Abashin, S.N., Arapov, D. Yu. & Bekmakhanova, N.E. (ed.) & authorial collective *Tsentral'naya Aziya v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie) 2008 464 pp.; 8 Appendices pp.339-424; Bibliography pp.425-32; glossary pp.433-8, Index of names pp.439-45; ISBN 978-5-86793-571-9

This useful and significant book is the latest in the Series *Okrainy Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Historia Rossica) whose general editors are Alexei Miller, Anatoly Remnev & Alfred Rieber. The authorial collective of S. N. Abashin, D. Yu. Arapov, N. E. Bekmakhanova, O. V. Boronin, O. I. Brusina, A. Yu. Bykov, D. V. Vasiliev, A. Sh. Kadyrbaev, T. V. Kotyukov, P. P. Litvinov, N. B. Narbaev & Zh. S. Syzdykova includes some of the finest of the first post-Soviet generation of Russian-language scholars working on the Islamic regions of the Empire, although the sheer number who have contributed inevitably leads to unevenness of tone and occasional contradictions. This book is an important milestone in the development of what can tentatively be called 'postcolonial' (or at any rate post-Imperial) Russian historiography. It aims to be a standard work of reference on the place of Central Asia (which here includes the territory of modern Kazakhstan) within the Russian Empire, and in purely factual terms it largely succeeds: there is as yet no equivalent of this volume in English, not least because much recent western scholarship on Central Asia has perhaps concentrated too much on applying the latest theoretical innovations to the study of Russian Imperialism without first laying the sort of empirical foundations this book provides. On an interpretative and analytical level the book is much patchier, and is not immune to some of the more distorting assumptions of both Soviet and modern Russian nationalist historiography. The overall characterisation of Russian Imperialism in Central Asia as essentially benign (26) will raise a good many eyebrows, and certainly requires more qualification than is given here. The first two appendices consist of essays on modern Kazakh and Uzbek historiography which offer a fascinating insight into the postcolonial politics of history-writing in the former USSR, even if their aggrieved and polemical tone sits uneasily alongside the more sober analysis of the preceding fifteen chapters.

Initially in their opening chapter on 'The History of Central Asia before its entry into the make-up of the Russian Empire' (10-30) Kadyrbaev and Syzdykova avoid the simplistic portrayal of the Central Asian Khanates as stagnant and unchanging polities in the 19th century which is all too common in much western and Russian historiography.[1] They draw attention in particular to the growing centralisation of the Bukharan state

[1] See for instance David Mackenzie *The Lion of Tashkent* (Athens, GA., 1974) pp.20-1

under Emir Nasrullah (1826-60) and the construction of new canals there and in the Ferghana Valley under Kokandian rule, whilst in Khorezm Muhammad Rahim Khan I (1806-25) also succeeded in creating a relatively strong state (24-5). It is hard to disagree with their suggestion that, nevertheless, Bukhara and Kokand were greatly weakened by internecine wars in the early to mid-19th century. However, they undermine much of this good work by concluding (26) that overall Central Asia remained in a 'medieval' state of development, with primitive agriculture and little economic growth (something contradicted elsewhere in the volume) rendering 'the subjection of Central Asia to one of the world powers inevitable', in order for the region to progress to 'higher forms of economic organisation'. The Marxist teleology embedded in this statement needs no further elucidation. The work of Wolfgang Holzwarth on the Uzbek State in 18th and early 19th-century Bukhara is perhaps too recent for it to be reasonable to expect any references to it,[2] but the failure to refer to Olga Chekhovich's classic article of 1956, which argued for a 'process of progressive development' in Central Asia before the Russian conquest, is a more serious omission.[3] There is also no reference to the extensive recent literature on rapid growth of trade (largely in horses and textiles) between Central Asia and India in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[4] The final part of the chapter gives a brief breakdown of the themes and arguments to be covered in the rest of the book, with a disclaimer explaining that it is intended more as a general textbook than an analytical monograph.

The title of Bekmakhanova and Narbaev's chapters on 'The Uniting of the Kazakh tribes with the Russian Empire and Administrative Reforms in the 18th - middle of the 19th centuries' (31-61) immediately sets alarm bells ringing as it retains the old Soviet term (*Prisoedinenie*) to describe Russian Imperial expansion. Predictably enough it focuses on the incorporation of the Little Horde into the empire with the submission of Abu'l-Khayr Khan to the Empress Anna in 1730 (37-8). The question of whether Abu'l-Khayr really spoke for all the Kazakhs of the Little Horde is not raised: although it is

---

[2] Wolfgang Holzwarth 'Relations between Uzbek Central Asia, the Great Steppe and Iran, 1700-1750' in Leder & Streck (Eds.) *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations* (Wiesbaden, 2005) pp.179-216; *Idem* 'The Uzbek State as reflected in Eighteenth-century Bukharan Sources' *Asiatische Studien* Vol. LX №.2 (2006) pp.321-353

[3] О.Д. Чехович «О Некоторых Вопросах Истории Средней Азии XVIII-XIX веков» *Вопросы Истории* 1956 №.3 pp.84-95

[4] Muzaffar Alam 'Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, c. 1550-1750' *Journal of the Economic & Social History of the Orient* 37/3 (1994) pp.202-227; Stephen Dale *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade 1600-1750* (Delhi) 1994; Jos Gommans *The Horse Trade in 18th-Century South Asia JESHO* 37/3 (1994) pp228-50; Claude Markovits *The Global World of Indian Merchants* (Cambridge, 2000); Scott Levi 'India, Russia and the Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade' *JESHO* 42/4 (1999) pp.519-48 & *Idem The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade, 1550-1900* (Leiden, 2002)

almost certainly true that it was the need for Russian assistance against the Djungars which led him to make overtures to St Petersburg, it is clear from the diary of Muhammad Tevkelev, the Tatar envoy whom the Russians sent to negotiate, that most of the notables of the Little Horde were uneasy about accepting Russian protection and deeply concerned about their loss of sovereignty. That the Russian response was governed entirely by an altruistic desire to protect the Kazakhs from their predatory neighbours is also very questionable: Ivan Kirilov, the leader of the Orenburg expedition which first sought to establish Russian power on the fringes of the Steppe in 1734, made explicit comparisons with the Spanish conquest of America.[5] None of this finds a place in Bekmakhanova and Narbaev's account, which would have benefited from reference to recent Western historiography on the subject, not to mention the recent Kazakh edition of Tevkelev's writings.[6]

Nonetheless, this is followed by the balanced statement that the 'uniting of the Kazakh *Zhuz* [to Russia] in the 18th and 19th centuries had both positive and negative aspects' (46), and by a comprehensive, detailed account (48-9) of Mikhail Speransky's collection of regulations for governing the Siberian 'Kirghiz', and the creation of legal and administrative structures for the Steppe region from the 1830s-60s. However, reading the description (56-7) of Kenesary Kasimov's uprising in 1845-7 one might assume that his campaigns were directed exclusively against Kokand, rather than also resisting Russian expansion, whilst the claim that the political turmoil his revolt caused was what 'forced' Russia to move further South, is reminiscent not only of Soviet historiography, but of the school of British Imperial history which claimed that it was only the chronic 'chaos' of 18th and early 19th-century India which 'forced' the East India Company to expand there. The final section of the chapter covers administrative reforms in the Steppe region up until the new statute of 1867.

