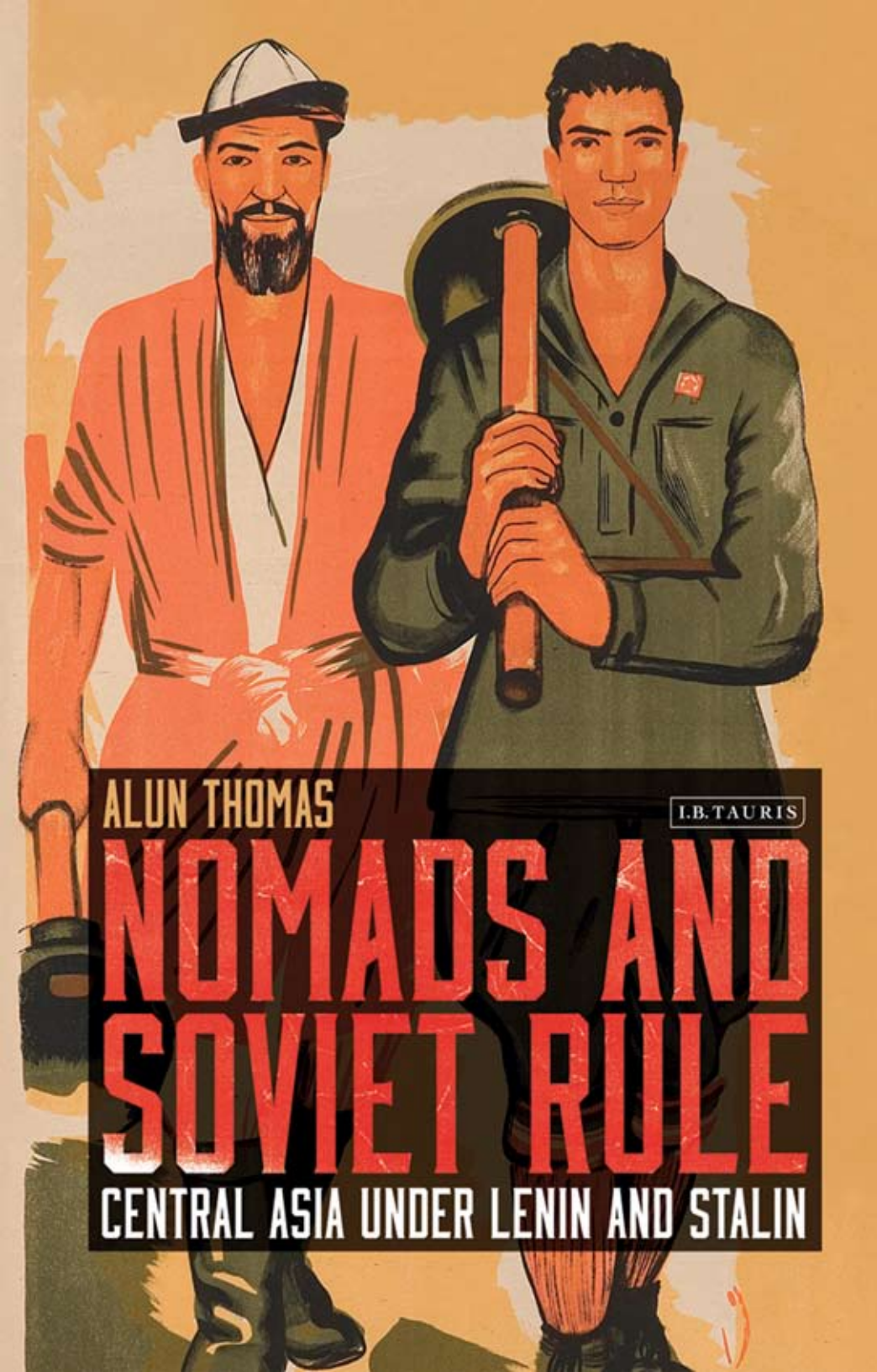
ALUN THOMAS
I.B.TAURIS
NOMADS AND SOVIET RULE
CENTRAL ASIA UNDER LENIN AND STALIN

Alun Thomas is Lecturer in Modern European History at Staffordshire University. He received his PhD from the University of Sheffield and has written in peer-reviewed journals and delivered papers internationally on late tsarist and early Soviet history. Other publications include 'The Caspian Disputes: Nationalism and Nomadism in Early Soviet Central Asia', *The Russian Review* 76:3 (2017) and 'An Empire Remembered? Collectivization and Colonialism in Mukhamet Shayakhmetov's "The Silent Steppe"' in Dirk Göttsche (ed.), *Memory and Postcolonial Studies: Synergies and New Directions across Literatures from Europe, Africa and the Americas* (2018).

'Alun Thomas' excellent book makes a major contribution to the ongoing debates about the Soviet Union as a particular type of empire and about conceptual frameworks that scholars should use to make sense of the scale of human losses resulting from Soviet policies. By focusing on what these policies meant for the peoples of the Central Asian steppe not as Kazakhs, but as nomads, and not as Russians, but farmers, the book tells a new story, which has been largely neglected by scholars. It sheds new light on the complexity of the Communist state's actions in a specific region of the former Russian Empire, where the Bolsheviks faced a whole range of ideological and practical problems for the addressing of which they proved to be poorly equipped.'

Vera Tolz-Zilitinkevic, Sir William Mather Professor of Russian Studies, University of Manchester

'Focusing on the 1920s in Soviet Central Asia, Alun Thomas' insightful work provides an innovative account of the policy and debates that preceded the forced settlement of Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads during collectivisation. He approaches with finesse the nuances of the governance of nomadic societies, as well as the conflicts that erupted between various actors because of their competing political agendas. Thomas' work is a most welcome addition to the literature on both the Soviet social engineering of nomadism and, more broadly, Soviet nationalities policy.'

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NOMADS AND SOVIET RULE

Central Asia under Lenin and Stalin

ALUN THOMAS

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Map 1 Soviet Central Asia in 1923.

Map 2 Soviet Central Asia in 1936.

INTRODUCTION

On 23 March 1929, Shaimardan Galiev put his name to a complaint submitted to the Communist Party's Central Executive Committee in Moscow. Galiev lived in a semi-nomadic district not far from the town of Semipalatinsk in the eastern Kazakh Steppe.[1] He and his wife had a five-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter. At the time the complaint was written, Galiev's wife was suffering from tuberculosis.

Galiev's complaint related to a piece of legislation passed in the previous year. Both the governing committee in Semipalatinsk and the ruling institutions of the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic, the territory administering Semipalatinsk within the larger structures of the Soviet Union, had made declarations on the confiscation of property. Any herders found in semi-nomadic districts with more than 200 head of cattle would have their property confiscated and would be exiled from their land.[2]

Galiev had essentially been accused by the authorities of being a *bai*. Originally meaning a respected and influential individual, sometimes fulfilling a ceremonial or judicial function alongside other esteemed social groups, in Soviet propaganda the *bai* and *manap* became class enemies, roughly equivalent to the Russian kulak, and representatives of the native bourgeoisie. For the Communist Party, this despotic class was exploiting the labour of its poorer compatriots and conspiring to preserve the feudal aspects of their lifestyle, most notably nomadism. Nomadism was considered a wretched, backward existence from which its practitioners would escape if only they were allowed to by the *bais*. Galiev protested that he should not be designated as a *bai* and therefore

should not be made the victim of persecution. He insisted that he had enjoyed no special status or authority under the old imperial regime of Tsar Nicholas II, a mark of counterrevolutionary potential for many in the Communist Party. He stated that he had previously participated in the work of local Soviet organs immediately following the Civil War. He insisted that, since early 1928, his family had owned only 25 cows, not the requisite 200 for semi-nomadic districts.

