began to make preparations and plans to flee; each saw to his own saddles, tack and gear.

We pricked up our ears and looked about in confusion, [70] and were still thus in bewildered suspense on the eighth of August.

Then a Qazaq hajji named Eding, from the place Qara-qastek in the Qastek region in the east, brought news from across the border: “The Qazaqs have begun fighting, and Almaty alone remains untouched. They've raided all four cities from Chelek on down,” he said. All in an

uproar, the Qırghız mounted up. [80] The Jetigen and Qıpchaq armed themselves and made off with cattle that Cossacks were grazing on the lower slopes.

The leaders were Borombay, Berdike and Otorbay; a leader from among the Qıpchaqs was Chaghatay son of Küntuughan.

We started just before sunrise, and did not withdraw until afternoon. We took the Russians' cattle and [90] set aside two or three for fattening.

We sent a man to ride to Möküş and Sultan. Happening across some Russians, we tried to save our poor souls,

fleeing in different directions after nightfall, at the hour of evening prayers.

What did we do as we fled? We turned toward Bel-saz, and through the night [100] we came and gathered at the home of Sultan.

2. *The fight*

As dawn came the Qırghız began to fight in earnest. They slaughtered a number of Russian beekeepers.

We assembled at Chong Kemin, sacrificed a horse, and took up the standard; we elevated Möküş as khan and mustered troops.

[110] Möküş became the leader of all the people, though in actuality he was quite young. The people all refused to give their men up to the draft, and turned against Nicholas.

We rose up because of land and the draft, and lost all hope for our lives and our property; but because of that business we Qırghız had been preparing for a long time.

We dispatched Aalike to the Qazaqs of Almatı district. [120] We had not a man left to muster; we also dispatched two men to the northern and southern Sayaq. They rode day and night and covered the distance. And so all the Qırghız were up in arms about the ninth of August.

In one volost fifteen rifles were found; [130] others split spruce trunks and hewed lances.

İbırayım, taking up a rifle, saved us from shame. They got supplies of *airan* and strapped them to their saddles; they slaughtered a cow for the lot of them, and thus saw to their food.

By Kötmaldı, at Kök-moynoq pass, [140] İbırayım son of Tülöö saw four wagon-loads of rifles coming up that way.

In each wagon, he could see, sat a soldier paired with a big, block-headed armed guard.

İbırayım crept up and made ready to fire his rifle from the reeds at Balıqchi.

He was unable to take his shot from Kötmaldı, [150] and by himself he was outmanned for a firefight; when that poor dear man saw those rifles, he couldn't resist taking action.

They galloped over undetected, took up position amid the reeds, and lay low in the path of the soldiers. Those came on driving their horses rushing and huffing and puffing along. They rushed up alongside the horses [160] right on the main road and shot them dead, and the wagons came to a stop with a jolt.

They shot a soldier, and as he lay where he fell the others got down and ran off toward Baliqchi. As soon as the soldiers had hurried away, İbirayım seized a hundred and eighty Berdan rifles. [170] Having taken those rifles, the Qırghız slowed down; but after they had taken them, the Russian onslaught grew all the greater. More and more soldiers immediately arrived from Almatı and Toqmoq.

At nine o'clock, at the place called Kök-jon, on the Qashqa-jol pass, we met them and exchanged fire.

[180] The son of Bakurevich was a commissary officer and an excellent soldier. He came leading ninety soldiers; see how that went!

Thirty soldiers had detached and entered the valley of the Jol-bulaq; the Qırghız, however, were already aware that they were approaching from two directions.

Möküş, Tülöö, Chaghatay, Bayımbet, Belek, and Borombay [190] met them at Qashqa-jol; they managed to head them off accompanied by thirty marksmen. Not one of the rounds those marksmen fired missed.

The son of Bakurevich was hit and fell from his horse. The rest left their horses and dove into a wheat field by the side of the road. Sultan was hit by a ricocheting bullet. [200] On the body of the commissary officer a stern order was found: the general had commanded seven hours' indiscriminate slaughter.

There was no second order; the Russians on that road got the worst of it. At Jol-bulaq, a thick press of Qırghız blocked the Russians and drove them into a house, and surrounded them; here too they did not let up.

[210] For about three hours they exchanged fire with us, incurring heavy casualties.

There being no officers in their ranks, they retreated.

3. *The flight*

As soon as we Qırghız heard about the order, we lost our minds. We fled en masse, migrating away toward China.

We took to flight noisily, [220] looking about wide-eyed. Poor men with no pack animals had no choice but to rob the rich.

We were hard-pressed. At three places soldiers surrounded us; poor dear Möküş stood against them and returned fire, and saved us.

If not for İbirayım and Möküş, the Russians would have crushed us then. They would have made the women and children [230] weep; in those straits they would have shot them down and laid them low with their rifles.

The Qirghiz had no cattle left, so we saw much of Chinese officialdom. We had killed and eaten all the Russians' cattle, and filled our bellies.

But our tents were left behind as they had been pitched, and our money was left behind as it had been bundled; after God was through with us, [240] our perfect heaven, the Chu valley, was left behind.

As they went on their way, all the people rich and poor were equal. The rich were in a benevolent mood once they had lost all hope of saving their cattle. The rich men were generous and good. Those who hadn't seen that wilderness before despaired for their lives, let alone their cattle; their hearts were filled with pain. Wise people could not make preparations, [250] so people roamed about on the pass. There was no grass to graze; a great many cattle fell behind from hunger.

We finished off the cattle there; however many we killed, we matched them with our own deaths. On the twentieth of August we were atop that pass.

As soon as we crossed Bedel pass and began to descend, we hit the black rocks; our poor dear people [260] were filled with despair at the sight of that country.

If you looked, the land was nothing but red rocks; having seen it, one lost all sense. You'll see later how this was just the beginning of all we experienced.

Qulansari, as it was known to us, turned out to be burnt-over land, and the Cherik people of that locality turned out to be first-class rogues. [270] They would charge one sheep for a single large armload of straw.

Then, always and to a man they would take the one sheep, but give us nothing. The Cherik would eat well at the expense of the exhausted Qirghiz.

A poisonous weed called *delbe* grew there; enemies appeared everywhere. They parted our horses from our herds, poisoning them on the flourishing *delbe* weed. We saw humiliation at the hands of the Sarts with their shrill bullying: [280] "Your cattle have gotten onto my land!"

The richest men went off on their own to a place called Qash-köngüz. The moderately well-off and the poor remained behind in the lands of Turfan and Aq-suu; the herds we drove couldn't get us through the winter.

The cattle didn't even last three months; we wandered here and there. Where had the old days gone, [290] when we would look out for each other?

Even the sons of the moderately well-to-do became weak and didn't measure up; how could men poorer than they keep body and soul together?

To save face those unhappy people wandered away in search of sustenance. Facing constant starvation and isolated, those unhappy people dwindled away. [300] Covering themselves with but a single tawny hide, those unhappy people grieved. Hiring themselves out for food was how those unhappy people got by.

They sold off cheap all the cattle they had been driving with them. In the end they sold their bawling children. When hardship hit, they were left with nothing but their own souls to care for.

Once their parents had gone, [310] the children of those who were moderately well-off had to hustle and sell *bozo*, the poor devils. Those miserable wretches also made noodles in pots and sold that.

4. *The people's return from their flight*

Those unhappy people longed for their homeland, and cried out beseechingly to God. At that time the good word Freedom was spread about; [320] when they heard it, how the people rejoiced – they were head over heels! They started moving from every direction, unable to control themselves in their strong desire. Men of status had both hands covered in soot from grabbing their cook-pots. Without a nag to ride, they hitched up their coat-hems and walked on foot.

Rejoicing at the news of freedom, they took supplies of oat flour. [330] Many of us, however, fell ill on the road, straggling around with halting steps. But we pressed on in our hurry, leading the sick ones on tethers, straight toward the pass by the shortest route, praying to God to show us the way.

We saw the height of the pass amid endless towering peaks. If I went on about the miseries we experienced on that road there would be no end.

[340] Clambering over clattering boulders we crossed the high passes K k-irim and Bedel. We could not dig graves to bury the corpses of those who died on the way.

We had no tools to dig into the rock to bury them. We had not enough food, nor any leisure to eat our fill.

We had no necessities for the trek. People were left for dead. [350] How else can it be, we said, without even a nag to ride?

Then Russians appeared and we despaired for our lives; Russian bandits rustled a few animals from our herds here and there.

Do I have strength to repeat this? As soon as we met the Russians they took their liberties with us. [360] Those Russian bandits swept us Qirghiz up and slaughtered us.

Those who remained unhurt after that limped along until they reached the Chu. Then it was famine time, visited upon us by the One God. Wandering everywhere without any shelter, those unhappy people were lost. Dying of hunger, those unhappy people dwindled away.

When Russians come searching for you [370] they take away your dignity. One may get to know a Russian quite well, but if he gets angry, he'll kill you. "Off you go," he'll say, and kick you away while stealing every last one of your cattle.

If you catch two illnesses at once, that's surely your death; if two people sue you at once, that's the end of your dignity.

Starvation and the Russians [380] slipped in from either side. The worst part of those times was the Kerensky era; we barely avoided death by starvation or at the hands of the Russians. Then food was distributed to the Qirghiz, Qazaqs and Dungans.

In 'Eighteen, Soviet power prevailed. The tyrannous Russians were no more. [390] We had food, and began to feel like ourselves and get our strength back.

Canteens opened up for the hungry; Soviet power was in place. If you went to a Sart, he'd say, "Get out of here," whip you on the behind, and drive you off. We also saw that sort of thing from the Dungan warrior Bolor.

Some begged from the state; the rest of us came together [400] at the mouth of the Kichi Kemin, and gathered and formed up.

Those who came together remained safe from death. We were one hundred and fifty houses. There is no falsehood in my words.

No few souls stayed behind in Kashgar, Turfan and Aq-suu. Shabdanov came and gathered those of us who were left, just as before.

[410] We put our faith in the Bolsheviks. At the start we had been badly slaughtered, but when the era of justice began we were united once and for all.

I, Musa, descendant of Küntuughan, saw all this with my own eyes in the days of 'Sixteen, then composed a tale. Now let me end this tale of Turfan. [420] If you are upright, children, you will grow up to be masters. Take this to heart! I, Musa Chaghatay uulu, am descended from the Qıpchaq. I recount things from my own life. If you please, children, the way of literature is for me.

Commentary

The poem edited here begins on page 17 of a long ms. compilation of narrative poems in Arabic-script Qırghız in Qayum Miiftaqov's handwriting, titled *1916- juldın qozgholongu* (The Revolt of 1916). The title page bears the further inscriptions *Qırghızdın basma adabiyatqa köchüü aldındaghı adabiyattarınan* (From the Qırghız literature pre-dating the transition to print literature); *Qırghızistan El aghartuu kemiseriyetinin Bilim borboruna jynalghan materiyaldardan* (From materials collected by the Scientific Center of the Qırghızstan Commissariat for Education); and the date, 29 April 1928. As witnessed by a PDF copy supplied to me by the Manuscript Archives of the Chingiz Aitmatov Institute for Language and Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, the ms. consists of 101 numbered pages plus a few unnumbered sides and leaves. Page 17, where the poem *Qırghın* begins, includes five concluding lines of the previous poem in the collection.

The following notes keyed to numbered lines of the text show ms. forms that differ from forms as textualised here; explications of words and senses not entered in the dictionaries by Iudakhin (*Kirgizsko-russkii slovar'*) and Muqambayev (*Qırghız tilinin dialektologiyalıq sözdüğü*); and explications of toponyms, mainly those that are hard to find in generally

available reference works and maps from Kyrgyzstan and Russia. They do not record smoothings of a few minor orthographic irregularities and normalisations of names in the text.

1 [Miftaqov's footnote:] *) *Musa Chaghatay uulu öz qolu menen jazıp bilim kemisiyesine tapshurghan (1927 jul)* "Musa Chaghatay uulu wrote this in his own hand and submitted it to the scientific commission (1927)". In this ms. Miftaqov almost invariably spells Chaghatay uulu's given name as Moso, which we may interpret as a hyper-Qırghız rendition of Musa, the common form used in this edition. 2 [Miftaqov's footnote:] **) *Chüylük (Atake – Sarghaghish [sic] eli)* "Resident of the Chu valley (Tinay Sarıbaghish people)". 18 *chochqobay* for Russian *uchastkovyi*. 48 Overwriting in a later hand emends the original written form *kerikip* to *terigip*, which appears correct. 50 *ooz* "muzzle-loading firearm": cf. the cognate Uzbek *āghiz* "mouth; muzzle of a firearm"; ms. *berigip* is evidently in error for *birigip*. 70 ms. *deley-* apparently for *deldey* "be taken aback, be amazed". 71 ms. *qara qushtaq* is clearly in error for *Qara-qastek*, the name of a village very near Qastek at 43°08'01"N 76°06'01"E, northeast and over the mountains from the Kichi Kemin valley. 73–74 The start of hajj in Mecca that year (8 Dhu'l Hijjah 1334) fell on 6 October 1916; it is thus plausible that a person making the journey from the Qastek area might pass through the Chu valley in early August. 77 Towns likely to have been included in this mention of attacks are those located along the post road to the east of Vernyi (Almatı). The direction *bashtuq* "... on down" refers to the east to west flow of the nearby Ili river, starting from the east: Chilik/Shelek (Zaitsovka, at the intersection of east to west and north to south postal routes), Kara-Turuk, Malovodnoe, Mikhailovskoe, Nadezhdinskaia and Sofiiskaia (*Voenna-dorozhnaia karta Aziatskoi Rossii* 1:2100,000 [1920] sheet 14). 86 Chaghatay Küntuughan uulu appears to have been the poet Musa Chaghatay uulu's own father. Qıpchaqs from this family had appeared in the Kemin area in the mid-nineteenth century, when Bayake Küntuughan uulu entered the service of Jantay, the grandfather of the Atake (Tinay) Sarıbaghish leaders Möküş and Samudun, who are mentioned in this poem; see Prior, *Şabdan Baatır Codex*, 257f., 327. 98 Bel-saz is a low pass on a shoulder of the Qırghız Ala-too range above the Kegeti river, about 30 km south south west of Toqmoq, 42°36'36.19"N 75°05'55.20"E. 113 ms. *tas* (with no known sense) is apparently in error for *qas* "hostile, malicious; enemy". 123 *künggöy* "sunny-slope" and *teskey* "shady-slope" (of the east to west Tian Shan mountains) with reference to the Sayaq means "on either side of lake Issyk Kul". 134 *airan*, a yogurt drink. 139 Kök-moynoq was the narrow defile at the western end of lake Issyk Kul, through which the upper Chu river flows into the head of the Boom gorge; the Russians had a post office with telegraph service there. 145 *soqu bash* "big and dim-witted", lit., "mortar-headed" (Iudakhin, *Kirgizsko-russkii slovar'*), may harbour a racial overtone, as the phrase is also found in Qırghız anthropological literature in the sense