In Chapter 4 Boronin gives us a narrative of 'The Conquests of the Russian Empire in Central Asia' (62-85). I would heartily concur with his rejection of the Marxist-Leninist argument that the conquest of Central Asia was motivated by a desire to secure a source of raw cotton for the Moscow textile industry: Russia's weak commercial class did not have that kind of influence in official circles, and in any case the dates do not add up. The much-cited disruption of cotton supplies caused by the American Civil War cannot

[5] Michael Khodarkovsky *Russia's Steppe Frontier. The Making of a Colonial Empire 1500-1800* (Bloomington, IN) 2002 pp.152-6

[6] И. В. Эрофеева (ed.) *История Казахстана в Русских Источниках XVI – XX веков* Том III *Журналы и Служебные Записки Дипломата А. И. Тевкелева по Истории и Этнографии Казахстана* (Алматы, 2005)

have provided the spur for a campaign which began in earnest in 1853 with the seizure of the Kokandian fortress of Aq-Masjid, and which would have come to an end much sooner had the Crimean War not intervened. By the time the Russians moved into the cotton-growing oasis regions to the south of the Steppe after 1865 the American Civil War was over. Boronin's conclusion is that economic interests played little part in motivating the conquest: instead, as Foreign Minister Gorchakov said at the time, it was the quest for a secure frontier which was paramount in Russian military thinking, together perhaps with strategic fears that British influence was growing in the region.[7] His acknowledgement that Russia and Britain pursued similar policies of espionage and exploration in Central Asia, often provoking information panics in each other's 'official minds', is particularly welcome, and represents a shift away from the one-sided Soviet-era narrative, represented by the work of G. A. Khidoyatov,[8] which has the British as the sole aggressors in the region.

On the vexed question of whether General M. G. Cherniaev's capture of Tashkent in 1865 was authorised by St Petersburg (74) Boronin argues (correctly in my view) that Cherniaev had orders to free Tashkent from Kokandian control and establish it as an independent city-state 'under Russian influence'.[9] It was only once the Russians realised that this would almost certainly lead to the city's annexation by Bukhara that they were forced to hang on to it: in general they underestimated the degree to which their search for a secure frontier on the Steppe would entangle them in the political rivalry between Bukhara and Kokand. More could perhaps have been said here about the destabilising impact of the Russian campaigns themselves on the internal politics of the Khanates, but what seems clear is that the Russians had not anticipated the lengthy war with Bukhara that would follow the annexation of Tashkent from Kokand. The chapter further describes the conquest of Khujand, Djizak and Samarkand, which finally led to peace being signed with Bukhara in 1868. It includes a fascinating account of the Ili crisis and the temporary annexation of Kuldja from China in 1871, an episode that is often overlooked in accounts of Russian expansion in the region, and concludes with a brief section on the conquest of Transcaspia (where Boronin rather curtly acknowledges General M. D. Skobelev's massacre of at least 8,000 Turkmen after the siege of Geok-

[7] 'Correspondence Respecting Central Asia' *Parliamentary Papers* Central Asia №.2 (1873) C. 704 (London, 1873) pp.70-75

[8] Г. А. Хидоятов *Из Истории Англо-Русских Отношений в Средней Азии в Конце XIX Век* (Ташкент, 1969); *Идет Британское Экспансия в Средней Азии* (Ташкент, 1981) This is an odd title for a book about the Russian annexation of Penjdeh and the advance on Herat. Both books are listed in the bibliography.

[9] It is borne out by the published version of his orders in А. Г. Серебренников *Туркестанский Краи. Сборник Материалов для Истории его Завоевания* 1865г Часть I (Ташкент, 1914) Док. 63 & 65 pp.86-92

Tepe) and on the annexation of the Pamirs and the drawing of the boundary with Afghanistan.

In Chapters 5-6 Vasiliev and Narbaev give us an overview of 'Central Asia in the internal politics of the Tsarist Government' (86-131), which successfully guides the reader through the various legal changes in the status of the two Central Asian Governor-Generalships, from the middle of the 19th century. Beginning with the Steppe Commission's recommendations and the temporary Turkestan statute of 1867, they describe the remarkable independence this allowed to K.P. von Kaufman, the first Governor-General, and the manner in which he used it to create a highly personalised system of military rule in the region. Subsequently they show how the 1886 statute which followed the recommendations for reform of Senator F. K. Girs's Commission began to dilute the purely military administration which had existed in Turkestan up to that point, giving greater control to the Ministries of Finance and the Interior and introducing some elements of the 1864 legal code. They examine the incorporation of the Semirechie and Transcaspian *Oblast*s into Turkestan, the changing status of the Steppe Governor-Generalship, and finally the recommendations of Count K.K. Pahlen's reforming commission of 1908-10.

Although the authors are correct to see a general tendency towards greater legal and administrative normalisation over the fifty years of Tsarist rule in Central Asia, in my opinion they exaggerate the unanimity of Russian official views on the possibility or desirability of fully integrating the Turkestan and Steppe Governor-Generalships into the Empire. Whilst numerous statements can be found calling for greater administrative *sblizhenie* and *sliyanie*, these are almost always counterbalanced by pessimism over the cultural distance which lay between Russians and Central Asians, and warnings that civilian rule might compromise military security. This debate became particularly pronounced in the aftermath of the Andijan uprising, when some argued that the 1886 statute had weakened and de-militarised Turkestan's administration too much.[10] Here some reference is needed to Daniel Brower's work, which shows clearly how proposals to extend civilian rule and introduce all-Imperial norms of governance and *grazhdanstvennost'* were almost always stymied by those who insisted that the priorities of military security – whether against Muslim 'backwardness' and 'fanaticism' or new, pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic threats – must be maintained.[11] The fact is that both the Steppe and Turkestan remained under military rule until 1917, that the courts and administration were almost

[10] See for instance В.П. Сальков *«Андижанское Восстание» в 1898г* (Казань, 1901) pp.92-3
[11] Daniel Brower *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (London, 2003)

entirely under military control, that the *Zemstva* and other norms of civilian government which existed in European Russia were never introduced, and that local anomalies such as the preservation of religious and customary law remained intact. I would disagree with their claim (125) that the Pahlen Commission of 1908 provided a 'powerful impulse' towards the greater integration of Turkestan into the Empire, and the 'adoption of all-Imperial norms'. Pahlen saw Turkestan as a colonial region with particular, colonial problems, writing that 'Ея государственныя нужды далеко не похожи на те, кой приходится удовлетворят в коренной Империи.' 'Her governmental needs are very different from those which come to be applied in the heart of the Empire.'[12] His recommendations for Turkestan's reform frequently looked to British India rather than to European Russia for inspiration:

'Недостатки эти особенно наглядно выступают при сравнении нашей системы управления края с управлением Азиатских владений других государств, особенно с выдающеюся по обширности - Английскою Индийскою колониею'.[13]

'These insufficiencies present themselves especially clearly on comparison of our system for ruling the area with that of other Governments over Asiatic possessions, especially with the most prominent and extensive – the British Indian Colony'.

