

*The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* by Edward Dennis Sokol, with a foreword by S. Frederick Starr. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016 (original edition 1954). x, 187 pp. Bibliography. Index. Tables. Map. \$25, paper.

The centenary year of the 1916 Central Asian Revolt has received more attention than many had anticipated, with numerous conferences and publications in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia, but S. Frederick Starr's Central-Asia Caucasus Institute at the Johns Hopkins University is so far the only western institution to have recognised the anniversary, with a reception in June 2016 at which the publication under review was launched.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately this reprinting of a sixty year old monograph (closer in time to the revolt itself than to our day) with no revisions or additions other than a four-page foreword does an important subject few favours. It does not help that Starr manages to cram as many factual errors and misleading statements into those four pages as most scholars could manage in a full-length book. This begins with the very first sentence, in which Starr states that 'a century ago approximately 270,000 Central Asians – Kazakhs, Tajiks, Turkmen, Uzbeks, and especially Kyrgyz – perished in one of the most ghastly mass deaths in modern history' (p.vii). In fact estimates of the number who died vary widely - while the only demographic studies we have, based on tax data, suggest that some 267,000 people 'went missing' in Semirechie in 1916, this includes missing births and emigration. The number of deaths was probably closer to 150,000, and of these it is not clear what proportion died directly at the hands of Russian forces, or as a result of disease and starvation while fleeing to China.<sup>2</sup> This story is horrific enough without the need for embellishment, but it soon becomes clear why Starr is espousing a maximalist estimate of the number of deaths, as he compares this 'mass killing' to the Armenian genocide. In this he is echoing accusations that were first heard from the "Asaba" opposition party in Kyrgyzstan in the early 1990s, and which have gained considerable traction in the media and among nationalist historians in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan during the centenary year, without receiving official endorsement in either country.<sup>3</sup> These accusations are aimed squarely at Russia, and have unsurprisingly been vehemently refuted by Russian historians, and indeed by many in Central Asia.<sup>4</sup> Starr's desire to side with the 'little guy' is understandable but misguided. There is no clear evidence of the intent of the Russian colonial authorities to destroy the Qazaqs or Kyrgyz 'in whole or in part, as such' – though they certainly suppressed the revolt with extreme brutality and engaged in ethnic cleansing to free land for further Russian settlement. The accusation of genocide has the effect of shutting down all debate and dialogue between Russian and Central Asian historians, and it is driven not by any interest in historical truth, but by a form of ethnic and linguistic nationalism that is potentially extremely dangerous in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, with their large Russian minorities. Starr also lends credence to the absurd idea, put forward by G. I. Broido in the 1920s, that the revolt was deliberately provoked by the authorities to give them

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<sup>1</sup> 'Revolt in Central Asia: The Cataclysm of 1916' June 8 2016 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/forums-and-events/item/13203-revolt-in-central-asia-the-cataclysm-of-1916.html>

<sup>2</sup> Marko Buttino *Revoliutsiia naoborot. Sredniaia Aziia mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007) pp.80, 375-6.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Morrison 'Central Asia: Interpreting and Remembering the 1916 Revolt' *eurasianet.org* October 19 2016 (<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/80931>).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. '1916 – prichiny vosstaniia i mif o genotside' *stanradar.com* September 25 2013 (<http://www.stanradar.com/news/full/4834-1916-prichiny-vosstaniia-i-mif-o-genotside.html>), an interview with the Kyrgyz historian Shairgul Batyrbaeva.

an excuse to seize more land for Russian settlers.<sup>5</sup> The notion that local Russian colonial officials, most of whom were hostile to or at best ambivalent about peasant settlement in Turkestan,<sup>6</sup> would have thought this a remotely sensible course to embark on when the Empire was staggering under the pressures of war is absurd. The revolt came as a surprise to the authorities - 3,000 Russian settlers were killed in Semirech'e, as no adequate measures were in place to protect them. Broido was certainly correct in identifying the expropriation of land for Russian settlement as the deepest underlying cause, but his suggestion that the revolt and its suppression were planned by the authorities is the crudest kind of conspiracy theory, typical both of the hysteria over supposed plots and treason that dominated educated Russian opinion during the Great War,<sup>7</sup> and of a period in Soviet historiography when all the disasters of the late Tsarist period were attributed to Machiavellian manoeuvring rather than plain blundering. Sokol himself lent it little credence (pp.166-8), yet Starr writes that 'it remains a hypothesis that must be carefully tested in each of the many regions in which the Uprising welled up' (pp.ix-x).

