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Title	"Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region" : The Pahlen Report and Pereselenie in Turkestan, 1908-1910
Author(s)	Morrison, Alexander
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 31, 1-29
Issue Date	2012
Doc URL	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/2115/51092">https://hdl.handle.net/2115/51092</a>
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	ASI31_001.pdf



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Articles

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## “Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region”: The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1910

ALEXANDER MORRISON

In the end, nothing was done. The reports of the Pahlen investigation were printed in massive volumes and then, like the reports of many a previous enquiry, were forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

The report of the Commission for the Inspection of the Turkestan region led by Senator Count Konstantin Konstantinovich von der Pahlen (1861–1923) was frequently cited in the publications of the first generation of western historians to work on pre-revolutionary Russian Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> As Richard Pierce noted, whilst at the time the Pahlen Commission’s one-year tour of inspection from June 1908–1909, together with the immense labor of writing, collating and correcting the twenty-three volumes of its report, might have been an exercise in futility, the latter later became a gold-mine of information for historians excluded from Soviet archives in Russia and Uzbekistan. Combined with Pahlen’s lively memoirs, composed in exile in 1922 in his native German and published and translated in 1964, the Pahlen Report was the single most important source for the administrative structures and economy of the Russian Empire’s most colonial periphery, namely Turkestan. The importance we should attach to this

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This article was originally delivered as a paper at the Central Asian Sources Seminar of Kyoto University for Foreign Studies. My thanks to Professor Yoichi Yajima for the invitation, and likewise to Professors Isogai Ken’ichi and Uyama Tomohiko and the reviewers of *Acta Slavica Iaponica* for their questions and comments.

- 1 Richard A. Pierce, “Introduction,” Konstantin K. Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan: Being the Memoirs of Count K. K. Pahlen 1908–1909*, Trans. N. J. Couriss (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. xii.
- 2 Before the collapse of the USSR seriously-researched work by Western scholars on colonial Turkestan was not extensive: apart from Pierce’s own monograph, Richard Pierce, *Russian Central Asia 1867–1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960), the most valuable contributions were Seymour Becker, *Russia’s Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva 1865–1924* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); articles by Ian Murray Matley in Edward Allworth, ed., *Central Asia, a Century of Russian Rule* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); David Mackenzie, “Turkestan’s Significance to Russia 1850–1917,” *Russian Review* 35 (1974), pp. 167–188; D. S. M. Williams, “Land Reform in Turkestan,” *Slavonic & East European Review* 51:124 (July 1973), pp. 428–438; Idem, “Fiscal Reform in Turkestan,” *Slavonic & East European Review* 52:128 (July 1974), pp. 382–392.

text today, twenty years since the beginning of the “archival revolution” and the “imperial turn” in the study of Russian history, is less clear.<sup>3</sup> As a report which was, in large part, never acted on, the Pahlen Commission’s findings might be able to tell us about where Russian rule in Turkestan had arrived by 1908, but supposedly offer few clues to the trajectory of official politics in the last, fateful decade of Russian colonial rule before it was first rocked and then destroyed by the events of 1916–17. Large parts of the report were based upon earlier publications, in particular the posthumously-published *Proekt* for a new Turkestan statute of the first Governor-General, Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman (1818–1882), the earlier one-volume report on Turkestan drawn up by senator F. K. Giers (1824–1891) in 1884, and works of the statistical committees in Samarkand, Syr-Darya and Ferghana Provinces;<sup>4</sup> one leading Russian historian of Central Asia has gone so far as to refer to it as no more than a “secondary source.”<sup>5</sup> Pahlen himself was not an old Turkestan hand – that, indeed, seems to have been precisely why he was chosen for the task of cleaning up what was supposed to be a particularly corrupt periphery of the empire, run by a coterie of vested military-bureaucratic interests.<sup>6</sup> The members of his commission were equally outsiders with little local knowledge, drawn largely from the Imperial Senate and from the Ministry of Justice, and he himself described with some amusement the effects of travelling away from the line of rail in Turkestan on some of the more exquisite members of his entourage.<sup>7</sup> The Inspection was often criticized in both the metropolitan and the Turkestan Press at the time, not so much because people doubted the truth about the many cases of criminality and corruption which it uncovered, but because even sympathetic commentators thought it had insufficient human resources at its disposal to cleanse the “Augean Stables” of Turkestan, and would be

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3 Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist & Alexander M. Martin, “The Imperial Turn,” *Kritika* 7:4 (Fall 2006), pp. 705–712.

4 Gen.-Ad’t. K. P. fon-Kaufman, *Proekt vsepoddanneishego otcheta Gen.-Ad’utanta fon-Kaufmana po grazhdanskomu upravleniiu* (St. Pb.: Voennaia Tip., 1885); F. K. Girs, *Otchet, revizuiushchago, po vysochashemu poveleniiu, Turkestanskogo kraia, tainogo sovetnika Girsra* (St. Pb.: n.p., 1884); *Sbornik materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar’inskoi oblasti* (Tashkent: Syr-Dar’inskii oblastnoi Statisticheskii Komitet, 1891–1907); *Spravochnaia knizhka Samarkandskoi oblasti Vyp. I-X* (Samarkand: Izdanie Samarkandskogo Oblastnogo Statisticheskoga Komiteta, 1893–1912); *Ezhegodnik Ferganskoi oblasti Vyp. I-III* (Novyi Margelan: Izdanie Ferganskogo Oblastnogo Statisticheskago Upravleniia, 1902–04).

5 Sergei Abashin, personal communication. See also his review of A. S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) in *Ab Imperio* 2 (2009), pp. 380–386.

6 A. Sh., “Reviziia Turkestanskogo kraia,” *Novoe Vremia* 11762 (1908) in *Turkestanskii sbornik [TS]* 494, p. 171; beyond this it is hard to say specifically why Pahlen was chosen to conduct the inspection, beyond his obvious credentials as the son of a former Minister of Justice and pillar of the Baltic German aristocracy.

7 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 198.

dependent on local cooperation to have any effect.<sup>8</sup> More hostile press coverage criticized its immense cost, and argued that insufficient local expertise was being brought to bear, whilst the few months which Pahlen and the members of his commission spent in Turkestan in 1908–09 were hardly sufficient to give them more than the most superficial impressions of such a vast and complex region.<sup>9</sup> Under such circumstances, could the report really be anything more than a baggy compilation of received wisdom, prejudice, and ignorance? It could be argued that either Pahlen and the members of his Commission would simply accept what they were told and what they read, or – given that they were sent to Turkestan to fulfill a particular “reforming” agenda set by St Petersburg – that they would treat everything they found with suspicion and contempt. To this we can add the fact that – as Pierce had already recognized fifty years ago – Pahlen was a man of his time, more humane and honest than some, perhaps, but convinced of the necessity and rightness of colonialism, even as he uncovered the many cruelties and abuses it brought with it.<sup>10</sup> His memoirs were written thirteen years after his last visit to Turkestan without the benefit of his notes, and contain numerous inaccuracies (he frequently confused the Syr-Darya and Amu-Darya rivers, for instance), whilst also revealing some rather sinister beliefs about the superiority of the “Aryan” over the “Turco-Mongol” races.<sup>11</sup> If postcolonial discourse theorists urge us to discard even archival sources produced for internal purposes by the colonial state, then how much more should we distrust a text like the Pahlen Report, which, whilst it was not widely circulated, was very much a public document, produced with a particular audience in mind?

There is some truth in these criticisms: the shortcomings and blind spots in Pahlen’s understanding of Turkestan are seen most clearly in his Commission’s work on the *narodnye sudy*, or *qazis*, in Turkestan, and on Islamic and customary law in the region.<sup>12</sup> These placed a very heavy emphasis on judicial corruption and arbitrariness, something Pahlen also referred to in his memoirs in the context of the unreformed judicial system in the protectorate of Bukhara.<sup>13</sup> However, what was perceived as “corruption” or criminal behavior by Pahlen and colonial officials seems to have had deep roots in local politics which we still do not properly understand, and in some cases may even have been a sub-

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8 Anon, “Avgievyy koniushi,” *Na rubezhe* 19 (1908) in *TS* 494, pp. 23–25.

9 See for instance P. Andreevich, “K revizii Turkestanskogo kraia,” *Tashkentskii kur'er* 10 (1908), in *TS* 469, pp. 81–83; N. S., “Strana bezpraviiia. Po Srednei Azii. Reviziiia Grafa Palena,” *Vecher'* 379 (1909), in *TS* 516, pp. 13–14.

10 Pierce, “Introduction,” p. xiv.

11 See Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 52.

12 Senator Gofmeister Graf K. K. Palen, *Otchet po revizii Turkestanskogo kraia, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU poveleniiu...* (St. Pb.: Senatskaia Tipografiia, 1910), Vol. 14, *Narodnye sudy Turkestanskogo kraia*, Vol. 19, *Pravovoi byt tuzemnago naseleniia*.

13 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 76–77.

the means of resisting or undermining the colonial authorities. The reliability of the Pahlen Commission's conclusions on these points is debatable, and I have not always been as conscientious as I should have been in questioning its assumptions.<sup>14</sup> The "colonial" nature of Pahlen's thinking becomes still more obvious when we consider his ambitious aim of creating a single, written *shari'a* code for the use of all *qazis* in Turkestan.<sup>15</sup> This ended in fiasco, largely because Pahlen attempted to base his reform upon a code of Anglo-Muhammadan law used in British India, which proved quite unacceptable to local jurists.<sup>16</sup> The failure of such a textbook attempt at the creation of "colonial knowledge" tells us a good deal about the limits of Russian power in Turkestan when compared to British India or French Algeria, and it also demonstrates how little Pahlen understood about certain aspects of Turkestan's population and culture.<sup>17</sup>

The Pahlen report certainly needs to be used with more caution than was employed by the earlier generation of historians who had little or nothing against which to test its assertions. Nevertheless, in my view it remains central to our understanding of the administrative framework of the *Turkestanskii krai* at the beginning of the twentieth century, as the single most comprehensive assessment of Russian colonialism by someone who was actually there, who toured the region and met many of the protagonists, but at the same time had no personal stake in the system and could view it with a certain degree of detachment. What is more, the opening up of former Soviet archives finally allows us to see the Pahlen report in its full political and bureaucratic context, to understand why the Commission was sent to Turkestan, how it gathered information, and how, and on the basis of what sources, the text of its report was put together. The *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv* in St Peters-

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14 In particular two reviewers of my own book have rightly pointed out that I often simply reproduced the language of Pahlen's criticisms of corruption in the native administration of Turkestan, without reflecting on the degree to which this was simply a common trope of colonial administrators seeking to blame their own failings on their native subordinates. See Adeeb Khalid, "A. S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* [Review]," *Slavic Review* 69:2 (Spring 2010), pp. 242–243; Jeff Sahadeo, "Visions of Empire. Russia's Place in the Imperial World," *Kritika* 11:2 (Spring 2010), pp. 398–399.