This is seen most clearly in his decision not to abolish the *Sharia* courts, but to attempt to regulate them using the code of 'Anglo-Muhammadan' law developed in British India (an attempt that remained abortive and unsuccessful).[14] Doubtless Pahlen, like the other Turkestan reformers before him, would have liked to see Turkestan's governance brought closer to Russian Imperial norms, but he simply did not believe that this volatile and alien frontier region was yet ready for this. *Sblizhenie* in Central Asia was never entirely abandoned by the Tsarist regime, but it was repeatedly postponed.

Abashin's Chapter on 'The Socio-Economic and Demographic Development of Central Asia in the make-up of the Russian Empire' (132-158) covers a remarkably wide range of material clearly and concisely. He points out that although trade between Russia and the Central Asian Khanates grew rapidly in the early 19th century, and the latter had a favourable trade balance with Russia, nevertheless in Empire-wide terms this trade was of limited significance, and that officials saw Central Asia largely as a route to the much larger Indian market. By the mid-19th century trade with the Khanates had actually declined to a third of its level in the 1830s, and did not rise again until after the conquest

[12] Граф К.К. Пален *Всеподданнейшая Записка, содержащия главнейшие выводы Отчета* (С.Пб., 1910) p.12
[13] РГИА Ф. 1396 Оп.1 Дело №.437 «Краткий Всеподданнейший Доклад К.К. Палена о Ревизии Туркестанского Края. Черновик» 1909 p.32
[14] See Adeeb Khalid *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* (Berkeley, 1998) pp.70-1; Alexander Morrison *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868-1910* (Oxford, 2008) pp.274-82

in 1867: in Central Asia then, trade most definitely followed the flag. In any case, as Abashin demonstrates, the small and relatively poor population of the region did not form a very significant market for Russian goods, and it was not until 1894 when Bukhara was placed within the Russian customs boundary that the flow of manufactured goods from sources other than European Russia (mainly British, via India) was sealed off. The lack of economic motive for Russian Imperialism in the region is underlined by the enormous fiscal deficit Turkestan generated every year until 1905: by 1881 St Petersburg had already subsidised the region to the tune of 85,881,204 roubles.[15] Although at least one historian has claimed that these figures were manipulated by Senator F. K. Girs and General Cherniaev to discredit Governor-General von Kaufman, the only substantive objection to them is that they include the cost of the military occupation of Turkestan.[16] Given that it was obviously desirable for borderland regions to cover the cost of their military occupation, and that, to take a colonial parallel, in India local revenues paid not merely for local garrisons but for an army of 150,000 men which could be used in British interests elsewhere, it is significant that Turkestan was such a substantial drain on the Imperial exchequer. This was partly owing to a policy of light taxation introduced by von Kaufman, whereby various Bukharan and Kokandian cesses were replaced with a government land tax, based upon a notional 10% of the value of the crop (down from 20-30% before the conquest) (138-41). Despite the construction of railways and the rapid expansion of the area under cotton in the last decade of the 19th century, the extent to which Turkestan was of economic value to Russia even in the last twenty years of Tsarist rule remains questionable.

Abashin repeats (146) the common assumption that the Russian conquest was motivated by the Tsarist state's search for a secure cotton supply (something largely dismissed by Boronin in his chapter – see above). However, as he subsequently shows, the growth of cotton in Turkestan was encouraged by the imposition of heavy duties on imported cotton, rising to 3 roubles 15 kopeks per *pood* by 1894, which effectively protected Turkestan cotton from foreign competition and acted as an indirect subsidy. This suggests to me that it probably would have been cheaper for the Moscow mills to have imported all their raw cotton from the U.S.A. and elsewhere, and that the Tsarist State's perverse drive for autarky had the effect of driving up prices. This has very interesting implications for the largely unquestioned assumption that growing cotton in Turkestan was of benefit to the economy of the Russian Empire as a whole, and deserves

[15] Ф. К. Гирс *Отчетъ, Ревизующаго, по Высочайшему Повелению, Туркестанский Край* (С.Пб., 1884) p.366
[16] David Mackenzie 'Turkestan's Significance to Russia' *Russian Review* Vol.33 No.2 (Apr. 1974) pp.174-5

to be explored further. The consequence of this policy for Turkestan itself was a substantial increase in the acreage under cotton to 16.8% of all irrigated land. Production soared from 873,000 *poods* in 1888 to 13,697,000 *poods* in 1913, which supplied about a half of the Empire's needs. 90% of it was grown on small native plots of five *desyatinas* or less, dependent on pre-existing canals, emphasising the extent to which this was an enterprise in which the whole agrarian population participated.[17] The very last years of Tsarism saw still more ambitious plans for a cotton monoculture. In the much-quoted words of the Agriculture Minister A. V. Krivoshein 'every excess *pood* of Turkestan wheat competes with Russian and Siberian wheat; every *pood* of Turkestan cotton competes with American cotton. Thus it is preferable to supply the region with imported though expensive grain and to free irrigated land for cotton.'[18] He wanted to see the acreage devoted to the crop expanded to 33%: here, as elsewhere, unrealised late-Tsarist plans for Central Asia would later be fulfilled in the Soviet period. Abashin refrains from making moral judgements about the expansion of cotton cultivation, merely pointing out that it is a valuable cash crop which is particularly well-suited to irrigated agriculture. Apart from cotton-cleaning factories and some coal mines, Turkestan and the Steppe region had few industrial enterprises before 1917, and Abashin does not waste time repeating Soviet mantras about the emergence of an industrial proletariat in the region. He does claim, however (155) that the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a growing concentration of land in the hands of wealthy *bai*s, and the division of the remainder into ever more fragmented plots. This in turn led to a growth in share-cropping by poor or landless peasants (*Chairikerstvo*, from the Tajik *Choryakkor*, indicating that – at least in principle - the labourer received ¼ of the crop); Abashin suggests that this was probably connected to the growing commercialisation of agriculture in this period. The chapter concludes with an overview of demographic trends, pointing out how population growth-rates soared from 0.4 - 0.6% in the 1870s to 1.5 – 2% in Turkestan and 0.8 – 1.4% in the Steppe region by the early 1900s, partly owing to improved medical care but also to in-migration from Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan, as well as Russian settlers. Abashin also writes that the main centre of settled population shifted from the Bukhara oasis to the Ferghana valley, although this is a process which must have begun in the late 18th century with the expansion of irrigation in the latter region under the Kokand Khanate.

