

## Peasant settlers and the ‘civilizing mission’ in Russian Turkestan, 1865-1917

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“What extraordinary festival of yours is this?” I asked the hostess of the post-house where I stopped. “Festival? There isn’t any festival,” she answered contemptuously. “They’ve been brewing poteen [*samogon*] from watermelons [*arbuzy*] these three weeks past and having a good drunk. They have managed to make some sort of vodka out of watermelons and so now they have given up doing anything else.” “And how long is it all going to last?” I asked. “Naturally they won’t stop till they have distilled all the *arbuzy* into vodka. I’m afraid they’ll go on drinking and howling for another month yet....”<sup>1</sup>

With this vignette, from a town on the post-road (*trakt*) through Semirechie in southern Central Asia, along which he was escaping from the Bolsheviks in 1918, the Tsarist engineer Pavel Nazarov expressed the common view taken by officials and intellectuals of peasant settlers in Russian Turkestan – namely that they were drunken, feckless, and incapable of playing a civilizing role in that ‘barbarous’ region. Ten years previously, when Senator Count Pahlen’s Commission of inspection visited the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in 1908, it concluded that the local administration resented the political and fiscal problems caused by the replacement of hard-working, revenue-paying native peasants with ‘lazy’ Russians and Ukrainians. Both the report and Pahlen’s later memoirs indicate that his own sympathies lay with the local administration.<sup>2</sup> As A. V. Remnev and N. G. Suvorova have argued, the Russian state’s optimism that colonisation could secure and Russify the Empire’s frontiers was constantly tempered by a fear that the average cossack or peasant was incapable of performing the role of a true *kulturträger* (cultural pioneer), and instead would degenerate or absorb local influences.<sup>3</sup> This frustration with the inability of those members of the ‘ruling race’ at the bottom of the social scale – the ‘Poor Whites’ – to perform the civilizing role assigned to them is seemingly a characteristic of all settler societies. To the extent, then, that the ‘Poor White’ is something constructed in the minds of the elite, rather than a positive identity espoused by those on the margins, peasant settlers in Russian Turkestan seem to fall squarely into that category.<sup>4</sup> That said, the specifically racial anxieties summoned up by the term were less pronounced in the Russian empire, where there was no direct equivalent: racial ideologies and categorisations were quite highly developed in some branches of Russian ethnography, but with the notable exception of anti-semitism they only rarely spilled over into official rhetoric and

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Nazarov *Hunted Through Central Asia*, trans. Malcolm Burr (Edinburgh: Wm Blackwood & Sons, 1932), 161.

<sup>2</sup> Graf K. K. Pahlen *Otchet po Revizii Turkestanskogo Kraja, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU Povelению...* (St Petersburg [St Pb.]: Senatskaya Tip., 1910) Vol.6 *Pereselencheskoe Delo v Turkestane*, 135-7; Count K. K. Pahlen *Mission to Turkestan*, trans. N. J. Couriss (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1964), 202-3; 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.

<sup>3</sup> A. V. Remnev & N. G. Suvorova “Obrusenie aziatskikh okrain Rossiiskoi Imperii: optimizm i pessimizm russkoi kolonizatsii” *Istoricheskie Zapiski* 11 (129) (2008): 132-179

<sup>4</sup> Donal Lowry “Rhodesia 1890 - 1980: ‘the lost dominion’” & David Washbrook “The British Community in India” in *Settlers and Expatriates* ed. Robert Bickers (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2010), 124-5, 184-5, 193; Charles Bolton *Poor Whites in the Antebellum South. Tenants and Laborers in Central Carolina and Northeast Mississippi* (Durham NC, Duke University Press, 1994).

practice.<sup>5</sup> Instead Russian officials were more concerned about the possibility of religious apostasy and cultural degeneration among settlers in Asia.<sup>6</sup> Getting beyond official attitudes to understanding how peasant settlers saw themselves is more difficult - Russian Turkestan had no equivalent of the picaresque *pied-noir* hero Cagayous to help poor settlers turn their ambivalent status into a badge of pride - but as we shall see, there are some possible clues in the available archival sources.<sup>7</sup>

The contempt in which peasant settlers were held by the administration in Central Asia was in constant tension with the Tsarist government's wider policy, endorsed by successively more liberal statutes in 1889, 1896 and 1904, of encouraging the *pereselenie* (resettlement) of Slavs in the Asiatic regions of the empire.<sup>8</sup> Politically and strategically this was supposed to reduce social and economic tensions in the Empire's land-hungry heartland and consolidate its Asian borders by settling them with loyal Europeans. In theory, from the late 19th century, Russian colonization was meant to be directed, controlled and assisted by the state, and in this it was closer to (but considerably more successful than) earlier French attempts at planned and assisted European colonisation in Algeria than it was to Britain's *laissez-faire* haemorrhaging of population overseas, although state involvement in migration was far from unknown in the British empire.<sup>9</sup> The *Glavnoe upravlenie Zemleustroistva i Zemledeliya* (Main Administration for Land Settlement and Agriculture - *GuZiZ*) and the *Pereselenskoe Upravlenie* (Resettlement Administration) which from 1896 directed peasant colonisation, developed a technocratic institutional culture, which sought to ensure the maximum productive use of supposedly under-populated land by distributing it to peasant households according to scientifically-determined 'norms'.<sup>10</sup> By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century *pereselenie* was trumpeted as essential both to Russia's identity as a nation, and to the Empire's modernisation project. G. V. Glinka, the head of the Resettlement Administration, began his contribution to *Asiatic Russia* (a four-volume work celebrating its achievements) as follows: 'In the course of all Russian history, from the very beginning of the Russian land right down to the present time [...] a phenomenon was constantly observed, distinctively peculiar to us and idiosyncratically ideological – *the movement of the mass of the people to the east*. Now, when the formation of the state territory of our fatherland has been completed, and its external frontiers are finally defined with real boundaries, this popular movement [...] is technically known as *pereselenie* [resettlement] on free

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<sup>5</sup> Marina Mogilner "Russian Physical Anthropology of the Nineteenth-Early Twentieth Centuries: Imperial Race, Colonial Other, Degenerate Types, and the Russian Racial Body" in *Empire Speaks Out. Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* ed. Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber & Alexander Semyonov (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2009), 155-189; Marina Mogil'ner *Homo Imperii. Istorii fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 15-19, 187-278.

<sup>6</sup> Willard Sunderland "Russians Into Yakuts? 'Going Native' and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s-1914" *Slavic Review* 55,4 (1996): 806-25

<sup>7</sup> David Prochaska "History as Literature, Literature as History: Cagayous of Algiers" *American Historical Review* 101,3 (1996): 670-711.

<sup>8</sup> *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* [PSZ] Sob.3 Tom IX No.6198 13/07/1889; PSZ Sob.3 Tom XVI No.13464 02/12/1896; PSZ Sob.3 Tom XXIV No. 24,701 06/06/1904

<sup>9</sup> Charles-Robert Ageron *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de la France, 1968) Vol.I, 37-48; Marjory Harper & Stephen Constantine *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2010), 290-293.

<sup>10</sup> 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; Ian Campbell "Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested: the Shcherbina Expedition of 1896 - 1903" *Central Asian Survey* 30,3-4 (2011): 423-436.

Government land and has as its direct consequence the gradual incorporation of previously deserted tracts and the final peaceful conquest of the borderlands – their settled *colonisation*.<sup>11</sup> [Emphasis in original]

Glinka's account of the spread of Russian colonisation began with a well-known quotation from the historian Sergei Solov'ev, popularised by his pupil Vasilii Kliuchevskii: 'The history of Russia is the history of a country which colonises itself'.<sup>12</sup> Glinka and Kliuchevskii trumpeted the peculiarly Russian nature of this colonising movement, but this was by no means universally accepted, even within Glinka's own organisation. The leading technical expert on peasant resettlement, Alexander Arkad'evich Kaufman, had written a few years earlier that 'The resettlement of Russian peasants is considered by many to be one of the characteristic particularities of the Russian national way of life [*russskago narodnago byta*]' but for him there was nothing specifically Russian about it: 'Resettlement and colonisation have played a role of paramount importance not only in the economic, but in the cultural and political history of all times and peoples'.<sup>13</sup> Like Kaufman, most Tsarist officials saw Russian movement into the 'empty lands' of Asia as part of the wider European 'civilizing' mission in North America, Algeria or Southern Africa, and were quite happy to describe it as a process of conquest and colonisation.<sup>14</sup> In recent years it has become relatively uncontroversial to suggest that the Russian Empire had much in common with its 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European counterparts – that in its Asian territories, at least, it was a 'colonial' empire in the widely-understood sense of the term: namely that it had some legal, cultural and economic distinctions between metropole and colony, it employed Enlightenment discourses of 'progress' and backwardness to justify its rule, and it made use of ethnic and religious criteria to determine its hierarchies and access to material benefits and political rights.<sup>15</sup> Peasant colonization was perhaps the clearest example of this, as it was predicated on the pre-eminent right of Europeans (predominantly ethnic Russians and Ukrainians) to the empire's land, at the expense of any indigenous population.<sup>16</sup> The term *pereselenie* (resettlement) to ensure the optimal use of

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<sup>11</sup> 'Krestyanskoe Pereselenie i Russkaya Kolonizatsiya za Uralom' in *Aziyatskaya Rossiya*, ed. G. V. Glinka Vol.I *Lyudi i Poryadki za Uralom* (St Pb.: Izd. Pereselecheskago Upravleniya, 1914), 440-499, here 440.

<sup>12</sup> V. I. Kliuchevskii *Kurs russkoi istorii* ch.I (Moscow, 1911), 24-5; Alexander Etkind *Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 61-71.

<sup>13</sup> A. A. Kaufman *Pereseleniya i Kolonizatsiya* (St Pb.: Tip. "Obshchestvennoi Pol'zy", 1905), 3.

<sup>14</sup> P. P. Semenov "Znachenie Rossii v kolonizatsionnom dvizhenii evropeiskikh narodov" *Izvestiya Imperatorskogo Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva* XXVIII (1892): 358-9; A. N. Sedel'nikov *et al* (ed.) *Rossiia. Polnoe Geograficheskoe Opisanie Nashego Otechestva* Vol.18 *Kirgizskii Krai* (St Pb.: Izd. A. F. Devriena, 1903), 13-5; A. Woeikoff *Le Turkestan Russe* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1914), 297-8.

<sup>15</sup> The literature on this subject is now too extensive to cite in full, but see in particular the debate between Adeeb Khalid, Nathaniel Knight, and Maria Todorova on the application of Edward Said's *Orientalism* to Russia "Ex-Tempore" *Kritika* 1, 4 (2000): 691-727; Adeeb Khalid, "Culture and Power in Colonial Turkestan," in *Le Turkestan Russe: Une colonie comme les autres?* ed. S. Gorshenina and S. Abashin (Cahiers d'Asie Centrale, no. 17/18) (Tashkent and Paris: IFEAC, 2009):413 – 447; Jane Burbank & Frederick Cooper *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 2010), 251 – 286.