15 See V. V. Bartol'd, "Istoriia kul'turnoi zhizni Turkestana," *Sochineniia* Vol. II, Pt. 1 (Moscow: "Nauka," 1963), pp. 386–388; Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 70–71; Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*, pp. 274–282; Paolo Sartori, "An Overview of Tsarist Policy on Islamic Courts in Turkestan: Its Genealogy and Its Effects," in S. Abashin & S. Gorshenina, eds., *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale*, Vol. 17/18, *Le Turkestan Russe. Une colonie comme les autres?* (Tashkent-Paris: IFEAC, 2009), pp. 492–494 for other discussions of this episode.

16 This text was Sir Roland Knyvett Wilson, *Anglo-Muhammadan Law: A Digest Preceded by a Historical and Descriptive Introduction of the Special Rules Now Applicable to Modern and Ancient Authorities* (London: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1903); Pahlen, *Pravovoi Byt*, pp. 10–11.

17 I have explored this idea further in Alexander Morrison, "Applied Orientalism in British India and Tsarist Turkestan," *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 51:3 (2009), pp. 619–647.

burg contains the *Fond* for the Pahlen Commission (all of which, to the best of my knowledge, is on microfilm) – possibly including the “notes and papers” which Pahlen thought he had lost when he fled St Petersburg after the October revolution.<sup>18</sup> This contains copies of the publications used by the Commission, drafts of various volumes of the report (some of which differ quite substantially from the final, published versions) and, perhaps most importantly, original information collected by its members or submitted to the senator and his entourage in 1908–09. These included numerous petitions from officials, “natives” – urban and rural, settled and nomadic – and from Russian peasant colonists, which are an important source in their own right.<sup>19</sup> Comprehensive analysis of this material will allow us to understand which parts of the report are based on the Commission’s own research, which are recycled from earlier statistical and historical publications, what was suppressed and what was included, and which parts of the report were actually written by Pahlen himself. We are also fortunate to have the senator’s lively memoirs against which to compare this material and the text of the report, which adds another layer of possible analysis, even if they are not uniformly reliable.

Thus the Pahlen Commission’s work can now be examined from at least five different angles, each of which I will try to introduce in this article: we have the evidence of the report itself, of the documents which the Commission produced and collected and on which the report was partly based, of records from local archives in Central Asia from the period of the inspection and the years before, of Pahlen’s memoirs, and finally of the Press reaction, in Turkestan and the metropole, both to the Commission’s activities whilst it was in Central Asia, and to the publication of the report. Between them, I would argue, they give us a more vivid picture than any other source of the state of Turkestan’s administration in the early twentieth century, and through this, of many other aspects of the social, economic and political history of this still under-studied region.

### THE LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT IN TURKESTAN

The Pahlen Commission and its report shed light on a turbulent and still poorly-understood period in Turkestan’s history. By the early 1900s the generation of officers which had administered the region since its conquest in the 1860s had almost all retired or died off, and increasing peasant settlement and a cotton boom presented the threadbare apparatus of military government with new challenges with which it struggled to cope. Pahlen’s Commission of Inspection had been set up at short notice because of what appeared to be a

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18 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA), f. 1396 [Reviziia Senatora Palena K. K. Turkestanskogo Kraia v 1908–1910 gg.]; Pierce, “Introduction,” p. xiii.

19 A selection of petitions received by the commission can be found transcribed at <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/c5631.html> (accessed 21/06/2011)

crisis in Turkestan's administration, triggered by the unexpected resignation of Governor-General N. I. Grodekov (1843–1913) in March 1908. This was only the latest such premature departure: Generals S. A. Dukhovskoi (1838–1901) and N. A. Ivanov (1842–1904) died in office, followed in 1905, after less than a year, by the easy-going General N. N. Tevyashev (1842–1905). In a region where the Governor-General had far more autonomy than in any internal province, and the administration was highly dependent on his personal grasp of affairs, this lack of continuity had serious consequences. As a pseudonymous correspondent of the Kadet newspaper *Rech'* (who went by the intriguing name of "Needle") described it, it was at this stage that the state of affairs in Turkestan began to attract attention in St Petersburg. Tevyashev had been so ill that he not only failed to suppress revolutionary disturbances in Tashkent in 1905 but supposedly did not even notice they were happening, being quite happy to leave the running of the region to his head of Chancellery, G. P. Fedorov.<sup>20</sup> The next Governor-General, D. I. Subotich (1852–1920), had then resigned after less than a year in office in order to become a member of the *Voennyi Sovet* in St Petersburg. Whilst Subotich (who was Serbian in origin) was darkly suspected of both cowardice and liberal tendencies by Turkestani officials,<sup>21</sup> Grodekov's apparent desertion of his post could not be explained in these terms. He was a quintessential old *Turkestanets* with a distinguished military record, a long-time Governor of the Syr-Darya *Oblast'*, and almost the last of the hallowed coterie who had served with von Kaufman. "Needle" attributed the departure of both Subotich and Grodekov to the overwhelming quantity of paperwork which the job now brought with it.<sup>22</sup> A system of administration which relied on the Governor-General's personal decision even for quite minor matters might have sufficed in the pioneering days of von Kaufman, but it was no longer adequate for a region whose society and economy were rapidly being transformed.<sup>23</sup>

Pahlen was sent to Turkestan with a specific mandate, namely to examine the feasibility of extending civilian government and laws to the region in

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20 Needle, "Senatorskaia reviziia Turkestana [24/12/1908]," *Rech'* Nos. 6, 10, 13 (1909) in *TS* 499, pp. 185–190; in his memoirs Fedorov described Tevyashev's illness and the delay in suppressing the disturbances in Tashkent, together with Subotich's precipitate departure: G. P. Fedorov, "Moia sluzhba v Turkestanskom krae (1870–1910 goda)," *Istoricheskii vestnik* 12 (1913), pp. 886–890.

21 Turkestanets, "Iz istorii Turkestana," *Vecher'* 349 (1909) in *TS* 508, pp. 187–190.

22 Needle, "Senatorskaia reviziia Turkestana," *Rech'* 6 (1909), p. 186.

23 Senator Gofmeister Graf K. K. Palen, *Otchet po revizii Turkestanskago kraia, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU poveleniiu...*, Vol. 4, *Kraevoe Upravlenie*, pp. 101–115 lists numerous instances of the petty matters the Governor-General was called upon to deal with personally, as well as the problems caused by the fact that the Military Governors of Provinces could deal directly with Ministries in St. Petersburg.

order to integrate it more firmly into the Empire under a new statute.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, perhaps his principal brief was to remove the obstacles which an outdated military bureaucracy was placing in the way of increased Russian colonization in the region, which was in fact the probable reason why Grodekov had been forced out.<sup>25</sup> In the event, he would argue strongly against both: instead Pahlen's report advocated a curious mixture of legal rectitude, market forces and old-fashioned paternalism. He agreed that Turkestan's governance needed to become less personalized and dependent on the Governor-General, and his proposed solutions to this included reforming the Governor-General's Council, the introduction of civilian administration and a modified form of *zemstvo*, and the granting of greater responsibility to the District Officers (*uezdnye nachal'niki*) whose personal qualities he came to admire. The region as a whole, he argued, should be a "colony within the empire," with greater devolution of power and autonomy from the centre: this was the lesson which he learnt from examining the example of British India:

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. [...] Almost all the power, which in the inner *Gubernii* belongs to the Governors, is in fact appropriated by the Governor-General's Chancellery. All the *Uezdnye Nachal'niki* and *Pristavy* know that the most petty questions cannot be settled on their direct authority, but by the Governor-General's Chancellery, to which they also turn for all instruction and advice. In this way the entire extensive region, divided into five *Oblasti*, each of which could constitute a large *Guberniia*, in practice turns out to be just one vast administrative unity [...] and this situation presents itself particularly starkly when the powers of the head of the Turkestan *Krai* are compared with those of the Governor-General of India.<sup>26</sup>

This administrative anglophilia, combined as it was with what Peter Holquist has called "the old Russian liberal bureaucratic notion of an enlightened, absolutist *Rechtstaat*" is reminiscent of the views of Boris Nolde, another Baltic German who wrote about the model of devolved power in British colonies, and whose ideas may possibly have influenced Pahlen.<sup>27</sup> To some extent

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24 Pahlen's official instructions were published locally as "Vysochaishe odobrennoe 18 iyunia 1908 goda osoboe nastavlenie senatoru, naznachennomu po vysochaishemu povoleniiu k proizvodstvu revizii Turkestanskogo kraia," *Turkestanskiia vedomosti* [TV] 153 (1908) in *TS* 469, pp. 168–172.

25 "K revizii Turkestanskogo kraia," *Tashkentskii kur'er* 105 (1908) in *TS* 469, pp. 4–5; Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (London: Routledgecurzon, 2003), pp. 140–143.

26 "Kratkii vsepoddanneishii doklad K. K. Palena o revizii Turkestanskogo kaia. Chernovik," (1909), RGIA, f. 1396, op. 1, d. 437, ll. 30–34, 43ob.