---

[17] А. И. Книзе, В. И. Юферев «Хлопководство» *Азиатская Россия* (С.Пб., 1914) Vol. II *Земля и Хозяйство* pp.278, 285-6

[18] А. В. Кривошеин *Записка Главноуправляющего Земледелием и Землеустроиством о Поездке в Туркестанский Край в 1912 году* (С.Пб., 1912) pp.7-8 Quoted in Mackenzie 'Turkestan's significance' p.182

Chapter 8 'Changes in the Culture of the Central Asian peoples under Imperial power'(159-186) has contributions from Abashin, Kadyrbaev, Syzdykova and Vasiliev. Included are sections on Islamic education, Russian education amongst the Kazakhs and in Turkestan, the 'Russian-Native Schools', attempts to reform traditional education, the 'new-method' *maktabs*, the question of 'Russification', Literature, Music, Drama, Architecture, the Visual Arts, the Press and 'Enlighteners'. This is rather a lot for twenty-seven pages, and inevitably certain topics are dealt with very perfunctorily. I am in broad agreement with most of the arguments presented here: namely that the most significant movements for reform and enlightenment emerged amongst the peoples of Central Asia themselves, and generally owed little to direct official encouragement or to state educational institutions. The small number of Russians who learned local languages, and the limited availability of Russian-language education for Muslims in Turkestan in particular, meant that intellectual exchange was limited to a small elite. Whilst Russian intellectual influences were obviously significant, many of the most important new ideas came to Central Asia from the Volga and Crimean Tatars, the Ottoman Empire and the Muslims of British India, and the Muslim modernist movement broadly known as 'Jadidism' was often viewed with deep suspicion by the authorities as a cover for pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic ideas (170). However, if the state did little to promote intellectual modernisation and viewed Muslim reformers with suspicion, it also did not engage in the aggressive Russification policies which were common in the Western borderlands in the latter years of the Empire. The period after the relaxation of censorship in 1905 saw a flowering of the press in Central Asia, in the form of a number of short-lived reformist newspapers, and also new forms of literature, such as Mahmud Khoja Behbudi's play *Pedarkush* (the Parricide). The conclusion of the chapter is slightly at odds with the evidence presented within it, as it attributes too important a role to Russian rule in 'encouraging' new intellectual developments, when the state's role, at least, was at most a passive and unintentional one.

Chapter 9, co-authored by Bykov and Abashin, carries on where the previous one left off, examining 'The influence of Russian power on the condition of the Central Asian population' (187-209), but this time concerned with social rather than intellectual history. Bykov describes how whilst most Kazakhs remained nomadic or semi-nomadic and continued to practise transhumant pastoralism until the Revolution, from the late 18th century a growing number were turning to settled agriculture in Turgai Province and along the Syr-Darya. Bykov claims to see growing class stratification along economic lines

in Kazakh society by the late 19th-century, with older elites losing much of their pre-eminence and a growth of poor and propertyless groups. I am not really qualified to judge the validity of this argument as applied to the Kazakhs, but it bears a close resemblance to standard Soviet-era narratives of social development. Abashin's section on settled society in Central Asia is more sophisticated, and contains much more detailed descriptions of how life was actually lived at the time of the conquest and thereafter: he makes an appealing suggestion (200) that one of the most profound changes brought about by Russian rule was the introduction of the samovar, which led to a boom in the number of *chaikhanas* (teahouses) an essential feature of the Central Asian urban landscape! His account of the position of women and families draws heavily on the remarkable, pioneering work of the Russian administrator, Orientalist and Ethnographer V. P. Nalivkin and his wife Maria, who spent a year living in a village in Ferghana in 1884 and published a book of ethnographic observations which deserves reprinting and a wider audience.[19] Abashin's account of religious practice (as opposed to doctrine) is clear and concise, and as detailed as limited space will allow. The chapter concludes with a brief survey of some of the transformations brought about by Russian rule, such as the spread of new manufactured goods, changes in dress and housing, the rise of drunkenness and a growing gap between rich and poor. There is no doubt that the advent of Russian rule helped to bring about profound social change in Central Asia, not least through the attempted marginalisation of the religious, landowning and tribal elites which had dominated Kokand and Bukhara before the conquest (something which gets too little attention here). Nevertheless, the overall conclusion of the chapter, that Central Asian society had been largely static and unchanging before the Russian conquest violently ruptured the existing order, is stating the case too strongly. The evidence presented in the chapter itself suggests otherwise: namely that many currents of social change can be traced back at least to the mid-18th century; this is an area where more research in the vernacular languages of Central Asia is urgently needed.

In Chapter 10 Brusina tackles the delicate topic of 'Migration in Central Asia' (210-233), referring largely to the question of Slavic settlement, and presumably drawing upon her earlier published historical and ethnographic research in this area.[20] However almost all the references in the opening section on Cossack settlements on the Kazakh Steppe are to Bekmakhanova's work on the 'formation of the multi-national population of

[19] В. Наливкин & М. Наливкина *Очерк Быта Женщины Оседлаго, Туземнаго Населения Ферганы* (Казань, 1886)
[20] О. И. Брусина *Славяне в Средней Азии* (Москва, 2001)

Kazakhstan and Northern Kyrgyzstan', which describes the establishment of the Ural, Siberian, Orenburg and Semirechie Cossack hosts. The degree to which this state-directed process can really be described as 'migration' is questionable however. To view this as a purely demographic question is to ignore the military role played by these groups in securing the empire's frontier, whilst there is no mention of those who were expropriated when this land was settled by the Cossack hosts. Subsequently Brusina describes the great acceleration of Slavic peasant settlement in the later 19th century, so that by 1897 there were 1 million Slavs in the Steppe Governor-Generalship and 200,000 in Turkestan, of which 70,000 were peasant settlers inhabiting 116 new settlements. Numbers would swell still more after the opening of the Tashkent-Orenburg Railway line in 1906. Here, (222-3) there is an acknowledgement of how disruptive much of this movement was, and of the fact that by 1917 approximately 28% of the territory of modern Kazakhstan had been set aside for the use of settlers. However, the explosion of the resultant tensions between settlers and the local population in the Central Asian Revolt of 1916 is not mentioned, for reasons which become clear later in the volume (see below). Instead Brusina describes the administrative arrangements made for settlers, their economic life, and the attempts of the authorities to isolate them as far as possible from the local population. The ambivalence of local officials and educated Russians towards peasant settlement (attested to by Pahlen, amongst others),[21] the poor conditions settlers often found on their arrival, their unfamiliarity with irrigated agriculture and their frequent tendency to rent the land they occupied back to the natives from whom it had been taken and who had the skills to farm it[22] – all these go unacknowledged. The discussion of urban settlement gives the figures for the Russian population of cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand and New Marghelan, but would have benefited from some reference to Jeff Sahadeo's richly detailed research on Russian settler society in Tashkent, even if his monograph perhaps appeared too late for this.[23] The chapter concludes with a description of the migration of other ethnic groups to Central Asia in the Tsarist period, most notably the Tatars, Armenians, Georgians and Persians, the latter of whom by the early 1900s were the largest non-Russian element in the population of Ashkabad.