<sup>16</sup> Willard Sunderland "The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been," *Slavic Review* 69,1 (2010): 120-50. Alexander Morrison "Metropole, Colony and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire" *Kritika* 13,2 (2012), 355-9.

agricultural land became *kolonizatsiya* (colonisation) once it was transposed to Asiatic Russia, where supposedly there were no valid prior claims, and it could be linked to a civilising mission.<sup>17</sup>

Turkestan is of particular importance in the history of Russian colonization because it was one of only two regions where Russian settlers were heavily outnumbered by an indigenous population which was quite distinct from them in religion, culture and race (the other was Transcaucasia), rendering it more comparable with Algeria or Southern Africa than North America, the usual point of comparison for Siberia.<sup>18</sup> It saw by far the worst outbreak of violence between settlers and 'natives' (*tužemtsy*) – primarily Kyrgyz and Kazakhs – namely the Central Asian revolt of 1916, which was triggered largely by conflict and competition over land and water resources between settlers and nomads.<sup>19</sup> This episode is central to our understanding of the collapse of Tsarism in Central Asia, and the wider failures of the colonial regime, as well as giving the lie to rose-tinted Soviet narratives of class solidarity between peasant settlers and the local population.<sup>20</sup> A clearer understanding of *pereselenie* in Central Asia is thus crucial to the wider effort made by scholars over the last twenty years to re-assess the nature of Russian peasant resettlement and Russian colonialism.<sup>21</sup> It will also allow the Russian experience to become more fully integrated into the wider historical literature on settler colonialism.

<sup>17</sup> Willard Sunderland "The 'Colonization Question': Visions of Colonization in Late Imperial Russia" *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 48,2 (2000): 210 – 32; Alberto Masoero "Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia. Stages in the Development of a Concept" *Kritika* 14,1 (2013): 59-91. The most sophisticated statement of this distinction at the time came from a young official of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*, Georgii Gins "Pereselenie i Kolonizatsiya" Parts I & II *Voprosy Kolonizatsii* [VK] 12 & 13 (1913): 73 – 120 & 39 – 99.

<sup>18</sup> Although they were not a majority, large non-Russian populations remained even in areas that had were part of metropolitan Russia, notably the Muslims Tatars of the Volga and Crimea. Thus even in relation to his ill-defined sphere of 'internal colonization' Etkind is wrong to suggest that in the Russian empire 'non-Europeans were either assimilated or annihilated': *Internal Colonization*, 251.

<sup>19</sup> The best account of the 1916 revolt and the reprisals which followed it is Jörn Happel *Nomadische Lebenswelten Und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010); see also Marko Buttino *Revolutsiya Naoborot. Srednyaya Aziya mezhdru padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: "Zven'ya", 2007), 58-91 (original Italian ed. 2003); The only account in English remains Edward D. Sokol *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1954).

<sup>20</sup> e.g. 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* No.1 (1965): 28-38; A. I. Ginzburg 'Pereselentsy i mestnoe naselenie Turkestana v kontse XIX – nachale XX veka' *Voprosy Istorii* No.2 (February 1976): 201-5; 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 Soviet scholarship see S. N. Maltusynov *Agrarnyi vopros v Kazakhstane i Gosudarstvennaya Duma Rossii 1906-1917gg*. (Almaty: "Daik-Press", 2006), 21-34.

<sup>21</sup> Earlier works include Donald W. Treadgold *The Great Siberian Migration. Government and Peasant in Resettlement from Emancipation to the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. P., 1957); François-Xavier Coquin *La Sibirie. Peuplement et Immigration Paysanne au XIX Siècle* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves 1969); George J. Demko *The Russian Colonisation of Kazakhstan 1896-1916* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana U. P. 1969); More recently see David Moon "Peasant Migration and the Settlement of Russia's Frontiers 1550-1897" *The Historical Journal* 40,4 (1997): 859-893; Willard Sunderland "Peasant Pioneering: Russian Peasant Settlers describe colonization and the Eastern Frontier, 1880s-1910s" *Journal of Social History* 34,4 (2001), 895-922; Nicholas Breyfogle *Heretics and Colonizers. Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2005); Charles Steinwedel "Resettling people, unsettling the empire. Migration and the Challenge of Governance 1861-1917" in *Peopling the Russian Periphery. Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* ed. Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schrader & Willard Sunderland (London: Routledge, 2007), 128-147. On the colonization of the Kazakh steppes see K. Nishiyama, "Russian Colonization in Central Asia: A Case Study of Semirechye, 1867–1922" in *Migration in Central Asia: its history and current problems* ed Komatsu Hisao, Obiya Chika & John Schoeberlein (Osaka: Japan Centre for Area Studies, 2000), 65-85; Virginia Martin *Law and Custom in the Steppe. The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), Ch. 3; Gulnar Kendirbai *Land and People: the Russian Colonization of the Kazak Steppe* (Berlin: ANOR, 2002); Stephen Sabol *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazakh National Consciousness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 38-52; Niccolò Pianciola *Stalinismo di frontiera. Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905-1936)* (Rome: Viella, 2009), 62-86.

The latter has seen fruitful comparisons of Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanophone settler societies, and their relationships with the land and with indigenous populations, but until recently Russia was not included, presumably for linguistic reasons.<sup>22</sup> James Belich, in his recent economic and cultural comparative study of settler societies, concluded convincingly that Russian settlement in Siberia was indeed a late example of the sort of 'explosive' colonisation seen in Australia and the American West, and his analysis suggests how fruitful such comparisons could be if enriched with Russian-language sources.<sup>23</sup> There is a long and honourable tradition in Russian history-writing which compares the conquest and settlement of Siberia and the Steppe to the 'open frontier' of the American West,<sup>24</sup> but comparisons with Algeria or South Africa, where, as in Turkestan, settler societies confronted much larger indigenous populations, have largely been lacking.<sup>25</sup> This is particularly relevant to the 'Poor White' question, since in settler societies where a large indigenous population provided an inexhaustible supply of cheap labour it was particularly difficult for unskilled and uneducated Europeans to find an economic role that would allow them to maintain a standard of living commensurate with their status in the racial hierarchy.<sup>26</sup> It was in these circumstances that status anxiety amongst the *petits blancs* at the margins of 'white' society became particularly acute, as did official fears that they were lowering colonial prestige in the eyes of the 'natives.'<sup>27</sup> This article seeks to provide a general introduction to European colonization in a region about which most historians of empire know very little, to compare it with other examples of 19<sup>th</sup>-century European colonialism, and to assess how far peasant settlers in Turkestan were capable of playing the 'civilizing' role which the ideology of late Tsarist colonization assigned to them.

### **I - Settlers, nomads, and officialdom**

In a petition to the Police chief of the Asinskii region of the Aulie-Ata district, in what is now southern Kazakhstan, a Kazakh called Kantarbai Karambaev from Kuyuk canton (*volost'*) wrote that at midday on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1913 forty peasants from the settler village of Novo-Georgievskoe, led by their village elder (*starosta*) and clerk, had attacked his settlement (*aul*) and:

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<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Good "Settler Colonialism: Economic Development and Class Formation" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 14,4 (Dec. 1976), 597-620; Donald Denoon *Settler Capitalism. The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1983); Daiva Stasiulis & Nira Yuval-Davis (ed.) *Unsettling Settler Societies. Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London/New Delhi: SAGE publications, 1995); Lynette Russell *Colonial Frontiers. Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 2001). Lorenzo Veracini *Settler Colonialism: a theoretical overview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> James Belich *Replenishing the Earth. The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World 1783 - 1939* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2009), 505-517.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Barrett *At the edge of empire: the Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus frontier, 1700-1860* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); Sunderland *Taming the Wild Field*

<sup>25</sup> The exception is Jeff Sahadeo's excellent monograph *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent 1865 - 1924* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana U.P., 2007), but this deals largely with urban settlers.

<sup>26</sup> Dane Kennedy *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC: Duke U.P., 1987), 3, 167-192.

<sup>27</sup> David Prochaska *Making Algeria French. Colonialism in Bône 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1990), 10, 153-4.

'wounded by breaking her head my wife, [...] Sugur Kankhozhina, who lies near death, and my other wife Orumbai Karymbaeva from fear had a miscarriage, and all the men who were there at the time to the number of 6 they drove off to the mountains with stones and took two *ketmens* and many other things.'<sup>28</sup>

Shortly afterwards Sugur Kankhozhina succumbed to her injuries: following the post-mortem the district doctor concluded that she had died as a result of a blow to the head, whilst although Karymbaeva was suffering from tertiary syphilis, as she had previously borne eight children without a miscarriage the attack was probably to blame.<sup>29</sup> The authorities launched a murder enquiry which produced over 100 folios of witness statements (*doznanie*) and would eventually lead to the trial and imprisonment of eight settlers.

According to Kantarbai Karambaev's testimony, the affray began when he and another Kazakh, Taitili Tabaldyn, spotted two peasants from the Novo-Georgievskii settlement carrying off a lamb from outside his yurt. When they pursued them the peasants struck at them with their staves, but abandoned the animal. One of them then stole Kantarbai's horse and rode off to fetch the village elder, who arrived a little while later with a party of thirty or forty settlers, and began throwing stones at the yurt. When the women emerged from inside, 'A Russian by the name of Ivan struck Sugur Kankhozhina with a staff, it seems on her right side, and Makarka struck her head with a stone. A Russian by the name of Pavel took up Orumbai Karymbaeva and threw her to the ground.' As the Russians moved off, having taken the lamb, Kantarbai said that Ivan had shouted to him in 'Kirgiz',<sup>30</sup> saying he should have let them take it in the first place. Five Kazakh witnesses, including Karymbaeva, corroborated these details, noting the names of those peasants who had dealt the blows.<sup>31</sup> Little beyond the bare facts can be gleaned from this, but it is notable that Kantarbai claimed he had never had problems with the Russians before, and also that he and the other Kazakhs knew the Christian names of the settlers, and could identify them without difficulty.

Of the sixteen accused, fifteen were described on the charge-sheet as *maloros'* (i.e. Ukrainian); two were originally from Voronezh province, two from Kharkov, one from Kiev and the rest from Kursk. Their testimonies were conflicting and confused, offering various excuses for the attack which ranged from stolen horses to kidnapping.<sup>32</sup> There were some recurrent themes however – the throwing of stones, the stealing of horses, and the atmosphere of barely-suppressed violence which appeared to exist between the peasant settlement and the neighbouring *aul* – and they referred frequently to a boundary (*granitsa*) which was meant to form a clear demarcation between them, but which was often transgressed.

In his judgement on the case, the Aulie-Ata magistrate began by writing that

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<sup>28</sup> Petition from Kantarbai Karimbaev to the Asinskii Police Chief 01/06/1913 TsGARKaz [Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan] F.433 Op.1 D.287 'Po obvineniyu krestyan Kuyukskoi volosti Shevchenko, Beznosova, Popova i drugikh v napadenii na aul i za uchastie v drake' ll [ff].6-ob [verso]. A *ketmen* is a type of large hoe.

<sup>29</sup> *Protokol* No.24 03/06/1913; *Protokol Sudebno-Meditsinskogo Osmotra* 04/06/1913 TsGARKaz F.433 Op.1 D.287 ll.9-12ob.

<sup>30</sup> In the nineteenth century the Russians invariably referred to the Kazakhs as 'Kirgiz', in order to distinguish them from their own Cossacks (*Kazaki*).

<sup>31</sup> *Protokol* 05/06/1913 TsGARKaz F.433 Op.1 D.287 ll.14-17

<sup>32</sup> *Protokol* 05/06/1913, *Protokol doprosa* 07/06/1913 TsGARKaz F.433 Op.1 D.287 ll.17ob – 18ob, 23-24.