“dolichocephalic”, plausibly a distinguishing trait of Russians as perceived by Qırghız. **153** *chaap barıshıp* “they galloped”: evidently İbrayim’s decisive act involved first finding comrades to join the ambush. **158** ms. *tüyün-* “tie in a knot” may have been for intended *tüyül-* “move hastily”, although the exact repetition of *tüyüliüp* two lines later would be stylistically suspect. **168, 170** The Berdan rifle used by the Russian military in the late nineteenth century (*berdanka* in Russian, *bar-dengke* in Musa’s Qırghız) was obsolete by 1916; it is not clear whether Musa simply meant “Russian rifle”, or that model was still used by Russian forces in Semirech’e. In either case they would have been better than firearms normally available to the Qırghız; cf. line 50. **185** *Jol-bulaqqa kirishti* “entered the valley of the Jol-bulaq”: or “canyon”, or “ravine”. **212** ms. *yömüştüktör* appears to encode Russian *iamshchik* “driver, coachman”; however, the presence or absence of drivers was moot since the horses pulling the wagons were dead and the soldiers had fled. I assume that the ms. form was meant to be pointed as *pömüşhüktör*, as if Russian *pomoshchnik* “adjutant”, in the sense of various low and mid-level officer ranks. *bosh* in this line too seems to connote a hole in ranks. **215–216** The ms. gives the lines numbered here as 215 and 216 twice: once immediately before and once immediately after the heading, with the first pair crossed out. **233–234** The indigent Qırghız refugees had to appeal to Chinese officials for sustenance. **237** ms. *tigüülüü* **238** ms. *tanguuluu*, evidently close in sense to the modern standard forms *tanguuloo* “tying up”, *tanguluu* “tied up”. **243** ms. *mal-jandan* shows an emendation to *malınan*, in matching ink and possibly in Miiftaqov’s own hand; cf. line 247. **265** ms. *qulang sari* **267–274** According to Musa’s earlier work, there had been conflict in the mid-nineteenth century between northern Qırghız groupings including the Tinay Sarıbaghısh and the Cherek Qırghız tribe of East Turkistan (Prior, *Şabdan Baatır Codex*, 107, 181). **293, 311** ms. *aaldarı*, as if for standard *aldarı*, from *alda-* “cheat; fail to counterbalance; come up short”; at 311 the ms. form *aaldarı* has been emended by a later hand to *aldarı*. **312** *bozo*, a beverage made from fermented millet mash. **385** ms. *dungqan*. **391** ms. *qudura* for standard *quduret*. **394** the form *ketin* “leave!” is in Sart dialect. **396** ms. *dungqandın; baatır* “warrior, hero” may deserve ironic quotation marks here, as Dungsans (ethnically Chinese Muslims) were more common in food service jobs than as fighters. The ms. form *bolor* is not definitely a name, and the line may mean “a Dungan warrior of the time”. **400** ms. *keche kemın*.

Abbreviations

- QQT Soltonoyev, *Qızıl qırghız tarıkhı*
 ŞBC Prior, *The Şabdan Baatır Codex*
 VSAK Piaskovskii et al. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda*

Index

Numerical references indicate the line numbers where personal, geographic, and ethnic names are found in the text. Some additional references and spelling variants are given as used in the indexes of the works cited by the following abbreviations.

- Aalike (*QQT*, vol. 2, pp. 103, 106) 118
 Alda (Allah) 239
 Almati (locality) 76, 119, 174
 Aq-suu (locality) 285, 406
- Balıqçı (locality) 147, 166
 Balsha-bek (Bolshevik) 410
 Bayımbet (Borombaev: *VSAK*; *QQT*, vol. 2, p. 113) 189
 Bedel (pass) 341
 Belek (possibly Soltonoyev, Sultanaev: *VSAK*; *ŠBC*, p. 326n.) 189
 Bel-saz (pass; see n. to line 98) 98
 Berdike 84
 Bolor (Dungan warrior?) 396
 Borombay (Sazanov: *VSAK*) 83, 189
 Bügürübösh (Bakurevich: *VSAK*) 180, 195
- Chaghatay (Chogatai: *VSAK*; see n. to line 86) 86, 423
 Chaghatay (perhaps the same as prev.) 188
 Chelek (locality) 77
 Cherek (people) 267, 274
 Chong Kemin (valley) 106
 Chüy (valley, Chu) 240, 362
- Dungghan (people, Dungan) 385, 396
- Eding aaji (hajji) 73
- İbirayım (Tölö uulu: *QQT* vol. 2, pp. 102–106; see Tülö) 132, 140, 146, 169, 227
- Jetigen (people) 80
 Jol-bulaq (locality) 185, 206
- Kereniskey (Kerensky) 382
 Kichi Kemin (valley, headquarters of the Shabdanov brothers) 400
- Kök-irim (pass) 341
 Kök-jon (locality) 176
 Kök-moynoq (locality, Kok-Mainak: *VSAK*; see n. to line 139) 139
 Kötmaldı (locality, Kutelmaldy: *VSAK*; cf. *ŠBC*, p. 217) 138, 149
 Küntuughan (ancestor of Musa: see *ŠBC*) 86, 415
- Möküş (Mokush Shabdanov: *VSAK*; *QQT*, vol. 2, pp. 99–102) 92, 108, 110, 188, 226, 227.
- Musa Chaghatay uulu (author of the present poem: see *ŠBC*) 2, 415, 423
- Nekeley (Tsar Nicholas II) 5, 7, 9, 11, 55, 113
- Orus (people, Russian) 89, 93, 104, 173, 205, 206, 235, 352, 354, 357, 360, 369 371, 379, 383, 389
- Otorbay (*QQT*, vol. 2, p. 102) 83
- Qara-qastek (locality; see n. to line 71) 71
 Qash-köngüz (locality) 283
 Qashqa-jol (locality) 177, 190
 Qashqar (locality, Kashgar) 406
 Qastek (locality) 72
 Qazaq (people) 73, 75, 385
 Qazaq Orus (people, Cossack) 81
 Qıpchaq (people) 80, 85, 424
 Qırghuz (people) 31, 79, 117, 126, 171, 187, 215, 233, 273, 359, 385
 Qıtay (country, China) 35, 217
 Quday (God) 317, 334, 364
 Qulansarı (locality: cf. *ŠBC*) 265
- Sa-bet (Soviet) 388, 393
 Samudun (Isamudun, Khisamutdin Shabdanov: *VSAK*; *QQT*, vol. 2, pp. 95–96, 99, 113) 38

Saribaghush (people: see <i>ŠBC</i>) 39	Tinay (people: see <i>ŠBC</i>) 39
Sart (people) 279, 394	Toqmoq (locality, Tokmak/Toqmaq) 25, 174
Sayaq (people) 123	Tülöö (Tölö in <i>QQT</i> ; possibly Tule in <i>VSAK</i> ; see İbrayım) 140, 188
Shabdanup (Shabdanov, the sons of Shabdan Baatır, patron of Musa Chaghatay uulu) 408	Turpan (locality, Uch Turfan) 285, 406, 419
Sultan (Dalbek uulu, Dalbay uulu, Dolbaev: <i>VSAK</i> ; <i>QQT</i> , vol. 2, pp. 102, 111) 92, 99, 199	

Notes

I thank the editors of this volume for their flexibility and advice; Asel Isaeva, the director of the manuscript archives of the Institute of Language and Literature of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences for her generous assistance; and Jipar Duishembieva for being the cause of my writing this chapter and for thoroughly checking my text and translation. I am responsible for all errors that remain.

- 1 Daniel Prior, *The Šabdan Baatır Codex* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013). The descendants of Tinay (fl. early eighteenth century) of the Qirghız Saribaghush tribe included a number of powerful chieftains over several generations down to the early twentieth century. Based in the Kemin valleys of the upper Chu river, one line of Tinay chiefs controlled an important nexus of tribal territories and, eventually, Russian strategic designs encompassing the Chu valley, the western Issyq Kul basin and their Tian Shan hinterlands. It was this line that produced the famous Shabdan Baatır (Shabdan the Hero, c. 1839–1912), who parlayed his colonial status as *manap* or tribal client of the tsarist military government into a lofty position as guarantor of cooperative relations between Russians and Qirghız. See Tetsu Akiyama, “Why Was Russian Direct Rule over Kyrgyz Nomads Dependent on Tribal Chieftains ‘Manaps’?”, *Cahiers du Monde russe* 56 (2015), 625–649; Daniel Prior, “High Rank and Power among the Northern Kirghiz: Terms and Their Problems, 1845–1864”, in Paolo Sartori (ed.), *Explorations in the Social History of Modern Central Asia (19th–Early 20th Century)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 137–179.
- 2 Jipar Duishembieva’s chapter in the present volume analyses other works by little-known members of Musa’s generation.
- 3 B. Soltonoyev, “1916- jilindaglı Qirghız kötörülüşü”, in *Qızıl qirghız tarikhı*, vol. 2, 92–134. On Soltonoyev see Jipar Duishembieva, “Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856–1924” (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2015), 172–183; Prior, *The Šabdan Baatır Codex*, 318n., 326n.
- 4 On Miftaqov see Prior, *The Šabdan Baatır Codex*, 326n.; A. Toqombayeva, *Qayum Miftaqov, 1892–1948. İlimiy–populyardıq ocherk* (Frunze: İlim, 1991).
- 5 At the time of writing (October 2018), the archives website (<http://manuscript.lib.kg>) was undergoing reconstruction, and neither the Arabic nor the Cyrillic

version was accessible. I thank Asel Isaeva, director of the archives, for providing me with scanned copies.

- 6 S. Egemberdiyeva and A. Aqmataliyev (eds.), *Tarikhyy ırlar, qoshoqtor jana oquyalar* (Bishkek: Sham, 2002), 169–177.
- 7 See Prior, *The Šabdan Baatır Codex*, 92–96.

Domesticating 1916: the evolution of Amangeldi Imanov and the creation of a foundation myth for the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (1916–1939)

Danielle Ross

Introduction

The year 1936 marked the twenty-year anniversary of the Central Asian uprising, a series of revolts sparked by the Russian Imperial government's effort to mobilise men from the steppe provinces and Turkestan to perform labour duties during the First World War. In commemoration of the revolt, Kazakh writers, ethnographers and historians published historical studies and works of historical fiction retelling the story of 1916. Prominent among this cultural production was Lenfilm's *Amangeldy*, first released in 1938. Amangeldi Imanov, a leader of the uprisings that took place in Torghai province in 1916 and a participant in the revolutionary politics of the steppe in 1917, was also the central actor in S. A. Brainin's 1936 historical study, *Amangeldy*. In reconstructing the Central Asian Revolt and Imanov's role in it, Soviet writers and historians such as Beimbet Mailin, Gabit Musirepov and Brainin claimed to have turned, at least in part, to descriptions of Imanov found in the Kazakh oral tradition. These claims not only conveyed that they had been thorough in their research, but gave the sense that they had channelled and shaped historical narratives of the Kazakh masses and, ultimately, were telling a story that was authentically Kazakh and originated with the common people.

Since the 1990s, scholars of Soviet history have identified nation-building as an integral part of the Soviet project. For Soviet leaders, national self-determination was an inevitable stage in all societies' evolution toward socialism and was, therefore, a process more profitably co-opted and controlled than quashed.¹ To harness nationalism in the service of building Soviet identity, the Soviet government redivided the defunct Russian Empire into national republics, built cadres of

non-Russian party members, fostered the creation of Soviet national arts and literature, and collected census and ethnographic data to identify national groups and trace their evolutionary progress toward becoming socialist.² However, as they did so, they encountered what they identified as regionally or nationally specific problems and issues that undermined efforts to create Soviet national identities or led officials to take alternate, tailored strategies.³

The need to generate a strong, coherent identity among the Soviet peoples became even more urgent as the USSR entered the Second World War. Some historians have argued that this led to increased promotion of national identities. David Brandenberger highlights the mid-1930s and the war era as the moment at which the Soviet government embraced and popularised elements of Russian nationalism.⁴ However, Lowell Tillett and, more recently, Harun Yilmaz and Roberto Carmack, have examined the crafting and promotion of non-Russian national narratives and imagery to integrate the histories of non-Russians such as the Kazakhs into broader Soviet historical narratives and to rally non-Russian support for the war effort.⁵

This chapter intervenes at the intersection of these two historical issues – the creation of Soviet national identities and the harnessing of national heroes, narratives and artistic forms to rally popular support for the Soviet project – to explore the depiction of the 1916 uprisings and Torghai rebel leader Amangeldi Imanov in the Kazakh oral literature of the 1922–1940 period. As historians reassess the impact of the First World War, the 1916 uprisings, the Russian Revolution and the civil war upon the Empire's non-Russian peoples, they face great difficulties in finding native accounts that have not been filtered through Imperial or Soviet intermediaries.⁶ Songs, poems and other written and oral compositions by non-Russians involved in these events – such as Tatar-language songs and poems composed and recorded in Volga-Ural Muslim soldiers' diaries during or shortly after their service in the First World War – provide a window on how this population understood the war and their role in it.⁷ A large corpus of Kazakh-language songs about 1916 would seem to provide a similar opportunity to recover non-Russian perspectives on the Central Asian uprising. However, this effort is complicated by the fact that most of these Kazakh songs were recorded or composed in the midst of the Soviet nation-building projects of the 1920s–1930s, years leading up to the USSR's involvement in the Second World War, and, for Kazakh SSR, period of general turbulence caused by dekulakisation, collectivisation, the settlement of the nomadic population, the famine and the purges.