---

[21] Count K.K. Pahlen *Mission to Turkestan* (Oxford, 1964) pp.202-3; Л. Синицын «Заметки по поводу наших переселенцев» *Туркестанския Ведомости* 15th March 1888 №.11

[22] See П. В. Позняков «Русские поселки в Голодной Степи Самаркандской Области» *Справочная Книжка Самаркандской Области* Вып. VII (Самарканд, 1902) pp4-13, 22

[23] J.F. Sahadeo *Creating a Russian Colonial Community: City, Nation and Empire in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Ph.D. Thesis, 2000); "Epidemic and Empire: Ethnicity, Class and Civilisation in the 1892 Tashkent Cholera riot" *Slavic Review* Vol. 64 №.1 (Spring 2005) pp.117-139; *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Bloomington, IN, 2007)

Litvinov's chapter on 'The Religious policy of the Russian Empire in Central Asia' (234-258) is a sometimes rather unreconstructed account of a Russian Empire confronted with various forms of what it saw as dangerous Islamic 'fanaticism', which the state had rashly encouraged on the Steppe under Catherine the Great and in the early 19th-century. Some reference to Allen Frank's work on Kazakh religion - which has thoroughly exploded the notion that the Kazakhs were only superficially Islamised before they came into contact with the Volga Tatars - would have been useful here.[24] However Litvinov gives a good description of the twists and turns in religious policy in Turkestan, first under Cherniaev – who sought to forge alliances with religious elites – then under Romanovsky, a protégé of the Governor of Orenburg, Kryzhanovsky, who was deeply hostile to Islam – and finally to von Kaufman's policy of *Ignorirovanie*, the 'not-knowing' of Islam, which sought (not wholly successfully) to sever the state's connection with religion. The lack of any more active measures to undermine Islam was questioned at the time, and the whole policy came under review in 1898 when an *Ishan* (a Sufi religious leader) led an attack on the Russian garrison of Andijan in which twenty-two soldiers were killed. This incident produced a bout of soul-searching and paranoia out of all proportion to its seriousness, prompting Governor-General Dukhovskoi to write a much-cited report on the 'Muslim Question', whose recommendation that Turkestan should be given a state-controlled Islamic hierarchy akin to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly fell on deaf ears. Litvinov then devotes what seems a disproportionate amount of space (given that 97% of Turkestan's population was Muslim, and even in the Steppe region they made up over 70%) to religious minorities such as Hindu merchants and Roman Catholics. The chapter never really brings out clearly enough the absolute centrality of Islam as a marker of difference between the Russians and the subject population of Central Asia, or the degree to which official paranoia about the possibility of a religious revolt or *ghazavat* led to an extremely cautious and conservative policy in the region. Whilst this meant that the Russians trod very lightly on religious sensibilities, it was also one of the main factors which led them to keep Turkestan under military rule and resist the extension of representative institutions to the region.[25]

Abashin's chapter on 'The National Classification of the peoples of Central Asia' (259-276) is exceptionally good, and its very inclusion is an acknowledgement, all too rare

[24] Allen J. Frank "Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde" in Kemper, Von Kügelgen *et al* (ed.) *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia* (Berlin, 1998) Vol. II pp.234-6; *Idem Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Leiden, 2001) pp.275-82, 314-5

[25] Here again Brower's work is relevant: *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* pp.94-102

even in modern Russian writing, that social and ethnic categories can be constructed. Whilst he does not allege that the 1897 census 'created' ethnic or linguistic identities in Central Asia, he does show clearly just how complex these were in the pre-Soviet period. His discussion of the efforts of Russian Orientalists and ethnographers to understand just what terms such as 'Muslim', 'Kirghiz', 'Uzbek' or 'Tajik' actually meant in Central Asia is admirably clear. The 'Sart problem' rightly gets a section to itself, as this remains the most contentious question surrounding pre-revolutionary identities in Central Asia, and Abashin shows clearly how despite the best efforts of scholars such as V. V. Barthold and N. P. Ostroumov, no clear understanding or definition of the term had been arrived at before 1917. The concluding section on 'Ethnographic Classification and Colonial Rule' draws on the work of Adeeb Khalid, and Abashin concludes that, despite the creation of ever more elaborate ways of classifying the local population, the only categories which really mattered in administrative terms were those which divided the population into 'settled' and 'nomadic' groups, reflecting different ways of life, though perhaps not taking sufficient account of widespread semi-nomadism. Legally speaking all Turkestan's inhabitants were '*inorodtsy*' or 'aliens', whilst the Russians referred to them generically as '*tuzemtsy*' or 'natives'. The degree to which late-Tsarist ethnography played a role in the formation of national republics in the USSR is an intriguing one, but it lies beyond the scope of this volume.[26]

Chapter 13 on 'Political Life in Central Asia after 1905' (277-292) has contributions from Bekmakhanova, Abashin, Vasiliev and Kotyukova. Only the short-lived second Duma contained any Muslim deputies from Turkestan, elected on a franchise even more restricted than in European Russia and accordingly it had a marginal and rather unimportant element in the political life of Turkestan in the immediate pre-war period.[27] It is thus not entirely clear why this chapter devotes twice as much space to the Duma as it does to the Jadids (280-2), who represented by far its most significant political movement, even if they were far from united. Furthermore they are lumped together in a section with Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, and whilst this was a connection that was often made by paranoid Tsarist officials at the time, that is no cause to repeat it here. It is clear from the work of Khalid and others that for most of the Jadids their *Watan* was Turkestan, or indeed the Empire itself, whilst they remained loyal even when the

[26] See Francine Hirsch *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY, 2005) pp.30-61
[27] Khalid *Muslim Cultural Reform* pp233-235

Ottoman Empire went to war with Russia in 1914;[28] although this is acknowledged, the overall impression given of Jadidism here is rather superficial.

There are more serious problems with the final section devoted to the 1916 Central Asian Uprising (288-92). Not only is it inadequate in length, it is also wholly compromised by its adherence to a Soviet-era narrative which has Russian peasant settlers fighting alongside Kazakhs and Kirghiz in a joint struggle against the Tsarist regime. This is a gross caricature of what actually happened in 1916, the events of which are in fact compelling evidence *against* the rosy picture so often painted by Soviet historians of 'class solidarity' amongst poor Russians and Natives in Turkestan before the revolution. Initially provoked by discontent at an Imperial *ukaz* conscripting Central Asians into labour battalions, the revolt rapidly transformed into a violent rebellion aimed at expelling Slavic peasant settlers, with whom the nomadic population in particular competed for land and water resources – there is ample evidence of the ethnic dimension to the revolt even in the published collections of documents produced in early Soviet times, whilst relations between Kazakhs and Slavic settlers in Semirechie were already poor at the time of the Pahlen Commission's tour of the region in 1908, something attested to in numerous petitions from both sides.[29] The slaughter of Russian settlers by the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs who inhabited Semirechie was matched by equally brutal reprisals on the part of the settlers, who referred to the native population as 'dogs'.[30] The revolutionary and war years saw an extensive campaign of land seizures by Russian settlers in Semirechie in particular, which were legitimised as a form of revenge for the revolt.[31] Whilst these are obviously painful historical issues they need to be looked squarely in the eye, not ducked as they are here.