Soviet legislators had occasionally placed limits on confiscation in nomadic or semi-nomadic areas, partly because they recognised that the nomadic economy functioned differently from that of sedentary farmers and should be treated differently. But, as indicated by Galiev's predicament, such limitations were often meaningless. The Central Executive Committee corresponded with Kazakh organs of state and ruled that local administrators had shown an excessive and punitive attitude towards him.[3] In the context of the time, such a ruling feels understated. Galiev submitted his complaint in the early stages of Joseph Stalin's collectivisation drive, roughly 1928–34, when millions across the Soviet Union would suffer dispossession, arrest and famine.[4] Among all those rural populations who suffered, the nomads' experience was particularly egregious, compounded as it was by forced settlement or 'sedentarisation'.[5] By the mid-1930s nomadism would be all but extinguished in much of Central Asia.[6]

It is instructive that Galiev chose to address his complaint to Moscow rather than to Alma-Ata, then the capital of the Kazakh republic. The Soviet Central Asian republics, precursors to today's Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, were notionally created to manage the variety of nationalities and interests present in the region. But this national framework, ultimately a conduit for the Communist Party's ambitions, showed little sensitivity for nomadic interests and had made it harder for the nomads to migrate between pastures. Later in 1929, the Central Executive Committee wrote to the Kazakh authorities, asking for a response to the original complaint and a resolution to the case of 'the Kazakh of *aul* no. 5', an *aul* being a small nomadic community, 'encampment' or 'migratory unit'.[7] Galiev's fate remains unclear.

The nomadism under discussion here in fact encompasses a large number of practices and behaviours, but should more specifically be referred to as nomadic pastoralism.[8] Nomadic pastoralists migrate at

different points in a year in order to exploit different pastures as the seasons change. As such, they typically migrate with herds of grazing livestock. They carry their possessions and living quarters, their yurts, along with them on their migrations, though in some cases permanent dwellings might be established at different seasonal destinations. Kazakh Steppe nomads referred to these destinations as follows: the *qystau* (winter sites), *kokteu* (spring sites), *jailau* (summer sites) and *kyzdeu* (autumn sites). Communities differed, though, in their number of stopping places and accordingly in the duration of their stay in each place. A small proportion migrated almost perpetually. The Kyrgyz, living in more mountainous regions near the peaks of the Tian Shan, generally moved only from winter pastures in the nearby foothills to the *jailoo*, or summer pastures, at higher altitudes. A variety of animals were being bred by nomads in the early twentieth century, including sheep, cattle and goats, horses and camels. In general, a larger and more stable herd enabled longer migratory journeys.[9] Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomadic communities, in particular, were organised along 'genealogical lines', including patrilineal descent, though not always in the inflexible and uniform manner supposed by Soviet agents.[10]

In the period between the end of the Russian Civil War and the conclusion of the collectivisation campaign, approximately 1920 to 1936, the new Soviet state was confronted with the task of governing this nomadic population in Central Asia. This book recounts its efforts to do so. It divides these efforts across six themes or policy areas: common Soviet perceptions of nomads and nomadism; land use and the distribution of land among nomads; the creation and enforcement of borders in nomadic regions; the confiscation and taxation of nomadic property; social policy among nomads and their inclusion into the framework of the state; and, finally, the collectivisation of nomadic communities. Galiev and his family would likely have experienced Soviet power in all these different areas, since the actions of the state would prove profoundly influential in the lives of millions of nomadic people. Yet such actions were repeatedly complicated by the nomadic practice of migration. The nomads' mobility, their tendency to move around Central Asia as the seasons passed, is the central source of conflict in this story.

Scholarship has addressed this subject before. Prior to the collapse of the USSR, Soviet historiography typically understated the mistreatment

of nomads and uncritically accepted the claims of Party leaders.[11] These are grave weaknesses, but careful study of this body of work still yields valuable quantitative data and considerable insight.[12] In non-Soviet scholarship during the Cold War, focus and analysis were naturally determined by the restrictions placed on foreign historians by Moscow, as well as by the exigencies of domestic political conditions in the West. Population and demographics, relating especially to collectivisation and its consequences, were common subjects of investigation.[13] Work was also done at this time specifically on the governance of nomads, most notably by Martha Brill Olcott.[14]

In English-language studies since 1991 and the 'archival revolution', nomads have garnered the most attention in work relating to the Soviet state's 'nation-making' efforts.[15] As non-Russians, nomads find a place in the origin stories of the Central Asian republics written by historians including Adrienne Edgar, Bhavna Davé and Shirin Akiner.[16] Similarly, Russian-language historiography very often addresses the treatment of nomads as part of new national histories for the post-Soviet nations, such as Kokish Ryspaev's *History of the Republic of Kazakhstan*.[17] Given the Communist Party's disinclination to include nomadism as a formal, constituent part of the larger national identities of Central Asia, however, the histories of these national identities and their genesis often relegate nomads to a relatively minor role.

Some scholarship has turned its attention to nomads more specifically. Their experience of collectivisation has been most comprehensively investigated. An initial wave of revelations was published during and immediately after the collapse of the USSR by historians working in the (post-)Soviet space. These studies broke decisively with the intellectual orthodoxy of their predecessors and made extensive gains in our understanding of collectivisation in Central Asia.[18] More recently, historians have added to these achievements with substantive analyses of collectivisation and 'sedentarisation'. Included here are Talas Omarbekov, Isabelle Ohayon, Sarah Cameron, Robert Kindler and Niccolò Pianciola.[19] Some of these authors, and others, have also focused concertedly on the Revolution and New Economic Policy (NEP) period, including Pianciola, Marco Buttino, Paula A. Michaels and Matthew Payne.[20] Yet, frequently, discussion of the nomads' treatment under the NEP comes mainly as a prelude to collectivisation. Following the political landscape of contemporary Central Asia, scholarship also often

continues to look at nomadism, a transnational phenomenon, through a national lense.

Presenting the NEP period, 1920–8, as that which came before collectivisation leads us to search for the origins of that campaign and its attendant catastrophes in the preceding decade. The origins may be there, but this privileges only one limited reading of events and processes that were also significant and indicative in and of themselves. We learn something new about history whenever we slice up the timeline differently. The same principle applies with regard to historical topics: severing ties between the treatment of nomads and the genesis of their Central Asian nations allows nomadism to garner more undivided attention, and helps to avoid the dangers of 'patrimonialisation', in which certain aspects of the story are recruited for contemporary political purposes.[21] Both of these analytical decisions are, however, only partial. Both collectivisation and nation-making continue to merit much discussion within the parameters of this book, defined as follows.