Against this background, the interpretation and public presentation of 1916 and its actors became highly politicised issues. By the late 1930s, 1916 became central to the Soviet national origin myth of Kazakh SSR

and Amangeldi Imanov became both the leader of the uprising and its personification. While Soviet historians worked to integrate the events of 1916 into all Union and national republic historical narratives, the Kazakh songs of 1916 became a laboratory in which the uprisings and their relationship to the Soviet victory and the Soviet Kazakh nation were reduced to easily transmittable symbols and clichés. In some ways, the evolution of the Kazakh songs of 1916 is one of the development of culture that was socialist in content and Kazakh in form. At the same time, however, the songs and other Kazakh-language cultural productions commemorating 1916 provide an example of how the creation of Soviet national identity was tailored in response to the historical and cultural specificities of a particular region or people. That is to say that, for Soviet Kazakh cultural elites, 1916 and Imanov became vehicles for spreading Soviet views on nation, class and imperialism among the Kazakh population.

The songs

Individual Kazakh-language songs relating to 1916 were published at various times during the Soviet period, especially during the commemorations of the uprising. In a few instances, collections of songs were produced. In 1936, a collection of Russian translations of Kazakh songs of 1916 was published in Alma-Ata and Moscow.⁸ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several Kazakh-language compilations of songs of 1916 and/or Amangeldi were published, including the 1916 epic poems (*dastan*) of Omar Shipin (1879–1963), the *dastan* of Nurkhan Akhmetbekov (1903–1964) on Amangeldi, and *1916*, a compilation of songs from the time of the uprising through the 1940s.⁹ The third, *1916*, reproduces a collection of songs first compiled and published by scholars employed at the Kazakh branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1940. The 1940 collection was originally intended to be three volumes, but only one was published.¹⁰

In addition to these published songs, a number of Kazakh songs of 1916 can be found in the manuscript collection of the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences Library in Almaty. Most of these are transcripts taken by the Academy of Sciences members during ethnographic research conducted in the 1940s and 1950s. The largest single file, totalling several hundred pages of handwritten and typed transcripts in Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic-script Kazakh, dates from the early 1940s and may, in fact, be the research notes for the 1940 edition of *1916*, as there is significant overlap between the content of the file and *1916*. Although they were collected during the war, the Academy of Sciences transcripts bring together folksongs, authored works and Soviet propaganda pieces from 1916 to 1940. In this way, beyond offering insight into wartime propaganda, these songs also

offer glimpses of the interpretation of the uprising and of Kazakh and Soviet identity at various moments in the late 1910s, 1920s and 1930s.

1916–1936: many people, many uprisings

The first organised commemoration of 1916 began in 1926. This commemoration not only preceded the ten-year commemoration of October, but also displayed some of the same impulses and difficulties. The range of material published on 1916 in the late 1920s included writer Saken Seifullin's *Tar Zhol, Taighaq Keshu* (1927), a memoir of his experiences during 1916 and the Russian civil war as well as retrospectives by Turar Rysqulov, Alikhan Bukeikhanov and Mirzhakup Dulatov.¹¹ On the one hand, all these authors portrayed the rising of Kazakhs in 1916 as a mass movement in response to conscription and longer-term injustices inflicted by the Imperial Government. On the other hand, their reflections on 1916 reflected the uprising as it unfolded wherever they had been located at the time. This tendency to conceive of 1916 in either very broad or very local terms was even more pronounced in the Kazakh songs composed about the uprising from the late 1910s to the mid-1920s.

Sartai's "Tar Zaman" and Narymbet's "Sary-Arka" exemplify the broad approach to remembering 1916. Sartai, a singer (*aqyn*) from Uralsk province composed "Tar Zaman" sometime before 1923 (Sartai died in 1923) and the song became a staple of Soviet-era compilations of Kazakh songs of 1916. "Tar Zaman" focuses not on armed revolt, but on the sense of injustice and helplessness experienced by those families whose male relatives were recruited. The song begins with the announcement of the mobilisation.¹² Sartai then describes the reactions of grieving parents, who approach Imperial officials and local *bais* to offer bribes and beg that their sons be returned to them.¹³ Finally, he offers an assessment of the war itself, noting how "Not one of the Russians, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Nogais, Turkmens who live under the tsar's rule remain." In two years, Emperor Nicholas has swept them all up, scattered them to the winds, and sent them to die in the trenches.¹⁴ Sartai ends on more hopeful note, wishing good health to the children who will be born now that the crisis has passed.¹⁵

Narymbet's "Sary-Arka" was quoted in Bukeikhanov's 1926 article on 1916. The exact date of composition is unknown. "Sary-Arka" was republished multiple times during the Soviet period. Like "Tar Zaman", "Sary-Arka" laments the injustice and violence of the 1916 mobilisation. As its title suggests, it focuses primarily on the geographic space Kazakhs call Sary-Arka, the steppe land and lakes of what are now Kostanay and Akmola provinces in northern Kazakhstan. Narymbet begins by exalting the natural beauty of his native region, but recounts how the emperor

brought suffering and misfortune to it by taking away the inhabitants' sons and leaving their mothers to grieve. Like in "Tar Zaman", the emperor and his conscription are portrayed as impersonal, implacable, merciless forces. For those families outside the ranks of the elite, there is no escape or recourse. Like Sartai, Narymbet offers no depiction of resistance, but only asks when and how the misery of the conscription will end.¹⁶

In addition to "Tar Zaman" and "Sary-Arka", songs of 1916 were transcribed by the Academy of Sciences for inclusion in the Russian-language *Songs of 1916* in 1936 and the Kazakh-language *1916* in 1940. It is likely that many of these were composed and performed in the late 1910s and 1920s, but it difficult to date them with precision. It is also difficult to say much about their authors. Some are identified as the work of particular "poets of the people" (*narodnyi poet*) or "people's singers" (*narodnyi pevets*). None of them are identified as Communist Party members or part of the official Soviet Kazakh literary sphere and almost no biographical details on them are available except for their district of origin and whether they took part in the resistance to the conscription. In terms of genre, most fall into one of three categories. One category includes "letters to the people" or "letters" to a particular leader, in which the composer-singer either calls the addressees to action or berates them for their actions.¹⁷ The second category is the epic poem (*dastan*), usually giving narrative accounts of conflicts between Imperial military forces and those who resisted the conscription.¹⁸ The third category is that of songs of lament. Like "Tar Zaman" and "Sary-Arka", these songs focus primarily on the tragic dimension of 1916: the breaking of families, the killing of relatives and neighbours, destruction of homes, displacement from one's homeland, shortages of food and other resources, and the general misery caused by war and mobilisation.¹⁹

When these songs are taken together, elements of narrative unity are evident. All of them focus on the 1916 mobilisation and its immediate aftermath, whether they emphasise suffering or resistance. Many songs portray a situation in which the conscripted men and boys would be sent to die in combat in the trenches in far-off Europe.²⁰ Most blame the mobilisation and the violence it triggered on the cruelty and indifference of Emperor Nicholas II.²¹ Many of the songs also depict a sharp division between the common people and a privileged elite made up of native representatives of Imperial rule (*starshinas*, *biis*, *volost' sultans*), the wealthy (*bais*), and religious leaders (*mullahs*).²² When the mobilisation began, elites not only tried to implement Imperial policy on the ground, but also bent the rules so that their own children were spared.

Beyond those points, the unity of the narrative presented by the songs broke down. First, 1916, as presented in the songs, was not yet defined primarily as a moment of resistance. Most songs portrayed the hardship

as something to be endured rather than resisted by force of arms. Nor were the conflicts sparked by the mobilisation connected with the revolutions of 1917, the founding of the Soviet Union or any other subsequent historical events.

When these songs did recount acts of resistance, they did not offer a geography adapted to the emerging administrative divisions of the nascent Soviet Union. Sary-Arka, Merkenskaia *volost'*, Kapal, Qordai, Taty, Semipalatinsk, Torghai, Vernyi and Semirech'e all appear as settings for the events described in the songs. The administrative landscape that poets describe is the one that the Russian Imperial authorities had constructed in Central Asia. Nor did the songs offer an obvious cast of main characters who could be easily incorporated into other Soviet literary genres. Instead, the songs were littered with the names of heroes, villains and victims. Some poems level accusations at specific officials and spiritual leaders. Others highlight the activities of specific local people who resisted the conscription and/or clashed with Imperial soldiers. A few songs turn the audience's attention to those killed in punitive attacks or to specific young men who were imprisoned or conscripted and taken away. However, no individuals stand out as dominant figures in the disorder of 1916. Aside from Nicholas II, there is no individual figure who recurs from the songs of one locality to those of the next.

The effect of the early Soviet historical studies of 1916 on the representation of the uprising in Kazakh oral literature is not clear. G. I. Broido's thesis that the uprising was provoked by Russian officials hoping to take Kirgiz (Kazakh and Kyrgyz) land is not reflected in the songs of the 1920s and early 1930s, despite influencing the interpretation of 1916 by Soviet Kazakh intellectuals such as Rysqulov.²³ Shestakov, who co-authored the article with Bukeikhanov in 1926 which included the citation of "Sary-Arka", emphasised the Kazakhs' resistance as a response to the Imperial Government's thinly veiled attempt to use them as cannon fodder. Like the authors of the early songs, Shestakov assumes that the true purpose of the mobilisation had been to find new recruits for the front lines and not the labour battalions.²⁴ From the present information, it is not clear whether Shestakov's views influenced the songs, were influenced by them, or evolved along a parallel course.

When the Russian volume *Songs of '16 (Pesni o shestnadtsatom gode)* was initially compiled, representations of 1916 in Kazakh oral literature do not appear to have advanced far from the memoirs and retrospectives of 1926. The volume still possessed no narrative beyond the unifying factors of mobilisation, local corruption, and the rapaciousness of the Imperial Government. There was no clear delineation of zones or regions in the songs included and there were no recurring heroes. Most importantly for considering the role of 1916 in Soviet propaganda, there was

not, as yet, much in the way of linkages between 1916 and other historical events in the revolutionary era. However, by the time the book came to press in 1936, Soviet official views on the relationship between 1916 and Kazakh oral literature were becoming better-defined. For example, the ending of Sartai's "Tar Zaman" was altered in the Russian translation to include new lines:

On that day I found out about Lenin,
 And I also learned about Stalin
 Two heroes the likes of which have not been known for centuries,
 The swept away the evil kingdom of the tsar
 And returned joy to us in the steppe
 And returned our sons to us.
 The years will go by like a great caravan,
 But those heroes' names
 Will be carried forever
 In the hearts of my people and my country!²⁵

This new ending clashed sharply with the tone of the original version of Sartai's song. It also made little sense from a chronological perspective. Sartai had died in 1923, well before the development of a cult of Lenin or Stalin. However, the editorial change signalled the intention of Soviet leaders to weld 1916 more firmly to the Soviet myth of the October Revolution and to integrate the non-Russian peoples of the steppe into the broader revolutionary narrative.

Creating a Soviet master narrative of Kazakh 1916 (1936–1938)

David Brandenberger has the mid- and late 1930s as a period in which the Soviet Government responded to the rise of Hitler's Germany by building a pantheon of heroes and a body of "popular" cultural material that was at once Soviet and national. This new Soviet national literature, cinema and propaganda was meant to instil a sense of patriotism among Soviet citizens and cultivate their loyalty in the event of invasion and war.²⁶ Such a creation of a Soviet Kazakh identity and past began in the mid-1930s, but it appears to have been undertaken not only in response to threats from abroad, but in answer to tensions and developments internal to Soviet Kazakh society. The new Soviet Kazakh literature of the 1930s was designed not only to promote the newly created Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, but to tie the founding myth of the Kazakh national republic to the all-Union myth of the October Revolution and to erase or delegitimise the Kazakh nation-building projects of the pre-Soviet period. The year 1916, already presented by Soviet historians as a moment of anti-colonial resistance or class struggle, was chosen to play a central role in this new myth.

The 1930s reinterpretation of the significance of 1916 was to be strictly controlled at all levels. In the 1920s, Bukeikhanov and Shestakov cited existing Kazakh songs about 1916. By contrast, by the 1930s, ideologically appropriate “folk” texts were written by trusted party writers. State poets and singers composed new songs about the 1916 uprising and its leaders that were crafted to fit neatly into the evolving narrative of October 1917 and the rise of the Bolshevik Party. To create a “popular” memory of 1916, Soviet officials also created a cadre of “traditional” singers (*aqyns, zhyraus*) to serve as the transmitters of this new memory. The most famous of the new Soviet faces of Kazakh oral literature was Zhambul Zhabaev (1846–1945), who contributed at least two songs to the new canon of 1916.²⁷ But there were also others, including Kenen Azerbaev (1884–1976) and Omar Shipin (1879–1963). The biographies of both singers were crafted to lend the greatest possible legitimacy to the 1916-related songs attributed to them. Both had supposedly taken part in the 1916 uprisings, Azerbaev in Semirech’e and Shipin in Torghai. Shipin had reportedly met Imanov in 1909 and fought under his leadership in 1916. Azerbaev and Shipin each had numerous songs about 1916 attributed to them. These songs began to be transcribed by the late 1930s. New songs were attributed to them through the 1940s and 1950s. The promotion or invention of these new singers was as important as the creation of the new songs. Their “traditional” outward appearance and their purported links to 1916 were meant to lend them and their music the air of authenticity.²⁸

Kenen Azerbaev’s songs focused on the uprisings in Semirech’e. One of his songs addresses the causes of the uprisings. It emphasises the conflict between the Russians and the Kazakh and Kyrgyz “nomads” and plays up the anti-colonial aspects of 1916. He characterises Nicholas and the Imperial Government as “those who demanded so much of the people’s blood”. He also emphasises the Imperial ambitions of the Russians, who “wanted to frighten the Kazakhs” and to “show the Kazakh that the Russian was his father”.²⁹

A second song attributed to Azerbaev, “Ali Batyr, Rebel in the Kazakh-Kyrgyzes Struggle against the Tsar”, narrates the career of Ali, the son of a poor widow. When threatened with conscription, Ali runs away and joins those Kazakhs and Kyrgyzes who have decided to take up arms against Nicholas and the Imperial army. Ali fights side-by-side with various leaders and, through his heroic deeds, gains the title of “Ali Batyr”.³⁰ Some of the leaders with whom Ali interacts were real participants in the 1916 uprisings, but Ali himself is an invented socialist realist hero.