'between the peasants of the settlement of "Novo-Egorovskoe" [*sic*] in the Aulie-Ata District and the neighbouring Kirgiz [*sic*] there have long existed hostile relations on grounds of an economic character. Kirgiz cattle have strayed onto peasant land and destroyed the boundaries and vice versa.' He accepted the version of events given by the Kazakh witnesses almost verbatim, and entirely ignored the claims made by the settlers of provocation. He concluded that the attack had been deliberately organised by the *starosta* Savva Shevchenko and Semen Beznosov, who were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment, together with six others.<sup>33</sup>

What is striking about this case is that at no stage do the Russian authorities appear to have believed a word of the account given by the settlers, or to have considered ways in which they might mitigate their crime. The lengthy interrogations were designed to establish precisely who was responsible for dealing the fatal blows, but they were never used to contradict the account given by the Kazakh witnesses. On one level the case provides an instance of the tensions that existed between Kazakhs and settlers over land, water, and livestock, which were among the root causes of the 1916 revolt just three years later. However, it also suggests that even where this hostility existed, Kazakhs and Russians mingled sufficiently for the former to know the names of the latter, and for the latter to learn to speak at least some Kazakh. It also supplies confirmation of the tendency of local military officials to side with the indigenous population in such disputes, and to resent the complications and disturbances caused by the presence of settlers.

The representativeness or otherwise of this case can only be established through a more thorough survey of the archival record than I have been able to manage so far, but it does suggest peasant settlers' uneasy and ambivalent relationship with the surrounding nomads and with Russian officialdom on the eve of revolution and revolt. These tensions had been present since the first attempts were made in the 1860s to establish Cossack and peasant settlements in Central Asia, but they came to a head in the early 1900s as the number of settlers swelled.

## II - The Origins and development of Peasant Settlement in Turkestan

The earliest Russian settlements in Central Asia were designed to provide an emergency reserve of manpower in case of native revolt, and to improve food security by making Russian garrisons less dependent on native agriculture. After the fall of Tashkent in 1865 moved the Russian frontier beyond the steppe, official policy was couched in terms of securing a newly-conquered region with a dense, settled and supposedly 'fanatical' Muslim population who heavily outnumbered their Russian rulers. In 1867 Nikolai Maev, a military statistician and future editor of the official newspaper, *Turkestanskii Vedomosti*, wrote that:

'The tremendous distance which separates Turkestan Province even from Orenburg, not to mention other Russian towns, will for long continue to be one of the main obstacles to the stable establishment of Russian influence and civilization in Turkestan Province [...] the difficulty of the route is increased

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<sup>33</sup> *Postanovlenie o privlechenii obviniaemykh* 03/08/1913 TsGARKaz F.433 Op.1 D.287 ll.64-67ob; ll.93-6ob, 100-101, 146-155.

still more because of the insignificant Russian population in the forts and posts located on the Kirgiz [*sic*] steppe. So long as the population along the post and caravan routes from Orenburg to Tashkent does not increase, Turkestan Province will remain an entirely separate place, with very few dealings with Russia owing to the difficulty and distance of the road.<sup>34</sup>

This document was later cited by the early Bolshevik historian P. G. Galuzo as evidence that, almost from its inception, Russian settlement in Turkestan was intimately bound up with the question of military security.<sup>35</sup> On one level this was true, however the belief that an increase in the Slavic population would improve Turkestan's security was in constant tension with the fear that over-rapid colonisation would provoke widespread revolt. Together with logistical difficulties, this meant that settlement proceeded extremely slowly, and official policy was always characterised by vacillation. In 1872 most Russian settlement was still urban, creating what some saw as a dangerous dependence on the 'natives':

'The insignificant Russian population, just as it was immediately after the conquest, is still confined to fortresses, or in settlements attached to them, beyond the confines of which one does not meet with a single Russian settlement, not even a single Russian estate or farm; [...] although much time has already passed since the conquest of the region, we are nevertheless still living in encampments [*use eshche stoim lagerem*] in the part of Central Asia we have conquered. The consequence of such a state of affairs is that, although from a military point of view we rule the region, in all other respects we find ourselves entirely in the hands of the natives.'<sup>36</sup>

Early rural settlements were mostly established in strategic locations along the post-roads through the steppe north of Tashkent, usually on the initiative of individual officers. Before 1886 only seven small settlements were established in Turkestan proper, but the land had not been properly surveyed and lacked sufficient water, and many of the early settlers instead encroached on areas that had already been irrigated by the Kazakhs (a pattern that would be commonly repeated).<sup>37</sup> Russian settlement was concentrated in the largely nomadic province of Semirechie, which already had thirteen *stanitsas* of Cossacks with a population of 14,000 by 1867.<sup>38</sup> In 1868-9 General Alexei Kolpakovsky, the military governor, settled a few peasant families from his home province of Voronezh near the provincial capital of Vernyi. By 1883, when the province was transferred to the new steppe Governor-Generalship, there were 36 settlements with a population of around 2,500.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> N. A. Maev 'Zapiska o merakh k uvelicheniyu russkogo naseleniya v Turkestanskoi Oblasti' 19/07/1867 TsGARUz [Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan] Fond I-1 Op.16 D.15 'S zapiskoyu poruchika Maeva, o merakh k uvelicheniyu russkogo naseleniya v Turkestanskoi Oblasti' ll.3ob-4.

<sup>35</sup> P. G. Galuzo *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Izd. Sr. Az. Komm. Un-ta im. V. I. Lenina, 1926), 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> 'O merakh dlya razvitiya v Turkestanskom krae russkogo zemlevladieniya' 6/10/1872 TsGARUz F. I-1 Op.14 D.82 ll.3-4ob

<sup>37</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 169-177.

<sup>38</sup> A. A. Polovtsov *Otchet chinovnika osobykh poruchenii pri Ministr Vnutrennykh Del' A. A. Polovtsova, komandirovannago v 1896-1897gg. dlya sobraniya svedenii o polozhenii pereselencheskago dela v Turkestanskom krae* (St. Pb.: Tip. Min. Vn. Del', 1898), 5-6; P. Rumyantsev "Usloviya kolonizatsiya Semirech'ya" *VK* 9 (1911), 209.

<sup>39</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 7-9.



The new Turkestan statute issued in 1886 envisaged the creation of entire cantons populated by Russians 'with the development of colonisation' [*s razvitiem kolonizatsii*].<sup>40</sup> From 1883, on his appointment as Governor of Syr-Darya Province, General N. I. Grodekov created forty-one Russian settlements with a population of 16,000 along major roads, remarking that each of them was worth a battalion of troops, and distributing limited numbers of firearms.<sup>41</sup> In 1897 Grodekov, by then Acting Governor-General, decided to close Turkestan to colonisation as the authorities were having difficulty placing migrants. This decision was swiftly reversed by his successor, Dukhovskoi, in 1898, after the Andijan Uprising once again strengthened the argument that Russian settlement was urgently needed for military security, but the ban was then reintroduced the following year.<sup>42</sup>

The inconsistency of official policy in the 1890s did not prevent a steady growth in the number of settlers: the crop failure and famine of 1891-2 in European Russia had helped to accelerate the flow of unauthorised migrants (known as *samovol'tsy* or 'self-willed' settlers): in that year 20 new settlements were created in Syr-Darya Province, while 1,769 families arrived in Semirechie, or 85% of the number which had settled there over the previous 13 years.<sup>43</sup> This type of irregular settlement proved much more important than any official initiatives. A central feature was the use of scouts, or *kbodoki*, who were sent out to Siberia and the Steppe from villages in European Russia to reconnoitre and identify likely spots for resettlement, the cost of their travel being defrayed collectively by their fellow-villagers. The report they made on their return would determine whether a village or a group of families decided to uproot themselves. The networks used by these scouts, and the sources of information they used to find suitable spots for colonisation had little to do with official desires or priorities.<sup>44</sup> While the state did produce an equivalent of the 'booster literature' identified by Belich as playing a crucial role in Anglophone settlement, the oral reports received from *kbodoki* probably played a more important role in stimulating chain migration (just as letters home from emigrants did in the more literate societies of the West).<sup>45</sup> Sunderland mentions a *kbodok* called Filipp Belik who published a letter in the state-sponsored *Sel'skii Vestnik* (*The Village Herald*) describing the horrors of settler life in the Syr Darya Region, warning his compatriots to avoid it.<sup>46</sup> They were not always so honest: In 1899 sixty-two land-

<sup>40</sup> 'Polozhenie ob upravlenii Turkestanskogo Kraia' *PSZ Sob.*3 Tom VI (1886) No.3814 12/06/1886, 328, 338-9.

<sup>41</sup> 'Kolonizatsiya Turkestana pri Grodekove' *Zakaspiiskoe Obozrenie* 1907 No.9 in *Turkestanskii Sbornik* Vol.417, 146-150; Uyama Tomohiko "A Particularist Empire: The Russian Policies of Christianization and Military Conscription in Central Asia" in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia* ed. Uyama Tomohiko (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre, 2007), 48.

<sup>42</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 179-80; on the Andijan Uprising, in which twenty Russian soldiers were killed by the followers of a Sufi leader, see Beatrice Forbes Manz "Central Asian Uprisings in the Nineteenth Century: Ferghana under the Russians" *Russian Review* 86 (1987): 267 - 281; Bakhtiyar Babajanov "Andizhanskoe vosstanie 1898 goda i "musul'manskii vopros" v Turkestane (vzglyady "kolonizatorov" i "kolonizirovannykh")" *Ab Imperio* No.2 (2009): 155-200; Alexander Morrison "Sufism, Panislamism and Information Panic. Nil Sergeevich Lykoshin and the Aftermath of the Andijan Uprising" *Past & Present* 214 (2012): 255-304.

<sup>43</sup> O. Shkap'skii "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros v Semirechenskoi Oblasti" *VK* No.1 (1907), 20-1; I. I. Geier *Po russkim seleniyam Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti (pis'ma s dorogi)* Vol.1 *Chimkent'skii uryzd* (Tashkent: Tip.-Lit. Brat. Kamenskikh, 1893), 32-3.

<sup>44</sup> Sunderland "Peasant Pioneering", 899-901; Lewis Siegelbaum "Those Elusive Scouts. Pioneering Peasants and the Russian State, 1870s - 1950s" *Kritika* 14,1 (2013): 31-58.

<sup>45</sup> Belich *Replenishing the Earth*, 147 - 163; an example of official promotional literature is *Opisanie Semirechenskoi Oblasti* (St Pb.: Izd. Per. Upr., 1914), a mixture of hectoring advice and blurred photographs.