27 B. E. Nol'de "Angliia i ee avtonomnye kolonii," *Vestnik Evropy* 9 (1906), pp. 5–67, cited in Peter Holquist, "Dilemmas of a Progressive Administrator: Baron Boris Nolde," *Kritika* 7:2 (Spring 2006), pp. 244, 255.

he too should be seen as a “liberal” bureaucrat, in the more limited, Russian sense of the term.<sup>28</sup> From his own writings it is clear that what mattered most to him, as it did to many other Russian liberals, was an end to state arbitrariness and the establishment of a firm rule of law, rather than any desire for more representative government.<sup>29</sup> In some ways even this is unexpected: his father, Count Konstantin Ivanovich Pahlen (1833–1912), as Minister of Justice in the 1870s had tried (ineptly) to subordinate the newly-created independent judiciary to autocratic control.<sup>30</sup> The younger Pahlen, by contrast, had argued strongly for an end to all Jewish legal disabilities when he was Governor of Vilna in 1902–05. The reasons for this difference in attitudes may have been no more than generational, and it did not make him particularly responsive to popular demands or needs, but equally it ensured that he deplored and sought to halt the way in which some officials and organs of the state rode rough-shod over legal norms, whether these comprised Islamic law and local custom (as he saw them), formal legislation, or administrative regulations. As we shall see, he would argue that such disregard for legality was particularly pronounced when it came to the accelerating European colonization of the region, and he strongly sympathized with local officials over the administrative problems this caused. Pahlen was thus his own man, and the conclusions of his inspection did not, in fact, coincide with the script drawn up in St Petersburg, which is one reason why they were largely ignored.<sup>31</sup> The last years of Tsarist rule in Turkestan would instead be marked by a mixture of military obstruction to Pahlen’s proposed extension of civilian rule to the Muslim population, and ever more concerted efforts by agencies in St Petersburg to exploit the territory for the benefit of “the Russian people.” From August 1914 the priority became to ensure the region contributed as much as possible to the war effort, leading to the disastrous decision in 1916 to extend labor conscription to the local population. However, if Pahlen’s prescribed remedies were ignored, that does not mean that he had not correctly diagnosed at least some of the causes and symptoms of Turkestan’s administrative malaise.

This article is an attempt to assess the value to the historian of one element of the Pahlen Commission’s work, namely the forthright condemnation in both the report and Pahlen’s memoirs of the politics and practice of *pereselenie*, or peasant resettlement, in Turkestan. This choice is governed partly by the avail-

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28 D. C. B. Lieven, “Bureaucratic Liberalism in Late Imperial Russia: The Personality, Career and Opinions of A. N. Kulomzin,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 60:3 (July 1982), pp. 413–432.

29 Andrzej Walicki, *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 1–6.

30 Richard Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 276–283.

31 On the negative reaction to Pahlen’s proposals at the 1911 conference to draw up a new Turkestan statute see Brower, *Turkestan*, pp. 101–109.

ability of sources: the most appalling abuses Pahlen's commission uncovered were in Transcaspia, but a thorough assessment of the report's conclusions on the subject would require the use of materials from the archive in Ashkhabad, which has never been opened to researchers.<sup>32</sup> The Uzbekistan State Archives are now also effectively closed to western researchers, however the most important fields for resettlement were in what is now Kazakhstan, and the archives in Almaty are fully accessible. The other reason for choosing this topic is more positive: Pahlen's trenchant verdict on *pereselenie*, namely that it "Sows the seed of national strife in an alien region" (*zakladyvaet semena natsional'noi rozni v inorodcheskom krae*) seems eerily prescient of the violence which would break out between settlers and nomads in 1916.<sup>33</sup> Pahlen also devoted much of his later memoir to excoriating the officials of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* (Resettlement Administration), although here his conclusions were informed both by memories of how his recommendations had been ignored, and hindsight over the 1916 revolt.<sup>34</sup> The volume on peasant colonization in Turkestan produced by Pahlen's Commission of Inspection generated more controversy than any other. In siding with local Turkestan officials against what Peter Holquist has rightly called the "technocratic ideology" of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* in Turkestan and calling for a more measured approach to the colonization of Central Asia, Pahlen was ignoring his original instructions and defying what was perhaps the most powerful Ministry in St Petersburg at that time, the *Glavnoe Upravlenie Zemledelie i Zemleustroistvo* (GUZiZ), of which the

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32 See Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 123–161; newspaper articles describing the situation in Transcaspia collected in *Turkestanskii sbornik* suggest that Pahlen was not exaggerating, and allow names to be put to the initials he gave in his memoirs. See in particular: Mestnyi, "O shchukakh Zakaspiiskoi oblasti," *Grazhdanin* 192 (1908); "Svezho predanie, da veritsia s trudom," *Novoe vremia* 11759 (1908) in *TS* 494, pp. 113–118, 166–1667 which confirm Pahlen's account of the web of corruption surrounding the head of the Military Governor's Chancellery, Colonel Strzhalkovskii, and the inadequacy of the temporary statute under which Transcaspia was governed, which had been designed to give the greatest possible latitude to the first Governor of the Province, A. N. Kuropatkin; See further K., "Novyi vid rabstva," *Rus' 70* (1907) in *TS* 417, p. 179; "Vlast' nachal'stva," *Sovremennoe slovo* 333 (1908) in *TS* 494, pp. 128–129, both of which deal with the activities of Kutateladze, the *Pristav* of Merv, guilty of murder and extortion (See also Palen, *Kraevoe Upravlenie*, pp. 123–124). Kuropatkin, on whose personal form of rule Pahlen blamed many of the shortcomings which emerged in the administration of Transcaspia once he had left it, did not attempt to deny the guilt of those put on trial, merely asserting that such things could never have happened in his day, and that it was a consequence of the general moral decline visible across the empire. "General A. N. Kuropatkin o Turkestanskoi revizii," *Turkestanskii kur'er* 81 (1908) in *TS* 495, pp. 127–128.

33 Senator Gofmeister Graf K. K. Palen, *Otchet po revizii Turkestanskogo kraia, proizvedennoi po VYSOCHAISHEMU poveleniiu...*, Vol. 6, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, p. 406.

34 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 193.

*Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* was one of the most important departments.<sup>35</sup> His inspection coincided with the appointment of the ambitious A. V. Krivoshein as its head, and until his assassination in 1911 the *GUZiZ* also enjoyed the direct patronage of the President of the Council of Ministers, Pyotr Stolypin. Willard Sunderland has recently suggested that, had the First World War not intervened, the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* would have evolved into a fully-fledged colonial ministry, and certainly many of its officials viewed Turkestan and other non-Russian regions simply as places to be exploited economically and russified through *pereselenie*, with little or no regard to the interests of the local population.<sup>36</sup> The measure of Pahlen's defeat on this issue can be gauged from reading Krivoshein's *Zapiska* describing his visit to Turkestan in 1912. Far from acknowledging the need to slow the pace or alter the nature of peasant colonization in Turkestan, he instead envisaged a massive expansion of irrigation that would allow the creation of up to 300,000 Russian households, or a population of 1 ½ million settlers: the difficulties of creating new Russian settlements even in the most densely-populated areas should not be a deterrent.<sup>37</sup> Whilst Pahlen's mandate from St Petersburg as a *Revizuiushchii Senator* allowed him to write with what even now seems astonishing frankness about all aspects of Turkestan's administration in his Commission's report, the volume on *Pereselencheskoe Delo* shows clear signs of having been toned down, certainly by comparison with the trenchant commentary he made on resettlement policies in his memoirs, where he accused the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie's* officials in Turkestan not merely of incompetence and arrogance but of rampant corruption.<sup>38</sup> The evident anger and contempt with which Pahlen penned this section of his memoirs may reflect his irritation at being worsted in what rapidly became a fierce bout of bureaucratic infighting: in this case his advice was not merely ignored, but actively rejected. Given that the arbitrary expropriation of land for peasant settlers which he so strongly criticized is widely considered to be an important factor in the outbreak of revolt against Russian rule in 1916, this makes the conclusions in his report seem all the more poignant and prophetic.<sup>39</sup>

35 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 (Spring 2010), pp. 151-179.

36 Willard Sunderland, "The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was But Might Have Been," *Slavic Review* 69:1 (Spring 2010), pp. 120-150.

37 A. P. Krivoshein, *Zapiska glavnoupravliaushago zemleustroistvom i zemledeliem o poezdke v Turkestanskii krai v 1912 godu* (St. Pb.: Gos. Tip., 1912), pp. 59, 67.

38 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 182-184, 202-203.

39 The best recent accounts of the 1916 revolt and the reprisals which followed it are Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten Und Zarische Politik: Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010); Marko Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot* (Moscow: "Zven'ia," 2007), pp. 58-91 (original Italian ed. 2003); Uyama Tomohiko, "Two Attempts at Building a Qazaq State: The Revolt of 1916 and the Alash Movement," in Stéphane Dudoinon & Hisao Komatsu, eds., *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Routledge,

*PERESELNIE IN TURKESTAN*

The resettlement of peasants from European Russia in the Asian borderlands of the Empire had become official policy in the late 1880s, as successively more liberal statutes, and eventually the creation of the “Resettlement Administration” (*Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*) in 1896 saw a rapid increase both in the numbers of settlers heading “East of the Urals,” and in the state’s attempts to regulate and managed the flow.<sup>40</sup> Turkestan had seen relatively few settlers compared with Siberia or the Northern Steppe: between 1896 and 1909 only 25,000 officially-registered *pereselentsy* had entered Turkestan and Semirechie, compared to 640,000 in the steppe Governor-Generalship.<sup>41</sup> Apart from ques-

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2001), pp. 77–98; 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), pp. 41–53; The standard, highly circumspect Soviet work is Kh. Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 g v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent: FAN, 1962). The only general account in English, based entirely on the published sources available at the time, remains Edward D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954).