Azerbaev’s songs present one potential Soviet interpretation of 1916. They depicted the corruption and injustice of Imperial rule as the shared experience of all nomads. In his works, *bis, volost’ bais, manaps, qojas* and *mullahs* are combined into a single exploitative class that transcends

ethnic barriers.³¹ Uprising participants are likewise united by their undertaking of class struggle rather than by their nationality. However, Azerbaev's treatment of 1916 also had its drawbacks. One of those was his tendency to conflate colonial-Imperial oppression with ethnic Russian. This approach reflected Soviet historians' stance in the early 1930s that hostilities in 1916 occurred primarily ethnic lines (Russians vs non-Russians).³² However, it would become problematic once friendship of oppressed peoples across ethnic lines became a central part of Soviet ideology on nation and class.³³ Another difficulty with Azerbaev's portrayal of 1916 as class struggle between oppressed nomads and the Imperial Government was that his emphasis on class identity over national identity limited the usefulness of his songs for promoting specific Soviet national identities. Azerbaev's songs were recorded by the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in the late 1930s or early 1940s, but were not included in the published 1940 collection.

Rather than creating a wholly fictional hero or trying to present resistance in 1916 as a mass movement, by the mid-1930s, Amangeldi Imanov, a leader of a group of Kazakh rebels in Torghai province, was singled out. The oral canon of 1916 was altered to reflect this new policy. The invention of the Amangeldi myth was an alternative to the integration strategy displayed in the re-writing of "Tar Zaman". Rather than having Lenin and Stalin directly intervene into the affairs of the steppe, the physical task of liberating the steppe from colonialism was now passed to a Kazakh Soviet hero. In Omar Shipin's "The Battle of Torghai", Imanov leads an army of Kazakhs armed with only axes, spears and archaic rifles to raid Torghai and steal wealthy citizens' livestock and 100,000 rubles in gold.³⁴ In Kuderer Zholdybaiuly's "Amangeldi's Capture of Torghai", the Kazakh people are trapped in an era of slavery, corruption and ignorance. They take up arms, but do not know how to proceed until Imanov appears and leads them.³⁵ In "Amangeldi Batyr's Battle at Quiyiq Lake with 1000 Soldiers from Qostinai", Imanov leads his followers to aid women and children who are under attack by tsarist soldiers.³⁶

Imanov, as presented in the songs written between 1934 and 1938, is permitted to resist tsarist oppression and save innocent people. Ideologically, however, the new songs tethered him closely to Lenin and Stalin. In "The Battle of Torghai", Imanov gives a speech to his followers telling them that they lack the resources to capture Torghai by themselves and must turn to Lenin and Stalin for aid.³⁷ In Adambekov's "Amangel'dy", the author describes Imanov as setting out on Lenin's path.³⁸ In a 1938 song, Zhabaev describes Imanov as loving Lenin "to the very last".³⁹

The songs of the mid- and late 1930s shifted to telling the story of Amangeldi. These songs focused on describing his character and his attributes, characterising him as a just man, a good leader and "a son of the people". There was also a shift in genre from the epic poem to

the elegy (Kazakh: *zhoqtau*). Taking on the voice of mourners, authors used the *zhoqtau* form to portray Amangeldi as an idealised hero of the oppressed Kazakh masses and a martyr of the revolution.⁴⁰ Some authors even went so far as to engage in imaginary dialogues with Amangeldi's mother, begging her not to weep and assuring her that she had borne her son "for the people" and, through the act of motherhood, had rendered a service of inestimable value to the Kazakh people. As Amangeldi was elevated to a sort of Stalinist Soviet sainthood, both the Torghai uprising and 1916 in general faded from view and were abstracted into a few broad strokes. Kazakhs were portrayed as caught in a time of injustice, ignorance, corruption and class oppression. Then Amangeldi miraculously appeared to lead them to light, justice and freedom.⁴¹

The new focus on Amangeldi did not bring about a more detailed or nuanced picture of the rebel leader. On the contrary, as a Soviet hero, Amangeldi's most notable characteristic was his lack of personal history or peculiarities. Born in 1873, he was already forty-three years old in 1916. Yet, the biographies of him given in oral literature offer information about his career or his personal life. Details such as his education in a *madrassa* were incompatible with his new role as hero of the people, and were dropped in favour of a general emphasis on the poverty of his parents. Echoing some of the themes in Xavier Hallez and Isabelle Ohayon's chapter in this volume, emphasis was also placed on the participation of his grandfather, Iman, in Kenesary's revolt as a means of linking Amangeldi and the Torghai uprising to the broader history of Kazakh class and anti-colonial struggle against tsarist rule.⁴²

To bridge the distance between the Moscow and Torghai and strengthen Imanov's ties to the Bolshevik Party, songwriters began to underline the role of Albi Zhangel'din, a participant in the unrest in Torghai province who had aligned himself with the Bolsheviks before the 1916 mobilisation.⁴³ In "The Battle for Torghai", Zhangel'din acts as an emissary between Imanov and Lenin and Stalin. He also explains to the common Kazakh rebels the need for these Bolshevik leaders' support in the revolt.⁴⁴ Zhangel'din also appears in "The Driving out of Salimgerei Qaratileuov in July 1919", although one of the song's transcribers later went back and crossed out the stanzas that mention his activities in Orenburg.⁴⁵

As Zhangel'din was portrayed in the oral narrative of 1916, he underwent the same process of socialist realist flattening as Imanov. As Imanov became the very essence of the people's champion, Zhangel'din became the equally featureless revolutionary guide, his only defining characteristics being his understanding of Marx-Leninism and his ability to transmit that understanding from the party leaders to the Kazakh herdsmen.

By 1938, party officials and writers had generated a new body of Kazakh oral literature on 1916. In it, the uprising activities in Torghai

were streamlined and assigned to Imanov. The myth of Imanov's Torghai uprising was meant to serve as shorthand for the Kazakh experience of 1916. Imanov was moulded into an idealised proletarian leader who was either already committed to the ideals of Bolshevism or introduced to them by Zhangel'din. This Imanov-centred Kazakh 1916 was intended to be a Kazakh-Central Asian piece of the larger October myth of how Lenin and Stalin led workers and peasants against the tsarist government.

The interplay between oral literature and written genres

The outpouring of new Kazakh songs of 1916 in the 1930s occurred simultaneously with a new series of portrayal of 1916 in history and prose literature. The period 1936–1939 was marked by the publication of a new wave of historical studies of the Kazakhs in 1916: S. D. Asfandiyarov's *National Liberation Uprising of 1916 in Kazakhstan*, S. Brainin and S. Shafiro's *Uprising of the Kazakhs in Semirech'e*, Brainin's *Amangel'dy*, and Brainin and Timofeev's *Amangel'dy Imanov, Leader of the 1916 Uprising in Kazakhstan*.⁴⁶ Both the new focus on 1916 as a key moment for Kazakhs and Kazakhstan and the creation of a new oral literature centring on Imanov corresponded to the promotion of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic to the status of a union republic in December 1936.

Brainin's *Amangel'dy* uses Imanov's biography to forge a historical narrative of the steppe from the 1916 mobilisation through 1919. Like the reworked oral literature, *Amangel'dy* presented a highly selective portrait of its titular character, focusing on his grandfather's role in Kenesary's Revolt, his father's poverty, and his inability to marry his true love because he was too poor to pay her bride price. This last episode, in which Imanov "kidnaps" this woman and they run away to live together for a year until her parents force her to return to them, is used to establish Imanov's anti-feudal attitude and revolutionary credentials in the absence of a more traditional political education.⁴⁷ *Amangel'dy* follows the events leading up to the revolt, cutting between the history of the Bolshevik Party and Imperial rule in the steppe. Brainin devotes two of the book's six chapters to the uprising in Torghai province in summer 1916, where he emphasises the successful (and almost single-handed) leadership of Imanov. Zhangel'din appears briefly to offer advice early in the revolt and then disappears until after the October Revolution.⁴⁸

By chapter five, the book reaches the February Revolution and Brainin introduces the conflict between Alash Orda, who are identified as allies of the wealthy Kazakhs, the Provisional Government, and counterrevolution, and Imanov.⁴⁹ Despite their efforts to recruit him, Imanov refuses to join forces with them or grant them the use of the army he has assembled

during the 1916 Uprising. His patience pays off in October, when the Bolsheviks take power in Petrograd and, in 1918, he allies himself with them, fighting against the White forces of Dutov and Kolchak as well as against Alash from March 1919 through May 1919.⁵⁰ During this period, “Comrade” Zhangel’in reappears and acts as an intermediary between Imanov and the Bolshevik leadership.⁵¹ Bolshevik actions (including Imanov’s) against the Whites are so effective that the White leadership institutes a “reign of terror”. In May 1919, Imanov and a group of “Reds” are caught and disarmed by Alash forces after leaving Qostanai. The Alash government arrests Imanov and executes him by firing squad.⁵²

Brainin leaves his readers no room for doubting the significance of Imanov’s career. He follows Imanov’s death scene with a note that only a little more than a year after Imanov’s death, Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic would be founded (in October 1920).⁵³ He then states directly that Imanov’s name is closely connected with the founding of the new national Soviet republic.⁵⁴

To underline the importance of Imanov’s role in the end of imperialist, colonial rule and the creation of a socialist Kazakh homeland, Brainin ends his study with a song supposedly sung by the Kazakh people about Imanov.⁵⁵ Ironically, in 1936, Imanov the people’s hero was mostly a new addition to Kazakh oral narratives of 1916. The earliest song to record an armed conflict between Imanov and representatives of Alash-Orda was not recorded until the late 1930s or early 1940s.⁵⁶

A year before Brainin published *Amangel’dy*, Kazakh writers Beimbet Mailin and Gabit Musirepov adapted Imanov’s life for the Kazakh-language theatre in *Amangeldi*.⁵⁷ Their interpretation of Imanov’s life was much more impressionistic and less faithful than Brainin’s was. All characters in the play were referred to exclusively by the first names throughout the play. Of the twenty-four characters listed in the cast, only two are based on historical figures. The first is Amangeldi Imanov himself. The second is Mirzhakyp, who was clearly meant to be writer and Alash Orda member Mirzhakyp Dulatov. His novel *Unfortunate Jamal* (1914) is quoted by another character, leaving no doubt as to Mirzhakyp’s true identity.⁵⁸ A third identifiable character appears late in the play, Alibi, who seems to be Alibi Zhangel’din or loosely based upon him.⁵⁹ He appears again at the very end of the play, to deliver the final line.⁶⁰ However, is not listed in the cast at the beginning.

Most of the other characters appear to be fictional archetypes: two “close friends” of Amangeldi, two male teachers and two female teachers, three “common Kazakhs” (*Aul qazaqtary*), three Alash leaders, Mirzhakyp’s wife and a *volost’* sultan, among other. Many of these characters exist solely for the purpose of explaining to one another (and the audience) why Kazakhs should follow the Bolsheviks and not Alash.

The most key of these archetypal characters is Andreev, an ethnic Russian representative sent by the Bolshevik leadership to act as a counsellor to Imanov and an intermediary between him and Lenin, assuming the role filled by Zhangel'din the oral literature.

Amangeldi begins not with the 1916 uprising, but at some unspecified point after October 1917, when Alash and the Bolsheviks are fighting for the hearts and minds of the Kazakh people. This fight is personified through the conflict between Mirzhakyp and Amangeldi, both of whom struggle to win the support of the various secondary characters. By the end of the play, Mirzhakyp has succeeded both in capturing Amangeldi and winning one of Amangeldi's bosom companions to the side of Alash. He places this friend-turned-traitor, Muqan, in charge of executing Amangeldi. In the end, however, despite all Mirzhakyp's urging, Muqan cannot bring himself to shoot Amangeldi. When Mirzhakyp shoots Amangeldi himself, Muqan turns his rifle on Mirzhakyp. Mirzhakyp shoots him as well and he dies beside Amangeldi. Andreev and Alibi arrive with the Bolshevik forces to kill or drive off the Alash members. They come mere seconds too late to save Amangeldi.⁶¹

Whereas Brainin's *Amangeldy* makes at least the pretence of adhering to history, Mailin and Musirepov's *Amangeldi* does not. The play does, however, adhere closely to the official Soviet view of Dulatov, who after his arrest and interrogation in 1929, had been accused of being the most "energetic" among the Alash leaders in his calls for Imanov's execution.⁶² However, both works are tied together by their effort to forge a martyr narrative for Imanov and to use that narrative to anchor a broader story of how Kazakhs became Soviet. As readers of Brainin's book are assured that Imanov died in the service of founding Kirgiz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (and, by extension, Kazakh SSR), so Mailin and Musirepov, through the character of Zhangel'din, admonish audiences to "remember" Mirzhakyp's murder of Amangeldi, an act symbolising the ultimately unsuccessful efforts of Alash to crush dreams of a Soviet Kazakh utopia in their infancy.

Amangeldy – both book and play – highlight another important shift in the process of remembering 1916. During the ten-year anniversary in 1926, Alash leaders such as Alikhan Bukeikhanov and Mirzhakyp Dulatov had taken part in constructing the memory of 1916 through their articles and their publication of Kazakh "folk" sources such as Narymbet's "Sary-Arka". In 1928, both Bukeikhanov and Dulatov had been arrested. Dulatov died in prison in 1935 and Bukeikhanov was executed in 1937. By the mid-1930s, 1916 provided a means for Soviet writers to forge a national origin narrative for the Kazakh and Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic that did not involve Alash or its leaders. This new focus on creating an ideologically correct origin myth explains the diminishment of the actual events of 1916 in the new songs of the 1930s. In a sense,

1916 was transformed into a prologue to what was, for Soviet writers and officials, a more important series of events: the October Revolution, the founding of the Soviet Union, and the founding of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.

Stalin-era efforts to build a Soviet Kazakh origin narrative around Imanov and 1916 reached their pinnacle in the film *Amangel'dy*. Filmed by Lenfilm in 1938 and directed by M. Levin, *Amangel'dy* is today considered to mark the beginning of Kazakh cinema. The screenplay was written by Vsevolod Ivanov, Beimbait Mailin and Gabit Musirepov. With the exception of a few Russian characters, most of the roles were filled by Kazakh actors.