This book proposes to treat the NEP as a distinctive era in the relationship between nomad and state. Focus falls primarily on these years. The book also treats nomadic pastoralism as an issue of transnational importance that did not find its way into the Soviet template of national identity in any meaningful sense. Therefore, it does not tell the tale of the creation of Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan, though it places its story in the context of those nation-making processes, among others, and thereby makes use of much historiography on the creation of national republics, including those more general histories of the process by scholars including Terry Martin, Francine Hirsch and Jeremy Smith.[22] While not denying the national or regional variations in nomadic life, which were substantial and consequential, this study draws some generalisable conclusions from study of Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomadic experience in the USSR.[23] As such, its geographical understanding of 'Central Asia' includes territory now covered by all five of the post-Soviet Central Asian states already mentioned, but this use necessitates two important caveats: first, that the nomadic regions of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were plainly not perfectly representative of such regions across the whole of Central Asia (or indeed of each other); second, that this definition of Central Asia does not correlate with the traditional Russian term *Sredniaia Aziia*, which excluded much of the Kazakh Steppe. Either use of the term also encompasses substantial sedentary populations.

This book will argue that the treatment of nomads by the Soviet state during the NEP was frequently chaotic, violent and characterised by ambivalence on the part of policy makers, but that there are also discernable trends which apply to much of the 1920s. These trends often originated from three of the Communist Party's foremost preoccupations: nationality, class and economic development, as they applied to the government of nomadic regions. The book also places all this in the context of three larger historical processes: imperialism, modernisation and post-colonialism. In other words, by the time he submitted his complaint in 1929, Galiev and his family had for almost a decade been subjected to the Soviet iteration of global trends as much as to specific processes taking place under Bolshevism. His story and others' therefore carry implications for our understanding of history far beyond the Soviet space. To begin to understand this, we must glance briefly at the history of Central Asia prior to 1917.

Before the Bolsheviks

Central Asia's relationship with Russia is an old one.[24] Centuries before the establishment of the USSR, the nomadic peoples of Central Asia defined the political geography of the emerging Russian Empire. The Russian Empire reciprocated after Moscow became the dominant military power in the region. At that point, the balance of power was tipped in European Russia's favour, that is, in the favour of a sedentary culture.[25] Beginning in the sixteenth century, Russia expanded dramatically eastwards into Siberia and then southwards into the Caucasus. This opened up a vast imperial land border with nomadic territories to its south. Individual khans swore oaths of loyalty and took titles from the tsar, but overstated their authority among disparate tribes and proved unable to keep the implicit promises that frustrated Russians assumed had been made.[26] Nomads from the Kazakh Steppe thus tended to pillage Russian settlements and take captives. By threatening peasant communities in the Volga region and western Siberia, they forced the Russian state into a defensive pose. The towns of Omsk, Orenburg, Orsk, Petropavlovsk and Semipalatinsk, all established within 30 years of one another in the early eighteenth century, occupied the 2,500-mile long Irtish Line of fortifications intended to defend Russia's southern border from nomadic incursions.[27] Colonies of Cossacks, part

agricultural communities, part military detachments, threatened nomadic raiding parties with retributive violence and kidnappings.[28] The Russian border moved southwards, reaching the Pamir Mountains by the start of the twentieth century.

Imperial authority was patchwork in Central Asia.[29] In the first half of the nineteenth century the empire largely ruled its southern colonies indirectly. It nevertheless claimed responsibility for a hugely diverse population, presenting new challenges for governance. In response, it created and recognised a new stratum of sultans in a bid to undermine the old khans. It infiltrated local systems of justice with its own appointees.[30] Under its supervision, the region became more dependent on grain imports to feed its population.[31] Central Asians became subjects of the tsar, though they remained *inorodtsy*, 'of different birth', or *tuzemtsy*, 'of a foreign land', markers of otherness defined partly by nomadism but more often by religious faith.[32] As such, they were subjected to Russification, a campaign to effect cultural betterment and more homogeneity within the empire.[33] In the mid-1800s suspicions grew about the malign influence of Tatar Mullahs among Kazakh nomads, and a new Russian education was instead endorsed through use of mobile schools spreading basic literacy.[34]

Nomadic life reflected and informed the changing political and economic arrangements of the Central Asian region. It had helped to define the power and culture of the Golden Horde from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, and it had shaped the political structures of the tribes and khanates that emerged from the Horde in the early 1500s.[35] Then, as an encroaching Russia gradually became predominant, nomadic pastoralism affected tsarist power's local impact. Before the annexation of Central Asia began, nomadic communities were becoming dependent on trade with their new sedentary neighbours.[36] After annexation, nomadic and sedentary economies were further intermeshed. The system of territorial division introduced in the 1820s by Mikhail Speransky, then Governor-General of Siberia, began disrupting and changing nomadic migrations.[37]

As in many other empires, the settlement of nomads was an occasional preoccupation of Russian imperial officers, though the goal was pursued erratically and considerable difficulty was encountered.[38] For nomadic communities, sedentary agriculture was often a sign of foreignness, even a taboo.[39] Nomads called sedentary Central Asians

sarts, which the state sometimes misunderstood as a separate ethnic category of its own.[40] Still, Russian missionaries insisted that conversion to Orthodox Christianity necessitated settlement and a more comfortable peasant life, contrasted against the grubby existence of habitual migration. An 1897 law promised each Kazakh 100 rubles to settle, and it was hoped that arriving Russian peasants would show the *inorodtsy* how to farm.[41]

Colonisation by Russian peasants came in increasingly large waves.[42] Famine in Russia pushed peasants southwards in 1891, and in 1896 the Resettlement Administration was established to supervise and encourage this movement.[43] The Stolypin reforms further expedited the migration after 1906 as peasants enjoyed tax privileges for selling up and moving south.[44] The tsarist administration created a legislative regime that was conducive to further colonisation, exhibiting an insensitivity towards the nomadic lifestyle which even tsarist governing officers noted.[45] The lives of pastoral cattle herders were critically disrupted by the arrival of these settlers and the agricultural techniques they practised on confiscated land.[46] Changes were again defined by the nomads' own practices; the Kyrgyz, who made more intensive use of a smaller number of pastures, suffered the most acute upheaval from arriving settlers.[47]

World War I shook the foundations of the Russian regime and undermined imperial authority in Central Asia.[48] This was grossly exacerbated after Tsar Nicholas II attempted to conscript his Central Asian subjects for 'rearguard labor' on the battlegrounds of Europe, prompting mass protests.[49] In 1916, violence and disorder reached a nadir, as any grudging peace between colonising and colonised communities was ruptured.[50] The most sustained violence between nomads and Europeans took place in the Zhetysu region populated by the Kyrgyz.[51] All sides suffered considerable casualties; more Russian soldiers died trying to quash rebellion than were lost during the original conquest of the region.[52] Still, Central Asians endured the greater losses.[53] The conflict prompted a mass exodus of nomads eastwards into the Xinjiang province of China, part of a wider trend of population displacement across the Tsarist Empire.[54] The stimulus for 1916 has been debated in recent years. Certainly an element of the conflict was a resistance among nomadic peoples to the increasing hardship visited upon them by arriving Europeans and the state, which supported

colonisation.[55] Land and water, their ownership and use, were at the heart of the unrest, and they would play this role again.[56]