<sup>46</sup> Sunderland "Peasant Pioneering", 906; see also Siegelbaum "Those Elusive Scouts", 49-52.

hungry peasant families from Kiev Province were convinced by the stories of fertile soil, vineyards and grapes spun by their *khodoki* into moving to Perovsk district in the same region:

'the 'Kievlyane' set off for the settlement of Skobelevskii, where they quickly arrived. The closer they came to the settlement, the more strongly their hopes evaporated, turning to disillusionment. The growths of *saxaul* here and there on the bare steppe pleased them little. Finally, there was the settlement... they were now standing amongst its streets... and on viewing it all, presented to their eyes, curses, abuse and a profusion of blows descended on the heads of the *khodoki* from all sides: "where have you brought us to? What are we going to do here?" Such wails were heard from all sides, and also "How did such *khodoki* fall to us?" [...] they saw that most of the land was not fit for cultivation, and that the best land was in the hands of the Kirgiz [Kazakhs].'<sup>47</sup>

The settled regions of Turkestan, which the Russians considered to be the most Islamic (and therefore dangerous), also saw the fewest settlers. By the late 1890s Samarkand Province had just 1,986 peasant migrants resettled on the newly-irrigated lands of the 'Hungry Steppe' north of Jizakh, and even fewer elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> In Ferghana before 1900 there was only one Russian settlement, created on the site of the village of Ming-Tepe, which had been razed to the ground as a punitive measure after the 1898 Andijan Uprising.<sup>49</sup> As late as 1905 A. A. Kaufman wrote that settlement in these two provinces was so negligible as to be hardly worth considering.<sup>50</sup> Of all Turkestan's 'core' provinces it was only Syr-Darya that saw significant levels of rural settlement, although even here Russians made up just 3% of the population.<sup>51</sup> Semirechie remained by far the most heavily colonised region in Turkestan, but even here by 1908 there were still only 46 peasant settlements. The Pahlen Commission complained that the best land was held unproductively by the Semirechie Cossack host (which had 32 *stanitsas* by 1911), while trade and entrepreneurship had been allowed to fall into the hands of Sarts, Dungans, Taranchis<sup>52</sup> and other sedentary Muslims who had migrated to the Province from Ferghana and Chinese Turkestan over the previous forty years. By 1910 the Russian population of the province stood at 188,016, or 16% of the total.<sup>53</sup>

The most severe constraint on the spread of colonisation in Turkestan was that throughout most of the region the construction of new canals was a prerequisite for agricultural colonisation, as all existing irrigated land was already intensively cultivated by the local population.<sup>54</sup> Extending irrigation by building new canals was both expensive and technically difficult: by 1913 only 50,000 *desyatinas* of

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<sup>47</sup> 'Chislinaets' "Selenie Skobeleva (Perovskogo Uezda)" *Turkestanskiya Vedomosti* [TV] 14/11/1899 No.89.

<sup>48</sup> P. V. Poznyakov "Russkie poselki v Golodnoi Stepi Samarkandskoi Oblasti" *Spravocnaya Knizhka Samarkandskoi Oblasti* Vyp.VII (Samarkand: Tip. Shtaba Voisk S. Obl., 1902), 22.

<sup>49</sup> Brusina *Slavyane v Srednei Azii*, 22-3.

<sup>50</sup> Kaufman *Pereseleniya*, 260.

<sup>51</sup> Suleimenov *Agrarnyi Vopros*, 124-5; Polovtsov *Otchet chinovnika*, 145, 179-83; Demko *Russian Colonization*, 110-11, 211.

<sup>52</sup> 'Sart' was a generic term used by the Russians for the settled population of Turkestan, Dungans are Chinese Muslims, Taranchi means 'farmer', and was a term used for Uighurs who had migrated to Turkestan from Kuldja after the region was returned to China in 1881.

<sup>53</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 25; Rumyantsev "Usloviya kolonizatsiya Semirech'ya", 209, 216

<sup>54</sup> Semenov "Znachenie Rossii v kolonizatsionnom dvizhenii", 368.

newly-irrigated land on the so-called 'Hungry Steppe' in Samarkand province had been populated with settlers.<sup>55</sup> In Semirechie, the main destination for Russian settlers, no new irrigation schemes were undertaken at all until the very last years of Tsarism, when there were ambitious (but unrealised) plans to create a large settler colony on newly-irrigated land around the River Chu.<sup>56</sup> In the absence of any land which had been newly irrigated by the state, in 1901-2, when 2,787 families of *samovol'tsy* arrived in Semirechie, most of them were settled along the Chu on land which had been irrigated and brought under cultivation by sedentarised Kazakhs and Kyrgyz: unsurprisingly this was a region whose settlers repeatedly complained about disputes over water and poor relations with the local population.<sup>57</sup> New irrigation schemes in Central Asia were primarily concerned with colonization:<sup>58</sup> the protocols relating to the newly-irrigated areas of the 'Hungry Steppe' specified that 'core (*Korennyye*) Russian subjects of Orthodox origin' were to be preferred for land grants, which could only be sold to or inherited by another Orthodox Russian.<sup>59</sup> This provision reflected the specification in the 1904 Resettlement statute that in the Syr-Darya, Ferghana and Samarkand provinces and in the Caucasus region permission to settle on state land would only be given to 'individuals of core Russian origin and Orthodox belief, stretched to include certain schismatic Orthodox sects.'<sup>60</sup> Most of Turkestan's settlers were Orthodox Great-Russians or Ukrainians, barring 266 Lutheran households in the Aulie-Ata district and a small group of Baptists near Khujand, who in both cases were of German origin. Both the Steppe region and Turkestan saw higher levels of Ukrainian migration than Siberia proper, although in Turkestan they were outnumbered by settlers from the lower Volga or from Orenburg, all regions bordering the steppe.<sup>61</sup> A survey of three of the oldest settlements of the Tashkent region, all of which were established in 1892, found that 58.1% of settlers came either from Samara or Saratov provinces. A further 21.6% came from the black-earth provinces of Voronezh and Poltava.<sup>62</sup>

The elaborately technocratic structures and techniques of resettlement used in the Northern Steppe and Siberia had little impact in Turkestan. By 1909 the total number of Russian migrants officially settled in the region by the Resettlement Administration was just 24,769, negligible when

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<sup>55</sup> E. P. Skornyakov "Iskusstvennoe oroshenie" *Azhyatskaya Rossiya* Vol.II, 249; A *desyatina* is 1.09 hectares.

<sup>56</sup> V. A. Vasil'ev *Semirechenskaya Oblast' kak koloniya i rol' v nei Chuiskoi doliny* (Petrograd: Izd Per. Upr., 1915)

<sup>57</sup> Petition from the settlers of Uspenskoe, Chu region, Pishpek District, 24/08/1908 RGIA [Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg] F.1396 'Reviziya Senatora Palena K. K. Turkestanskogo Kraja v 1908-1910gg.' Op.1 D.293 ll.18 - 19; Polovtsov *Otchet chinovnika*, 79; Shkapskii "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros" pp.20-1; V. S. Vorotnikova *Chuiskie pereselencheskie uchastki v Pishpekskom uezde Semirechenskoi Oblasti* (Vernyi, n.p., n.d.), 1-10.

<sup>58</sup> Maya Peterson suggests that the link between new irrigation projects and colonization only became explicit in the very last years of Tsarist rule before the First World War. Maya Peterson "Technologies of Rule: Empire, Water, and the Modernization of Central Asia, 1867-1941" (Harvard University Ph.D. Thesis, 2011), 179. However, as it was only in this period that any significant new irrigation projects were completed, I believe the point still stands.

<sup>59</sup> 'O vyrobotke pravil ob otvode chastnym litsam oroshennykh kazennykh zemel' v Golodnoi Stepi, Samarkandskoi Oblasti' 08/01/1910 RGIA F.426 Op.3 D.499 ll.13-15ob.

<sup>60</sup> 'Vysochaishe Utverzhdenyya Vremennyya Pravila o dobrovol'nom pereselenii sel'skikh obyvatelei i meshchan-zemledeltsev' PSZ Sob.3 Tom XXIV No.24701 (6<sup>th</sup> June 1904), 604; on the role of schismatics in Transcaucasia see Breyfogle *Heretics and Colonizers*.

<sup>61</sup> On the concentration of Ukrainians in Akmolinsk Province see Ihor Stebelsky 'Ukrainian Settlement Patterns in the Kirgiz Steppe before 1917: Ukrainian Colonies or Russian Integration?' in *Transforming Peasants. Society, State and the Peasantry, 1861-1930* ed. J. Pallot (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996) pp.130-145.

<sup>62</sup> I. V. Yuferev 'Opyt opredeleniya normy nadela pereselentsev v Turkestanskom Krae' *VK* No.2 (1907), 301-5.

compared with the 640,480 in the Steppe Governor-Generalship.<sup>63</sup> Whilst in both cases, owing to the prevalence of unregistered migration, these figures are a considerable underestimate, this is more pronounced for Turkestan. For most of this period Turkestan and Semirechie were officially closed to settlers, and any migration which did take place was *de facto* unregistered. Furthermore, a high proportion of Turkestan's settlers had only moved south after trying and failing to establish themselves in more favoured regions for settlement. One observer wrote that the Russian settlers of the Chu valley 'are very mixed [...] they have all come from different places, but not one of them came here directly from Russia; having left her, they have traversed practically the whole of Siberia and the Far East.'<sup>64</sup> This might have been an extreme case, but in the Chimkent district only 56.8% of settlers had come there directly. Of the remainder 55.4% had first tried to establish themselves in European Russia, 13.2% in Siberia and 29.7% elsewhere in Turkestan.<sup>65</sup> The Resettlement Administration's figures for migration to Turkestan revealed little other than its own irrelevance, as barely a quarter even of those officially settled in Turkestan notified it of their intentions.

The Pahlen Commission's report shows that in 1908 Turkestan's core provinces had 68 Russian settlements with a total population of 35,000, whilst Semirechie had 46 with a population of 65,536, a total of 101,023.<sup>66</sup> Even the Commission's figures were for official settlements, and did not include those formed by *samovol'tsy* without the involvement of the authorities. In the Chimkent district alone alongside the eighteen official settlements were an additional fourteen unofficial ones, comprising 556 families occupying 16,832 *desyatinas* of land (of which about half was cultivable). These had been set up without any official sanction on land bought or rented from Kyrgyz or Kazakhs, and unlike the official settlements they retained Turkic names such as Balykchi or Toguz.<sup>67</sup> When the Minister of Agriculture, A. V. Krivoshein, conducted a tour of Turkestan in 1912, he estimated that while there were 6,500 households which had been properly settled and allocated land, there were a further 8,000 which had not. He concluded that most colonisation was the work of *samovol'tsy*, rather than the Resettlement Administration.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, though it was considered the most desirable form of colonisation by the authorities, the Russian demographic impact on Turkestan was not limited to rural settlement. The 1897 census recorded that the European population of Turkestan (Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, Poles,

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<sup>63</sup> N. Turchaninov (ed.) *Itogi Pereselencheskogo dvizheniya za vremya s 1896 po 1909 gg. (vkluchitel'no)* (St Pb.: Izd. Per. Upr., 1910), 48-51.

<sup>64</sup> Vorotnikova *Chuiskie pereselencheskie uchastki*, 22.

<sup>65</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 283; Nikita, a Russian settler in the Chimkent District whose life-story was narrated in considerable detail by Geier, had first attempted to settle in Tomsk, and was eventually impelled towards Turkestan by the 1891 drought. Geier *Po Russkim Seleniyam*, 85-8.

<sup>66</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 249-61; the text of the report states that there were 78 settlements, but I am assuming that this is an error and that the tables are more accurate

<sup>67</sup> Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 346.

<sup>68</sup> A. P. Krivoshein *Zapiska Glavnoupravlyayushchago Zemleustroistvom i Zemledeliem o poezdke v Turkestanskii krai v 1912 godu* (St Pb.: Gos. Tip., 1912), 45-6.