However the most egregious myth peddled by Starr is that the history of the Uprising was suppressed in the Soviet period, the archives closed, the topic taboo. Even he is forced to admit that 'during the first years after the Bolshevik coup, informative articles on the events of 1916 appeared in Russia' – as Sokol's book is based almost exclusively on Soviet publications it would have been hard to deny this – 'but by the end of the 1920s these ceased.' This is simply untrue – important works on 1916 continued to be published in the 1930s,<sup>8</sup> and while the revolt did largely disappear from Soviet historiography in the high Stalinist 1940s and early 1950s, there was still a section on it in the 1943 history of the Kazakh SSR, though now reconfigured for patriotic purposes.<sup>9</sup> From the 1960s debate and discussion opened up once again – not just 'a couple of minor studies' (p.viii) as Starr dismisses them, but Khalil Tursunov's monograph on the subject, which remains the main full-length study in Russian, P'iaskovskii's important publication of documents, and interpretations of the revolt as part of Uzbek, Qazaq and Kyrgyz national history.<sup>10</sup> The important point about the historiography of

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<sup>5</sup> 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) pp.1-2, 7, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Morrison 'Sowing the Seed of National Strife in this alien region. The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan' *Acta Slavica Iaponica* Vol.31 (2012) pp.1-29.

<sup>7</sup> See William C. Fuller *The Foe Within. Fantasies of Treason and the end of Imperial Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006) & Boris Kolonitskii *"Tragicheskaiia Erotika". Obraz imperatorskoi sem'i v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2010)

<sup>8</sup> P. Galuzo (ed.) *Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii. Sbornik dokumentov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1932); A. Shestakov (ed.) 'Dzhizakskoe Vosstanie v 1916g.' *Krasnyi Arkhiv* No.60 (1933) pp.60-91; S. Brainin & Sh. Sharifo *Vosstanie Kazakhov Semirech'ia v 1916 godu* (Alma-Ata: n.p., 1935); A. S. Asfendiyarov *Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1936); Z. D. Kastel'skaia *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gosizdat Uzb. SSR, 1938).

<sup>9</sup> 'Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane. Narodnyi geroi Amangel'dy Imanov' in M. Abdykalykov & A. Pankratova (ed.) *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata: Kazogiz, 1943) pp.370 – 398. On the controversy that subsequently erupted over this book see Harun Yilmaz 'History writing as agitation and propaganda: Kazakh history book of 1943', *Central Asian Survey*, 31:4 (2012), pp.409-423. On the use of the figure of Amangel'di 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* Vol.33 No.1 (2014) pp.95-112.

<sup>10</sup> Kh. Tursunov *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent: Gosizdat Uzb. SSR, 1962); A. V. P'iaskovskii *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Izd. AN 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 & B. Ya. Basin *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane (prichiny, kharakter, dvizhushchie sily)* (Alma-Ata: «Nauka», 1977).

1916 is not that it was a suppressed or taboo subject, but that it was constantly reinterpreted to suit the prevailing political climate. In the 1920s and 1930s it was still acceptable to denounce Tsarist rule as an 'absolute evil', and Bolshevik authors such as Piotr Galuzo and Turar Rysqulov took a really very radical, anti-colonial line, which persisted into the 1930s.<sup>11</sup> In the 1940s this was replaced with the orthodoxy that Russian rule in Central Asia was a 'lesser evil', compared both to the 'feudal' regimes which preceded it and the alternative of British imperialism, and it was held to have had a 'progressive significance' for the peoples of the region. Some historians were denounced for 'nationalist deviation' for writing approvingly about the resistance offered by Shamil or Sultan Kenesary to Russian expansion, (the latter leading to the famous 'Bekmakhanov affair'); these movements were classed as 'feudal' and 'reactionary'.<sup>12</sup> However, the notorious Joint Scientific Conference on the History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the pre-October period held in Tashkent in 1954 decided that the 1916 revolt should be classed as 'progressive'. It could no longer be described as an inter-ethnic 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 the 'Bais and Manaps' of their own exploiting classes. The violence inflicted on settlers by Qazaqs and Kyrgyz in Semirech'e was reinterpreted as attacks on 'kulak villages' created as a result of the Stolypin reforms, while the violence inflicted by the settlers was conflated with repression by the Tsarist regime. Earlier Soviet writers such as Rysqulov, Broido or Brainin and Shafiro were criticised for over-emphasising 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.<sup>13</sup> The story of these historiographical somersaults is well-known – Lowell Tillet's 1969 account remains unsurpassed, and in fact Sokol himself describes them briefly (pp.165-175) – but Starr is apparently completely unaware of them.<sup>14</sup> He also ignores the extent to which these Soviet interpretations remain alive and well today: the bogus idea of class struggle has proved remarkably durable in modern Russian publications,<sup>15</sup> while the anachronistic division of the revolt into separate Kyrgyz, Qazaq, Uzbek, Tajik and Turkmen 'national liberation movements' is now the orthodoxy in the post-Soviet historiography coming out of Central Asia.<sup>16</sup>