The Arrival of Soviet Rule

It is a commonplace that the Tsarist Empire, with its miniature proletariat, was not ready for the Bolsheviks' model of revolution.[57] This was doubly so for its southern colonies. Central Asia remained overwhelmingly rural in 1917.[58] It also had its own distinctive political cultures and geopolitical priorities. For many in Central Asia the significance of the Revolution and Civil War was thus quite different than for those in Russia.[59] Some local leaders sided with the Red Army in response to poor treatment from the Whites, some the other way around. Others jostled for dominance amongst themselves.[60] War Communism, the Bolsheviks' economic model during the Civil War, represented a considerable centralisation of power and gave its practitioners a superficial, legitimising uniformity. It was also characterised by the arbitrary requisitioning of goods and, when it finally arrived in the region, caused profound damage to agriculture and much industry.[61] Nomadic communities suffered disproportionately from the conflict. The amount of land cultivated by nomads diminished more than that of settled communities and nomads lost a greater proportion of their livestock to confiscation.[62] Turkestan, located south of the Kazakh Steppe, was cut off from provisions and had to accommodate an influx of emaciated nomads from the north.[63] Shortages aggravated ethnic tensions.[64] By 1920 '[t]he economy of Turkestan was destroyed'.[65]

Postwar hardships were compounded by lamentable weather, which reduced the yield of the 1920 harvest. For years to come, famine would be a recurrent threat, coming first for Kazakhs and returning, in 1922–3, to Turkestan.[66] The demographic impact of these events was disastrous. The population declined considerably in all but one region of Kazakhstan.[67] The fall in the nomadic population was greater than among the sedentary population, reflecting the more adverse impact of the war on the nomadic economy.[68] A large number of nomads emigrated into other parts of Central Asia or further, beyond the old limits of tsardom. It was amongst this wreckage that Soviet power sought to establish itself.

During the revolutionary period, power struggles in Turkestan did not follow the patterns of conflict famously set by the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government. 'Parallel political movements developed among the local population, but the axes of division were quite different than those among the settler population', and the settler population's own schemes reflected its colonial context.[69] The first communist administration in Tashkent openly defended the interests of European colonists, alienating Central Asian communities.[70] Said administration was replaced, but across the region those who called themselves Bolsheviks and first took power often had no meaningful connection with the original party lead by Vladimir Lenin.[71] Where new political structures emerged, in imitation of the older tsarist governing framework, an institutional distinction between Russian Turkestan and the Kazakh Steppe was a frequent feature.[72]

Into this context of economic devastation, political disarray and inchoate administrative structures, the NEP was formally introduced in March 1921. Contrasted with War Communism, its primary features included the use of the market to rebalance the economy and a range of measures intended to stimulate it. Its full effects took a little longer to reach Central Asia. The specificities of circumstance there meant that the NEP was implemented and experienced very differently to European Russia. It precipitated more economic and social turbulence and quickly became submerged in arguments over national construction.[73]

As the Communist Party ceded oversight after War Communism, so it strengthened its power. Control over water provision was from the earliest days a matter of the centre's discretion, and local customary systems for the distribution of resources were quickly eroded by Party alternatives.[74] Many of the Party's other hopes in this period were totally unrealised.[75] It was forced to continue battling with Basmachi raiding parties in Turkestan, in an effort to secure order and control, well beyond the NEP period.[76] In spite of this, early on the NEP appears to have allowed for some modest economic improvement, or at least arrested the precipitous decline in cattle numbers.[77] It was punctuated by significant Party initiatives. During the first Land Reform in 1922, for example, European settlers were ejected from their land. In 1926 the Kazakh Communist Party initiated the Little October, an act of political centralisation and economic intervention. At the end of the period, the NEP was discontinued and replaced with Stalin's first Five Year Plan.

This was a considerable economic and political shift and, most important for the nomads, was accompanied by the aforementioned collectivisation of agriculture.[78]

Nationhood, Class, Economy

This book begins and ends with periods of intense violence. Both the Civil War and collectivisation would profoundly affect nomadic life, but only the latter would near totally eradicate it. Of primary interest to this study is the period between these two catastrophes. The treatment of nomads in this tumultuous time was as disorderly as was the nascent Soviet state, but there are patterns in Communist Party policy, discernable across the decade. To make sense of these patterns, it can be said that the treatment of nomads was conditioned by three salient Party priorities.

The first was an early commitment to the national emancipation of Central Asian society including its nomadic contingent. Scholarship has demonstrated that the Communist Party fostered and formalised national identities in the periphery of the former Tsarist Empire rather than trying to suppress them.[79] Tsarist ethnographers were recruited by the Party to identify nations amid the nexus of ethnic, religious, tribal and linguistic ties that predominated in the region.[80] Having been officially designated as nations for the first time, peoples were granted their own territory with varying degrees of autonomy, a national language with a uniform alphabet and, somewhat later, a national artistic tradition and literary canon. They were given the trappings of nationhood as the Party understood it.[81] In 1924 the 'national delimitation' of Central Asia took place, when the Khorezm and Bukharan People's Soviet Republics were dissolved and the region was divided into national territories within the larger USSR.[82]

As persuasively argued by Edgar and others, the creation of nations in Soviet Central Asia was not simply a project imposed from above.[83] While the Bolsheviks had an agenda for national emancipation, Central Asian elites had been developing their own models for national recognition before the Revolution and this manifested in various cultural and political projects during the late tsarist and early Soviet periods. These included pan-turkism and pan-Islamism, each in itself multifaceted, alongside other reform-minded, secular or nationalist

movements.[84] The Jadids developed a reformist agenda in the decades leading up to 1917 that was 'elaborated in the context of Muslim modernism and had nothing to do with Marx or Marxism'.[85] Alash, a Kazakh nationalist party, declared a short-lived autonomous national territory for the Kazakhs in December 1917.[86]

Many intellectuals and nationalists were quickly absorbed into the Soviet administration after the Civil War.[87] Most would subsequently be purged, while the promise of meaningful national autonomy, always a nuanced matter for the Bolshevik leadership, was attenuated. But, especially in the first half of the 1920s, these figures were indispensible for a wider Communist Party dominated by Europeans with little knowledge or understanding of a region considered closer to Asia than Europe.[88] As such, before centralisation became most acute, nationalists enjoyed a brief period of considerable influence and made notable contributions to the political structures of Soviet Central Asia.[89] *Korenizatsiia*, or nativisation, a process by which representatives of each nationality were recruited to serve in the governing institutions of their Soviet republic, would continue for many years.[90]

Sometimes in chorus, sometimes in competition, then, governing elites worked to generate national territories. Though new, these territories were not 'artificial', in that they were based on particular social realities of the population being divided and, once created, they began reinforcing national identities.[91] Lenin and Stalin disagreed significantly over the National Question but both hoped that, in granting national groups formal recognition, they could avoid nationalist uprisings among formerly colonised peoples that could fracture the unity of the socialist world. In fact, they institutionalised a series of divisions that would outlive the USSR itself.[92]