Amangel'dy was not a translation of Mailin and Musirepov's play from stage to screen. In fact, the only character that the film and the play had common was Imanov himself. The film also differed significantly in terms of plot, beginning not with the Bolshevik takeover, but with the 1916 recruitment order. Stylistically, however, the two works are quite similar. In the film, Imanov was once again surrounded by Soviet archetypes: the evil governor and general, the sycophantic *volost'* sultan and the bourgeois Alash members (dressed to resemble Bukeikhanov and Baitursynov, but not named after any actual Alash member), and the honest and hardworking herdsmen of the Kazakh steppe. The film gives Imanov a female companion (and, eventually wife) in Balym, a young woman who first appears in the film running after the wagon on which Imanov, arrested almost immediately after the recruitment announcement for rabble-rousing, is being taken away to prison. On his wagon to prison, Imanov also meets Egor, a conveniently placed and helpful Russian Bolshevik, who assists Imanov in escaping from the tsarist authorities and appears at various points in the film to bring news and guidance to Imanov from Lenin and Stalin. He replaces the Andreev character from the play, who, in turn, had replaced the ethnically Kazakh Zhangel'din from the oral literature.

By starting with the mobilisation in 1916, the film incorporated and re-enforced the narrative that was emerging in oral literature in the same period of Imanov as the initiator of the uprising and a leader for all common Kazakhs. Through the early introduction of Egor, the writers also solve the problem of Bolshevising the uprising. Egor serves the dual function of legitimising the soon-to-be uprising leader on the spot and keeping Lenin informed of the impending steppe revolt. In this way, 1916 is made into a Bolshevik-approved event and a portent of larger revolutions soon to come and a tangible link is forged between Lenin and Imanov. Egor arrives later to announce the October Revolution and the two events – the 1916 uprising and the Bolshevik Revolution, flow neatly into one another. The film's use of Kazakh folk music, foregrounded in scene of Imanov and Balym's wedding, is omnipresent throughout the

film in the soundtrack. It underlines the authentic Kazakh-ness of this otherwise generic socialist-realist story.

Conclusion

Kazakh historians and literary scholars of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods have treated the Kazakh oral literature of 1916 as a legitimate source of information on events, attitudes and literary trends during the 1916 uprising.⁶³ However, the most prolific authors of 1916-related songs and their often quite detailed accounts of Kazakh resistance were direct products of a larger campaign to generate an origin myth for the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic that could pass as authentically Kazakh in form while being extremely Soviet in content. They reveal far more about Soviet ideology on nation in the 1930s than about the lived experience and perspectives of Central Asia in 1916. Songs transcribed in the 1920s and early 1930s may be less directly engineered by Soviet officials, but still reflect broader ideas about class, national, and anti-colonial struggle that were likely not so clearly articulated in 1916.

If the songs are not terribly useful for the reconstruction of a non-Russian view of 1916, they do provide evidence of the comprehensive and holistic nature of Soviet propaganda-generation in the 1930s. In the case of 1916 and Imanov, history, drama, film and oral literature were all made to reflect the same policies on nation, class and historical narrative. In Kazakh SSR, oral literature was used to legitimate the Soviet official narratives that were presented in other genres.

The case of 1916 and Imanov also demonstrates the relationship between World War II-era propaganda and that of the interwar period. Wartime propagandists did not need to invent heroes from whole cloth. In the case of Imanov, they could take up an already well-developed Soviet narrative and tweak it to meet the demands of the war. The promotion of Amangeldi during the war re-enforced earlier efforts to root the creation of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in the myth of a Bolshevik-led, Lenin-inspired anti-colonial 1916 uprising.

Notes

- 1 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1–9; Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 6–9.
- 2 Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*; Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Bhavna Dave, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Jeremy Smith,

- Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Diana T. Kudaibergenova, *Rewriting the Nation in Modern Kazakh Literature: Elites and Narratives* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Lexington Books, 2017).
- 3 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 167–196; 221–260; Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); Ali Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).
 - 4 David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
 - 5 Lowell Tillet, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 373–374; Harun Yilmaz, “History as Agitation and Propaganda: the Kazakh History Book of 1943”, *Central Asian Survey* 31 (2012), 409–423; Roberto Carmack, “History and Hero-Making: Patriotic Narratives and the Sovietization of Kazakh Front-line Propaganda, 1941–1945”, *Central Asian Survey* 33 (2014), 95–112.
 - 6 For example, Jörn Happel, in his study of the uprising in Semirech’e, tries to extract non-Russian perspectives and experience from Russian official reports and interrogations: Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten Und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010).
 - 7 Danielle Ross, “Gog, Magog i Aeroplan: Tatarskaia narodnaia literature kak ovet na voynu, 1914–1917”, *Malenkii chelovek i bol’shaia voina v istorii Rossii* (St Petersburg: Nestor Istoriiia, 2014), 87–102.
 - 8 M. Altaiskii, P. Kuznetsov and L. Arkhangel’skii (ed. and trans.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode* (Moscow and Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe KraevoeIzdatel’stvo, 1936).
 - 9 Omar Shipin, *Dastandar* (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1989); Nurkhan Akhmedbekov, *Amangeldi: Dastandar* (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1990); Ozbekali Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 Zhyl (Qazaq khalqynyng ult-azattyq koterilisining 80 zhylyghyna): Angimeler, olengder men dastandar* (Almaty: “Rauan,” 1996).
 - 10 Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 Zhyl*, 7.
 - 11 Saken Seifullin, *Tar Zhol, Taighaq Keshu* (Kyzylorda: Tipografia Kazakstanskogo Gosudarstvennogo Izdatel’stva, 1927); T. Ryskulov, *Vosstanie Kazakov i Kirgiz v 1916* (Kustanai: n.p., 1926); Qyr Balasy and A. Shestakov, *1916 zhylyghy koterilisting on zhyldyghyna, 1916–1926* (Moscow: n.p., 1926); Mirzhakup Dulatov, “1916”, *Engbekshi qazaq* (1926), republished in M. K. Kozybaev (ed.), *Qaharly 1916/Groznyi 1916-i god*, 2 vols. (Almaty: Qazaqstan baspasy, 1998), vol. 2, 63–69.
 - 12 Sartai, “Tar Zaman”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 112.
 - 13 Sartai, “Tar Zaman”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 112–113.
 - 14 Sartai, “Tar Zaman”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 114. The Central Asian conscripts were to be sent to the labour battalions and non-combat posts.

- However, due to poor communication on the part of imperial authorities, some Central Asians believed that the recruits would be sent into combat. This misconception appears in many of the Kazakh songs about 1916.
- 15 Sartai, "Tar Zaman", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 116.
 - 16 Alikhan Bukeikhanov and Andrei Shestakov, "1916 zhyl koterilisting on zhyldyghyna", in Kozybaev (ed.), *Qaharly 1916*, 17–18.
 - 17 Bzaubak, "Obrashchenie k kazakhskomu narodu", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 14–17; Karzhauov Akimali, "Pis'mo", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 18–19; A. Tulegenov, "Pis'mo mulle Turgaiskogo uезд", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 50–52; Kulbash, "Pis'mo 'Abdrakhmanu, Otvet Abdrakhmana", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 78–80; "Kengesu Karibozga", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 70–71; "Men de kettim koppenen", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 74–75; "Tugan el", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 75; Aqmolda, "Bilerge", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 75–76; Nurtazin, "Zhebir Khazratke", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 76–77; "Eriksiz ketip elimnen", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 77–78; "Moldashtyng khatynan", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 108–109; Akimal Qarzhauaiuly, "Khalqyma khat", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 109; Baitas, "Kuanysh khat", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 110.
 - 18 E. Shuinaniev, "Vosstanie v Merke – poema", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 3–13; Etekpai, "Krovavyi dzhut – poema", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 27–46; Kuderik Dzholirbaev, "1916 god", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 69–77; Baqytkeri Nauqanuly, "Yien Zharlyghy", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 60–66; Isa Darkembaiuly, "Dar Aldyndaghy Soz", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 116–126; "Tatyrd", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 141–143; Qazaqstan Respublikasynyng Ul'tyq Ghylym Akademiiasy – Ortalyq Ghylymi Kitapkhana – Fond Redkikh Knig' i Rukopisei (hereafter QRUGA-OGK-FRKR), No. 1019, 21–22; "1919 zhyly Iul' aenda Qaratileuv Sali(m)gereidyng chyguva", QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 45–51; "16-zhyl sudagy Qazaq, Qyrgyzdyng patchaga qarshy koterilisi Ali Batyr", QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 52–55.
 - 19 Iskhakh Shaibekov, "Narod nezabvennyi", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 47–49; "Toska slepoi Dامتken", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 53–56; Tashibai, "Tau Qulatqan Dauylda", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 55–58; Zhaqyp Qalymbetuly, "Qaighynyng zhyly tughanda", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 72–74; Toleu, "Saryarqkanyng Saryny", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 82–84; Qarsaq, "Kapalanam", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 84–85; Battal, "Tuar ma eken bisge kun?", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 86–88; Boltirik, "El Zharyla Koshkende", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 101–104; Esqaiyr, "Tolghau", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 106–108; "Qaigyly akhual", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 108; Temirbai Omirbaiuly, "Zhatqan zherim kazarma", in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 110–111; Salimgerei Ongaibekov, "Qarasai", QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 43–44.
 - 20 E. Shuinaniev, "Vosstanie v Merke – poema", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 4; Bzaubak, "Obrashchenie k kazakhskomu narodu", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 15; Khusain, "Shestnadsaty god", in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 21; Etekpai,

- “Krovavyy dzhut – poema”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 29; Buzabaq, “Quty qashty patshanyng”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 68; Zhaqyp Qalymbetuly, “Qaigynyng zhyly tughanda”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 74.
- 21 E. Shuinaniev, “Vosstanie v Merke – poema”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 4; Bzaubak, “Obrashchenie k kazakhskomu narodu”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 14; Khusain, “Shestnadsaty god”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 22; Kuderik Dzholdirbaev, “1916 god”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 69; Kulbash, “Pis'mo 'Abdrakhmanu, Otvet Abdrakmana”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 78; Khairolda Otegenuly, “On Altynshy Zhyl”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 58; Baqytkeri Nauqanuly, “Uien Zharlyghy”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 62; Buzabaq, “Quty Qashty patshanyng”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 65; “Kengesu Karibozga”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 70.
- 22 E. Shuinaniev, “Vosstanie v Merke – poema”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 5; Khusain, “Shestnadsaty god”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 22; Etekpai, “Krovavyy dzhut – poema”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 30; Alimbet Tulegenov, “Pis'mo”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 50–51; Baqytkeri Nauqanuly, “Uien Zharlyghy”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 61; Ilyas, “Zhanaraldyng Buiryghy”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 66; Zhaqyp Qalymbetuly, “Qaigynyng zhyly tughanda”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 73.
- 23 Edward Dennis Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 165–166.
- 24 Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916*, 169.
- 25 Sartai, “Tar Zaman”, in Altaiskii et al. (eds.), *Pesni o shestnatsatom gode*, 68.
- 26 Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 1–8.
- 27 Zhambul, “Zildi Buiryq”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 53–55; Zhambul, “Amangeldi toigyna”, in Zhanibekov (ed.), *1916 zhyl*, 129.
- 28 On the questions concerning the authenticity of Zhambul's songs (whether they were written by him or for him and the degree to which Russian translations preserved the content and spirit of the original songs), see E. Dobrenko, “Naideno v perevode: Rozhdenie sovetskoi mnogonatsional'noi literatury iz smerti pisatel'ia”, *Neprikosnovenniy zapas* 78/4 (2011), 2–20; and Kudaibergenova, *Rewriting the Nation*, 48–50.
- 29 Kenen Azirbaev, “Oleng, jyr, tolgau maqal men jazylgan: 1916-zhil bolgan angime edi”, *QRUGA-OGK-FRKR*, No. 1019, 58–63.
- 30 Azirbaev, “Oleng, jyr, tolgau maqal men jazylgan”, *QRUGA-OGK-FRKR*, No. 1019, 52–61.
- 31 “16-zhyl sudagy Qazaq, Qyryzdyng patchaga qarsa koterilisi Ali Batyr”, *QRUGA-OGK-FRKR*, No. 1019, 52–55.
- 32 Tillet, *The Great Friendship*, 178.
- 33 Tillet, *The Great Friendship*, 76.
- 34 “Torgai Sogysy”, *QRUGA-OGK-FRKR*, No. 1019, 22–30.
- 35 Kuderik Zholdybaiuly, “Amangeldinyng Torgaidy algany”, *QRUGA-OGK-FRKR*, No. 1019, 31–33.

- 36 “1916 zhyly Ianvardyng basynda Amangeldi Batyrdybg Qostinaidan shyqqan 1000 soldatpen Quiyiq degan kolde sogysqan”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 34–38. Note: Violent reactions to the mobilisation in Torghai did not begin until August 1916, so no battle between Imanov and Imperial forces could have taken place in January 1916, as this song claims. The author can offer no explanation for this discrepancy.
- 37 “Torgai Sogysy”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 22–30.
- 38 Adembekov, “Amangeldi”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 52.
- 39 Zhambul Zhabaev, “Amangeldi Toiynda”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 1.
- 40 Esenbi Omarov, “Batyr: Amangeldinyng olgenjne 20 zhyl toluyna (1939)”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 55; Maulen Nurbave, “Tarikh umytpaidy (1939)”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 56–58; Baqyt Imanov, “Tabyt Basynda”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 98; “Joqtau (Amangeldi ulgendegi ayeli Balymnyng joqtauynan alyndy)”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 100–102; “Birmagambet Esenjoloutyng Amangeldi Joqtap Jyrgany”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 103–104.
- 41 Baqyt Imanov, “Amangeldinyng anasy men qostaqany”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 89.
- 42 “1916 zhyl tilovoi zhumysqa alyngan zhastyng zary or Qochtasu”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 59; Suleiman Saduaqasov, “Amangeldi turaly (1938)”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 3.
- 43 Alibi Dzhangeldin, “Moi Put”, *Alibi Dzhangeldin: Dokumenty i materialy* (Almaty: TOO izdatel'stvo Ana Tili, 2009), 18–32.
- 44 “Torgai Sogysy”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 30–31.
- 45 “1919 zhyly Iul' aenda Qaratileuov Sali(m)gereiding shyguva”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 51.
- 46 S. D. Asfandiyarov, *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 g. v Kazakhstane* (Moscow and Almaty, 1936); S. Brainin and S. Shafiro, *Vosstantie kazakhov Semirechi'ia v 1916 g.* (Almaty and Moscow, 1936); S. Brainin and N. Timofeev, *Amangel'dy Imanov vozhd' vosstaniia 1916 god v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazgospolitizdat, 1939).
- 47 S. Brainin, *Amangel'dy* ([No place of publication listed]: Qazag'stan Baspasy, 1936), 7.
- 48 Brainin, *Amangel'dy*, 26–27.
- 49 On Alash-Orda, its leaders, and their activities in Kazakh society before and during the Russian Revolution, see Steven Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Pete Rottier, *Creating the Kazak Nation: The Intelligentsia's Quest for Acceptance in the Russian Empire, 1905–1920* (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005).
- 50 Brainin *Amangel'dy*, 62–66.
- 51 Brainin *Amangel'dy*, 63.
- 52 Brainin *Amangel'dy*, 67.
- 53 Brainin *Amangel'dy*.
- 54 Brainin *Amangel'dy*, 70.
- 55 Brainin *Amangel'dy*, 70–71.
- 56 “1919 zhyly Iul' aenda Qaratileuov Sali(m)gereiding shyguva”, QRUGA-OGK-FRKR, No. 1019, 51.