Germans and others) already stood at 212,064, only 88,705 of whom were engaged in agriculture.<sup>69</sup> By 1911 there were 407,000 Slavs in the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, 6% of the total population of 6,493,000.<sup>70</sup> Three years earlier the Pahlen Commission had found just over 100,000 peasant settlers in Turkestan: even taking into account further immigration in the interim, unofficial settlers, the permanent garrison of approximately 30,000 men and the Semirechie Cossack host, this still suggests that at least a half of Turkestan's settlers lived in cities or towns on the eve of the First World War. As in Algeria,<sup>71</sup> urban settlement, primarily in Tashkent (where by 1917 20% of the city's population was European) and in Vernyi (a predominantly Russian city) was on a larger scale, and probably more transformative, than anything which happened in the countryside, not least because it was prolonged into the Soviet period. However, it was rural areas which saw the worst violence during the 1916 revolt, and which were the focus of official efforts to civilize Turkestan and make it more 'Russian' through peasant settlement.

The strategic, Russifying imperative which lay behind the deliberate settlement of these 'poor whites' on the Empire's frontiers is in contrast to British attempts to restrict the immigration into India, Kenya or Rhodesia of whites who were too unskilled and indigent to maintain suitable standards, resembling more closely French attempts to 'Europeanise' Algeria with a motley collection of poor peasants from Southern Europe. However, so far as local officials were concerned, Russian Turkestan also had an unauthorised 'settler problem'.

### III - Social divisions and official attitudes to the settler population

Russian settler society in Turkestan was far from homogeneous. As Jeff Sahadeo has shown, in Tashkent there was a substantial European 'underclass' which often had particularly poor relations with the local population, but society was dominated by military officers, administrators, a rising commercial bourgeoisie (both Russian and Jewish) and a small educated 'intelligentsia', much of it of military origin.<sup>72</sup> The contempt of these local Russian elites for peasant settlers, visible in the opening passage by Nazarov, was evident within two years of Turkestan's official opening to colonisation. In March 1888 *Turkestanские Ведомости* published an article on the settlers of Chinaz on the lower Syr-Darya excoriating their laziness, lack of enterprise and agricultural nous, and their preference for begging in the suburbs of Tashkent over a healthy life on the land:

'From this conversation it is evident how accustomed these hardworking paupers are to being pampered: having given them land, the administration has also brought them water and seeds for sowing, and then they will take the yields themselves for their own use. [...] one is forced to come to the conclusion that the predominating element amongst them – are idlers, and the warm welcome they encounter here is very much to their taste: the general sympathy and solicitude of the administration, the support for beginning cultivation and all possible privileges, by means of freedom from the payment of taxes and similar matters. If we add to all of this the still

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<sup>69</sup> Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler & Brigitte Roth (ed.) *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991) Vol.B, 264, 366.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Pierce *Russian Central Asia 1867-1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960), 137.

<sup>71</sup> Prochaska *Making Algeria French*, 135-142

<sup>72</sup> Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society*, 41-7, 57-68, 108-36, 170-6; *Idem* "Epidemic and Empire: Ethnicity, Class and Civilisation in the 1892 Tashkent Cholera Riot" *Slavic Review* 64,1 (2005): 117-39.

more generous hand-outs, which settlers collect in the towns, then it becomes clear why many of them prefer begging, rather than staying in their settlements and engaging in agriculture.<sup>73</sup>

Condemnation of the settlers' low moral and cultural level remained a consistent theme of official and unofficial criticism: thirty years later the Pahlen Commission's report complained that syphilis was widespread amongst them.<sup>74</sup> Alongside this were assertions that they were agriculturally conservative and less economically productive than the local population, a view shared by many of the Resettlement Administration's own experts. On their arrival settlers found that their Russian ploughs struggled to break up the dry, stony soil, or that they had been settled on land with insufficient water for cultivation, whereupon they petitioned the authorities to build canals at state expense.<sup>75</sup> As they were unfamiliar with the techniques of irrigated agriculture this did not necessarily help matters. In 1909 the Commandant of the Aulie-Ata district reported of Novotroitskaya near the river Chu that 'Unfortunately the human material of the settlement is very bad, consisting of vagabonds (*brodyag*) whose aim is to exploit state land and, having received assistance and sold off their plots, to seek new land. A portion of the settlers are real agriculturalists, who struggle with the vagabond element, thanks to which disagreements the organization of the village is extremely slapdash, and they do not clean the canals.'<sup>76</sup> In 1910 the Police Chief in Chu reported that the 'settler element' in the village of Gulyaevka were 'unused to Turkestani conditions and not very capable of working' in consequence of which the large canal which supplied their settlement had silted up and left their fields without water.<sup>77</sup> On the newly-irrigated lands of the 'Hungry Steppe' in Samarkand province the recently-arrived peasants from European Russia normally let out their land to natives.<sup>78</sup> It was true, Kaufman wrote, that the settlers of Syr-Darya province were perhaps the most prosperous he had seen anywhere, and that some of them had familiarised themselves with the technicalities of irrigation and even served as *mirabs* – irrigation officials – for the surrounding Kazakh population. However, they were wasteful in their use of water, refused to participate in collective labour to restore and repair canals, and often rode rough-shod over local custom regarding water distribution. They also failed to practice crop rotation, use fertiliser or diversify from wheat into cash crops such as cotton, instead exhausting the productivity of the land and seeking to expand their (already very large) plots, which in the Chimkent region were six or seven times that of the average native household in Ferghana. This, he wrote, explained the constant petitions to the authorities asking for more land.<sup>79</sup>

Many local officials argued that permitting peasant settlement was liable to provoke discontent or even rebellion amongst the local population. This was particularly true when it came to the creation

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<sup>73</sup> L. Sinitsyn "Zametki po povodu nashikh pereselentsev" *TV* 15/03/1888 No.11

<sup>74</sup> Pahlen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 162-3.

<sup>75</sup> Petition from 33 settlers of Bai-tyk, Chimkent, May 1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.293 ll.7 – *ob*.

<sup>76</sup> Lt-Col Kalmykov to the Pahlen Commission 26/08/1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.264 l.37

<sup>77</sup> Chu *Pristav* to K. A. Molchanov 21/08/1910 TsGARKaz F.184 Op.1 D.15 l.8 *ob*.

<sup>78</sup> Poznyakov "Russkie poselki v Golodnoi Stepi", 4-13.

<sup>79</sup> Kaufman *Pereseleniya*, 335-8; see for instance the petition from the peasants of the settlement of Munke, Karakistakskaya *volost'* April 1909 asking for land to be taken from the Kazakhs of the neighbouring *aul* and given to them RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.264 ll.53 – 54 *ob*.

of settlements in the most crowded districts of Turkestan, such as the Ferghana Valley or the region around Samarkand, but these arguments were also sometimes used for Semirechie, the centre of Russian colonisation. The creation of peasant settlements was widely considered to be detrimental in fiscal terms and in some cases to other needs of the military authorities: a merchant called 'Ali Ahmedovich Uzbekov in Pishpek district petitioned that he had rented a plot of land from the local Kyrgyz since 1887 for the purpose of breeding horses for the military, but had seen it appropriated by the Resettlement Administration in 1905 for the creation of a new settlement called Atbashinskoe. He claimed the land was unsuitable for cultivation in any case, and received letters of support from the commander of the Amu-Darya brigade and the head of the local remount commission saying that he was providing a valuable service to the cavalry.<sup>80</sup> In 1906 the Military Governor of Semirechie, General Ionov, wrote to Governor-General Grodekov warning that it was both unjust and dangerous to expropriate one group of Russian subjects, the indigenous population, for the purpose of settling another.<sup>81</sup> This opposition ensured that Turkestan was officially 'closed' to settlement from 1897 - 1905, and again in 1907, and that official guides published for colonists carried warnings to this effect, although in practice, as we have seen, this did not deter many unofficial migrants.<sup>82</sup>

The settlers themselves appear to have resented this hostility and contempt, and to have believed that local officialdom favoured the native population at their expense. One petition to the Pahlen Commission from Pishpek District complained (in almost incomprehensible Russian) that: 'The district administration is in league with the Kirgiz [...] The authorities [*nachal'stvo*] do not like Russian peasant settlers – many of them call us scum [*svoloch*]. They do not give us land even though it could be bought from the allotment [*dont*] of the Kirgiz, if their land was reduced. But the Russians do not receive an allotment. They are a rough and disobedient people [*nepokornyĭ narod i grubyi*] [...] There is no school, little ploughland [*paskhiya*] – but it would be possible to bring some useful learning, the peasants [*muzhiki*] have money. The Kirgiz are even sent to the gymnasium, and nothing [comes] to the Russians'.<sup>83</sup>

Local opposition to peasant colonisation was by no means universal, however, even among officials. In 1892 a young administrator in Samarkand Province, N. S. Lykoshin, was moved by his reading of A. A. Isaev's *Resettlement in the Russian national economy*<sup>84</sup> to publish a series of letters in the local newspaper, *Okraina*, with the avowed hope of 'calming those who protest against *pereselenie* in our

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<sup>80</sup> Petition from Gali Akhmedovich Uzbekov and Akhmedbek Koibagarov 1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.262 ll.38 – ob, 43 – 45ob; on the use of Central Asian horses by the Russian military see Carole Ferret 'Des chevaux pour l'empire' in *Le Turkestan Russe*. ed. Gorshenina & Abashin, 211 – 253.

<sup>81</sup> T. Kotiukova "Problemy rossiiskoi pereselencheskoi politiki v Turkestane v nachale XX veka" *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* No.2 (2010), 58; see also Morrison "Sowing the Seed", 11-15.

<sup>82</sup> *Pereselenie za Ural v 1908 godu. Spravochnaya knizhka s kartoyu zaselyaemykh pereselentsami mestnostei i zheleznykh dorog Aziyatskoi Rossii* (St. Pb.: Izd. Per. Upr., 1908). The slip pasted on the front cover reads: 'v Turkestan i na Kavkaz pereselenie ne razreshaetsya' (in Turkestan and the Caucasus resettlement is not permitted).

<sup>83</sup> 'Chlenu revizionnoi komissii kn. Vasil'chikov ot Pishpekskogo uезда' 1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.46 ll.21 –ob; similar sentiments appear in a petition from a settler in Kazalinsk, Timofei Antonovich Lutsenkov 12/05/1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.264 ll.23 – 24.