40 There is much excellent recent work on peasant migration and the activities of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*. Apart from the articles in the Slavic Review’s special forum on the agency – Vol. 69 No. 1 (Spring 2010) – cited above, see in particular David Moon, “Peasant Migration and the Settlement of Russia’s Frontiers 1550–1897,” *The Historical Journal* 40:4 (1997), pp. 859–893; Willard Sunderland, “Peasant Pioneering: Russian Peasant Settlers Describe Colonization and the Eastern Frontier, 1880s–1910s,” *Journal of Social History* 34:4 (Summer 2001), pp. 895–922; Nicholas Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia’s Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca, NY, 2005); Charles Steinwedel, “Resettling People, Unsettling the Empire: Migration and the Challenge of Governance 1861–1917,” in Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schradler & Willard Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 128–147. There is no single comprehensive history of *pereselenie* in Turkestan, but a good picture can be built up by combining recent historiography and some older works. See Bartol’d, “Istoriia kul’turnoi zhizni”; D. S. M. Williams, “Russian Peasant Settlement in Semirech’ye,” *Central Asian Review* 14:2 (1966), pp. 110–122; George J. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan, 1896–1916* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969); K. Nishiyama, “Russian Colonization in Central Asia: A Case Study of Semirechye, 1867–1922,” in Komatsu Hisao, Obiya Chika & John Schoeberlein, eds., *Migration in Central Asia: Its History and Current Problems* (Osaka: Japan Centre for Area Studies, 2000), pp. 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), Chapter 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), pp. 38–52; S. N. Maltusynov, *Agrarnyi vopros v Kazakhstane i Gosudarstvennaia Duma Rossii 1906–1917gg. (sotsiokul’turnyi podkhod)* (Almaty: “Daik-Press,” 2006); Niccolò Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera. Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905–1936)* (Rome: Viella, 2009), pp. 62–86.

41 N. Turchaninov, ed., *Itogi pereselencheskago dvizheniia za vremia c 1896 po 1909 gg. (vkluchitel’no)* (St. Pb.: Izd. Perselencheskago Upravleniia, 1910), pp. 48–53.

tions of climate and remoteness, this was partly because of strong opposition from local administrators, who, whilst they themselves had (largely for purposes of military security) created lines of Russian and Ukrainian settlements along the main post-roads through the steppe, strongly resented the political problems caused by the creation of Russian villages in already crowded areas such as the Ferghana Valley, and the replacement of hard-working, revenue-paying native peasants with lazy, feckless and drunken Russians and Ukrainians.<sup>42</sup> Instances of this hostility towards Russian colonization are not hard to find. In 1898, for example, when asked if there was room in his district for a new Russian settlement, the Djizak *Uezdnyi Nachal'nik* replied curtly that there was far too little water and that colonization could not be contemplated.<sup>43</sup> In the same year the then Governor-General, Baron Vrevskii, in his general report to the Interior Ministry, also insisted that there was simply not enough land for Russian settlement and noted the immense difficulties the administration of Ferghana Province had in settling 133 families from Kiev Province.<sup>44</sup> In 1907, General V. I. Pokotilo, the military Governor of the Ferghana *Oblast'*, wrote to Governor-General Grodekov insisting that

Russian colonization is entirely impossible, neither in the valley, the settled region with irrigation, because the quantity of that type of land is insufficient even for the demands made upon it by the natives, nor in the mountainous nomadic region, because this land, because of climatic conditions, is not fit for arable farming, but for pastoralism, and is already becoming crowded for this purpose.<sup>45</sup>

It was this kind of local opposition which the doyen of Russian agronomists and colonization experts, Alexander Arkad'evich Kaufman was referring to when he wrote of "local actors" (*mestnye deiateli*) who were pessimistic about the future prospects for *pereselenie*.<sup>46</sup> Turkestan was officially "closed" to settlement from 1895–1905, and again in 1907–1910, and the official guides

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42 L. Sinityn, "Zametki po povodu nashikh pereselentsev," *TV* 11 (15 March 1888) is a typical early example of the contempt with which they were often viewed by educated Russians in Turkestan. See further Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 108–136.

43 "O razmerakh zemel'nykh uchastkov godnykh dlia obrazovaniia Russkikh poselkov" (01/08/1898) Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Uzbekistan (TsGARUz), f. I-21, op. 1, d. 439, l. 1.

44 "Vsepoddaneishii doklad Turkestanskogo General-Gubernatora Barona Vrevskago za 1898 g" RGIA, f. 472, op. 66, d. 475, l. 16.

45 TsGARUz, f. I-1, op. 17, d. 811 "Doklad voennogo gubernatora Ferganskoi oblasti po pereselencheskomu voprosu v Ferganskoi oblasti, v osobennosti v Kurartskoi doline," ll. 54–67, published in T. Kotiukova, "Problemy rossiiskoi pereselencheskoi politiki v Turkestane v nachale XX veka," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal* 2 (Feb. 2010), p. 60.

46 A. A. Kaufman, *Pereseleniia i kolonizatsiia* (St. Pb.: Bibl. "Obshchestvennoi Pol'zy," 1905), pp. iv–v.

published for migrants carried warnings to this effect,<sup>47</sup> but this did not prevent considerable numbers of *samovol'tsy* or "self-willed" migrants from making their way to Semirechie in particular, where they vastly outnumbered those who had entered the region under official auspices. By 1908 Turkestan had just over 100,000 peasant colonists (65,000 of whom were in Semirechie) living in 114 officially-sanctioned settlements, but at least as many again were squatting or renting land illegally from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.<sup>48</sup> The first regional office of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* in Turkestan was set up in Semirechie in 1903, shortly before the province was re-opened for settlement, and its initial and most urgent task was the settlement of these squatters on state land. However, when in 1906 its head, B. A. Veletskii (the *bête noire* of Pahlen's memoirs) proposed a conference in Vernyi under his leadership to discuss the question of expropriating Kazakh land for this purpose, he was dismissed in no uncertain terms by the Governor-General and Governor of Semirechie. They wrote that this could only be undertaken by local officials with a close knowledge of conditions in Turkestan (which, they openly implied, Veletskii and his men lacked), and that representatives of the local population should be given a decisive say.<sup>49</sup> Pahlen's Commission of inspection thus arrived just as the debate over the future of Russian colonization was becoming particularly acute, partly because the opening of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway in 1906 created new possibilities for mass resettlement. As Pahlen later noted in his memoirs, the conflict between central and local organs of power over *pereselenie* was both open and vicious: at least one Governor-General had been forced to resign in part because of his attempts to resist the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*, and its officials were an increasingly visible and unwelcome presence in Turkestan's cities.<sup>50</sup>

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47 *Pereselenie za Ural v 1908 godu. Spravochnaia knizhka s kartoiu zaseliaemykh pereselentsami mestnostei i zheleznykh dorog Aziatskoi Rossii* (St. Pb., Tip. "Sel'skii Vestnik," 1908). The slip pasted on the front cover reads: "v Turkestan i na Kavkaz pereselenie ne razreshaetsia." The edition for 1910 has the same message printed on the front cover.

48 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 249–261.

49 Veletskii to the Turk. G-G (12/09/1906); G. M. Mustafin to Gen. Ionov, Gov. of Semirechie (24/09/1906); Ionov to the Turk. G-G (04/11/1906) (copies) Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan (TsGARKaz), f. 19 [Zaveduiushchii pereselencheskim delom v Semirechenskoi oblasti], op. 1, d. 38 "O Vyiasnenii 'izlishnikh' zemel' i o zemel'nykh normakh v Semirechenskoi oblasti," ll. 1–2ob.

50 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 183; as noted earlier, it seems probable here that Pahlen was referring to N. I. Grodekov, who already in 1897, when he was acting Governor-General, had closed the region to Resettlement on the grounds that it was causing too many problems with the natives (Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 179–180); As Governor-General in 1907–08 he again did his best to contain the ambitions of the *Pereselencheskoe upravlenie*, sending reports to St. Petersburg warning that its activities were in danger of generating rebellion on the scale of a "Second Caucasus." If St. Petersburg expected his successor, General P. I. Mishchenko (1853–1918) to be more compliant they were disappointed, as he gave similar warnings and within a few months of his arrival in 1908 ordered the local ad-

The Commission's conclusions on *Pereselenie* closely reflected the views of most local military officials. In the dispute between (as he saw it) paternalist old *Turkestantsy* and upstart, quasi-revolutionary technocrats, there was no doubt whose side Pahlen was on.<sup>51</sup> In *Pereselencheskoe Delo* he quoted at length and with approval a report from Pokotilo, by then the Governor of Semirechie (and whom Pahlen described in his memoirs as "a thorough, earnest, and energetic administrator"), and who used the language of "legality" (*zakonnost'*) in much the same way as Pahlen himself:<sup>52</sup>

Having admitted illegality (*bezzakonie*) in their affairs, the Resettlement officials do not see any limits to them. All their work is carried out "by eye": In Semirechie there is much land which is apparently free, the settlements are few, it is necessary to arrange things for the settlers, and the Kirgiz still have plenty of land. These are the superficial facts on which they now base the delineation of resettlement plots in the province. They select the best irrigated Kirgiz land and, in breach of the law, farmsteads and ploughland. [...] In general the result of all these illegal (*nezakonnyi*) and superficial enterprises could be the following: a) the Kirgiz, who are already in a panic, and seeing that they are really being deported from their native nest, will begin to riot; b) tens of thousands of new settlers, who cannot be catered for even in this slapdash manner will appear in the province as a threatening mob of hungry and destitute people and c) the Cossacks, feeling a bitter unearned injury, when land might be taken away from their *stanitsas*, will pass it into the hands of the settlers by an illegal route.<sup>53</sup>

Pahlen also quoted a letter from the Vernyi Uezdnyi Nachal'nik (another official whom he mentioned in complimentary terms in his memoirs)<sup>54</sup> of 4th January 1908 in which the latter complained that the officials of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* invariably selected land for settlement which was already under cultivation by Kazakhs or Kirgiz and then disappeared, leaving him and his fellow District officials to deal with the consequences:

The striving of the Resettlement officials to arrange things for the settlers as quickly as possible is understandable, but the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* – is a

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ministration to halt the expropriation of nomadic lands for *pereselenie* (Brower, *Turkestan*, pp. 140–142). At the time, however, Mishchenko's departure in March 1909 was widely attributed to Pahlen himself – see "Reabilitatsiia Gen. Mishchenko," *Sovremennoe slovo* 508 (1909) in *TS* 509, p. 27. A telegram from Mishchenko published in *Novoe vremia* 11765 (1908) in *TS* 494, p. 178 which uses the "a few bad apples" defense for Turkestan's administration suggests that he and the Senator did not see eye to eye.

51 Both Adeeb Khalid and Peter Holquist have referred to this as a "Viceregal mindset." Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 50–61; Holquist, "In Accord with State Interests," pp. 161–162. This is perhaps a fair description of Pahlen's overall belief in the paternalistic benevolence of colonialism, but with its overtones of high-handed arbitrariness does not perhaps do justice to his firm belief in the constraints of legality.