- 57 On the careers and work of Mailin and Musirepov, see Kudaiberganova, *Rewriting the Nation*, 21–81.
- 58 Beimbet [Mailin] and Gabit [Musirepov], *Amangeldi* (Almaty: Qazag'atan Korkem Adabiiet Baspasy, 1935), 12–13. Mirzhakyp Dulatov was arrested in 1928 on charges of bourgeois nationalism. He died in the prison hospital at Solovetskii Camp in 1935.
- 59 Beimbet and Gabit, *Amangeldi*, 88–94.
- 60 Beimbet and Gabit, *Amangeldi*, 104.
- 61 Beimbet and Gabit, *Amangeldi*, 104.
- 62 *Mirzhakup Dulatuly, Alty tomdyq shygarmylar zhinaghy* (Almaty: Maktab, 2013), 6:261. In his confession, Dulatov admitted that Alash Orda forces had captured Imanov. However, he claimed that the execution had taken place while he had been out of town and was carried out without any order from him (*Mirzhakup Dulatuly*, 245).
- 63 Omirkhan Abdimanily, *XX-gasyr bas kezindegi qazaq adebiyeti* (Almaty: Qazaq universiteti, 2002), 69–77; Z. Q. Qabdolov (ed.), *Qazaq adebietining tarikh, 10 tomda: 6-tom, XX-gasyrdyng basyndagy qazaq adebiyeti (1900–1917), 2-kitap* (Almaty: QAZAqparat, 2006), 201–241; B. Kenzhebaev, *XX gasyr basyndagy adebiyat: Zhetishi kitap* (Almaty: Bilim, 1993), 202–226; K. Ischanov, *1916 zhyl zhane khalyq poeziiasy* (Almaty, 1958), 8–16.

Select bibliography

Published document collections

- Akmataliev, A. A. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Bishkek: Uluu Toolor, 2016).
- Beisenbaev, S. B. (ed.), *Amangeldy Imanov (stat'i, dokumenty, materialy)* (Alma: Kazakhstan, 1974).
- Chuloshnikov, A., "K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz v 1916 godu. S predisloviem A. Chuloshnikova", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 16 (1926), 53–75.
- Galuzo, P. (ed.), "Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 39–94.
- Galuzo, P. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii. Sbornik Dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932).
- Isaev, Nuriddin (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane. Natsional'naya Tragediya Kyrgyzskogo naroda* (Bishkek: Maxprint, 2016).
- Iskhakov, Salavat (ed.), *Grazhdanskaya voina v Rossiii i musulmane. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Mocow: Tsentr strategicheskoi kon'unktury, 2014).
- Kakeev, A. Ch. (ed.), *Sredneaziatskoe (Turkestarskoe) Vosstanie 1916g* (Bishkek: Izd. KRSU, 2016), 6 vols.
- Kaptagaev, E. S. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane: Sbornik dokumentov* (Bishkek: Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv KR, 2011).
- Kotiukova, T. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkestane. Dokumental'nye svidetel'stva obshchei tragedii. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016).
- Kozybaev, M. K. (ed.), *Qaharli 1916 zhyl. Quzhattar men materialdar zhinaghy/Groznyi 1916 god. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998), 2 vols.
- Mambetaliev, K. I. (ed.), *Vosstaniya 1916 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Bishkek: Natsional'naia AN Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, 2015).
- Piaskovskii, A. V. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960).
- Pokrovskii, M., "Iz dnevnika A. N. Kuropatkina", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 20 (1927), 56–77.
- Qoigheldiev, M. Q., *Qazaq ult-azzatyq kozghalysy vol.2 Zhetysu – Issyk-kul'skaya tragediya 1916–1920gg* (Astana: Astana Poligrafiya, 2007).

- Shestakov, A. (ed.), "Dzhizakskoe Vosstanie v 1916g", *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 60 (1933), 60–91.
Vosstanie 1916 goda v Turkmenii (dokumenty i materialy) (Ashkhabad: Turkmenskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1938).

Other primary sources

- Abdrakhmanov, I., 1916. *Dnevnik. Pis'ma k Stalinu* (Bishkek: Kyrgyzstan, 1991).
 Abdusemätov, Nazarghoja, *Taranchi Türklarning Tarikhi* (Almuta: Uyghur Kommunistlirining vilayät byurasi, 1922).
 Abydykalykov, A. and Pankratova, A. (eds.) *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata: Kazogiz, 1943).
 Akhmedbekov, Nurkhan, *Amangeldi: Dastandar* (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1990).
 Altaiskii, M., Kuznetsov, P. and Arkhangel'skii, L. (ed. and trans.), *Pesni o shestnadsatom gode* (Moscow and Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe Kraevoe Izdatel'stvo, 1936).
 Asfendiyarov, Sandzhar, *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstaniya 1916 goda v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1936).
 Aspandiyarov, Sanjar, *Uyghur khälqining tarihi toghriliq (Yanglivashtin tughulghan Uyghur khälqi)* (Almuta: Qazaqstan, 1989).
 Brainin, S. and Shafiro, S., *Vosstanie Kazakhov Semirech'ya v 1916 godu* (Alma-Ata: Kazgospolitizdat, 1935).
 Brainin, S. and Timofeev, N., *Amangeldy Imanov vozhd' vosstaniia 1916 god v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazgospolitizdat, 1939).
 Broido, G. I., *Vosstanie Kirgiz v 1916g. Moe pokazanie prokuroru Tashkentskoi sudebnoi palaty, danoe 3-go Sentiabria 1916g* (Moscow: Nauchnaia Assotsiatsiia Vostokovedeniia pri Ts. I. K. SSSR, 1925).
 Chekaninskii, I., *Vosstanie kirgiz-kazakov i kara-kirgiz v Dzhetyysuskom (Semirechenskom) krae v iiule-sentiabre 1916 goda* (Kzyl-Orda: Obshchestvo izucheniia Kazakhstana, 1926).
 Galuzo, P. G., *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Izd. Sr.-Az. Kom. Un-ta, 1926).
 Galuzo, P. G., *Turkestan – koloniia* (Moscow: Nauka i Prosveshchenie, 1929).
 Isakeev, B., *Kirgizskoe vosstanie 1916 (Doklad na sobranii rabochikh "Intergel'po" i "Zheleznodorozhnikov", s sviazi s 15-letiem vosstaniia 1916 goda)* (Frunze: Kirgosizdat, 1932).
 Kharlampovich, K. V., *Vosstanie Turgaiskikh Kazak-Kirgizov v 1916–1917 g.g.* (Kzyl-Orda: Izd. Obsh. Izucheniya Kazakhstana, 1926).
 Kuropatkin, A. N., *Zadachi russkoi armii* (St Petersburg: B. A. Bezobrazov, 1910), 3 vols.
 Kuropatkin, A. N., *Dnevnik generala A. N. Kuropatkina*, ed. O. R. Airapetov (Moscow: Gos. Ist. Pub. Biblioteka, 2010).
 [Mailin,] Beimbet and [Musirepov,] Gabit, *"Amangeldi"* (Almaty: Qazag'atan Korkem Adabiiet Baspasy, 1935).
 Nazaroff, Paul, *Hunted Through Central Asia*, trans. Malcolm Burr (Edinburgh: Wm Blackwood & Sons, 1932).
 Pahlen, K. K., *Otchet po Revizii Turkestanskago Kraya, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU Povelению. Pereselencheskoe Delo* (St Petersburg: Senatskaya Tipografiya, 1910).

- Pahlen, K. K., *Mission to Turkestan: Being the Memoirs of Count K. K. Pahlen 1908–1909*, ed. Richard Pierce and trans. N. J. Couriss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
- Rumyantsev P. P., *Materialy po obsledovaniuu tuzemnogo i ruskogo starozhilcheskogo khozyaistva i zemlepolzovaniia v Semirechenskoj oblasti* (St Petersburg: Izd. Pereselencheskogo Upravleniya, 1913–1916), 7 vols.
- Ryskulov, Turar, “Vosstanie Tuzemtsev Turkestana v 1916 godu”, in *Ocherki revoliutsionnogo dvizheniya v Srednei Azii. Sbornik Statei* (Moscow: n.p., 1926), 46–122.
- Ryskulov, T. T. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 g. v Kirgizstane* (Moscow: Sotsekiz, 1937).
- Safarov, Giorgii, *Kolonial'naiia revoliutsiia (opyt Turkestana)* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1921; reprint: Society for Central Asian Studies, Reprint series no.4, Oxford, 1988).
- Seifullin, Saken, *Tar Zhol, Taighaq Keshu* (Kyzylorda: Tipografiia Kazakstanskogo Gosudarstvennogo Izdatel'stva, 1927).
- Shestakov, A., *15-letie vosstaniia v Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Sotsekiz, 1931).
- Shipin, Omar, *Dastandar* (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1989).
- Soltonoev, Belek, *Qizil Qirghiz Tarikhi* (Bishkek: Uchkun, 1993), 2 vols.
- Willfort, Fritz, *Turkestanisches Tagebuch. Sechs Jahre in Russisch-Zentralasien* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1930).
- Zhanibekov, Ozbekali, *1916 Zhyl (Qazaq khalqynynq ult-azattyq koterilisining 80 zhylyghyna): Angimeler, olengder men dastandar* (Almaty: Rauan, 1996).

Secondary literature

- Abashin, S. N., Arapov, D. I. and Bekmakhanova, N. E., *Tsentrāl'naiia Aziia v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moscow: NLO, 2008).
- Abdurasulov, Ul'fat, “Konflikt kak resurs: anatomiiia ‘turkmenskikh besporiadkov’ v Khorezme, 1914–1916gg”, *Ab Imperio* 3/2018, 141–186.
- Airapetov, O. A., *Uchastie Rossiiskoi Imperii v pervoi mirovoi voine. 1914–17* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2014–2017), 4 vols.
- Akiyama, Tetsu, “Why Was Russian Direct Rule Over Kyrgyz Nomads Dependent on Tribal Chieftains ‘Manaps’?”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), 625–649.
- Ālakhunov, Andrey, *Uyghur khāliq qoşaqliri* (Almuta: Nauka KasSSR, 1977).
- Astashov, A., *Russkii Front v 1914 – nachale 1917 goda* (Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2014).
- Barry, Gearóid, Dal Lago, Enrico and Healy, Róisín (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War I* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
- Batyrbaeva, S. D., “Teoretiko-metodologicheskie aspekty issledovaniia demograficheskikh posledstviiv vosstaniia 1916 g. v Severnom Kyrgyzstane”, in I. A. Petrov (ed.), *Turkestanское vosstanie 1916 g.: fakty i interpretatsii: materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, Moskva, 23–24 maia 2016 g* (Moscow: IRI RAN, 2016), 38–51.
- Brophy, David, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia–China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).
- Brower, Daniel, “Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* 44/1 (1996), 41–53.

- Brower, Daniel, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
- Budyanskii, David, *Istoriya Bezhentsev-Kirgizov* (Bishkek: n.p., 2006).
- Buttino, Marco, *La Rivoluzione Capovolta. L'Asia centrale tra il crollo dell'impero zarista e la formazione dell'URSS* (Naples: l'Ancona del Mediterraneo, 2003), trans. N. Okhotin as *Revoliutsiia Naoborot. Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniiem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007).
- Buttino, Marco, "Central Asia (1916–20): A Kaleidoscope of Local Revolutions and the Building of the Bolshevik Order", in Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov and Mark von Hagen (eds.), *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014).
- Carmack, Roberto, "History and Hero-Making: Patriotic Narratives and the Sovietization of Kazakh Front-Line Propaganda, 1941–1945", *Central Asian Survey* 33/1 (2014), 95–112.
- Chokobaeva, Aminat, "Born for Misery and Woe: National Memory and the 1916 Great Revolt in Kyrgyzstan", in Mariya Y. Omelicheva (ed.), *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 37–51.
- Chokobaeva, Aminat, "Krasnye kyrgyzy: sovetskaia istoriografiia vosstaniia 1916 goda", in *Al'manakh Shtaba no.2 Poniatiia o Sovetskom* (2016), 50–75 (www.art-initiatives.org/ru/almanac_of_stab).
- Drieu, Cloé, "Interdit aux Sartes, aux chiens et aux soldats': la Russie coloniale dans le film de Sulejman Khozhaev Avant l'Aurore [Tong oldidan], 1933", S. Abashin and S. Gorshenina (eds.), *Le Turkestan Russe. Une colonie comme les autres?* (Tashkent and Paris: IFEAC, 2009), 508–539.
- Drieu, Cloé, *Fictions Nationales. Cinéma, empire et nation en Ouzbékistan* (Paris: Karthala, 2013).
- Drieu, Cloé, "L'impact de la Première Guerre mondiale en Asie centrale: des révoltes de 1916 aux enjeux politiques et scientifiques de leur historiographie", *Histoire@politique*, 22 (2014), 175–193.
- Drieu, Cloé, "Situation révolutionnaire au Turkestan (février 1917–février 1918): les dynamiques locales des révolutions russes", *Vingtième Siècle* 135 (2017), 87–101.
- Drieu, Cloé and d'Andurain, Julie, "Beyond the European Stage of 14–18: The Other Great War in the Muslim World", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 141 (2017), 11–33.
- Duishembieva, Jipar, "Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856–1924" (University of Washington, Seattle PhD Dissertation, 2015).
- Egemberdiyeva, S. and A. Aqmataliyev (eds.), *Tarixiy urlar, qoshoqtor jana oquyalar* (Bishkek: Sham, 2002).
- Fuller, William, *The Foe Within: Fantasies of Treason and the End of Imperial Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
- Ganin, A. V., "Posledniaia poludennaia ekspeditsiia Imperatorskoi Rossii: Russkaia armiiia na podavlenii Turkestanskogo miatezha 1916–1917gg", in O. R. Airapetov, Miroslav Jovanovich, M. A. Kolerov, Bruce Menning and Paul Chaisty (eds.), *Russkii Sbornik. Issledovaniia po istorii Rossii* (Moscow: Modest Kolerov, 2008), 152–214.