In Chapter 14 Arapov discusses 'The system of Russian protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva' (293-312). It does not begin promisingly, referring to the 'typically stagnant' character of the economies of Bukhara and Khiva before annexation (see above). V. V. Barthold was a historian and Orientalist of remarkable brilliance, but he was also a man of his time, and to cite him without comment as Arapov does on these points is unwise. However the account of the conquest and the subsequent political status

---

[28] Khalid *Muslim Cultural Reform* pp.209-11, 237-8

[29] «Восстание 1916г в Средней Азии» *Красный Архив* 3 (34) 1929 pp.39-94; «Джизакское Восстание в 1916г» *Красный Архив* 5 (60) 1933 pp.60-91; See for instance РГИА Ф.1396 Оп.1 Д.45 p.238 & 46 p.21

[30] Daniel Brower 'Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916' *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* (Neue Folge, Band 44, Heft 1) 1996 p.49

[31] See Marco Buttino 'Turkestan 1917: la Revolution des Russes' *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 32/1 (1991) pp.66-71 & *Idem Революция наоборот. Средняя Азия между падением царской империи и образованием СССР* (Москва, 2007) Chapter 4

of the protectorates within the empire which follows is admirably accurate and clear, as is Arapov's description of their internal administration, population, economy and politics. This includes a much-needed survey of the tax regime and religious and secular elites in the Khanates, things which are still imperfectly understood even for the post-conquest period. Initially Bukhara and Khiva changed little under Russian rule, and the latter remained a fairly isolated backwater until 1917. However, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the wake of the Transcaspian Railway, Russian capital was beginning to penetrate Bukhara to a much greater extent than before, with businessmen contracting agreements with the Emir to grow large quantities of cotton on Government land. Arapov's account of 'Enlighteners' in Bukhara (306-8), whilst detailed, is undermined (again) by a fixation with the idea that the Bukharan Jadids were largely inspired by pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic ideas, something which simply reflects the official paranoia expressed in the *Okhrana* files which Arapov used for the earlier publication he draws upon here: he would have done better to consult the writings of the Jadids themselves. Arapov also considers the debates at the beginning of the 20th century as to whether or not the protectorates should be fully annexed to the Empire, something stimulated in large part by the rather lurid publications of D. N. Logofet[32] (which he does not cite) and by the serious anti-Shia riots which broke out in Bukhara in 1910 (309-10). Although the proposal was dismissed by Stolypin, it shows the direction in which official thinking was moving at the time, and had the revolution not intervened, it seems likely that the *de facto* integration of Bukhara into the Empire through Russian settlement and new railway construction would have been followed by a *de jure* abolition of the Emirate. Arapov uses a mixture of primary sources, the crucial work of Alexander Semenov, and his own earlier writings about the region, although there is no reference to Seymour Becker's old but still valuable monograph, which remains the standard work on the subject in English, nor, perhaps more disappointingly, to the excellent recent work of Vladimir Genis which is of particular relevance for the revolutionary period which Arapov examines at the end of the chapter.[33]

Finally, in Chapter 15 Vasiliev and Abashin survey 'Views of the Central Asian Region in Russian Society' (313 – 337), looking at representations of the region in official discourse and thinking, literature and the visual arts, considering 18th-century Russian

[32] Д.Н. Логофет *Страна Безправия* (С.Пб., 1909); *Идет Бухарское Ханство под Русским Протекторатом* (С.Пб., 1911)
[33] Seymour Becker *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia. Bukhara and Khiva* (Cambridge, MA., 1968); Владимир Генис *Вице-Консул Введенский. Служба в Персии и Бухарском Ханстве (1906-1920гг.)* (Москва, 2003)

ideas about the 'childlike simplicity' of the Kazakhs and their inability to understand farming or craftsmanship; early 19th-century myths about the 'wealth of the east' which were dispelled when the Asiatic Table of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to acquire more accurate information about Central Asia, and were instead replaced with a dominant trope of poverty and 'backwardness'; the Orientalist stereotype of Central Asian state and society as 'stagnant' and 'unchanging' (a view which, it must be said, is reproduced almost verbatim at some points in this volume); the songs of Russian soldiers about their friendship with the 'peaceful Sarts' (something not always borne out in the documentary record);[34] and the luscious Orientalist paintings of Vasilii Vereshchagin, who served in the campaign against Bukhara in 1867-8. There is an excellent analysis of Russian ideas of their 'civilising mission' in the region, the element of Tsarist Imperial ideology which most clearly prefigures that of the Soviet period, even if before 1917 such ideas were never pursued in anything like as ruthless a manner. Above all, the authors here make no bones about the degree to which Central Asians were represented in Russian texts as culturally – and sometimes even racially – inferior. Similarly when they come to consider views of Central Asia from an economic perspective, they write that 'The colonial character of Russian rule in Central Asia was most clearly reflected at the All-Russian Artistic-Industrial Exhibition of 1896' (328-9) where the Turkestan Pavilion contained displays showing the various useful raw materials (most obviously cotton) and other products which Turkestan would contribute to the Imperial Economy. That this was organised in order to convince a sceptical public of Central Asia's value to Russia (which, as is demonstrated elsewhere in the volume, was far from clear), is not the point which they are making: it shows that both the official and public perception was that Central Asia *ought* to be exploited as a colony. Subsequent attempts at greater exploitation were, however, dressed up in the rhetoric of the civilising mission, which the local population were supposed to be accepting enthusiastically. This did not mean, however, that they could ever become truly 'European', and they remained 'backward' relative to Russians. The supposed laziness of the nomadic population and their inability fully to exploit their lands was used as a justification for peopling the Steppe with Russian settlers, whilst the settled population were portrayed not as lazy, but as preferring trade to working the land. If anything, overall this judgement is perhaps a little too harsh: the official intention might have been to exploit Central Asia more ruthlessly, but, as so often with Tsarist Imperialism, there was a substantial gap between aim and execution. Nevertheless, it is

[34] See Alexander Morrison 'Russian Rule in Turkestan and the Example of British India' *Slavonic & East European Review* 84/4 (October 2006) p.702

refreshing to find such an honest, clear-eyed examination of some of the rhetorical strategies used to justify Russian Imperialism in a Russian publication, and it is something some of the other contributors to this volume might have read with profit.

There follows an all-too-brief section describing the numerous scholars – philologists, ethnographers, Orientalists etc. – who worked in Central Asia and gathered knowledge about it. Abashin writes that one of the 'Peculiarities of Russian Orientalism' (332-3) was that 'Orientals' themselves, such as Chokan Valikhanov, participated fully in the scholarly enterprise, but whilst this was perhaps commoner in the Russian case it was by no means unknown in the British Empire either.[35] The short biography of Vladimir Nalivkin which he gives here is very welcome however. The chapter concludes with a rapid survey of Central Asian influences on Russian music and art, such as Borodin's opera *Knyaz' Igor*.