52 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 198.

53 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 131–132.

54 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 205–206.

temporary administration. Today it is here, and tomorrow it is gone, and the full weight of the consequences of its inadequate decisions for the interests of the population of a particular place falls on the shoulders of the permanent officials, who have remained to govern, i.e. the administration.<sup>55</sup>

Pahlen ensured that such sentiments received a prominent airing in *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, which claimed that the Resettlement Administration's officials were quite incapable of giving any real direction or planning to what remained a largely spontaneous and disorganized process.<sup>56</sup> Instead he advocated handing over control to the local officials, "men on the spot" who understood the country and its people:

One of the most serious reasons for this phenomenon, unfavorable to the interests of Russian power, is, in my opinion, the complete impossibility of conducting difficult colonization matters directly from Petersburg. Not only would I say that, owing to the distance of Turkestan from our Governmental centre and the extreme particularities of local conditions mean that such direction can only have a paper, purely theoretical character, I submit that a just and wise reconciliation of general Government aims with local demands can be realized only through the complete independence of the highest local administrative organs within the limits of those general instructions which it has been given.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Pahlen's personal hostility to the Resettlement Administration and its officials, it is clear that much of his Commission's report on *Pereselencheskoe Delo* drew upon its publications and statistics, in particular O. Shkapskii's work on Semirechie.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly some of its observations and criticisms regarding the backward and unenterprising nature of the agriculture pursued by settlers, their dependence on land rented illegally from the nomadic population, lack of morals, and poor economic productivity,<sup>59</sup> echoed those made by the more realistic agronomists and technicians of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*, who often harbored a certain pessimism over the weaknesses of the Russian or Cossack settler as a *kulturträger*.<sup>60</sup> No less a partisan of *pereselenie* than A. A. Kaufman had written in 1905 that "of course, only with a large helping of blind optimism is it possible to dream of the cultural impact of the Russian settler on the enterprise of the Turkestan native."<sup>61</sup> The Pahlen Commission's report similarly noted that in areas where producing crops was difficult, the settlers rapidly gave up the struggle altogether, and

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55 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 44–48.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 195–200.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 406.

58 O. Shkapskii, "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros v Semirechenskoi oblasti," *Voprosy kolonizatsii. Sbornik statei [VK] 1* (St. Pb.: Izd. A. V. Uspenskogo, 1907), pp. 19–52.

59 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 162–163, 302–303.

60 A. V. Remnev & N. G. Suvorova, "Obrusenie Aziatskikh okrain Rossiiskoi Imperii: optimizm i pessimizm russkoi kolonizatsii," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 11:129 (2008), pp. 132–179.

61 Kaufman, *Pereseleniia i kolonizatsiia*, pp. 335–338.

that they were often insufficiently “agrarian,” detached from the land, and in many cases pursuing artisanal work rather than agriculture.<sup>62</sup> Even sturdier settlers from black-earth regions were incapable of increasing the productivity of the land, and in most cases actually damaged it.<sup>63</sup> Unlike the natives of Turkestan, they were slow to turn to cash crops, and made a negligible contribution to the booming cotton economy of the region. Even in settlements close to major towns or to the railway, where it would be easy to grow cash crops or vegetables for the urban markets, the colonists stuck to wheat. Only in one of the settlements of Ferghana province was cotton grown in significant quantities, and this was largely in imitation of the native smallholdings which surrounded it.<sup>64</sup> These were not particularly controversial allegations, and indeed were partly accepted by the colonization authorities. In 1912, admittedly, Krivoshein, who cherished a wholly unrealistic vision of a Turkestan populated by cotton-growing Slavs, would assert that cotton cultivation was spreading rapidly amongst the settlers, noting that in some settlements on irrigated land in the Samarkand and Tashkent districts up to 30% of the sown area was under cotton<sup>65</sup> However, he was misrepresenting the conclusions of an inquiry carried out by the Syr-Darya Provincial Statistical Committee on the question, which, as it was later published in *Voprosy kolonizatsii*, presumably had some sanction from his department. This showed that settlers were indeed increasingly diversifying from grain to other crops, notably sugar beet, *maash* (mung beans) and sunflowers, but concluded that the significance of Russian settlement for the planting of cotton was negligible, not least because, apart from those few districts mentioned by Krivoshein, most settlers farmed unirrigated land in areas climatically unsuited to it.<sup>66</sup> Whilst by the outbreak of the First World War more colonists had learnt to grow cotton and other cash crops, the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*'s own experts admitted that they still struggled to adapt to irrigated agriculture and preferred to concentrate on grain and forage crops with which they were already familiar.<sup>67</sup>

The Pahlen Commission also criticized the widespread renting of land from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz by the settlers, which allowed the latter to grow wheat and raise cattle on a far larger scale than would have been possible had they remained confined to their official plots. This practice was illegal because, in principle, under both the Turkestan and Steppe statutes the nomads had no rights of ownership over land they did not use themselves, but this did not pre-

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62 Pahlen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 228–229.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 415–416.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 290–296.

65 Krivoshein, *Zapiska*, pp. 62–63.

66 P. Skryplev, “Khlopkovodstvo i Russkie pereselentsy,” *VK* 12 (1913), pp. 215, 223–224.

67 V. Voshchinin, *Ocherki novogo Turkestana. Soet i teni Russkoi kolonizatsii* (St. Pb.: Tip. Tov. “Nash Vek,” 1914), pp. 21–23; A. Woeikoff, *Le Turkestan Russe* (Paris: Armand Michel, 1914), p. 305.

vent *ad hoc* arrangements being negotiated between Russian settlements and neighboring *auls*, which the authorities were powerless to prevent and upon which the whole enterprise of *pereselenie* in Turkestan came to depend: "The peasants themselves in the Aulie-Ata District uniformly affirm that without the renting of Kirgiz land it would be impossible for them to live, impossible for them to feed their cattle and they would be forced to seek happiness in new places."<sup>68</sup> In 1905 the practice was to some extent retrospectively legalized by a revision to the law which allowed nomads to rent land to settlers temporarily in cases where each household had only 3 *desiatinas* of land or fewer, but the terms even of this statute were universally violated.<sup>69</sup> In some cases the rented land was the settlers' sole means of support, as they had never received any official allocation from the authorities. Once again, many of these conclusions were derived from the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie's* own publications or those of other partisans of Russian settlement. As early as 1892 I. I. Geier, founding editor of the strongly pro-settlement newspaper *Russkii Turkestan*, noted that the peasants of Krasnovodskoe in the Chimkent district, on being refused further land by the local authorities for the expansion of their settlement, simply purchased it from the neighboring Kazakhs.<sup>70</sup> Shkapskii had written that in Pishpek district in 1906, out of 1,205 families who had arrived in the region as *samovol'tsy* in 1900, 204 had been resettled on land forcibly taken from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz along the river Chu, but 330 had no land other than what they rented from the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz for between 4.7 and 5.5 rubles per *desiatina*.<sup>71</sup>

#### ATTACKING THE *PERESELENCHESKOE UPRAVLENIE*

Such criticisms of settler agriculture echoed those made by most other official and unofficial sources, and were not in themselves in conflict with the wider aims of peasant resettlement. As Peter Holquist has noted, the Pahlen report's contemptuous attack on the system of "norms" for the allocation of land to settlers, which the senator also later ridiculed in his memoirs, was far more controversial:<sup>72</sup>

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68 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 306–310, 313; examples of such written agreements by Kazakhs to rent or sell land to settlers can be seen in TsGARKaz, f. 184 [Zaveduiushchii pereselencheskim delom v Aulieatinskom uezde Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti], op., d. 14 "o sporakh mezhdru zhiteliam selo Stavropolka i kazakhami sosednykh aulov za vygodnykh zemel'," ll. 12ob, 46, 49ob (all from 1911).

69 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 302–303.

70 I. I. Geier, *Po russkim seleniiam Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti (pis'ma s dorogi)*, Vol. 1 *Chimkentskii uezd* (Tashkent: Tip-Lit. brat'ia Kamenskikh, 1893), pp. 52–54.

71 Shkapskii, "Pereselentsy i agrarnyi vopros," pp. 22–24.

72 Holquist, "In Accord with State Interests," pp. 161–162; here Pahlen demonstrates a firm belief in the virtues of experience and common-sense over airy theorizing which is also highly reminiscent of Nolde: Holquist, "Dilemmas of a Progressive Administrator," pp. 265–266.

These magic formulae were to be derived from statistical research which would show the exact number of acres needed by a “toiler” in any given district [...] in order to be able to follow the latest scientific methods of husbandry with the means at his disposal. So far as I remember the figures produced by a learned statistician with a long record of work for the Government of Orenburg were thirty hectares or thereabouts per nomad, old and young inclusive, and six hectares per farmer. The following reasoning was then applied. Here is a district belonging to the Tsar: it contains X number of hectares and is inhabited by Y number of nomads. As each nomad is entitled to thirty hectares, the total amount of land due to them is Y multiplied by thirty. Deduct that figure from the total acreage of the area and you have a balance N which should be handed over to the settlers. Q. E. D.<sup>73</sup>

He went on to describe what this could mean in practice in regions where (as was increasingly the case) formerly nomadic Kazakhs or Kyrgyz had irrigated and cultivated the areas they used as *zimovki* (*qishlaq* – winter quarters), only to be deprived of the land they had “brought to life,” which was then given to colonists by the officials of the Resettlement Administration. The latter would claim that according to the “norm,” there was still plenty of land left for the nomadic population, even if none of it was suitable for cultivation, and no adequate compensation had been paid. These criticisms also appeared in the Commission’s report, in rather more measured language but with considerably more corroborative detail. It noted that in Semirechie, the province which received the bulk of Turkestan’s settlers, the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* had failed to carry out a detailed agricultural and hydrographical survey to determine either the extent and type of arable land, or the amount of it which was already being used by sedentarised Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. Instead its officials simply took the techniques for establishing “norms” that had been developed by the Shcherbina Commission for the Steppe Region without making any attempt to adapt them to local conditions.<sup>74</sup> Both the landscape and the agricultural practices in Semirechie were very different from those in the Steppe provinces, where most cultivation was of winter wheat on unirrigated land. Southern Semirechie had a varied terrain of valleys and mountains, where there was a high proportion of irrigated agriculture and of high-value cash crops such as peaches and cotton. The consequence was that the land designated as surplus to the “norm” required by the local population and chosen for Russian settlement was usually already occupied, irrigated and cultivated by former nomads, who were deprived of the fruits of their labor and in many cases their homes with wholly inadequate compensation. In Semirechie alone, despite the fact that in theory the local population retained more than twice

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73 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 191.