- Gatrell, Peter, *A Whole Empire Walking. Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999).
- Gerwarth, Robert, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End 1917–1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2016).
- Gerwarth, Robert and Manela, Erez (ed.), *Empires at War: 1911–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Hallez, Xavier, “Le ralliement des Kazakhs au pouvoir soviétique (1917–1920): convictions politiques, système tribal et contexte russe”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), 705–752.
- Happel, Jörn, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010).
- Holquist, Peter, “To Count, to Extract, to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia”, in Ronald Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111–144.
- Holquist, Peter, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- Holquist, Peter, “Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905–21”, *Kritika* 4/3 (2003), 627–652.
- Holquist, Peter, “The Role of Personality in the First (1914–1915) Russian Occupation of Galicia and Bukovina”, in Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Nathan Meir and Israel Bartal (eds.), *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in European History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 52–73.
- Holquist, Peter, “The Politics and Practice of the Russian Occupation of Armenia, 1915–February 1917”, in Ronald Suny, Fatma Göçek and Norman Naimark (eds.), *A Question of Genocide. Armenians and Turks at the end of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 151–174.
- Holquist, Peter, “Forms of Violence During the Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territory and in Northern Persia (Urmia and Astrabad)”, in Omer Bartov and Eric Weitz (eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires. Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 334–361.
- Ismailov, Il'yas, *Sovetskie dungane v periode stroitelstva sotsializma* (Frunze: Ilim 1977).
- Jeffery, Keith, *1916: A Global History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- Kabirov, Malik, *Ocherki istorii uigurov Sovetskogo Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata: Nauka KazSSR, 1975).
- Kamalov, Ablet, “Birth of Uyghur National History in Semirech'ye: Nāzāryoja Abdusemätov and His Historical Works”, *Oriente Moderno* 96/1 (2016), 181–196.
- Kastel'skaya, Z. D., *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gos. Izd. UzSSR, 1938).
- Kastel'skaya, Z. D., *Osnovnye predposylki vosstaniya 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972).
- Khalid, Adeeb, “Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan”, *Slavic Review* 55/2 (1996), 270–296.

- Khalid, Adeeb, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform. Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).
- Khalid, Adeeb, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
- Khamraev, Khamit, *Kul'dzhinskii trakt* (Almaty: Mir, 2014).
- Kolonitskii, Boris, “*Tragicheskaiia Erotika*”: *Obrazy imperatorskoi sem'i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: NLO, 2010).
- Kotiukova, T. V., *Okraina na osobom polozenii... Turkestan v preddverii dramy* (Moscow: nauchno-politicheskaya kniga, 2016).
- Kotiukova, T. V. (ed.), *Tsivilizatsionno-kul'turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentralnoi Azii v nachale XX stoletiya (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2016).
- Kovalev, P. A., “Mobilizatsiya na tylovye raboty naseleniya Turkestana (sentyabr' 1916g. – Mart. 1917g.,” in *Trudy Sredneaziatskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta im. V. I. Lenina* Vyp XC Kn.14 (Tashkent: Izd. SAGU, 1957), 63–115.
- Kovalev, P. A., *Tylovye rabochie Turkestana v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny (1916 – mai 1917 g.)* (Tashkent: Gosizdat Uzbekskoi SSR, 1957).
- Krongardt, G., “Demograficheskie aspekty istorii vosstaniia 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane,” in V. Ploskikh and J. Junushaliev (eds.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane (sbornik materialov nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 75-letiiu vosstaniia)* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1993), 49–53.
- Kudaibergenova, Diana T., *Re-Writing the Nation in Modern Kazakh Literature: Elites and Narratives* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Lexington Books, 2017).
- Levene, Mark, *Devastation. Volume 1: The European Rimlands 1912–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Lieven, Dominic, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War, and the end of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015)
- Lohr, Eric, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)
- Lohr, Eric and Sanborn, Joshua, “1917: Revolution as Demobilization and State Collapse”, *Slavic Review* 76/3 (2017), 703–709.
- Lohr, Eric, Tolz, Vera, Semyonov, Alexander and von Hagen, Mark (eds.), *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014).
- Makhmutbekova, Mistegül, *Kyrgyzstandagy uluttuk-boshtonduk kötörülüş* (Bishkek: Erkin-Too, 1996).
- Morrison, Alexander, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Morrison, Alexander, “Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire”, *Kritika* 13/2 (2012), 327–364.
- Morrison, Alexander, “Sowing the Seed of National Strife in this Alien Region. The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1911”, *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), 1–29.
- Morrison, Alexander, “Peasant Settlers and the Civilising Mission in Russian Turkestan, 1865–1917”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43/3 (2015), 387–417.
- Myrzaghaliuly, Marat, *1916–1917 zhyldardaghy Torghai Qazaqtarynyng köterilisi* (Almaty: Atamura, 2005).

- Noack, David X., "Continuing the Great Game: Turkestan as a German Objective in World War I", in Gearóid Barry, Enrico Dal Lago and Róisín Healy (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War I* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 230–244.
- Ohayon, Isabelle, *La sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline. Collectivisation et changement social (1928–1945)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2006).
- Ömär, Uchqunjan, *Uyghur khäliq tarikhiy qoshaqliri* (Kashgar: Qäshqär Uyghur näshriyati, 1981)
- Papazov, A. V., "Sredneziatskoe vosstanie 1916 goda i rol' general-gubernatora A. N. Kuropatkina v ego podavlenii", *Vestnik MGOU* 2 (2012), 109–112.
- Petersen, Roger, "A Community-Based Theory of Rebellion", *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie/Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* 34/1 (1993), 41–78.
- Petrov, I. A. (ed.), *Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny: ekonomicheskoe polozhenie, sotsial'nye protsessy, politicheskii krizis* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2014).
- Pianciola, Niccolò, *Stalinismo di frontiera. Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia Centrale* (Rome: Viella, 2009).
- Pianciola, Niccolò, "Décoloniser l'Asie centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)", *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49/1 (2008), 101–143.
- Pianciola, N. and Sartori, P. (eds.), *Islam, Society and States across the Qazaq Steppe (18th–Early 20th Centuries)* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013).
- Ploskikh, Vladimir, *Istoriia Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana* (Bishkek: Ilim, 2003).
- Prior, Daniel, *Patron, Party, Patrimony, Notes on the Cultural History of the Kirghiz Epic Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Research for Inner Asian Studies, 2000).
- Prior, Daniel, *The Šabdan Baatr Codex. Epic and the Writing of Northern Kirghiz History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- Prior, Daniel, "High Rank and Power among the Northern Kirghiz: Terms and Their Problems, 1845–1864", in Paolo Sartori (ed.), *Explorations in the Social History of Modern Central Asia (19th– Early 20th Century)* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 137–179.
- Qylychev, Esentur and Zhaparov, Nuraly (eds.), *Ürkün 1916, tarykhi-darektiüi ocherkter* (Bishkek: Ala-Too zhurnalynyn redaktsiiasy, 1993).
- Reynolds, Michael, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Ross, Danielle, "Fighting for the Tsar, Fighting Against the Tsar", in Gearóid Barry, Enrico Dal Lago and Róisín Healy (eds.), *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War I* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 211–229.
- Ruziyev, Mashur, *Vozrozhdennyi uyghurskii narod* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1976).
- Sahadeo, Jeff, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).
- Sanborn, Joshua, *Drafting the Russian Nation. Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).

- Sanborn, Joshua, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Sapargaliev, G. S. *Karatel'naia politika tsarizma v Kazakhstane (1905–1917 gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1966).
- Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, David, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001).
- Smele, Jonathan, *The “Russian” Civil Wars, 1916–1926. Ten Years That Shook the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- Sokol, Edward Dennis, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954 [reprinted 2016]).
- Steinberg, John W., *All the Tsar’s Men: Russia’s General Staff and the Fate of the Empire, 1898–1914* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).
- Stone, Norman, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975).
- Strachan, Hew, *The First World War: Vol. I: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Sulemeinov, B. S. and Basin, B. Y., *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane (prichiny, kharakter, dvizhushchie sily)* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977).
- Suny, Ronald Grigor, *They Can Live in the Desert But Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Tillet, Lowell, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).
- Toqombayeva, A., *Qayum Miftaqov, 1892–1948. Ilimiy–populyardiq ocherk* (Frunze: Ilim, 1991).
- Tursunov, K., *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent: Gos. Izd. Uzb. SSR, 1962).
- Ueda, Akira, “How Did the Nomads Act During the 1916 Revolt in Russian Turkistan?”, *Journal of Asian Network for GIS-based Historical Studies* 1 (2013), 33–44.
- Usenbaev, K. U., *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizii* (Frunze: Ilim, 1967).
- Usenbaev, K. U. (ed.), *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kyrgyzstane (Sbornik materialov nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 75-letiiu vosstaniia)* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1993).
- Usenbaev, Kushbek, *1916: Geroicheskie i graficheskie stranitsy* (Bishkek: Sham, 1997).
- Uyama, Tomohiko, “Two Attempts at Building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement”, in Stéphane Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (eds.), *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2001), 77–98.
- Uyama, Tomohiko, “A Particularist Empire: The Russian Policies of Christianization and Military Conscriptation in Central Asia”, in Tomohiko Uyama (ed.), *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 23–63.
- Uyama, Tomohiko, “Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals as a Sign of Weakness of Russian Imperial Rule: The Paradoxical Impact of Governor A.N. Troitskii on the Kazakh National Movement”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), 681–703.

- von Hagen, Mark, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).
- Weinstein, Jeremy M., *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Yaroshevski, Dov, “Russian Regionalism in Turkestan”, *Slavonic & East European Review* 65/1 (1987), 77–100.
- Yilmaz, Harun, “History Writing as Agitation and Propaganda: Kazakh History Book of 1943”, *Central Asian Survey* 31/4 (2012), 409–423.
- Ziyoyeva, Dono, *Turkiston milliy ozodlik harakati* (Tashkent: Sharq, 2000).

Index

- Abukin, Qanat 12, 216, 291, 299,
303n.18, 304n.18
- Alash-Orda 12, 19, 272–275, 279,
337–340, 345n.49
- Alekseev, General A. I. 28, 39, 145
- Alekseev, General M. V. 214
- Andijan 61, 77, 89, 114, 293
uprising of 1898 2, 19, 33, 100,
107, 118, 126–127, 136, 140n.8,
200–201, 207n.58
- anti-Semitism 172, 211
- aqyn* 17, 290, 293–294, 299, 301, 306
n.38, 330, 334
- Aulie-Ata 62, 152, 164–165n.61,
212, 291
- Austria-Hungary *see* Habsburg
- Austro-Hungarian Empire *see*
Habsburg
- Baatyr, Shabdan 86, 163n.42, 180,
189n.67, 291–292, 296, 303n.14,
308–309, 325n.1
- Baitursynov, Ahmet 271, 340
- barymta see barymtashy*
- barymtashy* 17, 197, 262–265,
267–269, 281, 285n.44, 285n.45,
288n.100
- batyr* 17, 149, 261–262, 264–266,
268–269, 274, 276, 280–282
- Belovodskoe massacre 11, 202, 214
- bii* 261, 263, 266, 268, 273, 284n.37,
286n.57, 331
- Bolshevik 5–6, 10, 16, 18, 25n.78,
162n.28, 174, 177–178, 182–184,
213, 222, 227, 232, 240, 245–250,
264, 270, 280, 309, 321, 324, 334,
336–341
Revolution *see* October Revolution
- Broido, G. I. 4, 18, 91n.13, 209,
213, 332
- Bughu 39, 293, 296–297
- Bukeikhanov, Ali Khan 270–271,
284n.26, 330, 332, 334, 339, 340
- Bukhara
Amir of 38, 48
city 101, 276
Emirate of 61, 72, 77, 86, 94n.72,
101, 131, 171–172, 191, 258, 261,
268, 270, 277, 280
- Buryat 29–31
- camels *see* livestock, camels
- cattle *see* livestock, cattle
- Caucasus 15, 27, 30–32, 46, 49, 53–54,
57, 59, 131, 259
Caucasian front 171–174, 186n.28
- Chikishlar 3
- Chimkent 62, 77, 113, 235, 292
- China 4, 55, 57–58, 113, 129, 131,
138, 179, 181–182, 218, 230, 241,
246–247, 250, 261, 271, 280,
299–300, 303n.17, 309, 316
- Chinese border 2, 17, 37, 148,
150–151, 158, 167n.95, 169, 176,
192, 221, 215–216, 228–229,
254n.75, 289, 293–294, 296–297,
302n.3, 318
- Christian 31, 51, 186n.27