<sup>84</sup> A. A. Isaev *Pereselenie v russkom narodnom khozyaistve* (St Pb.: Tsinkerling, 1891).

region'. Lykoshin invoked a glorious history of European emigration, comparing the Russian movement across the Urals to the colonisation of the Americas and Africa, and praising the pioneering spirit of those peasants who were brave enough to leave their homeland, however his account referred almost exclusively to the situation in Siberia and had nothing to say about the specific issues raised by Russian migration to Central Asia, apart from a brief reference to their role in improving military security.<sup>85</sup> In February 1899, when its pages were still dominated by articles analysing the Andijan Uprising, *Turkestanskii Vedomosti* carried an editorial which argued that finding good-quality officers to serve in Turkestan and encouraging trade were all very well, but:

'As for the resettlement movement [*pereselencheskogo dvizheniya*], it is the always essential and most powerful means for the durable merging [*slivaniye*] of our Central Asian dominions to the rest of Russia, and therefore must be developed as far as possible and in every convenient way.'<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly the Orthodox Church also looked on the settlers with greater favour than officials. With its proselytising activities closely circumscribed by the Russian policy of *ignorirovaniye* (non-interference with Islam), the Orthodox Eparchate in Vernyi saw that populating Turkestan with Slavs was the only way to achieve the Christianisation of the region, but this brought its own worries. One article by the editor of the Eparchate's newsletter on the pastoral duties of priests in Turkestan revealed a deep anxiety about the possibility that settlers might lose their Christian faith. While they showed greater energy, individualism and enterprise than their counterparts in Russia, they could also lose touch with their native virtues, and even abandon the Church. The sudden access of wealth and land corrupted the settler, and he ceased to work himself, but instead 'turns into a landowner, exploiting dark Kirgiz labour' beating and abusing them, while his family abandoned their working lives and took to drink, and 'in place of the Russian skirt, there appear village 'fashionistas' (*modnitsy*)'. What begins as a fairly warm depiction of settler life rapidly becomes a familiar form of moral condemnation as they fail to perform their assigned role as sturdy agriculturalists and become denationalised.<sup>87</sup>

Perhaps the strongest local advocate of *pereselenie* amongst the educated population of Tashkent was I. I. Geier, described by A. A. Kaufman as a 'fanatic for the colonisation of Turkestan'. Kaufman was probably thinking of the following, whose suggestion of restricting 'native' agriculture in favour of supposedly more 'advanced' Russian settlers anticipated the ideological extremes the Resettlement Administration would reach twenty years later:

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<sup>85</sup> N. S. Lykoshin *Pereselenie i Pereselentsy* (Samarkand: Tip-Lit. N. V. Poltoranova, 1892), 2, 67. Lykoshin would become one of Turkestan's best-known scholar-administrators, and was Military Governor of Samarkand Province at the time of the 1916 Revolt.

<sup>86</sup> "Ob usilenie russkago elementa v krae" *TV* 07/02/1899 No.11.

<sup>87</sup> M. Andreev-Berezovskii "Zadachi Pastyrskago sluzheniya v Turkestane" *Turkestanskiya Eparkhial'nyya Vedomosti* 01/11/1906 No.6, 64-5; 15/11/1906 No.7, 92-6.



'Nowhere can the business of placing the peasants of the overpopulated Russian provinces be so simply and justly settled as in Turkestan. At the moment the quantity of arable, ergo irrigated land, in the hands of the natives, far exceeds their economic condition.'<sup>88</sup>

His account of a journey among the Russian settlements of Syr-Darya Province was replete with encomiums on the virtues of these sturdy yeomen, and on the gradual but, to his eyes, real *obrusenie* (russification) of the land through colonisation: 'The closer you get to Chimkent, the more the consciousness awakes that you are travelling in a Russian land.'<sup>89</sup> However his most effective platform for propaganda was as the first editor of the newspaper *Russkii Turkestan*, founded in 1898 as only the second unofficial press organ in Turkestan, which consistently advocated peasant colonization until the 1905 Revolution, when the paper's ownership and editorial policy took a more radical turn.<sup>90</sup> In an early editorial Geier advocated colonisation as a means for bringing about what he called the 'organic merging' (*k organicheskomu sliyaniiu*) of the region with Russia.<sup>91</sup> Geier criticised what he described as the 'elder brother' of the Russian settlers – namely, the Tashkent intelligentsia – for not emulating the German society of the city and providing financial assistance and other encouragement, instead viewing settlers 'as something altogether different [*chuzhoi*], and even hateful'.<sup>92</sup> As this suggests, Geier's eloquence was unable to overcome the scepticism of most of Turkestani officialdom, not to mention a large proportion of educated Russian society in Tashkent, as to the wisdom or desirability of increasing the number of settlers. Colonisation did accelerate in the early 1900s, but this was not owing to local initiative or advocacy, but to an increased flow of illegal migrants. Their champions would be the Resettlement Administration, whose activities became the focus of increasing resentment from Turkestan's military bureaucrats, and which was heavily criticised (albeit in vain) by the Pahlen Commission.

#### IV - Inter-ethnic relations and the 1916 Revolt

Pahlen's conclusion on colonisation was that it 'sows the seed of national strife in this alien region' (*zakladyvaet semena natsional'noi rozni v inorodcheskom krae*),<sup>93</sup> and there is evidence that relations between settlers and the local population were poor and deteriorating by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As one 'Berotov' wrote in his suggestively-titled *Country of Free Land*, although the Russian settlers were introducing 'higher' forms of economic organisation to the nomads, they were ill-equipped to serve as agents of cultural enlightenment.

'Colonisation, lying entirely in the hands of officials who are not in the least interested in the spiritual enlightenment of the Kirgiz [*sic*] people, has not brought one fresh current to the pitch-black darkness of their world-view. [...] It suffices to point out that the settlers, especially cossacks, never refer to the Kirgiz as anything

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<sup>88</sup> Geier *Po Russkim seleniyam*, 33.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 34-5.

<sup>90</sup> Kaufman *Pereseleniya*, 335; T. E. Ernazarov & A. I. Akbarov *Istoriya Pechati Turkestana* (Tashkent: "FAN", 1976), 28, 80.

<sup>91</sup> I. Geier "Sredne-Aziatskaya obshchestvennaya zhizn. Golos iz Publiki" *Russkii Turkestan* 18/11/1898 No.24.

<sup>92</sup> Geier *Po Russkim seleniyam*, 23.

<sup>93</sup> Pahlen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 406; Morrison "Sowing the Seed of National Strife".

other than dogs. Near and far they plough up Kirgiz land, and in justification they say "the Kirgiz are dogs; the land is not theirs, but the state's; we are state peasants."''<sup>94</sup>

Or, as another supposedly common settler belief had it, the 'half-savage' nomads could not even be considered fully human, as 'they do not have souls, but steam'.<sup>95</sup> The British traveller Stephen Graham is not always a very reliable witness, but given his idealisation of 'Holy Russia', and of the Russian peasantry in particular, it is striking that he had this to say about relations between peasants and nomads in Semirechie, where he tramped through the settlements strung out along the *trakt* between Chimkent and Vernyi in 1915:

'There was always a feeling amongst the colonists that the Kirghiz [*sic*] were no more than serfs and slaves. It was astonishing to see the Russian peasant, who had taken with him to those regions a long tradition of serfdom, sitting still and watching the Kirghiz build for him his house, paying for the labour at a very low rate, and watching them doing all sorts of heavy and menial work. The colonist already reckoned himself a baron and no longer a peasant, being subject to no authority except military authority, and he employed the Kirghiz to do the hard work of the farm.'<sup>96</sup>

Graham's depiction of the loss of simple peasant virtues has much in common with the Orthodox Eparchate's critique noted above. Even some partisans of colonisation were aware that all was not well. Although in common with most advocates of *pereselenie* A. A. Kaufman had claimed that there was never any question of treating the native populations of the regions colonised by Russia in the same way the Spanish had treated the Incas or the British treated black-skinned peoples in Africa, he nevertheless uneasily admitted that there had been some regrettable cases where indigenous rights had been similarly overridden by the demands of Russian colonisation. One such case was Central Asia, where he referred to groups of *samovol'tsy* effectively seizing land from nomads, and eventually acquiring full rights to it because the local authorities were too weak to throw them off. Despite this he concluded that Russian colonisation was infused with humanitarianism and a spirit of 'live and let live'.<sup>97</sup> Another advocate of colonisation wrote that the 'agrarian question' (land hunger) was beginning to affect Semirechie, largely because, he admitted, resettlement came into conflict with the interests of the 'aborigines' of Central Asia; in some cases he anticipated that this could assume a threatening form.<sup>98</sup>

The 1916 revolt seemed to confirm these predictions: the immediate Russian reaction was to blame it on the 'savagery' and 'backwardness' of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, but even in August 1916, when the violence was at its height, one correspondent of the official newspaper in Vernyi blamed 'those Russians, who consider that wolves, dogs and Kirgiz - are one and the same'.<sup>99</sup> With hindsight the revolt came to be associated explicitly with peasant settlement: As Nazarov put it:

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<sup>94</sup> 'Berotov' *Strana Svobodnykh Zemel'* (St. Pb., 1908), 58.

<sup>95</sup> Gins "Pereselenie i kolonizatsiya" Ch. I *VK* No.12 (1913), 100.

<sup>96</sup> Stephen Graham "Impressions of Seven Rivers Land and Russian Central Asia" *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 2,3 (1915), 126.

<sup>97</sup> Kaufman *Pereseleniya*, 9-10.

<sup>98</sup> Shkapskii "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros", 19.

<sup>99</sup> G. Trofimov "K svetu!" *Semirechenskaya Oblastnyya Vedomosti* 14/08/1916 No.182.

'Such was the system of colonisation of this country, which grew into the chief cause of discontent among the Kirghiz against the Russian authorities which led to the rising of 1916. They tried to justify such measures as these with such catchwords as the beneficent influence of the Russian colonists on the rude nomads – a beneficent influence which expressed itself in teaching the Kirghiz to drink vodka.'<sup>100</sup>

Nazarov was a White Russian in exile when he wrote these lines, but his conclusions, if not his language, echoed those of the Bolsheviks. In the early Soviet period, when it was acceptable for historians to denounce Tsarist colonialism and celebrate the 1916 revolt as a class-conscious uprising against Imperialist oppressors, the settlers were placed firmly in that latter camp. Following the line established by Stalin, they were denounced as '*kulaks*', wealthy exploiters, and large numbers were deported from Semirechie in the 1920s.<sup>101</sup> Subsequent generations of Soviet scholars hastened to replace these conclusions with a narrative of 'friendship' between settlers and natives,<sup>102</sup> something few modern scholars would accept.<sup>103</sup> There is little doubt that by 1914 the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were caught in a painful double-bind. Nomadic pastoralism was coming under ever greater pressure from new forms of economic activity, the disruption of migration routes and the occupation of grazing lands by Russian settlers. Those nomads who turned to settled agriculture in response found themselves squeezed off their irrigated plots and forced to yield them to Russian settlers, for whom the best arable land was reserved.<sup>104</sup> Combined with the higher taxation and rapid inflation of the war years, together with the ill-judged attempt in July 1916 to conscript Turkestan's Muslims into labour battalions, these long-term tensions over land and water help to explain not just why the Central Asian revolt broke out, but why it would be fiercest in nomadic areas.<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think of relations between settlers and nomads as being purely hostile: even unsympathetic descriptions of settler life placed considerable emphasis on the ways in which settlers *relied* on the nomadic population. As Nazarov put it:

'Here, as everywhere else among the Russian settlements in Semirechie, I was struck by the dependence of the Russian colonists on the Kirghiz. Everything was done by the Kirghiz: they worked in the fields, tended the cattle, hauled the coal and charcoal and so on. Sometimes even they rented back their own land from the settlers – land that had been taken from them by the former Government and granted to colonists from Russia.'<sup>106</sup>

This was meant to be a commentary on their idleness, but it also suggested a certain degree of cooperation. Furthermore, while in some cases (particularly in irrigated areas) nomads were indeed

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<sup>100</sup> Nazarov *Hunted Through Central Asia*, 139.

<sup>101</sup> S. Brainin & Sh. Sharifo *Vosstanie Kazakhov Semirech'ya v 1916 godu* (Alma-Ata, 1935), 4, citing I. Stalin 'Marksizm i natsional'nyi-kolonial'nyi vopros' (1934), 71; T. Ryskulov "Istoriya SSSR. Turkestan i Kazakhstan (1905-1907 gody)" *Bor'ba Klassov* No.5 (1936): 1-15; P. G. Galuzo *Turkestan-Koloniya* (Moscow: Izd. Komm. Un-ta Trud. Vostoka, 1929); See Niccolò Pianciola "Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semirec'e (1920-1922)" *Cahiers du monde russe* 49,1 (2008): 101-143.