So what of Sokol's book – was it worth reprinting? The short answer is no. It was a worthy and respectable attempt to tackle a subject that was virtually unknown in western scholarship at the time, but even judged by the standards of 1954 it hardly justifies the gushing descriptions as 'a revelation', 'a masterpiece' or 'a classic study of a vanished world'

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<sup>11</sup> T. Ryskulov 'Vosstanie Tuzemtsev Turkestana v 1916 godu' *Ocherki revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Srednei Azii. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1926) pp.46-122; P. Galuzo (ed.) 'Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii' *Krasnyi Arkhiv* No.34 (1929) pp.39-94.

<sup>12</sup> Lowell Tillet *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969) pp.110 – 129.

<sup>13</sup> Usenbaev *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kirgizii* pp.4-10, 173, 256; Sulemeinov & Basin *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane* pp.9-13, 83.

<sup>14</sup> Tillet *The Great Friendship* pp.185 - 193

<sup>15</sup> O. I Brusina *Slaviane v Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura, 2001) pp.20-40, 137-147; it can also be seen in N. E. Bekmakhanova's section on the 1916 revolt in *Tsentral'naia Azia v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* ed. S. N. Abashin, D. Yu. Arapov & N. E. Bekmakhanova (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008) pp.228 – 292.

<sup>16</sup> M. K. Kozybaev (ed.) *Qaharli 1916 zhyl. Quzhattar men materialdar zhinaghi/Groznyi 1916 god. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1998) 2 Vols.; Dono Ziyoyeva: *Turkiston milliy ozodlik harakati* (Tashkent: 'Sharq', 2000); K. I. Mambetaliev (ed.) *Vosstaniia 1916 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Bishkek: n.p., 2015) p.5; 'Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane' <http://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/287>.

on the back cover. If it had to be reprinted then a facsimile of the original edition would have been more useful, and given that the type has instead been re-set, at the very least the opportunity could have been taken to correct the many mis-spellings of proper names in the original (e.g. 'Ushzkuz' instead of *Uch Zhuz*, p.65; 'Serog' instead of 'Serov', p.113). The first half of Sokol's book (pp.1-65) is a general description of Russian colonial rule in Turkestan, and here not only recent scholarship, but even Richard Pierce's much superior monograph from 1960 rendered what he wrote almost entirely obsolete.<sup>17</sup> It shares the usual failings of Sovietological work, reproducing the categories and assumptions of the Soviet scholarship on which it relies.<sup>18</sup> It seems perverse to republish a book that asserts that the Qazaqs and Kyrgyz were only converted to Islam 'after the Russian conquest in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries' (p.6),<sup>19</sup> which repeats the Hobson/Lenin thesis that Central Asia was conquered for its cotton, and Soviet tropes about the economic oppression and class stratification produced by the expansion of the cotton economy in Central Asia from the 1890s (pp.12-24).<sup>20</sup> Sokol's description of the revolt itself – its causes, development and suppression – has some more lasting value, largely because of the continued paucity of scholarship in English on the subject.<sup>21</sup> The only book on 1916 to have appeared in western scholarship since then is Jörn Happel's excellent 2010 monograph, which makes innovative use of *Okhrana* interrogations to write a history of the revolt from below, but even this focuses exclusively on Semirech'e, while Sokol attempts to be more comprehensive.<sup>22</sup> No-one since Sokol, for instance, has written anything in English about the 1916 revolt among the Turkmen (pp.135-8), or attempted to chart the course of the revolt from the July violence in Jizzakh all the way through to the northern steppe (although for some reason he wrote nothing about the rebellion in Turghai, which had still not been suppressed at the time of the February revolution). He was broadly correct in seeing the revolt not just as a sudden, spontaneous reaction to a misconceived attempt to recruit Muslims into labour battalions, but as having deeper roots in Tsarist colonization policies, and the expropriation of the best land in

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Pierce *Russian Central Asia 1867-1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960); Daniel Brower *Turkestan and the fate of the Russian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003) Jeff Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent 1865 - 1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007); A. S. Morrison *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868 - 1910. A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). This is just a selection of the book-length studies in English.