Crucially, however, nomadism was not one of the social realities from which national identity was formed. Neither Russian nor Central Asian elites considered nomadism a genetic predisposition or a resilient or definitive cultural attribute, nor did they expect it to survive the developmental force of socialism. At most, nomadism could be used on an *ad hoc* basis to distinguish nomadic members of one nation from the sedentary members of another.[93] Thus, unlike language, ethnicity and so on, nomadism was not elevated to the status of a national characteristic, attributable to all a nation's members.[94] To the extent that nomadism was included in nationalities policies, new nations were expected to

facilitate economic progress and thereby hasten nomadism's demise.[95] It has nevertheless been noted that economic development and nationality policy often impeded one another.[96]

Nationalities policy was the first policy agenda that influenced the treatment of nomads. Frequently, it distracted administrators from the needs of nomadic communities. This was particularly so in the first part of the decade, before and during the 'national delimitation' of 1924. Matters of taxation, economic policy, subsidy and governance were fought over as matters of national autonomy, with the relative laxity of the NEP misinterpreted by some as the steady creation of various sovereignties.[97] Disputes between nomads and farmers were understood as disputes between nations. Diversity in language, ethnicity and culture was often assumed, but so was homogeneity of lifestyle. In some areas of life, sedentary Central Asians had more in common with Russian peasants than nomads, but nationhood proved blind to such distinctions.[98] *Korenizatsiia* implied that nomads would be better governed by their compatriots, but new national cadres demonstrated little empathy for nomadic communities. The obfuscatory power of nationalism most acutely affected the mapping and management of land. As in other parts of the Soviet periphery, the spatial realities of nomadic territory were overlooked in the pursuit of ideological goals.[99]

The second policy agenda that influenced the treatment of nomads was the Party's commitment to a class-based understanding of nomadic society. Just as the Communist Party distinguished between Turkmen, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, it also distinguished between peasantry, proletariat and bourgeoisie. To do so was considered an essential means of radicalising the region, making it complicit with the notional aims of the Russian Revolution.[100] The official definition of class would change considerably over time, and for the new Central Asian branches of the Party this most cardinal of concepts was variegated and contested.[101] As in similar arguments related to the Russian peasantry, it was not always taken for granted that nomadic society specifically contained classes. A few posited that nomadic communities were fundamentally egalitarian. Where it was accepted that nomadic communities were class stratified, the origins of that stratification, whether in capitalism or feudalism, were also disputed.[102]

Such arguments ran for much of the decade but were eventually resolved. As political dissent became more difficult and central figures

acquired more power in, for example, the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Party branches, a consensus emerged that a clear and unambiguous class structure bedevilled nomadic society and perpetuated its destitution.[103] This necessitated policies that sought to dismantle the class structure, empower workers and overpower the rich. Party cells worked to raise the 'class consciousness' among nomads.[104] Those identified by the Party as the most powerful strata of society, the 'kulaks, *bais* and *manaps*', suffered condemnatory propaganda, confiscation, arrest, exile and execution.[105]

Class concerns really began to influence the treatment of nomads in the latter half of the 1920s, as nationalities policy had done in the earlier half of the same period. While seeing in nomadic society the same class structure as found in sedentary communities, the Party began denying the commonalities of the nomadic life. Nomads themselves were not thought of as a single class, as the Russian peasantry and even the Orthodox priesthood sometimes were.[106] Intractable problems in nomadic regions were understood as class conflict. While some in the Communist Party had always seen tribal authority figures in nomadic communities as enemies to be targeted, this attitude reached its greatest salience, in policy terms, as collectivisation neared.[107]

The third agenda that influenced the treatment of nomads was a consistent Soviet commitment to the economic development of nomadic society. When assessing nomadic pastoralism, Communist Party officials always saw economic and cultural backwardness. It was thought that increased affluence and productivity would precipitate settlement. It was also believed that the end of the nomadic life would enable greater affluence and productivity. This final trend in the relationship between nomad and state justified dramatic and often violent interventions in nomadic life in the name of progress. Whether to enforce a new national border, rout an exploitative class or reconfigure the economic realities of a pastureland, nomads often experienced Soviet power in flashes of poorly coordinated violence.

How can this violence be accounted for? Indeed, how should these three trends in the treatment of nomads be explained? How, in turn, does the treatment of nomads inform or challenge prevailing explanations for any other trends in the history of Russia, Central Asia and beyond? The following section will examine three paradigms for understanding the treatment of nomads during the NEP: imperialism, modernisation and post-colonialism. It will be argued that it is not

useful in this context to describe the USSR as an 'empire' and that modernisation has conceptual weaknesses, while post-colonialism is the pattern that best matches the case study. Ultimately, though, all three have their place in the story.

Imperialism, Modernity, Post-Colonialism

Returning first to the matter of how violence against nomads should be explained, it is surely relevant that the Soviet Union has been characterised as an 'extremely violent society'.[108] Central Asia contained a series of communities emerging from years of colonial strife, inter-ethnic tension and profound violence, followed by shortages and enormous tumult. Could these experiences have had a brutalising effect? 'Extremely violent society' in a broad sense is no doubt right, but for the present case study it exaggerates the proximity of nomads and their new rulers in the early years. Nomadic communities were too distanced from those holding power and influence to be considered part of a single society, violent or otherwise.

It is this very isolation, however, that hints at an alternative vantage point from which to view the topic. Largely disconnected as they were from a chaotic but increasingly domineering regime, the nomads' experience of Soviet power had clear similarities with their earlier experience of tsarist power. The implication is that 1917 was not in all cases the quintessential transformative moment and that the Soviet state, like its predecessor, was effectively imperial.[109] This of course places the Soviet state in a category alongside other European empires, an arrangement made many times previously.[110] Michaels, for example, identifies parallels between Soviet Central Asia and the Belgian Congo.[111]

In the 1920s, nomads were treated somewhat like colonial subjects. The Bolsheviks worked in Central Asia with tsarist-era knowledge and its tsarist-era prejudices, defined in part by the dominant ethnic and cultural group of tsardom: Great Russians.[112] For Buttino, 1920 is the year when 'there arose the conditions for the return of Russian hegemony in the guise of Soviet power'.[113] As with the older imperial administration, the Communist Party hoped to increase the productivity of the region and its output of certain materials.[114] It took control of major economic and infrastructural projects.[115] It created economic zones to produce goods using a labour force that was either coerced or

deprived of alternative sources of subsistence.[116] Early Soviet Central Asia witnessed 'accumulation by dispossession' of nomads from their land.[117] In other empires, too, 'restless nomadism was repressed'.[118] With regard to the African experience, Frederick Cooper suggests that '[p]olitics in a colony should not be reduced to anticolonial politics or to nationalism: the "imagined communities" Africans saw were both smaller and larger than the nation . . .'.[119] Nomadism was not quite an 'imagined community'; this fact is key. It was, however, a common characteristic that created a commonality of experience in the face of the Bolsheviks' project, and an element of that experience was colonial.