74 On the Shcherbina Commission, which carried out a detailed agrarian survey of the northern steppe, see Ian Campbell, “Empire Promoted, Empire Contested: The Shcherbina Expedition of 1896–1903,” *Central Asian Survey* (forthcoming).

the amount of land allocated to them as the “norm,” the creation of 59 Russian peasant settlements had led to the displacement of 5,169 Kyrgyz and Kazakh households, with compensation of no more than thirty rubles each at best, and in some cases as little as five or six. Nor was this problem confined to Semirechie – all the settlements in the Chimkent, Aulie-Ata and Perovsk regions of Syr-Darya Province were also built on land that had formerly been in Kazakh occupation.<sup>75</sup>

Pahlen went still further in claiming that such practices were not only arbitrary, politically dangerous and economically destructive, but also technically illegal, a breach of the 1886 Turkestan Statute, which guaranteed the right of use of land in permanent hereditary occupation “on which labor had been expended,” as Pahlen put it. Pahlen might have been correct, but the legal situation was complex. The 1886 Turkestan statute declared that all land in the region was state property, but recognized effective occupation and use (*pol'zovanie*) of the land by the sedentary population, with rights of sale and inheritance guaranteed by pre-existing Islamic law and custom, to which, Beatrice Penati has argued, it effectively makes a formal *renvoi*.<sup>76</sup> As Ekaterina Pravilova has noted, Russian notions of what constituted “Islamic law” in the region were heavily influenced by French and Ottoman models,<sup>77</sup> but in practice, at least until the early 1900s the only form of law which mattered in sedentary regions of Central Asia was that administered by the local *qazis*, which remained largely untouched by colonial norms, and which in all but the most formal sense preserved the full rights of ownership which the population had enjoyed before the conquest.<sup>78</sup> In principle nomads were granted a similar right of “*pol'zovanie*” for their pastures, but in practice the implications were rather different, partly because unless they were already at least semi-sedentarised they could not point to specific plots that were in individual or family possession, but also because they were supposed to have recourse only to customary law (*adat*) rather than Muslim law (*shari'a*), and the former gave much weaker protection than the latter.<sup>79</sup> The fragility of their claim to the land was more

75 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 35–43, 51–61, 280.

76 “Polozhenie ob upravlenii Turkestanskogo kraia,” *PSZ Sob.* 3 Tom VI, No. 3814 (12 June 1886), pp. 328, 338–339; Beatrice Penati, “Swamps, Sorghum and Saxauls: Marginal Lands and the Fate of Russian Turkestan (c. 1880–1915),” *Central Asian Survey* 29:1 (March 2010), p. 61.

77 Ekaterina Pravilova, “The Property of Empire: Islamic Law and Russian Agrarian Policy in Transcaucasia and Turkestan,” *Kritika* 12:2 (Spring 2011), pp. 353–386.

78 Paolo Sartori, “Introduction: Dealing with States of Property in Modern and Colonial Central Asia,” *Central Asian Survey* 29:1 (March 2010), pp. 3–4.

79 This colonial taxonomy was almost entirely artificial – in practice nomads had long made extensive use of Islamic law, whilst what the Russians referred to as *Shari'a* amongst the sedentary population carried a substantial admixture of custom. See Martin, *Law and Custom*, pp. 1–14; Sergey N. Abashin, “*Qalim* und *Mahr* in Mittelasien. Die Moderne Praxis und die Debatten über Scharia und Adat,” in Michael Kemper & Maurus Reinkowski, eds., *Rechtsppluralismus in der Islamischen Welt. Gewohnheitsrecht zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 195–207.

fully revealed in the revised Steppe Statute of 1891, under which Semirechie was regulated even after it returned to the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in 1897: article 120 stated that “the land, occupied by nomads, remains in indefinite collective use of the nomads, on the basis of custom and the rules of this statute,” but a note added that “land, which appears to be surplus to requirements (*izlishki*) for the nomads, will come under the direction of the Ministry of State Properties.”<sup>80</sup> Pahlen argued that land which was being cultivated, regardless of whether or not the wider “norm” had been exceeded, could never be considered “surplus.” In all this, once again, he was echoing the complaints and criticisms of local officials, who for the previous two years had been arguing that the system for designating “surplus” land employed by the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* was arbitrary, and that the Shcherbina Commission’s norms were unsuited to the different agrarian conditions in Turkestan: as one Semirechie official wrote in 1907, “The application of these norms to the Kirgiz of the Pishpek district must be recognized as completely impossible and unjust,” and these views were shared by Governor-General Grodekov himself.<sup>81</sup> Indeed it was probably a new set of regulations which would have both barred the expropriation of irrigated and cultivated land and restricted eligibility for resettlement only to those *samovol'tsy* who were already squatting in Turkestan, which finally led to Grodekov’s dismissal (or forced resignation) only a few days after he tried to introduce them.<sup>82</sup> Pahlen had local opinion on his side when he concluded that the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*’s system of expropriating “surplus” land under the system of “norms” was in breach of both the Turkestan and Steppe Statutes, but this was not a view which found many takers in St Petersburg.<sup>83</sup>

Pahlen thus concluded that most of the settlement which had taken place had been poorly-planned, carried out without sufficient care to protect the rights of the local population, and in many cases was in active breach of the law.<sup>84</sup> Russian rule would be better defended by a form of colonization which respected the rights of the local population and would reinforce their respect for Russian justice and law: what was happening at the moment under the auspices of the Resettlement Administration, by contrast, was damaging Russian prestige and the local economy in equal measure:

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80 “Polozhenie ob upravlenii oblastei Akmolinskoi, Semipalatinskoi, Semirechenskoi, Ural’skoi i Turgaiskoi i ob izmenenii nekotorykh statei Polozhenii ob upravlenii Turkestanskago kraia,” *PSZ Sob.* 3, Tom XI, No. 7574 (1891), p. 143.

81 Letter of 17/12/1907 quoted in “Zhurnal obshchego prisutstviia Semirechenskogo Oblastnogo Pravleniia” (02/01/1908) (copy) TsGARKaz, f. 19, op. 1, d. 38, l. 12ob.

82 “Usloviia dlia norm kirgizskogo zemlepol’zovaniia” (11/03/1908) (copy) TsGARKaz, f. 19, op. 1, d. 38, ll. 18ob.

83 Pahlen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, pp. 35–43, 51–61, 280.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 408–409.

The goal of Russifying the region (*tsel' obruseniia kraia*) by means of forcibly disseminating Russian nationality is also unattainable, at least through resettlement. All those attracted to resettle in the borderlands by the free distribution of land and Government loans turn out to be, as experience shows, the weakest elements of the Russian peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie, and also the sweepings of Siberian colonization. Entering the region with negligible morals, incapable in any way of raising the productivity of the country, bearing only a lightened burden of taxes and duties and sustained by government loans – the settlers, unfortunately, have not gained any respect for themselves amongst the natives and, through their disordered way of life often put off this population from adopting Russian customs and Russian culture. Finally, possessing considerable privileges, when compared with the natives, in their relations with the administration, they provoke the native population, which considers itself aggrieved through the forcible requisition of land and water, and sow the seeds of national discord and enmity, which could soon have consequences. In my view there is a different route which we should follow for the colonization of Turkestan – slower, but also more just, cheap and correct.<sup>85</sup>

The particularities of Turkestan demanded that settlers be chosen, not because they came from land-hungry regions or belonged to the category of *meshchany-zemlevadel'tsy*, but because they were strong, capable and cultured.<sup>86</sup> This was effectively a form of Stolypin's "wager on the strong," and elsewhere in the report Pahlen expressed his preference for the independent *khutor* over the intractable version of the *obshchina* which existed amongst Central Asian settlers.<sup>87</sup> If the assistance provided by the Resettlement Administration were removed, then Turkestan might attract fewer settlers, but those would consist of only "the strongest representatives of the Russian nation (*narodnost'*)," with sufficient hardihood, skill and capital to break in uncultivated tracts of land and truly develop the riches of the region in partnership with the local population, rather than feckless weaklings who took advantage of Government largesse to seize already-cultivated land from the "natives," "destructive work which already in the near future will only be possible with the protection of military force."<sup>88</sup> In the light of the events of 1916, such sentiments seem ominously prescient.

However, despite the Pahlen Report's apparently frank and unqualified condemnation of almost all aspects of *pereselenie* in Turkestan, it would be unwise to exaggerate the Senator's opposition to Russian colonization. He did not recommend that the program be brought to a halt, simply that it be implemented more slowly and carefully and under local supervision – in his memoirs he waxed lyrical about the earlier colonization efforts overseen by General

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85 Ibid., p. 418.