<sup>18</sup> Devin DeWeese 'Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay of Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam in the Soviet Union*' *Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.13 No.3 (2002) pp.298-330

<sup>19</sup> This notion has now been thoroughly refuted: see Devin DeWeese *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde. Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Allen J. Frank "Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde: Muslim Cossacks, Tatar Merchants and Kazakh nomads in a Turkic manuscript 1870-1910" in Anke von Kügelgen et al (ed) *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* Vol.II – *Inter-regional & inter-ethnic relations* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998) pp.211-242; *Idem Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia. The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde 1780-1910* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> See Beatrice Penati 'The Cotton Boom and the Land Tax in Russian Turkestan (1880s–1915)' *Kritika* 14,3 (2013), pp.741 – 774; 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* Vol.33 No.2 (2014) pp.131-142.

<sup>21</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of both Soviet and western historiography on 1916 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*, 1/2014 (n° 22), pp.175-193 & Aminat Chokobaeva 'Krasnye kyrgyzy: sovetskaia istoriografiia vosstaniia 1916 goda' in *Al'manakh Shtaba* No.2 *Poniatiiia o Sovetskom* (2016) pp.50-75 ([http://www.art-initiatives.org/ru/almanac\\_of\\_stab](http://www.art-initiatives.org/ru/almanac_of_stab)).

<sup>22</sup> Jörn Happel *Nomadische Lebenswelten Und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010).

Semirech'e for Russian settlers. Even so, western scholarship on 1916 has moved on since Sokol's day; apart from Happel's monograph, there are important articles by Daniel Brower, Tomohiko Uyama, Cloé Drieu and Akira Ueda.<sup>23</sup> All of these, unlike Sokol, are based on direct access to archival sources, and in many case on materials in Central Asian languages.

It is now possible to do far more profound research on 1916 than Sokol was able to, both in Central Asia and in Russia. Another of Starr's misleading claims is that 'even today the Putin government bans access to the Tsarist archives in Moscow, where records of events leading up to 1916 and of the Uprising itself are housed' (p.viii). Well, this is certainly news to the hundreds of foreign historians who have been working in Tsarist-era archives in Moscow, St Petersburg and other Russian cities for the last 25 years – in March 2016 I was able to work quite freely with the records of the Asiatic section of the General Staff relating to 1916 in the Russian State Military-Historical Archive in Moscow (RGVIA). The only place where I *have* been denied access to such materials is in Bishkek, where the government is anxious about the war of words which has erupted between Kyrgyz and Russian historians during the centenary, and has sought to deflect pressure from Moscow – even here the closure is likely to be only temporary.<sup>24</sup> RGVIA has recently published a large selection of documents relating to the revolt online,<sup>25</sup> and while these have clearly been selected to emphasise Russian suffering, they do include, for instance, the original of the notorious diary entry in which Governor-General Kuropatkin laid out his plan to deport all the remaining Kyrgyz around Lake Issyq-Qul to the mountainous region of Naryn, reserving all the best land for Russian settlers.<sup>26</sup> The Russian archives also seem to have cooperated fully in the recent publication of a six-volume collection of facsimile documents relating to the revolt by the Kyrgyz-Slavic University in Bishkek.<sup>27</sup> The archives that *are* currently almost impossible for western scholars to access are in Tashkent and Ashkhabad, not Moscow. The prevailing Russian interpretations of 1916 are indeed deeply problematic – they range from the active denial of the colonial nature of Russian rule and the presentation of settlers as the only victims of the revolt,<sup>28</sup> to a more moderate argument that the revolt was a 'general tragedy' provoked by the stresses of war which still ignores both colonial inequality and the massive disparity in casualties on either

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<sup>23</sup> Daniel Brower 'Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916' *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* Vol.44 No.1 (1996) pp.41-53; Tomohiko Uyama 'Two attempts at building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement' in Stéphane Dudoignon & Hisao Komatsu (ed.) *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2001) pp.77-98; Cloé Drieu 'Interdit aux Sartres, aux chiens et aux soldats': la Russie coloniale dans le film de Sulejman Khozhaev *Avant l'Aurore* [Tong oldidan], 1933' in Sergei Abashin & Svetlana Gorshenina (eds.) *Le Turkestan Russe. Une colonie comme les autres?* (Tashkent – Paris: IFEAC, 2009) pp.508-539. <https://asiacentrale.revues.org/1302>; Akira Ueda 'How did the Nomads Act during the 1916 Revolt in Russian Turkistan?' *Journal of Asian Network for GIS-based Historical Studies* Vol.1 (Nov. 2013) pp.33-44 available at: [http://www.i.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~angisj/IANGIS/IANGIS%20\(Ueda,%20revised\).pdf](http://www.i.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~angisj/IANGIS/IANGIS%20(Ueda,%20revised).pdf)