Perhaps a problem with the imperial paradigm is the lack of capital as a motivating force.[120] As noted by Katherine Verdery, Moscow accumulated 'not capital but . . . redistributive (or allocative) power'.[121] This seems more a difference of motivation than effect. Kate Brown suggests: '. . . in the history of space, communism and capitalism have produced no qualities that distinguish one from the other'.[122] The ultimate decision to *close* trade links between Central Asia and the outside, non-Soviet economy bears some similarities with 'old world' colonialism.[123]

Another objection is the Bolsheviks' explicit rejection of racialism and the use of race as a means of dividing society.[124] There was a working assumption among some Soviet administrators that the old imperial rulers were ethnically or culturally superior and deserved to govern, but this was one of Lenin's great fears and the target of much of his ire, something he called Great Power Chauvinism.[125] For Adeeb Khalid, this official rejection of racial categorisation and Russian supremacy is one of the things that invalidates the USSR's imperial status, as 'empires were based on the *perpetuation* of difference between rulers and ruled'.[126] In contrast, while the Party did make some effort to respect the particularities of Central Asian life, its ultimate aim was to 'homogenize populations in order to attain universal goals'.[127] If this is so, the distinction is a fine one. Something similar may be said of the Western European empires whose values were 'universalistic', in the sense that they were to be applied evenly to all and would replace 'otherness'.[128] As in other colonial contexts, non-Russian particularities were eventually defined by a form of ethnography entailing European values; 'Red Orientalism' was a collaborative process but one nevertheless sponsored by the Party and drawing on tsarist scholarship.[129] The Bolsheviks

accelerated the dissolution of *adat* and other systems of customary law, but these had already been eroded by Russian imperial forces endorsing alternative judicial standards.[130] Stalin hoped to convert nomads out of their backwardness just as the tsars before him had.[131]

The decision to draft Central Asians, some formerly opposed to the Bolsheviks, into the Soviet administration and give them charge of their titular republics also partly follows a pattern of participation among colonised peoples elsewhere.[132] Few Central Asians attained the mobility necessary to exert power and influence beyond their own region.[133] Such was the imperial tendency.[134] Yet even as Europeans still outnumbered Central Asians in regional Party branches in the 1920s, the powers given to non-Russians may have been more generous than under other imperial regimes, and limitations on their status were not made on the basis of their culture or ethnicity.[135] Importantly, however, these Central Asian elites were more often sedentary, and governed with little more empathy and respect for nomads than their European counterparts. Ultimately the pertinence of this argument therefore varies by subject of inquiry. For nomads, defined in this study by their lifestyle, Soviet power may have been universalistic only in the more limited way exhibited by other empires because their nomadic identity precluded their equality in a way that their race did not. But the point that nomads and others were not held to be racially deficient remains an important one.

The Bolsheviks' adherence to anti-imperial politics also makes it harder to suit them up in the uniform of the colonialist. They worked to export revolution to the colonies of the remaining European empires in an effort to undermine the global bourgeoisie.[136] To say that nomads experienced Soviet power as imperial power is not quite to say that the USSR was an empire or that its leadership thought and acted like imperialists.[137] The Bolsheviks' record in this regard has been shown to be mixed.[138] This holds true even if we acknowledge that colonialism is better understood as a mentality than an ideology, because the ideology of the Bolsheviks was hostile to the colonial mentality.[139] This is partly why the treatment of nomads was contested in the 1920s, and had the potential to develop in different directions. While the circumstances of imperialism were not fully broken by 1917, and in some cases were reinforced, it is thus vitally important that the worldview of the Bolsheviks themselves not be ignored.[140] The prevailing attitudes and

aims of the new elite very definitely played a major role in defining the treatment of nomads in early Soviet history, and the clearest and most obvious difference between the Bolsheviks and their tsarist predecessors was the former's Marxism. However, attitudes that played the greatest role in defining the relationship between state and nomad were not unique to Marxism or communism, and were less alien to tsarism. These features of the elite's thinking were, rather, common to modernisers.[141]

Nomadism was most noticeable to the Bolsheviks when they were doing the work of modernisation. Some of the foremost features of their modernisation project sat awkwardly alongside nomadism, including industrialisation, urbanisation and concomitant processes of rationalisation, planning and bureaucracy.[142] Even cultural campaigns were complicated by nomadism, such as the battle for mass literacy (less so the emancipation of women).[143] As a result, nomadism came to be equated with qualities deemed incompatible with modernity, among them low productivity, illiteracy, political disengagement and bureaucratic inconvenience or illegibility.[144] Fundamentally, though, it was the nomadic conception and use of space that was at fault. For Nick Baron, '[s]pace was a crucial dimension of [the Bolsheviks'] high modernist discourse and practice'.[145] Nomads were unique for the way they habitually transgressed in this dimension.[146]

Only to an extent, therefore, can the Bolsheviks' critique of nomadism be compared to their critique of the Russian peasantry: generalised cultural and economic backwardness that prohibited socialist development. The nomads were also considered problematic for additional reasons. Their habitual migration could obstruct their development and that of others. Their distance from the Party was even greater, literally and figuratively, and as a problem of governance their lifestyle intersected with nationality politics. Thus some of the modernising solutions posited by the Party were also familiar to the Russian peasantry, whereas others were particular to Central Asians or just to nomads. A growing faith in numbers and central planning, the spectre of 'figure mania', came for nomads as it did for everyone, much like enforced secularisation.[147] The Bolsheviks did away with talk of the soul and tried to bring their ideology to bear on the nomadic self.[148] But the state also went mobile to modernise. This was manifested in surveying missions, 'Red Yurts', moving administrative districts and

flexible tax rates, all modifications made for nomads specifically within their national republics.

Certain assumptions are implied here. If the nomads were being modernised out of existence, this places nomadism in opposition to modernity, a judgement akin to those tsarist officers and Communist commissars who described nomadic society as backward and in need of external aid.[149] Qualifiers such as 'traditional', 'customary' and 'native' pursue nomads through the pages of the relevant historiography, reinforcing a binary choice between nomad and modern.[150] This invites the characterisation of Soviet policy as 'Turning Hunters into Herders', 'Savages into Citizens' or 'From Nomadism to Socialism': something recognisable from other episodes in modern history and perhaps something inevitable.[151] It could even be something positive, given the positive associations of modernisation with 'progress and advancement', though any notion of Soviet 'progress' likely evokes associations of a more negative kind.[152] The modernity paradigm is further criticised, not unfairly, for its Eurocentrism. It is prone to treat specifically European (or Western) values and experiences as universal objectives, not least the establishment of a sedentary agricultural economy in rural areas.[153]

If we acknowledge that modernisation is one 'vision of historical progress' among many, nomads need not be 'simple folk whose highest cultural achievement is a colourful rug'.[154] One may accept that nomads were being inducted into a particular kind of society without dismissing their lands as 'a preserve of barbarism'.[155] Here, 'Sovietisation' merits discussion.[156] It may be suggested that, for all their comparability to a wider modernising project, the changes wrought upon Central Asia were justified by a particular 'logic of world history' reinforced by Marxism.[157] From this, sometimes circuitously, came the effort to recognise nations and radicalise classes. *Adat* was not only replaced by something more modern or systematic but by a system based on economic class.[158] Another defining feature of Soviet modernisation was its breakneck speed, something consciously pursued and valued by the administration.[159] Whether valid or otherwise, the Soviets had their own conception of modernity and nomadism was in its sights.