<sup>102</sup> On this shift see Lowell Tillet *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina U. P., 1969); see P. G. Galuzo *Agrarnye Otnosheniya na Yuge Kazakhstana v 1867-1914gg* (Alma-Ata: Izd "Nauka", 1965), which is of particular interest given the contrast with the same historian's work thirty years earlier.

<sup>103</sup> Peter R. Weisensel 'Russian-Muslim Inter-ethnic Relations in Russian Turkestan in the Last Years of the Empire' *Ethnic and National Issues in Russian and East European History* ed. J. Morison (London: Macmillan, 2000) 51, 57-9; Buttino *Revolutsiya Naoborot*, 45-57.

<sup>104</sup> Maltusynov *Agrarnyi vopros*, 129-37; Pianciola *Stalinismo di frontiera*, 70-73.

<sup>105</sup> Happel *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, 76-94

<sup>106</sup> Nazarov *Hunted Through Central Asia*, 139.

renting land from settlers, it was more common for this to happen the other way round: some groups within nomadic society were benefiting from being able to rent 'their' surplus land to the settlers. This was often presented by Russian officials as the exploitation of poor settlers by wealthy Kazakh and Kyrgyz *bais*, but the reality was more complex.<sup>107</sup> The renting of land illegally from the local population allowed the settlers to grow wheat and raise cattle on a larger scale than would have been possible had they remained confined to their official plots. This practice was illegal because under the governing statutes the nomads had no rights of ownership over land they did not use themselves,<sup>108</sup> but this did not prevent *ad hoc* arrangements being negotiated between Russian settlements and neighbouring Kazakh *auls*, which the authorities were powerless to prevent. In Pishpek district in 1906, out of 1,205 families who had arrived in the region in 1900, 330 had no land other than what they rented from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz for between 4.7 and 5.5 roubles per *desyatina*.<sup>109</sup> In eleven settlements of Semirechie province visited by the Pahlen Commission the settlers rented 28,559 *desyatinas* of land from the local population over and above the 63,615 *desyatinas* they had been originally allocated.<sup>110</sup> In the Chimkent District the settlers rented 8,129 *desyatinas* of land from the nomadic population, an average of 12 *desyatinas* per household. In Aulie-Ata district the amount was even higher, as just seven settlements rented 11,360 *desyatinas*, and the District Commandant wrote that forbidding this would provoke a settler revolt. In the village of Krasnovodskoe in the Chimkent district, when the Russian authorities refused to allocate more land the settlers had negotiated with the nomadic population to buy it outright; in Golovachev in Aulie-Ata district they had purchased 600 *desyatinas* of land 40 *versts* from their dwellings from the Kazakhs of Kuyuk canton.<sup>111</sup> The lack of clear title to land meant that disputes could arise when one group of nomads contested the right of another to lease a particular plot.<sup>112</sup> Partly in order to avoid such contested claims, settlers and nomads drew up quasi-legal written agreements (*prigovory*) for the sale or renting of land, which were usually written in both Turkic and Russian, and could carry well over a hundred signatures to attest that both sides had consented to the bargain: one example from 1911 is for a lease for 29 years, due to expire in 1940, indicating a certain degree of confidence in the stability of these arrangements.<sup>113</sup> According to Pahlen, in 85% of cases land was only rented for one year, or for a single harvest, at rates varying from 2-4 roubles per *desyatina* for unirrigated land, to more than twice that amount for irrigated.<sup>114</sup> Settlers also sometimes gave their livestock to the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs to be pastured, allowing them to be driven up into the hills in summer. Despite

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<sup>107</sup> Rumyantsev "Usloviya kolonizatsiya Semirech'ya", 212; *bai* means a wealthy individual.

<sup>108</sup> 'Polozhenie ob upravlenii Turkestanskogo Kraya' *PSZ Sob.3* Tom VI (1886) No.3814 12<sup>th</sup> June 1886, 328, 338-9; 'Polozhenie ob upravlenii oblastei Akmolinskoi, Semipalatinskoi, Semirechenskoi, Ural'skoi i Turgaiskoi' *PSZ Sob.3* Tom XI (1891) No.7574, 143

<sup>109</sup> Shkapskii "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros", 22-4.

<sup>110</sup> Pahlen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 154-8, 304-5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid* 306-10, 313. Geier *Po Russkim seleniyam*, 52-4.

<sup>112</sup> Petition from Alexei Mikhailovich Merzlyakov (n.d.) RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.264 ll.25-8.

<sup>113</sup> *Prigovory* 1910-11 TsGARKaz F.184 Op.1 D.14 'o sporakh mezhdru zhitelyam selo Stavropolka i kazakhami sosednikh aulov' ll.12 - 14, 46 - 48.

<sup>114</sup> Pahlen *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, 306-10, 313.

their technical illegality the local authorities generally turned a blind eye to these agreements, or even intervened to uphold them: in 1908 a female peasant settler, Efima Dorofeeva Knyshova, petitioned the Pahlen Commission because the local District Commandant, Colonel Kalmykov, had annulled her agreement for a ten-year lease of 210 *desyatinas* of land from the Kazakhs of the local *aul*, but this was because it had not been ratified by the elder of the *aul* in question, not because it was forbidden altogether.<sup>115</sup> When the authorities did intervene, it could lead to unintentional paradoxes: in 1908, when a group of settlers complained that the Chimkent District Commandant had annulled a rental agreement between them and the local Kazakhs, he replied that as the Kazakhs were evidently not using the land they had chosen to rent out he had added it to the local settlement fund!<sup>116</sup>

Extrapolating from this mutual economic entanglement to any form of cultural understanding or hybridity is obviously difficult: in the Nilgiri Hills of South India in the same period Indian businessmen and European planters and entrepreneurs were sometimes drawn together politically by common economic interests, but it would be stretching a point to suggest that this led to truly intimate social relations.<sup>117</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that in Russian Turkestan there was a degree of cultural exchange between settlers and the local population. In a deliberately provocative letter to the editors of the strongly pro-settler *Russkii Turkestan* the great orientalist V. V. Barthold criticised the renaming of peasant settlements after Russian saints, generals and governors, and asserted that 'even the inhabitants of the Russian settlements of Semirechie Province rarely call their village by its official name, and are satisfied with the old native names for the area, sometimes adapted to the Russian manner; thus instead of "Preobrazhenskogo" the peasants always say Tyup, instead of "Pokrovskogo", Kozel'tsy.'<sup>118</sup> In the Aulie-Ata region, where the oldest settlements dated back to the 1880s, the late 1890s saw settlers colluding with local Kazakhs to deceive Russian officials – a Kazakh might bribe the headman of a Russian settlement to submit a petition on his behalf, in the evident hope that the authorities would take it more seriously if it came from a settler rather than a native.<sup>119</sup> One case referred to settlers visiting a Kazakh *aul* in search of *koumiss*, indicating a degree of everyday economic and cultural exchange, not to mention a willingness to experiment with local forms of alcohol.<sup>120</sup>

These caveats are important, and the subject still requires further research. However, violent clashes between settlers and nomads seem to have increased in the early 1900s, as more unofficial migrants poured into Semirechie and northern Syr-Darya Province along the newly-opened Orenburg-Tashkent railway. Many petitions submitted to the Pahlen Commission described competition for land and water resources, illegal encroachments and an increasing unwillingness on the part of nomads to

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<sup>115</sup> Petition from Efima Dorofeeva Knyshova 10/12/1908; Letter from the Aulie-Ata D.C. 17/11/1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.262 ll.60 – 1.

<sup>116</sup> Petition from settlers of Belovodskaya division 26/10/1908 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.264 l.57.

<sup>117</sup> Alexander Morrison "White Todas. The Politics of Race and Class amongst European Settlers on the Nilgiri Hills, ca.1860 – 1900' *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 32,2 (May 2004): 54-85.

<sup>118</sup> V. Bartol'd 'Pis'mo v redaktsiyu' *Russkii Turkestan* 30/11/1898 No.41.

<sup>119</sup> *Rezolyutsiya* 24/01/1896 TsGARKaz Fond 149 'Mirovoi Sud'ya 1-go uchastka Aulie-Atinskogo Uyezda Op.1 D.16 ll.25-9

<sup>120</sup> See Morrison "Sufism, Panislamism, and Information Panic", 272-4.

rent their land out to settlers.<sup>121</sup> Set alongside the opening example of the Kazakh woman stoned to death by settlers in 1913, this suggests that the 1916 revolt represented a surge in an existing pattern of violence, not a sudden outbreak.

When the revolt finally came, Turkestan's military officials discovered that, however disastrous and distasteful they considered the colonisation policy to be, ethnic and religious solidarity trumped all of these considerations: the settlers might be backward and repellent, but they were 'European', and Christian, and therefore the state would defend them, arming them in order to help suppress the revolt. If there had been any doubt about this, or suggestions of a 'soft' or reconciliatory line towards the rebels, it was removed by the appointment of General Alexei Kuropatkin, a known champion of the settler cause, as Governor-General in July 1916.<sup>122</sup> In his diary entry for the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1916 Kuropatkin dismissed the representations of the Kazakh engineer Muhammad Tynyshpaev, who was acting as his interpreter, that it was the Russian administration and settlers who were to blame for provoking the violence, writing that '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 most settlers were], and killed up to 30 people. They threw their bodies into a well.'<sup>123</sup> Within Turkestan the worst violence by far was in Semirechie, where Kuropatkin's report suggested that 3,709 settlers had been killed, 2,179 of them in Przheval'sk District, which also saw the most vicious Russian reprisals.<sup>124</sup> Kuropatkin's 'solution' to the horrific inter-ethnic violence would have been little short of apartheid: the creation of an all-Russian district in the fertile region around Lake Issyk-Kul, and the deportation of the Kyrgyz to the mountainous region of Naryn.<sup>125</sup> The February Revolution prevented this plan from being put into effect, but it was an indication of the ever more ruthless nature of Tsarist policy.

The disgust many Russian officials felt at the uncouth behaviour, violence, drunkenness and lack of agricultural nous displayed by the settlers was genuine, but there were limits to this pessimism. However backward and useless settlers might be as *kulturträger*, or from the point of view of agricultural science, they were still an invaluable military resource for securing Russian rule in Central Asia. Galuzo exaggerated the single-mindedness with which the Tsarist authorities pursued the goal of an armed settler population as the best guarantor of continued Russian rule, but the events of 1916-17 showed that in the final analysis, this was what mattered. Their presumed political loyalty in the face of any

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<sup>121</sup> 'Zhaloba Krestyan Semirechenskoi Oblasti Pishpekskogo uyezda Belovodskoi volosti sela Novo-Troitskogo' RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.45 ll.238-9; 'Proshenie doverennogo ot obshchestve kirgiz Saburovskoi volosti Beksultana' 07/10/1908 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.256 ll.169-ob <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t380.html>; 'Prosheniya Tomu Akhinbekova, doverennogo ot naseleniya Dzhanoyskoi, Chumyshlinskoi i dr. volostei Pishpekskogo uyezda' 20/06/1909 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.263 ll.164-ob <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t1105.html>; 'Proshenie Kirgiz Auliatinskogo uyezda Biikul'skoi volosti No.7-i, Chuike Esengil'dieva i Biktura Bikbulatova' 08/1908 RGIA F.1396 Op.1 D.263 ll.187-8 <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t1106.html> (All last accessed 01/10/2011)

<sup>122</sup> K. Timaev "Gryadushee Turkestan" *Turkestanskii Kur'er* 9<sup>th</sup> August 1916 No.172.