86 Ibid., p. 430.

87 Ibid., pp. 162-163.

88 Ibid., p. 419.

G. A. Kolpakovskii in Semirechie.<sup>89</sup> In some respects his vision of a Turkestan opened up for more intensive development by Russian and foreign capital and entrepreneurship was not so very far from that advanced by Krivoshein (whom Pahlen described as “very able”). The difference was firstly that Pahlen did not share the *GUZiZ* chief’s faith in the ability of State agencies to apply “scientific” theories to foster this, advocating instead that it be left to the market, and secondly, that for him it clearly mattered little whether Turkestan’s resources were developed by Russians or by natives, so long as they were developed.<sup>90</sup>

There are also clearly some important omissions from *Pereselencheskoe Delo*. It is notable that the cases of outright criminality which Pahlen refers to in his memoirs – centered on the figure of Veletskii, the head of the Resettlement Administration in Semirechie, and ranging from the systematic falsifying of data to the embezzlement of settler loans – are not mentioned in the official report.<sup>91</sup> There is also a curious dissonance between the forthright conclusion to *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, in which Pahlen warned that the policies of the Resettlement Administration risked generating serious ethnic strife (whilst at the same time writing that the native population, despite their grievances, were entirely reconciled to Russian rule),<sup>92</sup> and the brief, rather bland section in the main body of the volume which considered relations between settlers and the local population. Although acknowledging that in some cases the expropriation of land by the Resettlement Administration and its occupation by settlers had led to tensions, it claimed that

All the same, in general, it is essential to recognize, that almost everywhere in the region relations between peasants and natives are becoming little by little more or less peaceful and neighborly, founded on a known solidarity of interests. Perhaps the most decisive influence on the establishment of such a way of life are the gradually increasing business relations between the two sides in the matter of the renting of land and the collective irrigation of fields. The exception is found only in some settlements of the Andijan and Osh *Uezds* of the Ferghana *Oblast’*, in particular the settlement of Pokrovskoe.<sup>93</sup>

The complex economic interdependence which was developing between settlers and nomads is striking and requires further study, but this passage nevertheless stands in curious contrast to Pahlen’s conclusions elsewhere. The report on the incident at Pokrovskoe, written by the same General Pokotilo whom Pahlen had quoted approvingly with regard to Semirechie, cast serious doubts on this optimistic conclusion. He noted that the commandant of the region surrounding Pokrovskoe had written a few months previously to say the settlers had been consistently encroaching on Kyrgyz land since the settle-

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89 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 180–181.

90 Pahlen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, p. 413; Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, p. 184.

91 Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, pp. 182–184, 202–203, 213, 219–222.

92 Pahlen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, p. 417.

93 *Ibid.*, pp. 338–344.

ment was established ten years previously, and that the latter were beginning to protest to the administration. In the spring of 1907 the settlers had called an extraordinary meeting of their *skhod* and decided unanimously to forcibly plough up and sow their crops on Kyrgyz land with weapons in their hands, and the Kyrgyz had made preparations to resist them. The administration had managed to prevent an outbreak of violence on this occasion, but "The enmity not only remains, but is growing."<sup>94</sup>

The suggestion in the Pahlen report that such tensions were limited to the crowded lands of Ferghana is all the more striking when one considers the numerous petitions related to *pereselenie* which the Commission received from elsewhere in Turkestan, both from Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who had lost land and from settlers who claimed they did not have enough of it. The Pahlen *Fond* in RGIA is full of these and they offer some fascinating insights into the social and economic life of the time, and on the curious relationship, compounded of both hostility and dependence, which existed between settlers and nomads. One of the most eloquent reads as follows:

Peasants of the Semirechie *Oblast'* Pishpek *uezd* Belovodskaia *volost'* village of Novo-Troitskaia

Petition.

We have been living almost forty years in the village of Novo-Troitskaia, formerly Sukuluk. We had land for 206 male souls allotted to us, i.e. 2060 *desiatinas* in all. Now we have 550 souls, and the land is entirely insufficient, together with which it is exhausted as it is not *chernozem* [black earth] but *suchlinok* [dried up], and without irrigation is not productive. Although we would water it we do not have enough from the river, we receive 1/5 and the majority is taken by the Kirgiz, who rent to the Dungans for the irrigation of the rice sown below the post-road [...]

Nevertheless it would still be possible to live somehow, if the Kirgiz rented out their spare land which is lying uncultivated and which would be enough not just for our village, but also for others.

Before the Kirgiz of the Sukuluk *volost'* rented [to us] when they had good administrators from the *manaps*. Dikanbai Djandrachev and others who lived with us in a friendly and neighborly way and did not forbid their Kirgiz from renting us land.

Now the Kirgiz of that *volost'* Cholpankul Tymalin has acquired some sort of power over all the Kirgiz and things have become very hard for us as Cholpankul Tymalin has forbidden and forbids his Kirgiz from renting us land under pasture and the Kirgiz are more afraid of him than of the Governor-General and consider him to be almost a Khan.<sup>95</sup>

94 TsGARUZ, f. I-1, op. 17, d. 811 "Doklad voennogo gubernatora Ferganskoi oblasti po pereselencheskomu voprosu v Ferganskoi oblasti, v osobennosti v Kurartskoi doline," ll. 54-67 in Kotiukova, "Problemy Rossiiskoi pereselencheskoi politiki," p. 61; the same text is reprinted in Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, p. 343.

95 "Zhaloba krestian Semirechenskoi oblasti Pishpekskogo uезда Belovodskoi volosti sela Novo-Troitskogo," RGIA, f. 1396, op. 1, d. 45 "Zhaloby zhitelei Turkestanskogo kraia na priteneniia i vziatocnichestvo mestnoi administratsii," l. 238.

This petition is referred to briefly in *Pereselencheskoe Delo*, but only as evidence of the shortage of water which often afflicted peasant settlements and the disputes which this caused, whilst the clear reference it makes to the worsening relations between settlers and Kyrgyz is ignored.<sup>96</sup> In 1916 Belovodskaya volost' would be the site of some of the worst violence of the rebellion, as a massacre of settlers was followed by vicious reprisals against the nomadic population.<sup>97</sup> Petitions from the local population – complaining that settlers were encroaching their land, or that the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* was proposing to seize land which was either unsuitable for arable farming or already occupied by zimovki for colonization purposes – were not referred to specifically at all in the Commission's report, although they must have informed its conclusions, and Pahlen clearly drew on his memory of them in his memoirs.<sup>98</sup> This may simply be a consequence of multiple authorship (it seems probable that Pahlen himself only wrote the concluding pages of this volume), but it may also be a consequence of enforced editing and censorship, reflecting the hostile reception which was being prepared for Pahlen's work on *Pereselenie* even before the report was published.

### THE TECHNOCRATS FIGHT BACK

As the Commission of Inspection made its rounds in Turkestan, it seems to have become clear very early on that the *Revizuiushchii Senator* was not sympathetic either to the "scientific" theories or to the practices of *pereselenie* in Turkestan. Numerous direct or veiled responses to Pahlen's trenchant criticisms can be traced in the those organs of the local press which supported increased colonization, such as the daily *Tashkentskii Kur'er*, soon to be renamed *Turkestanskii Kur'er*, which from 1908 was under the editorship of K. A. Timaev, a clerk in the local organ of the Directorate for Agriculture and State Properties who had been arraigned in court for corruption by the Pahlen commission but was subsequently acquitted.<sup>99</sup> Attacks on Pahlen can also be found in the pages

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96 Palen, *Pereselencheskoe delo*, p. 146.

97 My thanks to Professor Uyama Tomohiko for alerting me to this – see Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten*, pp. 143–145.

98 See "Proshenie doverennogo ot obshchestve kirgiz Saburovskoi volosti Beksultana" (07/10/1908) RGIA, f. 1396, op. 1, d. 256, ll. 169ob <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t380.html>; "Prosheniia Galiia Akhmedovicha Uzbekova" (14/09/1908) RGIA, op. 1, d. 262, ll. 38ob <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t790.html>; "Prosheniia Tomu Akhinbekova, doverennogo ot naseleniia Dzhanopskoi, Chumyshlinskoi i dr. volostei Pishpekskogo uezda" (20/06/1909) RGIA, f. 1396, op. 1, d. 263, ll. 164ob <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t1105.html>; "Proshenie Kirgiz Aulieatinskogo uezda Biikul'skoi volosti No. 7-i, Chuike Esengil'dieva i Biktura Bikbulatova" (?/08/1908) RGIA, f. 1396, op. 1, d. 263, ll. 187–188 <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t1106.html> (all accessed 21/06/2011)

99 T-ov "Turkestanskaia panama," *Birzhevye vedomosti* 10730 (1908) in *TS* 494, p. 81; "Senatorskaia Reviziia," *Na Rubezhe* Nos. 1, 6–9 (1908) in *TS* 494, pp. 1–12. I am grateful to Dr

of *Voprosy Kolonizatsii* and other publications of the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*. One defense of the system of expropriating *izlishki*, published in 1908, used the Shcherbina Commission's report to argue that the land needs of the Kazakhs were diminishing in *absolute* terms as they turned to settled agriculture, and that therefore the quantity of land identified as *izlishki* could be expanded still more.<sup>100</sup> The agronomist V. I. Iuferev also clearly aimed to counter some of the Commission's criticisms over the inaccuracy of the "norms" in use in Turkestan, noting that between 1906 and 1910 a thorough agricultural survey of the Chimkent, Aulie-Ata and Perovsk districts of Syr-Darya Province had been completed, together with partial surveys of the Tashkent district, the Osh, Namangan and Andijan Districts of Ferghana Province and parts of Samarkand.<sup>101</sup> In another fairly clear riposte to Pahlen, P. Rumyantsev asserted that the under-developed state of agriculture in Semirechie was not because of the low level of culture of the settlers, or because of the inactivity of the Resettlement Administration, but owing to the weakness of property rights, which meant that neither the nomads who temporarily leased land to settlers, nor the settlers who rented it, had any interest in improving its productivity, but instead moved on as soon as it was exhausted.<sup>102</sup> Whilst Georgii Gins, one of the leading young technocrats identified by Holquist, acknowledged that so long as Russian peasant settlers considered nomads to be something less than human, there was the potential for conflict, he twisted and misrepresented Pahlen's conclusions, blithely asserting that this problem would resolve itself as the settlers began to "raise the cultural level" of the Kazakhs by example.<sup>103</sup>

However, the heaviest blow was struck in 1909, before the report had even been published, when the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* convened a Commission under Senator Ivanitskii to draw up new regulations for the delineation of lands set aside for colonization in the Steppe Provinces; these were then considered alongside an alternative proposal prepared by Pahlen on the basis of his researches in Semirechie.<sup>104</sup> Evidently outraged by Pahlen's temerity in questioning the "scientific" basis of colonization policy, the Ivanitskii Commission's counter-arguments often willfully misrepresented his suggestions. Pahlen had proposed that, *in addition* to protecting their rights of use in pasturelands, nomads who had turned to settled agriculture should be granted

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Beatrice Penati for allowing me to cite an unpublished paper which contains more information on Timaev and his activities: [http://hokudai.academia.edu/BeatricePenati/Talks/24445/On\\_the\\_context\\_of\\_Pahlens\\_report\\_some\\_debates\\_about\\_land\\_settlement\\_and\\_forestry\\_1905-1914\\_](http://hokudai.academia.edu/BeatricePenati/Talks/24445/On_the_context_of_Pahlens_report_some_debates_about_land_settlement_and_forestry_1905-1914_) (accessed 27/06/2011)

100 D. Fleksor, ed., *Pereselencheskoe delo v 1908 godu* (St. Pb.: Izd. Pereselencheskago Upravleniia, 1908), pp. 29-31.

101 V. Iuferev, "Agronomicheskiia raboty v Syr-Darinskom Pereselencheskom raione v 1906-1910 gg.," *VK* 8 (1911), p. 270.