A simple dichotomy between Sovietisation and nomadism is too limited, however. As suggested above, the aspects of Soviet modernisation that most affected nomads were not unique nor were

they specific to Marxism. In fact, it is hard to conceive of any political project coming to dominate Central Asia that would be designed to reverse nomadism's decline. The various Central Asian intelligentsias were little more smitten with nomadism than the Bolsheviks or the Whites: all wanted to see its discontinuation.[160] This had been the case for many since they had begun to Russify before the revolution.[161] Alash blamed nomadism as well as colonisation for their people's perceived backwardness.[162] When they became part of the Soviet administration, whatever autonomy they struggled for, its primary purpose was not to preserve nomadism (though many of them did become collectivisation's most ardent critics).[163] That was not what any noteworthy conception of national autonomy was about before or after the Civil War. In this way the import of 1917 as a turning point is again diminished. Even if multiple modernities were debated, of which only one gained the upper hand during the revolution, none placed nomadism anywhere but in opposition. This is not to say that nomadism's end was predestined, only that it was not just the Bolsheviks' modernity that excluded nomadism.

In any case, it was the Bolsheviks who came to power. The ideal Soviet life was one of various conceptions of modernity, each of which necessitated a voyage during which nomadism was to be jettisoned. The voyage may have been unnecessary, the destination avoidable, but it resulted in a process for which modernisation is a shorthand with ample elucidatory utility. It connects the Bolsheviks' views on nomadism with those of other elites before and after 1917 in Russia and elsewhere. It frames the mass violence perpetrated upon nomads during collectivisation as 'developmental violence', carried out not because nomads were considered racially inferior or politically suspect but because the Party adopted an economic model that did not accommodate nomadism.[164] This is an important nuance: unlike the kind of loathing that might be associated with the leadership of the Third Reich, the Communist Party less hated nomads than found them inconvenient and pitiable.[165] Nonetheless, nomads here play the same unfortunate role as the 'socially harmful elements' persecuted by Stalin in the following decade, though the violence the latter suffered was somewhat more professionalised than that of the former.[166] The collectivisation of nomads, as in most aspects of their governance, was primarily chaotic.

This chaos is instructive. Imperialism and modernity do not reach an even salience across all different aspects of the relationship between

nomad and state. Just as imperialism is not a perfect fit for the economic and political motivations of Party operatives, the nomads' distance from those operatives precluded the authorities' ability to define the nomadic self and its worldview, something frequently associated with modernity.[167] While the administration's hopes for the nomads were modern in nature, the relationship between nomad and state was reactive, violent and anarchic. This remains in keeping with those aspects of Soviet history most unwieldy for the modernity paradigm: the Gulag, the collective farms and so on.[168] Nonetheless, each concept yields a piece of the narrative. Modernity and imperialism, like nationalism and Marxism, may have similar Western teleologies at heart, but they retain some analytical value in non-European contexts.[169]

There is a final means of understanding this topic deserving mention. Given the then recent collapse of the Tsarist Empire, early Soviet Central Asia was literally a post-colonial society. It also exhibited some more substantive features common to other post-colonial histories. Most clearly, much nomadic land was decolonised after the revolution, with European settlers uprooted and driven northwards. The parallels go far beyond this, however, and post-colonialism is another useful means of understanding the various transformations experienced in nomadic life in the 1920s.[170]

Post-colonial states can encourage, rather than reverse, some of the processes that caused the most upheaval during imperial occupation. The post-colonial experience has often been one of intensified economic development and modernisation, 'centripetal' forces working at the expense of pre-colonial norms and led by 'anticolonial movements' that became a new elite exploiting 'pseudo-nationalism'.[171] The nation state has been the most common political form after the fall of empires. New nations '*territorialize*', that is, they attribute social identities to the populations under their jurisdiction in order to bolster their power; '"nomadic subjects", in the broad sense, *resist territorialization* . . .'.[172] This proves true in the specific sense also. Nomadic lands during the NEP were territorialised by new national elites which drew their legitimacy from the downfall of the imperial regime, spoke the language of nationalism and anti-colonialism and committed themselves to rapid economic progress while disavowing some of the practices and deeply held values of those included in the titular nationality. Pianciola refers to the 'etatization' of nomads during collectivisation.[173]

Additional similarities merit mention. The continuing struggle between colonialist and colonised has been a defining feature of many post-colonial contexts, and ethnic strife was a defining feature of the Soviet 1920s.[174] Post-colonialism has also been characterised by the creation of 'purge categories' such as kulaks, *bais* and *manaps*, the cooptation or destruction of autonomous bodies and attacks on ideological pluralism.[175] The Soviet case exemplifies these trends, albeit in a particularly extreme form.

The most obvious objection to this post-colonial paradigm is to point to the aforementioned, stubbornly colonial qualities of nomadic life in the USSR.[176] The Soviet republics were not sovereign nations. Control was largely retained by Russia rather than ceded fully to the Central Asian elites. This objection is valid, but it warrants two replies. First, it should be remembered that sovereign post-colonial states are not by definition unitary and may conceal dramatic imbalances of political power under spurious territorial autonomies. Second, the post-colonial experience in other regions of the world has often also included the perpetuation of domination by a former metropole and the preservation of a 'peripheral' status.[177] Thus, in other post-colonial contexts, the 'controlling project of a colonial state' was maintained.[178] So it was in Central Asia. For nomads, what mattered was that power over their pastures passed from one elite to another, now speaking the language of national emancipation but taking it as a pretext to accelerate ongoing economic transformation. The importance of a distant but powerful centre, omnipresent in Soviet history, is diminished by the thin consensus between regional and central elites that nomadism would likely prove an ephemeral annoyance.

Like the alternative paradigms here explored, post-colonialism has further limitations. It would be foolhardy, for instance, to make a direct comparison between Moscow's role in Soviet Central Asia and London's role in the Commonwealth of Nations. But post-colonialism can contain within it the potent mix of ethnic tension, decolonisation, nationalism, modernisation, development, political weakness and continuing foreign (Russian) strength to which nomadism was subjected. National leaders, members of ethnic elites, argued over policies in the earliest years as matters of national emancipation, and divided up territories and jurisdictions as matters of sovereignty. Concessions were configured as acts of reparation for the atrocities and injustices of tsarism. Emphasis

may be placed either on the initiative of the regional elites themselves, or the overall control and impetus provided by the Bolsheviks, or (in some publications) the spontaneous mass energy of formerly repressed nationalities, but the effect is the same if we acknowledge that the central organs of the Communist Party took charge of and took down any movements for greater, more meaningful autonomy: the early 1920s witnessed a period of post-colonial change.[179]

Imperialism, modernisation and post-colonialism all lead those with a foothold in the Soviet system to imagine nomads as they appear on the cover of this book: productive farmers; happy, healthy, upstanding representatives both of their nation and of socialism; the providers and recipients of agricultural abundance and technological improvement. When searching for a generalisation that applies fairly equally to each of the case studies here presented, it helps to construct a tripartite collection of factors that includes nationalism, class and development and also fits the broader designs of imperialism, modernisation and post-colonialism.