The first two appendices are responses by Russian scholars working in Central Asia to the new debates about Russian Imperialism in the Tsarist period which have emerged in the region since the early 1980s, and which have been particularly pronounced since the collapse of the USSR in 1991.[36] No.1 is by S. V. Timchenko, a historian working in Almaty, and considers 'The problem of the uniting [*Prisoedinenie* again!] of Kazakhstan to Russia in modern Kazakhstani historiography' (338-359). Timchenko discusses various different currents in Kazakh historiography since the early 1980s. Where these adhere to Soviet-era notions of the 'friendship of peoples' they are described as 'fair' and 'objective', where they have ventured to criticise Tsarist policies in Central Asia and to refer to Russian colonisation and military conquest on the Steppe they are dismissed as statements of extreme, biased nationalism, what Timchenko refers to as the 'radical' school of Kazakhstani history led by M. K. Kozybaev. In support of the idea that Russian aims in the region were entirely benevolent, Timchenko simply cites without comment (347-8) the statements of a number of Russian officers that they wished to be just, peaceful and to defend the Kazakhs from their enemies! The naiveté (or disingenuousness) of this approach is clear enough, but it is worth pointing out that similar statements of good intentions and benevolent feelings towards colonised peoples can be found in *any* European Empire at *any* time, whether amongst British officers on the North-West

[35] See for instance T. R. Trautmann *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, CA, 1997) pp.218-21 on the 'Indianisation' of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the substantial Indian contribution to the emerging discipline of Indology.

[36] For a perspective on earlier debates of this kind see Eli Weinermann 'The Polemics between Moscow and Central Asians on the Decline of Central Asia and Tsarist Russia's Role in the History of the Region' *Slavonic & East European Review* 71/3 (July 1993) pp.428-81

Frontier or Frenchmen in the *Bureaux Arabes* of North Africa.[37] Timchenko then states that the Kazakh historian K. K. Kenzhebekov's description (in a book which, interestingly, uses *Prisoedinenie* in its title) of the Orenburg and Siberian garrisons as military forces used for the occupation of Kazakhstan is akin to language that might be used to describe 'Fascist Germany'! It is clear that powerful emotions are still aroused in some quarters when Russian policies in Central Asia are described as 'colonial', and this derives from the pejorative use made of this term in the Soviet period. Nevertheless, the sort of exaggeration indulged in here by Timchenko does no-one any favours. The basic facts are that the Russian Empire's conquest of the Steppe was often violent, and that its forces fought the Kazakhs (most notably Kenesary Kasimov) as well as the Kokand Khanate. The Kazakh hordes lost a great deal of their land and all of their political autonomy as a result. The nomadic population of Central Asia did not 'invite' Slavic settlers to occupy their grazing grounds, and relations between Kazakhs, Kirghiz and other Slavic settlers were often very poor in the pre-revolutionary period.[38] To object to the use of the terms 'colonial' or 'colonisation' to describe this process, as Timchenko does, is absurd. There are clearly problems with some modern Kazakh historiography, which makes equally absurd claims that the 'oppression' of the Kazakh people by the Russians can be dated from the fall of Astrakhan or the destruction of the Siberian Tatar Khanate. Timchenko is right, for instance, to point out how it ignores the expansionist policies of the Kokand Khanate on the Steppe, exaggerates the degree of economic exploitation to which the Kazakhs were subjected under Tsarist rule, and ignores the more positive aspects of the Russian presence. However, there is also much excellent historical work being published in modern Kazakhstan, notably by Daik-Press, which Timchenko does not refer to.[39] The refusal even to contemplate that there was a violent, military and colonial element to the Tsarist state's policies in the region renders any dialogue between these different schools impossible.

---

[37] See for instance Sir Lepel Griffin's extraordinarily pompous and self-congratulatory introductory essay to *Ranjit Singh and the Sikh Barrier between our growing Empire and Central Asia* (Oxford, 1905) p.17, where he remarks that 'the hands of the English were clean in the matter of the Sikh Wars and the annexation of Punjab, which were forced unwillingly upon them by the fierce and uncontrolled passions of the Sikh chiefs and people […the annexation] was accepted by the whole Sikh nation as just…'. The author was chief secretary in the Political Department of the Punjab Government in the 1870s & 80s.

[38] Peter Weisensel 'Russian-Muslim Inter-ethnic relations in Russian Turkestan in the last years of Empire' in J. Morison (Ed.) *Ethnic and National Issues In Russian and Eastern European History* (London, 2000) pp.47-60

[39] Apart from the edition of Tevkelev's writings referred to above, I am thinking particularly of two superb *Sborniki* of original documents with commentary: Б. Т. Жанаев, В. А. Иночкин & С. Х. Санаева (ed.) *История Букеевского Ханства 1801-1852гг* (Алматы, 2002); С. Н. Малтусынов (ed.) *Аграрная История Казахстана (конец XIX – начало XXв)* (Алматы, 2006); the latter is an amazingly rich resource for studying the history of Slavic peasant settlement in Kazakhstan.

In Appendix 2 (360-381) Valentina Germanova, a Russian historian working in Tashkent, whose husband Valery is also a member of the Historical Institute of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, writes about 'The Encroachment of the Russian Empire in Central Asia (remarks of a historiographer in the field of textbooks on the history of Uzbekistan)'. This is mainly an analysis of a single book, Jumaboi Rahimov's Class 9 historical textbook for schools in Uzbekistan, published in 2001. I first encountered this unpleasant work when I was presented with a copy by Goga Abrorovich Khidoyatov in 2001, although at the time I did not fully understand the politics which lay behind it. Amongst other things it attempts to portray the Khwarazmshahs, Tamerlane, Babur, Emir Sayyid Muzaffar of Bukhara, the Jadid reformers and the post-1917 *Basmachi* as an unbroken line of heroic 'Uzbek' nationalists, engaged in a struggle for self-determination against various foes, latterly the Russians.[40] This ridiculous anachronism, however, is not the reason Germanova objects to it, nor the reason why it was withdrawn in 2003 at the request of the Russian ambassador to Uzbekistan and replaced with another textbook co-authored (interestingly) by Khidoyatov (something I was unaware of until I read this essay). In view of this it is not quite clear why such a lengthy critique is necessary. Germanova identifies many factual errors in Rahimov's work, some of them rather petty, others more significant. However for her, as for Timchenko, the basic problem is that Rahimov's book has the temerity to refer to Russian and Soviet rule in Central Asia as 'colonial', and contains large numbers of anti-Russian statements. On this point she compares him to the notorious early Soviet historian M. N. Pokrovsky, who saw Tsarist Imperialism as an 'absolute evil'. Whilst Pokrovsky was not exactly an objective historian, his work and that of other anti-Imperialist early Soviet historians was no more inaccurate and distorting than the narrative of the 'great friendship' between the subject peoples of the Empire and their 'elder brother', the Russians, which replaced it from the 1940s, which appears to be what Germanova would prefer.[41] Whilst overt xenophobia is always undesirable, to view all attempts at a critical or revisionist account of Russian rule in Central Asia as a form of *lèse-majesté* designed to stimulate ethnic hatred, as Germanova appears to do, is not helpful. Most modern Uzbek historiography (or at any rate most of what is published in Uzbekistan) is indeed of little value. However, the chief problem with

[40] Жумабой Рахимов *История Узбекистана. Вторая половина XIX века – начало XX века* Класс 9 (Ташкент, 2001) p.5

[41] See М.Н. Покровский *Дипломатия и Воины Царской России в XIX Столетии* (Москва, 1923); Г. Сафаров *Колониальная Революция* (Москва, 1921); П. Г. Галузо *Туркестан-Колония* (Москва, 1929); Lowell Tillett *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969) esp. pp.32-4, 174-190 on Central Asia.