<sup>123</sup> P. Galuzo (ed.) "Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii" *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 34 (1929), 56.

<sup>124</sup> Buttino *Revolutsiya Naoborot*, 72-3; 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.

<sup>125</sup> Galuzo "Vosstanie 1916g. v Srednei Azii", 60.

revolt by the local population offset their acknowledged failure as agents of 'civilization' and economic development, and was ultimately what made them of value to the state.

### Conclusion

Where then does Russian Turkestan sit in the continuum of 19<sup>th</sup>-century European settler colonialism? As Lorenzo Veracini has argued, the analytical category of 'settler colonialism' is of fairly recent origin.<sup>126</sup> Before the 1970s few scholars distinguished clearly between settler and non-settler colonies, although Ronald Robinson described them as 'ideal, pre-fabricated collaborators' whose presence, at least initially, considerably aided imperial control.<sup>127</sup> The use of Russian Turkestan's settlers as a reserve of military manpower, and the sense that they helped to consolidate the Russian grip on the region would certainly suggest that they can be described in the same terms. Ronald Horvath's tripartite classification of settler societies from 1972 distinguished between extermination, assimilation and 'colonization in which settlers neither exterminate nor assimilate the indigenes', referring primarily to Algeria and South Africa.<sup>128</sup> Russian colonial society in Turkestan certainly fits the latter paradigm better than the first two. As we have seen, social and economic interaction and cultural transfers between settlers and the indigenous population were far from unknown, and were sometimes disturbing to Russian officials, but the overall pattern was one of separation, competition and increasing distrust, something which became ever more acute as the number of settlers swelled in the years before the First World War, leading to inter-ethnic violence.

The unsympathetic attitude of most Russian officials towards the settler population, and the sense that 'their' state was hostile to settler interests and favoured the 'natives' is more unusual, but certainly not unparalleled. In the British world settlers often chafed at the restrictions local officialdom and metropolitan sensibilities placed on their ability to exploit or eliminate the 'natives', and this was also true in Algeria.<sup>129</sup> However, there are some important differences, particularly with the Southern African case. Firstly, while European settlers in Turkestan could be of Russian, Ukrainian or German origin, the cultural and political differences between them did not begin to approach those between Anglophones and Afrikaners in South Africa, or even 'colons' from Metropolitan France and Spanish, Italian and Maltese peasant immigrants to Algeria.<sup>130</sup> Instead the divisions within Turkestan's settler society were based on culture, class and education, as an urban and official elite looked down on both peasant settlers and slum-dwellers in Tashkent. Anglophone settler societies were more socially diverse

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<sup>126</sup> Lorenzo Veracini "Settler Colonialism": Career of a Concept' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41,2 (2013): 313-333.

<sup>127</sup> Ronald Robinson "Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration" in *Studies in the theory of Imperialism* ed. Roger Owen & Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972): 124-5

<sup>128</sup> Veracini "Settler Colonialism", 319-20.

<sup>129</sup> Good "Settler Colonialism", 605-11. Veracini *Settler Colonialism*, 71-2; Morrison "White Todas". This is a major theme of Ageron *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France*.

<sup>130</sup> Prochaska *Making Algeria French*, 149-155.

than their public image would suggest,<sup>131</sup> but they were not peasant societies in the way that Russian Turkestan or, in part, rural Algeria were. While they might celebrate the rugged pioneer virtues of life in the outback or bush, the ideal was something closer to the yeoman farmer, or indeed the puny metropolitan urbanite regaining imperial manliness on the frontier.<sup>132</sup> There is something approaching this discourse in late Imperial Russia, in Petr Stolypin's celebration of the independence of the Siberian *kubator* (individual landholding) over the backwardness of the peasant commune, but it is not as prominent or persistent.<sup>133</sup> Indeed the predominantly negative attitude to peasant settlers among officials – that they were a 'dark' or 'black' unenlightened mass, whose cultural influence on the local population, if any, was baleful – was a reflection of wider metropolitan Russian discourses about the peasantry, seen as simultaneously the repository of Russian nationality and hopelessly backward and vice-ridden.<sup>134</sup> While this was being challenged by their Tolstoyan idealisation in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, that view never had much purchase in official circles, or among the more conventional intellectuals who predominated in Turkestan. In the Russian empire peasants remained peasants despite migration: they might have more land and be able to employ local labour, but they rarely rose up the social ladder, as agricultural labourers or industrial workers might through moving from Britain to Australia or Rhodesia. Their status as a separate estate – *soslovie* – was complicated by their new role as ethnic and cultural reinforcements on an alien frontier, but it did not override it.

Another difference is that, unlike in South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya or Algeria, the settlers in Turkestan did not develop a distinctive creole political and cultural identity that might one day have challenged metropolitan control. This was partly because the Russian empire did not create separate colonial states that might have proved a focus of alternative territorial loyalty.<sup>135</sup> It was also because only fifty years separated the arrival of the first European settlers in Southern Central Asia and the replacement of the Tsarist regime by the Soviet Union, a polity that followed a very different, nation-building logic in its Central Asian territories.<sup>136</sup> There are nevertheless faint echoes of UDI in the behaviour of the settlers in the turbulent years between the 1916 revolt and the establishment of Soviet rule after 1920. The brutal logic of ethnic warfare would be seen to the full in Turkestan during the revolutionary years, as settlers took advantage of the punitive measures which followed the 1916 revolt to engage in a land-grab at the expense of the local population in Syr-Darya and Semirechie provinces.

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<sup>131</sup> This was true even of the 'aristocratic' Kenya Colony: Will Jackson "Dangers to the Colony: Loose women and the 'poor white' problem in Kenya." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 14,2 (2013) <http://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed April 4, 2014)

<sup>132</sup> Belich *Replenishing the Earth* 153-165; Clive Moore 'Colonial manhood and masculinities' *Journal of Australian Studies* 22,56 (2009), 35-50.

<sup>133</sup> Steinwedel "Resettling people, unsettling the empire": 135-9.

<sup>134</sup> Nicholas V. Riasanovsky 'The Problem of the Peasant' in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia* ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 263-284.

<sup>135</sup> Khalid "Culture and Power", 417.

<sup>136</sup> The literature on this is now extensive: see in particular Terry Martin *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union 1923 - 1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). The best Central Asian case-studies are Adrienne Edgar *Tribal Nation. The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) & Paul Bergne *The Birth of Tajikistan. National Identity and the Origins of the Republic* (London: IB Tauris, 2007).



When Tsarist authority collapsed altogether in 1917, under the guise of 'Bolshevism' the settlers then attempted to seize the privileges of the former official ruling class for themselves. The Soviets which claimed power in Tashkent, Vernyi and other Central Asian cities were made up almost exclusively of Russian soldiers and railway-workers. They refused to admit Muslims on the grounds that they were backward and did not possess a proletariat, and responded with violence to attempts by Muslim intellectuals to create their own autonomous governments in the region. This attempt to erect a new political order based on race (or at least on cultural identity) was only brought to a halt by the arrival of central Bolshevik forces from Moscow after 1918.<sup>137</sup>

As these examples suggest, there is much to be gained from integrating settler colonialism in the Russian empire into the wider literature on the subject. It is of obvious benefit to Russian specialists, always inclined towards the notion of Russia's *osobyi put'* (*sonderweg*), which in this case has been reinforced by sixty years of Soviet (and in some cases post-Soviet) scholarship on the 'Friendship of Peoples' in Central Asia. Russian denial of the colonial nature of their empire is still widespread, and demonstrating the clear parallels with unquestioned cases of European colonialism is one of the best ways to refute it.<sup>138</sup> For historians of Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanophone settler colonialism, the Russian example adds a further repertoire of case-studies, from the 'explosive colonization' of Siberia and the near-extirpation of its indigenous peoples, to the less familiar world of Turkestan and the Steppe, where Russians and Turkic peoples lived side by side. If all historians of empire are now familiar with the key role played by colonies in forming the culture of the metropole, despite repeated attempts to establish clear boundaries and cultural distance between them,<sup>139</sup> the Russian case suggests something different. Here the political division between metropole and colony, though it existed, was not clearly defined by separate state boundaries. The horror of miscegenation, the anxieties about the 'poor white' or 'petit blanc' – these specifically racial fears are rare in descriptions of Russian settler society, though tropes of dirt, disease and cultural degeneration were common, and to some extent acted as proxies.<sup>140</sup> Thus in Turkestan, within the boundaries of a single political state which did *not* have a highly-developed ideology of racial difference, and in circumstances where settler and 'native' were on a similar social level, engaged in very similar types of small-scale peasant agriculture, the boundary between them nevertheless remained largely clear-cut and, from the early 1900s, a point of friction and, eventually, serious inter-ethnic violence.

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<sup>137</sup> 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; Buttino *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 204-9.

<sup>138</sup> See the review of Willard Sunderland's *Taming the Wild Field. Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. P., 2004) by V. I. Grachev and O. A. Rykin and response in *Antropologicheskii Forum* No.6 (2007): 414-436; S. V. Timchenko 'Problema Prisoedinenie Kazakhstana k Rossii v Sovremennoi Kazakhstanskoi Istoriografii' in *Tsentrāl'naya Aziya v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* ed. S. N. Abashin, D. Yu. Arapov & N. E. Bekmakhanova (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 338-359.

<sup>139</sup> The now classic statement of this thesis is Catherine Hall *Civilising Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

<sup>140</sup> Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society*, 85.

Understanding the self-perception and identity of peasant settlers in Turkestan, and the degree to which this division emerged from it is difficult. Despite their lack of overt political privileges, peasant settlers seem to have explicitly identified the state with their interests on the grounds of nationality and religion, and to have expected it to uphold their economic interests. Initially they were often disappointed in this, but the indications are that by the outbreak of WWI the central state agencies in St Petersburg were winning their battle against the resistance of the local military administration in Central Asia, and that those who could claim Russian nationality, if not race, were being given greater privileges. Given low levels of literacy among peasant settlers, and the initial lack of support and, at times, outright contempt and hostility which they met from the local military administration, it is striking that the settlers' sense of difference from and superiority to the local population seems to have emerged largely independently of elite Russian discourses regarding Asian backwardness, European civilization, Islam, Orthodoxy or race. It was only when these were refracted through particular administrative policies – in particular those of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* – that they began to have some indirect effect on settler life, and even then, given the limited role played by this agency in Turkestan, it was fairly marginal. More important, perhaps, was a reaction against the contemptuous views of educated Russians, of which some settlers were clearly aware, though only tantalising glimpses of this are revealed in the archival record. We generally see Turkestan's peasant settlers through the eyes of educated Russians, and even their occasional petitions are no sure guide to their self-conception, given that they were addressed to power with particular aims in mind. It seems probable, however, that their identity as Christians, and their identification with the Russian State combined with competition for resources and everyday interaction with the local population to create a sense of privilege and difference that was no less real, and no less capable of producing violent conflict, than the racial hierarchies that underpinned Anglophone settler societies.

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