- Christianity *see* Christian
- Chu Valley 158, 209, 216–217, 297, 299, 308, 319–320, 322, 325
- Cossacks 29–30, 42n.20, 49, 61, 87, 102, 111, 114, 128, 131–132, 137, 149, 153, 155–158, 165n.64, 167n.95, 172, 175–177, 182, 184, 196, 200, 211, 214, 216, 218–222, 231–233, 239, 245–250, 259–260, 267, 270–271, 273, 290, 292, 302n.6, 317
- cotton 11, 13–14, 53, 72, 76–78, 147
- Dragoman 110, 111, 149, 298
- Dulatov, Mirzhakyp 35, 271, 273, 287, 330, 338–339, 346n.58
- Duma (Russian State) 4, 29, 34, 49, 52, 58–61, 65, 66, 89, 135–137, 139, 218, 285n.38
- Dungan 37, 39, 51, 58, 60, 112, 114, 150, 157–158, 175, 179–182, 190n.75, 228–229, 231, 233–238, 240–241, 249–251, 294–296, 301, 303–304, 320–321, 323–324
- eastern front 4, 16, 171–172, 210–211
- Erzurum 173
- famine 11, 21n.11, 73, 88, 145, 281, 320, 328
- February Revolution 3, 11, 14, 16, 210, 218, 222, 244, 271, 280, 290, 293, 337
- Ferghana 2, 13, 28, 32, 34–36, 52, 55, 57, 61, 76–77, 101–102, 108, 118, 147, 172, 189n.67, 191, 196, 206n.51, 210, 241, 246
- Folbaum, M. A. 54, 60, 112–116, 118, 121n.24, 124n.67, 132–133, 136, 157, 163n.39, 165n.64, 200, 202, 213–215
- forest 76, 251n.6
- Galuzo, P. G. 4–5, 73, 140n.8, 213
- Gelaohui 37, 44n.47, 181, 189n.70–71, 190n.73
- genocide 8, 17, 20, 209–210
Armenian 16, 173
- Germans 15, 18, 36–39, 62, 87, 89, 107, 116, 123n.46, 131–133, 137, 139, 147, 151, 159, 169n.98, 171–172, 177, 179, 181, 186n.22, 187n.41, 189n.72, 199, 211, 215, 220, 241, 295, 299, 333
- Germany *see* Germans
- ghazavat* 19, 84, 87–88, 94n.79, 259, 268, 276
- Ghulja 190n.75, 218, 229, 231, 241, 246, 250, 254n.75, 290, 293, 299
- Gippius, A. I. 32, 118, 200
- grain 13, 72–73, 77–78, 88, 182–183, 187n.41, 216, 218, 300
wheat 76–78, 88, 272, 300, 318
- Habsburg 1, 14, 35, 46, 171–172, 211
- horses *see* livestock, horses
- Imanov, Amangeldi 7, 13, 17, 85, 269–270, 272, 280–281, 288n.100, 327–346
- infidel 11, 33, 97, 100, 107–108, 117, 230
- inflation 11, 14, 25n.77
- inorodtsy* 2, 27, 31, 34, 47, 48, 51, 54–55, 57, 59, 61–63, 66, 67, 131, 147, 175, 259, 263–264, 266, 270
- irrigation 14, 50, 73–74, 77, 79–80, 92n.30
- Issyq-Ata 134, 170, 218
- Issyq-Kul 19, 138, 158, 180, 209, 215, 220, 290–291, 294–297, 301, 325n.1
- Ivanov, N. A. (Governor-General of Turkestan) 51
- Ivanov, P. P. (Colonel, Governor of Ferghana) 28, 35, 41n.3, 87, 108
- Ivanov, V. A. (Colonel, Commandant of Przheval'sk district) 111–112, 118, 148–149, 305n.30
- Jadid 6, 18, 34–35, 226n.57, 309
- jihad* 19, 87, 94n.79, 286n.59
- Jizzakh 2, 6, 12, 15, 37, 39–40, 41n.3, 71–94, 97, 105–108, 132–133
- kafir* *see* infidel
- Kalmyk 27, 29–31, 231, 243, 254n.86
- Kashgar 37, 110–111, 116, 149, 179, 240–241, 289–290, 293, 321
- Kashgaris *see* Kashgar

- Kasymov, Kenesary 17, 256, 258–262, 266–270, 273–274, 278, 280–281, 283–286, 288n.102, 336–337
- Kazakh 2, 4–5, 7–9, 11–13, 15–21, 27–28, 30–32, 34, 38–41, 42n.20, 44n.56, 49, 51, 54–55, 61, 72, 79, 88, 128–131, 133–135, 137–140, 146, 148–149, 153–155, 158–159, 164–165n.61, 169–171, 174–178, 180, 183–184, 192, 201, 209–210, 212–213, 215, 218–220, 222, 231–238, 241, 247–251, 256–281, 283n.13, 285n.38, 286n.57–58, 290, 293, 297–299, 304n.25, 306n.45, 327–341, 342–343n.13
- Kerensky, A. F. 3, 89, 135–137, 177, 221, 320, 324
- Khiva, Khivan 3, 38–39, 48, 65, 131, 197, 258, 261, 270, 280, 283
- Khoqand 34, 89, 163n.42, 178, 258, 260–261, 283n.17
- Khujand 2, 12, 75, 76–77, 84, 87–88, 102–103
- Krivoshin, A. I. 14
- Kuropatkin, General A. N. 4, 16, 35–37, 43n.38, 49, 51, 65, 88, 106, 108, 113–114, 116, 122n.32, 132–136, 138, 143n.89, 158, 176, 191–208, 210–215, 217–220, 222, 223n.8, 290, 292, 300, 302n.6, 304n.25
- Kyrgyz 2, 4–5, 8–9, 11–19, 21n.11, 27, 36–37, 39–40, 41n.2, 44n.56, 51, 54, 110, 112, 128, 131, 133–139, 140n.11, 145–159, 159–160n.2, 164–165n.61, 169–171, 174–177, 179–184, 192, 201, 209–222, 232–234, 238, 241, 245, 250–251, 259, 261–262, 283n.20, 284n.29, 289–301, 302n.6, 303n.14, 17 & 18, 304n.23 & 25, 305n.28, 31, 36 & 38, 306–307n.45, 52 & 57, 308–326, 332, 334
- livestock 14, 76, 156–158, 180, 213, 218, 260–262, 270, 272–273, 275, 292, 297–300, 303n.13, 335
- camels 135, 213
- cattle 17, 135, 137, 148, 155, 157, 165n.64, 213, 216, 243, 246, 262, 264, 284n.31, 299, 316–317, 319–320
- horses 14, 87, 137, 148, 150, 156, 213, 221, 233, 265, 290, 296–297, 317–319, 323
- sheep 76, 109, 135, 158, 213, 275, 319
- Lykoshin, N. S. 39, 43n.38, 95, 102–108, 112, 118, 122n.30, 122n.32
- manap* 37, 41n.2, 109–110, 115, 163n.42, 222, 291–292, 295, 301, 303n.14, 305–306n.38, 308, 325n.1, 334
- monastery 19, 305n.28
- Musa Chaghatay-uulu 17, 225n.34, 308–326
- Naryn 113, 131, 138, 158, 167n.95
- Nicholas II 30, 51, 54, 63, 127, 131, 147, 201, 228, 242–243, 316, 330–332, 334
- October Revolution 5–6, 11, 174, 177–178, 182–184, 210, 222, 227, 245, 333, 337, 340
- Okhrana 11–12, 15, 38, 41n.4, 98, 129–131, 133, 157, 214, 303n.17 & 18
- opium 18, 37, 171, 179–184, 190n.75, 239–241
- Orenburg 34–35, 157, 336
- Cossacks 30, 211
- Muslim Spiritual Assembly (*Dukhovnoe Sobranie*) 31–32
- Ottoman 1, 36, 38, 46, 55, 58, 87, 127, 171–173, 179, 181, 266
- Pahlen, Count K. K. 73, 75, 77, 128, 138, 201, 207n.64
- pan-Islamic 97, 108
- Pasha, Enver 18, 38
- pastoralism 73, 140 n.11, 145, 168n.98, 215
- pasture 73, 75–76, 92n.30, 217, 278, 283
- summer (*Zhailau*) 215–216
- winter (*Qystau*) 38, 131, 215–217
- Petrograd 23, 33, 65, 116, 338

- Pishpek 2, 12, 21n.11, 37, 61, 86,
94n.75, 114, 137–138, 146–147,
149–150, 152, 155–156, 158,
160n.10, 164–165n.61, 176–177,
179–182, 214–221, 241, 244, 289,
291–294, 296–297
- POWs *see* prisoners of war
- prices 11, 13–14, 76, 78, 148, 179,
241, 289
- prisoners of war (POWs) 14, 35–36,
43n.37, 63, 132, 137, 177–178
- Provisional Government 14, 25n.78,
63, 70n.90, 174, 202, 210, 218,
220–222, 246, 271, 337
- Przheval'sk 2, 12, 18, 21n.11, 37,
39, 41n.4, 111–112, 114, 118,
146–149, 151–152, 155–158,
180n.10, 170–172, 174, 176–182,
184, 190n.75, 215–216, 218–219,
221, 237, 241, 289, 291, 293–294,
299, 302n.6, 305n.28
- Qazaq *see* Kazakh
- qazi* 97, 102
- Qing (Chinese) Empire 37, 179, 181,
189n.70, 227–228, 230, 258
- Qipchaq 260–263, 277, 269–274
- Qirghiz *see* Kyrgyz
- railway 2, 50, 76, 84, 88, 93n.61, 102,
135–136, 162n.32, 177, 222, 242,
264
- refugees 129, 158, 210, 213, 215,
218–220, 241, 247, 250, 254n.75,
289–291, 293, 295, 303n.17, 323
European 35–36, 62, 133, 156,
168n.98, 211, 302n.9, 351
- resettlement (*pereselenie*) 12, 128,
163n.42, 180, 182, 201, 203,
209–226, 233
- Romanov, Grand Duke N. N. 30, 211
- Romanov, Tsar Nicholas II *see*
Nicholas II
- rumours 13, 15, 18–19, 26n.87, 29,
33, 35–36, 38–39, 60, 65, 98, 101,
112–114, 116, 126–127, 129,
131–133, 135, 137–138, 141n.34,
147–148, 152, 160n.5, 165n.61,
215, 217, 240, 246, 272
- Rysqulov, Turar 4–5, 28, 264, 330, 332
- Samarkand 34, 39, 52, 55, 61, 72,
74–77, 88–89, 90n.10, 101–106,
108, 118, 131–132, 172, 191,
196, 202
- Sart 57–58, 60, 80, 101–102, 105,
112–113, 132–133, 141n.35,
152, 238, 289, 297, 314–315, 319,
321, 323
- Sarybaghysh 39, 150, 163n.42, 180,
216, 283n.20, 291, 293, 296–297,
303n.14
- Semirech'e 2, 8–9, 11–13, 15–17, 19,
21n.11, 27–29, 36–37, 39–40,
51–52, 54, 58, 60–61, 87, 94,
97, 102, 105, 108–113, 115–118,
121n.24, 128, 131–138, 145–190,
194, 200–201, 209–255, 260, 262,
289–290, 292–297, 299, 302n.3,
308, 323, 332, 334, 342n.6
- sheep *see* livestock, sheep
- Shkapskii, O. A. 219–222
- Siberia 15, 27, 29, 41n.3, 46, 54–55,
64, 107, 127, 131, 133, 157, 177,
183, 189n.64, 259, 260, 265,
283n.16
- Skobelev, M. D. 16, 196, 198, 205n.30,
210, 303n.14
- Sokol, E. D. 3, 12, 159n.1
- Soltonoev, Belek 37, 39, 165n.66, 291,
305n.36
- Stolypino 11, 137
- Stavka* 62, 291
- Taranchi (Uyghur) 16, 51, 58, 175,
179–180, 182, 222, 227–255, 295,
301
- Tashkent 4, 7, 8, 10–11, 34–35, 64,
72, 74, 77, 84, 106, 113–114, 116,
131, 133–134, 137, 152, 156,
164n.49, 176–178, 182, 195, 221,
240, 246–248
Soviet 10, 176, 188n.53, 202, 245
- taxes 11, 14, 19, 32, 34, 50, 52–53,
66, 70n.96, 75, 92n.30, 251n.6,
260, 263, 276–278, 286n.61,
292, 298.
- Toqmaq 37, 113–114, 155–156,
165n.71, 180, 215–217, 261,
289, 291, 297, 311, 313, 316, 318,
322, 325

- Torghai 2, 7, 12–13, 17–18, 27, 35,
39, 40, 53, 55, 256, 260, 262,
266–277, 281, 282n.10, 283n.17,
286n.66, 328, 332, 334–337,
345n.36, 347–348
- Transcaspia 16, 27, 38, 52, 56–57, 59,
61, 101, 172, 191, 194–198, 203,
204n.13, 210, 246
- Turkmen 3, 12, 16–17, 33, 38–40, 54,
56–57, 59, 172, 197, 210, 259,
283n.20
- Tynyshbaev, Muhammadjan 146,
153–155, 162 n.32, 163n.42,
212–213, 219–222
- Ürkün 2, 17, 37, 148, 150–151, 158,
167n.95, 169, 176, 192, 221,
215–216, 228–229, 254n.75, 289
- Uyghur *see* Taranchi
- Vernyi 16, 108–111, 113–115, 129,
134, 136, 138, 147, 149, 153,
156, 160n.10, 162n.32, 172, 182,
213–214, 219, 221–222, 228–289,
231, 233–234, 236–239, 245–248,
250, 291, 293, 299, 303n.18, 332
- vigilantes (*druzhinniki*) 19, 135, 138,
202, 210, 212–214
- vigilantism *see* vigilantes (*druzhinniki*)
- violence 2–3, 6–8, 10, 12, 14–16,
18–19, 71, 78, 97, 126–144, 146,
151, 153, 156, 158–159, 169–226,
247–248, 256–257, 264–265, 271,
278, 280, 292, 309, 330–331
- von Kaufman, General K. P. 76, 194,
201, 205n.14, 303n.14
- von Martson, General F. V. 58, 60,
65, 132
- weapons 47, 56, 108, 155–156, 170,
176, 183, 238, 240, 261, 270
firearms 134, 155, 165n.66, 261
- wheat *see* grain, wheat
- women 11, 19, 35, 72, 88, 112–123,
150–152, 152, 154, 156–158,
163n.44, 164n.49, 169, 176, 213,
246, 295, 303n.13 & 16, 304n.23,
318, 335
- Xinjiang 18, 37, 170–171, 177,
179–184, 189n.70, 227, 229
- Yakut, Yakutia 50–51
- Zhanbosynov, Abdigapar 13,
267–268, 270–271, 274, 280–281,
286n.57
- Zharkent 113–134, 149–1450, 158,
160n.10, 172, 179, 181–182, 202,
218–220, 228–229, 231–234,
236–238, 240–242, 244, 246,
250–251, 251n.6, 293, 319