102 P. Rumyantsev "Usloviia kolonizatsiia Semirech'ia," *VK* 9 (1911), pp. 223-224.

103 G. Gins, "Pereselenie i kolonizatsiia chast' I," *VK* 12 (1913), p. 100.

104 See Brower, *Turkestan*, pp. 143-145 for another account of its deliberations and outcome.

full property right over their cultivated plots, and that the practice whereby the lands they had already broken in and “brought to life” were designated as “*izlishki*” and used for resettlement should be prohibited. The Ivanitskii Commission claimed that the Pahlen Commission had recommended that *only* these lands should be reserved for the use of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, without any provision for pasture. It rejected any recognition of the ownership rights of the nomads in plots they had brought under cultivation, claiming that it would be a violation of the Steppe Statute and that it was quite out of the question to hand over the best and most productive land in the steppe regions to native use as it would render the creation of large plots for resettlement much more difficult.<sup>105</sup> Pahlen’s ridiculing of the cherished system of “norms” called forth the following revealing response:

As for the negative regard of the Senator sent to inspect Turkestan towards all types of “*normirovanie*” of the use of land, the Commission notes that *all of our land organization policies are based upon these very norms [...]* Nor can the commission agree with the conclusion of the Inspecting Senator, that the current order of defining land not needed (*izlishki*) by the Kirgiz, is damaging to the latter and of no benefit to the state, finding instead that prolonged and broad experience of land distribution works sooner gives us the right to come to the opposite conclusion, at least so far as concerns the interests of the indigenous population of the Steppe provinces. The introduction of settlers to the steppe has brought about the development of agriculture and the culture of pastoralism amongst the Kirgiz.<sup>106</sup> (emphasis in the original)

The Ivanitskii Commission thus refused even to engage with Pahlen’s objection that “norms” were meaningless if, as in Semirechie, they were arrived at by taking the whole area of a Province and dividing it by the estimated number of nomadic households without regard to terrain, hydrography or fertility, and if in practice the land designated as “spare” was already under cultivation by settled or semi-settled nomads, who were then evicted to make way for settlers. It was equally dismissive of the evidence the Pahlen report provided that the settlers were often not economically productive, and were dependent on local agricultural expertise. This categorical refusal to accept any of Pahlen’s conclusions was fully endorsed by Krivoshein and by the Imperial Senate, which ruled that not only would none of the Pahlen Commission’s recommendations on *pereselenie* be applied in the Steppe region, but that the more aggressive procedures for designating “spare” land which the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* had endorsed instead should also be extended to Semirechie. Finally, the commission flatly denied that there was a real danger of inter-ethnic tensions boiling over in Turkestan:

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105 “Khronika. Novaia instruksiia opredeleniia gosudarstvennago zemel’nago fonda v stepnykh oblastiakh dlia pereseleniia i drugikh gosudarstvennykh nadobnostei,” VK 6 (1910), pp. 331–332, 337–340, 343–344.

106 Ibid., pp. 332–333.

The Russian people do not destroy other tribes by repopulating their territory, on the contrary, they strive to bring them civilization and raise their well-being. The cruel policy of the Americans towards the Redskins is not in the soul of our people and is contrary to their traditions. *In colonizing the steppe, the Russian Government stands on the footing of right and culture.*<sup>107</sup> (emphasis in the original)

In 1912 Krivoshein would also write that “never and nowhere should the well-being of Russian people be founded on the destruction of conquered tribes.”<sup>108</sup> These breathtaking assertions of the benevolence and exceptionalism of Russian imperialism would bear numerous offspring in the Soviet period.<sup>109</sup> Neither then, nor now, were they an adequate description of what the Russian colonization of Central Asia really meant for those on the receiving end. Instead the conclusions of modern historians on the state of relations between settlers and nomads in Turkestan in the early 1900s are often strikingly similar to Pahlen’s.<sup>110</sup>

The outbreaks of violence between settlers and the local population which Pahlen had warned of were already in evidence before the First World War.<sup>111</sup> In 1916 severe inflation in food prices, high taxation and the conscription *ukaz* issued in August of that year combined with long-standing resentment over colonization and expropriation to produce widespread ethnic conflict, most particularly in the densely-settled Pishpek and Przheval’sk districts of Semirechie, where over 2,000 settlers were killed. For all its shortcomings, even when taken in isolation the Pahlen Commission’s volume on *Pereselencheskoe Delo* in Central Asia correctly identified some of the growing ethnic tensions surrounding *pereselenie*, and could be read with profit by many modern historians still

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107 Ibid., p. 336.

108 Krivoshein, *Zapiska*, p. 53.

109 See, for instance E. M. Brusnikin, “Pereselencheskaia politika Tsarizma v kontse XIX veka,” *Voprosy istorii* 1 (January 1965), pp. 28–38; A. I. Ginzburg, “Pereselentsy i mestnoe naselenie Turkestana v kontse XIX – nachale XX veka,” *Voprosy istorii* 2 (February 1976), pp. 201–205.

110 Peter Weisensel, “Russian-Muslim Inter-ethnic Relations in Russian Turkestan in the Last Years of the Empire,” in John Morison, ed., *Ethnic and National Issues in Russian and East European History: Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies*, Warsaw, 1995 (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 51, 57–59; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, pp. 45–57; Maltusynov, *Agrarnyi vopros*, pp. 129–137; Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*, pp. 70–73.

111 In May 1913, for instance, a group of settlers in the Syr-Darya Province attacked a Kazakh *aul* with stones, killing one woman and severely injuring another. Petition from Kantarbai Karimbaev to the Asinskii *Uchastkovyi Pristav* (01/06/1913) TsGARKaz, f. 433 [Mirovoi sud’ia Aulie-Atinskogo uezda], op. 1, d. 287 “Po obvineniiu krestian Kuiukskoi volosti Shevchenko, Beznosova, Popova i drugikh v napadenii na aul i za uchastie v drake,” l. 6ob.

wedded to the “*Druzhby Narodov*” version of Russian imperial history.<sup>112</sup> When combined with the still more pungent allegations of corruption and incompetence in Pahlen’s memoirs, and the large number of petitions from settlers and nomads alike from the Pahlen *Fond* in St Petersburg, it presents a surprisingly frank picture both of the general grubbiness and injustice of colonialism,<sup>113</sup> and more specifically of the disastrous impact of what was perhaps the most “modern,” ideologically-driven agency of the late-Tsarist state in one of the Empire’s most complex, least understood peripheries.

## CONCLUSION

Pahlen clearly went to his grave in the belief that, despite the turmoil which swiftly followed, his Commission had done some good work in Turkestan. His memoirs are a litany of abuses exposed and corrupt officials brought to justice. Unfortunately no systematic attempt has yet been made to match the cases he mentions to trial proceedings in the archives: in the course of my own research I came across one successful trial in Samarkand which was initiated by the *Revizuiushchii Senator*, but it is not mentioned in Pahlen’s memoirs, probably because it involved petty corruption by a mere chancery clerk and his translator rather than a high-ranking officer or a member of the despised *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*.<sup>114</sup> Whilst Pahlen and the officials of his Commission may well have been successful in rooting out individual cases of corruption, this was meant to be merely the preliminary to the drawing up of a new statute and a systematic reform of Turkestan’s administration, and these aims remained unfulfilled.

The volume on *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* is not wholly reliable, of course: parts of it simply reproduce verbatim the attitudes of local military officials and there is an unevenness of tone which suggests that Pahlen only really got

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112 See the review of Willard Sunderland’s *Taming the Wild Field* by V. I. Grachev and O. A. Rykin and my response to them in *Antropologicheskii Forum* 6 (2007), pp. 414–436; See further O. I. Brusina, *Slaviane v Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura, 2001), pp. 20–40, 137–147. In this otherwise interesting anthropological work she claims that the violence of 1916 was governed more by socio-economic status than by ethnic and linguistic differences, reflecting a common unwillingness amongst Soviet-trained scholars to look this painful episode squarely in the face. She also avoids discussing this directly in her chapter on *pereselenie* in S. N. Abashin, D. Iu. Arapov & N. E. Bekmakhanova, ed., *Tsentral’naia Azia v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), pp. 210–33. N. E. Bekmakhanova’s contribution on the 1916 Revolt in the same volume (pp. 288–292) has Russian settlers fighting *alongside* the Kazakhs against the Tsarist regime.

113 Something also seen in Alexander Kerensky’s passionate denunciation in the Duma of the repressive measures undertaken in his native Turkestan after the 1916 revolt. “Takoe upravlenie gosudarstvom – nedopustimo. Doklad A. F. Kerenskogo na zakrytom zasedanii Gosudarstvennoi dumy. Dekabr’ 1916 g.,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 2 (1997), pp. 4–22.

114 Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*, p. 161.

his own way when writing the conclusion – other parts suggest preliminary censorship by the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* and its powerful patrons in St Petersburg. On the latter front, however, Pahlen's memoirs are a sufficient corrective, whilst on the former he was able to bring his own observation to bear on local prejudices. Pahlen may have known nothing about Islamic law, but he knew plenty about agriculture (he had farmed the family estate in Livland for ten years) and, perhaps more importantly, about bureaucratic politics.<sup>115</sup> The petitions his commission received from nomads and settlers, combined with their tour of the settlements in Syr-Darya and Semirechie Provinces, allowed him to come to some shrewd and accurate conclusions on what proved a disastrously misguided Imperial policy. Whilst he was ignored at the time, his interpretation of the impact of peasant colonization on the nomadic population of Central Asia has proved remarkably durable.

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115 Pierce, "Introduction," p. 10.