<sup>24</sup> 'Prezident Almazbek Atambaev podpisal Ukaz "O 100-letii tragicheskikh sobytii 1916 goda" 27/05/1915 (<http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/5931>).

<sup>25</sup> 'Sobytie v Semirech'e po dokumentam rossiiskikh arkhivov' (<http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/>)

<sup>26</sup> A. N. Kuropatkin, Diary entry for October 12 1916 in RGVIA F.165 Op.1 D.1970 l.22. (<http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/iz-dnevnikov-kuropatkina/iz-dnevnika-komanduyushchego-voyskami-turkestanskogo-voennogo-okruga-0>); originally published in Galuzo 'Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii' p.60.

<sup>27</sup> A. Ch. Kakeev *et al* (ed.) *Sredneaziatskoe (Turkestanskoe) Vosstanie 1916g. Istorii v dokumentakh* (Bishkek: Izd. KRSU, 2015-16) 6 vols.

<sup>28</sup> A. V. Ganin 'Posledniaia poludennaia ekspeditsiia Imperatorskoi Rossii: Russkaia armiia na podavlenii Turkestanskogo miatezha 1916-1917gg.' *Russkii Sbornik. Issledovaniia po istorii Rossii* Vol.V ed. O. R. Airapetov, Miroslav Jovanovich, M. A. Kolerov, Bruce Menning, Paul Chaisty (Moscow: Modest Kolerov, 2008) pp.152-214; A. V. Ganin 'Predislovie' (<http://semirechye.rusarchives.ru/predislovie>)

side.<sup>29</sup> Moscow has put pressure on Kyrgyzstan to ‘correct’ what it sees as errors in the representation of the revolt in school textbooks.<sup>30</sup> However there is no sense in exaggerating the attempts by the Russian state to prevent the study of 1916, nor is the best way of combating them to espouse an extreme nationalist stance that is only shared by a minority of scholars even within Central Asia. Starr’s interest in the 1916 revolt is in how it can be instrumentalised to fight contemporary political battles, something that is clear from the reference to ‘Putin’s heavy-handed efforts to persuade Kyrgyzstan to join his new economic union’ on the rear cover of this re-edition. This does a disservice both to the history of the revolt, and to the memory of its many victims. A better way to commemorate them than reprinting this outdated book would have been to invest in the scholarship of a new generation, who for the first time are making extensive use of oral history, poetry and songs in Qazaq and Kyrgyz that give a completely different perspective on the revolt and the suffering it caused to that found in Russian accounts.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> T. V. Kotiukova *Tsivilizatsionno-kul’turnye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii Rossii i narodov Tsentral’noi Azii v nachale XX stoletiya (1916 god: uroki obshchei tragedii)* (Moscow: n.p., 2016).

<sup>30</sup> ‘Posol’stvo RF i Soiuz sootchesvnikov trebuiut zapreta uchebnika “Istoriia Kyrgyzstana: XX-XXI veka”’ *regnum.ru* February 15 2013 (<https://regnum.ru/news/cultura/1625821.html>)

<sup>31</sup> Jipar Duishembieva ‘Visions of Community: Literary Culture and Social Change among the Northern Kyrgyz, 1856-1924’ (University of Washington, Seattle Ph.D. Dissertation, 2015) Ch.5; Aminat Chokobaeva ‘Born for Misery and Woe. National Memory and the 1916 Great Revolt in Kyrgyzstan’ in *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* ed. Mariya Y. Omelicheva (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015) pp.37-51; Meiramgul Khussainova ‘Historical Qazaq Songs about 1916’ (Unpublished paper, ESCAS conference 2015); Some Qazaq songs are analysed and can be heard at Nurtai Lakhanuli ‘Pesni i kiui o vosstanii 1916 goda’ *Radio Azattyq* July 28 2016 (<http://rus.azattyq.org/a/pesni-i-kyuji-o-vosstanii-1916-goda/27821546.html>).