it is not that it is critical of Russian colonialism, but its adherence to a narrowly nationalist agenda, which is in turn partly a product of heavy-handed political control (the works of Islam Karimov now have the same canonical status which Marx and Lenin did in Soviet times).[42] It echoes older Soviet scholarship on the 'ethnogenesis' of the Uzbek 'nation',[43] and glosses over the complexity of Central Asian society before the national demarcations of 1924 (so ably outlined by Abashin in this volume), the extent of bilingualism and the importance of Persian/Tajik as an urban and governmental language. It thus deliberately ignores the degree to which modern Central Asian national identities (particularly 'Uzbek'), far from having been 'suppressed' in the Soviet period, are in fact a product of early Soviet nation-building policies.[44] None of these points is made by Germanova, nor indeed by Timchenko with regard to Kazakh historiography, although this is a less significant problem there. The remaining six appendices contain useful statistical information on the population of Turkestan, a copy of a prayer for the Tsar delivered in Tashkent in 1892, and extracts from the 1886 statute for Turkestan and the 1891 statute for the Steppe Governor-Generalship.

This review essay has concentrated too much on the faults in this book rather than its many strengths: as a work of reference it will be invaluable, and the historical judgements made in some of the chapters are bold, compelling and offer fruitful avenues for new research. It is inevitable that in a work of this scope there will be factual errors and over-simplifications, and the editors are clear from the outset that they are trying to produce a textbook rather than a collectively authored monograph. *Tsentral'naya Aziya v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* showcases some of the greatest strengths of modern Russian history writing, particularly its rigorous empiricism and its fruitful combination of historical research and anthropological fieldwork. Nevertheless, the very limited reference made to recent western historiography on the region, and the persistence of certain historiographical tropes from the Soviet period is worrying, even if that hackneyed phrase '*Progressivnoe Znachenie Prisoedinenie Srednei Azii k Rossii*' finally seems to have been laid to

---

[42] See for instance Н. Абдурахманова & Г. Рустамова *Колониальная Система Власти в Туркестане* (Ташкент, 1999)

[43] See Yuri Slezkine 'N. Ya. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics' *Slavic Review* 55/4 (Winter 1996) pp.826-862; Marlène Laruelle 'The Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia: Political Context and Institutional Mediators (1940–50)' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9/1 (2008) pp.169-188

[44] The literature on this is now enormous. See in particular Ingeborg Baldauf 'Some thoughts on the making of the Uzbek Nation' *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 32/1 (1991) pp.79-96; Yuri Slezkine 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or how a Socialist State promoted Ethnic Particularism' *Slavic Review* 53/2 (Summer 1994) pp.414-452; Terry Martin *The Affirmative Action Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 2000); Arne Haugen *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (London, 2003); Adeeb Khalid 'Theories and Politics of Central Asian Identities' *Ab Imperio* 2005/4

rest. In this respect the essays by Timchenko and Germanova are revealing. It is clear that they cannot contemplate the term 'Colonialism' except as an insult, and one to be taken personally. In the Soviet period 'Colonialism' and 'Imperialism' were things only bourgeois powers were capable of: *ergo* the Soviet Union, and from the 1940s, by a curious process of extension, its Tsarist predecessor, could not be a 'Colonial' power. This strand of thinking has become entangled with older Slavophile ideas about the 'natural' and 'organic' nature of Russian expansion until for many historians there is a firm belief that the Russian people themselves are not capable of being 'Colonial': a belief which co-exists quite happily with irrefutable evidence of growing racism against Caucasians and Central Asians in European Russian cities.

I say 'European' advisedly, because my experience of the (genuinely cosmopolitan) urban societies of Tashkent and Almaty is that these tensions are much less pronounced there, and that in general inter-ethnic relations are good. The existence of a reasonably harmonious multi-ethnic society in Kazakhstan is a genuinely impressive Soviet (and post-Soviet) achievement.[45] It is all the more impressive because it sprang from such unpromising beginnings: the expropriation of Kazakh land for Russian peasant settlement, the inter-ethnic violence of the 1916 revolt, the land-grab by Russian settlers immediately after the revolution, the death of almost 40% of the Kazakh people in the course of their collectivisation and forced sedentarisation after 1928,[46] and the use of Central Asia as a dumping-ground for unwanted nationalities such as the Chechens, Volga Germans and Koreans. There is no call to suppress these uncomfortable facts about the past for fear of jeopardising relations in the present: societies do not forget such events in any case, and if they are not discussed and debated openly by responsible historians they can fester, become distorted or manipulated (as seems to be happening in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, to some degree), and eventually erupt in bitterness. A failure to acknowledge this complex colonial legacy also makes it more difficult to establish where the roots of Central Asia's relative inter-ethnic harmony actually lie: my guess would be in the post-Stalin era, and some recent research is already beginning to suggest this.[47]

---

[45] See however Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse *Les Russes du Kazakhstan: Identités nationales et nouveaux Etats dans l'espace post-soviétique* (Paris, 2004), who argue that in the early 1990s there were considerable ethnic tensions between Russians and Kazakhs, which have largely been defused by the emigration of many Russians and the withdrawal of the large minority who remain from the political sphere.
[46] See Niccolò Pianciola 'Famine in the steppe. The collectivization of agriculture and the Kazakh herdsmen, 1928-1934' *Cahiers du monde russe,* 45/1-2 (2004) pp.137-192 & Isabelle Ohayon *La sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline* (Paris, 2006)
[47] Michaela Pohl 'The "planet of one hundred languages". Ethnic relations and Soviet identity in the Virgin Lands' *Peopling the Russian Periphery. Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (London, 2007) pp.238-261

The fears and frustrations expressed in the essays by Timchenko and Germanova are understandable and unsurprising: a similar polarisation took place in the historiography of the British Empire in the 1950s and 60s, with some historians (mostly, but not exclusively British) arguing that it had been a largely (or even entirely) benevolent institution, and others (mostly from newly independent colonies such as India) arguing that it had been largely baleful and destructive.[48] One difference is that British historians never had the same hang-ups about using terms such as 'Imperialism' and 'Colonialism'; another is that until recently, with majority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa, decolonisation did not lead to large white settler minorities falling under the rule of indigenous peoples. Although some historical debate about the British Empire is still conducted on these sterile lines,[49] in general the last thirty years have seen much less polarisation, and an acknowledgement that the complexity of the Imperial legacy renders it not only difficult, but futile, to try to reduce it to questions of black or white, right or wrong. This volume makes it clear that Russian Imperial historiography is already going through a similar process, and that sometimes it is painful.

Alexander Morrison

School of History

University of Liverpool

[48] See A.P. Thornton 'The Shaping of Imperial History' *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1999) Vol.V *Historiography* pp.612-633

[49] Niall Ferguson's *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World* (London, 2003) is an influential but wrong-headed defence of British Imperialism, whose most severe critics are nowadays mostly to be found in American academia. See Nicholas Dirks *The Scandal of Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2006)