Sources

To tell its story, this book primarily makes use of Soviet archival materials. The voice of the 'centre', the Kremlin, is most apparent in documentation recovered in Moscow. The archives of Almaty, Kazakhstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan have also provided a great deal of the detail from which this book builds its case, and from these holdings we glean a somewhat different perspective from less well-known personalities and institutions. Notably, however, the holdings of these archives from the 1920s are predominantly in the Russian language, typed up using the Cyrillic alphabet. This is a reminder that the source material has some inherent biases and blank spaces, and these have major implications.

As with tsarist-era sources on the same subject, the nomads' voice is very often absent from Soviet documentation, and 'a process of translation and interpretation of nomadic conceptualizations has already occurred'.[180] Little of the vernacular remains. This is so in similar contexts.[181] In her account of European colonialism in the Arkansas Valley, Kathleen DuVal addresses the proclivities of her source material as follows: 'As with all European sources, there was much of Indians' worlds that the explorers did not see or saw without understanding.'[182]

This suggests a lack of understanding on the part of Europeans and also a want of trying. Europeans either failed to look closely at native communities or, having looked, they declined any strenuous efforts to fathom that which they had in sight. At first glance it seems the Bolsheviks suffered from the opposite affliction. A glut of understanding, filtered through a stringent ideology but denied much factual evidence, defined so much of what they did. Data on nomads and nomadism are most often 'the fruit of manifestly approximate recording procedures'.[183] But this was not always so. When looking at nomads the Bolsheviks often simply drew a blank. Yet their sources shape the story being told and the lessons the story conveys. Even their form, rather than their content, may account for decisions of interpretation.[184]

The difficulty of counting nomads is one example of the misleading potential of tsarist and Soviet sources. Nomadism was still a majority pursuit among Kazakhs and Kyrgyz at the beginning of the twentieth century, but it was declining.[185] In the 1910s Russian officials reported that nomads were settling in their thousands.[186] Furthermore, general claims from contemporaneous sources that most Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were still nomadic belie the diversity of practice, and Carole Ferrett makes clear that we should not see variations in nomadic practice as different steps along a linear path towards complete sedentarisation.[187] In 1926 a meeting of the Kazakh Communist Party was told that half of the Kazakh Republic's cattle-herding population was nomadic or semi-nomadic, though more recent estimates suggest a larger figure of 2–3 million.[188] In 1927 Kyrgyz authorities counted 261,884 nomads and 158,884 semi-nomads alongside 307,497 sedentary people in the Kyrgyz region, smaller than its Kazakh counterpart.[189] This simple Soviet distinction between nomadic and semi-nomadic could not accurately convey the differences between those who migrated all year, those who migrated less frequently, and those who spent half of each year cultivating land.[190] Some remained part of a nomadic milieu but lived a sedentary life or were 'semi-sedentary'.[191] Such diversity could work both ways. An apparently settled nomad may not have considered themself a farmer, and could turn their back on the sedentary life at any point. This is something the Soviet state learned to its frustration, comparable in a way to the proletarian identity in European Russia.[192]

Similarly, the tsarist administration came to believe that nomadic society was organised around clans and led by powerful clan leaders.

Although these appear to have been 'phantoms' which did not reflect the realities of life for Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, they nevertheless found their way into Bolshevik documentation too, because state agents lacked the ethnological knowledge and training necessary to accurately survey nomadic social structures.[193] This lack of knowledge also causes sources to understate the internal, tribal divisions of nomadic society, so-called clans aside. Though this book often treats nomadic pastoralists as a single group for heuristic purposes, they did not generally identify this way, regardless of what the sources imply by omission.

The sources also prompt knotty linguistic decisions. In the imperial era, 'Kirgiz' was a 'generic term employed at the time by Russians to designate Turkic nomads'.[194] 'Kara-Kirgiz' related mostly to those originating from land we now call Kyrgyzstan. 'Kazakh' was spelled 'Kazak' in Russian until the state sought a way to differentiate Kazakhs from Cossacks.[195] These differences were reflected in the early territorial and national divisions of Soviet Central Asia. In this book, to avoid confusion, the identity of nomads is described using the modern day name and spelling of the Central Asian nations to which they most closely approximate: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and so on. The spelling of Kazakh and Kyrgyz words is generally rendered as a transliteration of Cyrillic Russian, in deference to the language of the sources, for example: *dzhut*, *bai, manap*. Very general words like 'state' and 'Party' are used frequently for ease of comprehension, but not so as to understate the diversity of these institutions and the effects of this diversity on the archival materials which they have left behind, nor to exaggerate the functional differences between Party and state in the governance of nomads.[196]

For both Communist Party and Soviet state, nomadism was a lifestyle that constantly provided obstruction, frustration and challenge. Most decision makers in Soviet Central Asia saw a collection of classes and nations, scattered across a hierarchy of economic development. They looked at nomads but did not always see them. When communities, families and individuals, like Shaimardan Galiev, did come into view, the results could be immensely transformative for a lifestyle that had once defined the geopolitical realities of the region.

CHAPTER 1

PERCEPTIONS OF NOMADISM

The treatment of nomads by the nascent Soviet state was influenced by processes and events located far beyond the Communist Party's control, sometimes originating long before the Russian Revolution, often resulting from the unintended or unforeseen consequences of earlier Soviet policies. Governance immediately following the Civil War was especially erratic, though the Party mithered about its lack of administrative reach and influence throughout the 1920s.[1] Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks began having a noteworthy impact on nomadic life from soon after the Revolution, and increasingly so as their power grew and their infrastructure solidified. Even in those early cases when policy aims were more hypothetical than realisable, we see the beginnings of a Soviet approach to nomadism which would be immensely important by the end of the decade.

As such, how those in power after the Revolution thought about and understood nomads and nomadism mattered enormously. This is a topic comprising everyday stereotypes and misconceptions, cultural suspicions, philosophy, ideology, state reports and scholarly investigations. Of relevance are not only how the state thought but also what it knew and felt it knew of the nomads' numbers, lives and desires. This chapter aims to encapsulate how nomads were perceived by state administrators and Party members in the Soviet 1920s, thereby providing the foundations for a wider account of the relationship between nomad and state in the book's remaining chapters.

Who was the *Skotovod?*

At the first sitting of the Congress of Workers for Sedentarisation in 1930, a Comrade Koshkunov was giving a report on the previous year's campaigning when he was interrupted from the floor:

> [Koshkunov] ... And as a result of that year we have it that the poor and moderately wealthy mass have themselves started to declare support for sedentarisation, in spite of agitation from *bais* and nationalistic elements. They were saying that this sedentarisation turns Kazakhs –
>
> Rejoinder: Into Russians. (laughter)
>
> [Koshkunov] These chauvinistic elements interfered with our work.[2]

This throwaway interruption to Koshkunov's report was a simple summary of a complex situation in nomadic life of the time. The rejoinder mocked a prevalent anxiety that sedentarisation equated to Russification. It thereby undermined the arguments of those in Soviet Central Asia, characterised by Koshkunov as class enemies and nationalist deviationists, who wanted to protect the nomadic way of life from Party and state. That these '*bais* and nationalistic elements' said they did not want to see nomads become Russians, implying perhaps that sedentary Kazakhs were a contradiction in terms, emphasises how controversial and contested the treatment of nomads still was, but it also reveals something about the nature of political discourse at this stage in Soviet history.[3]

The language of nationality permeated Central Asian political discussion in the 1920s. This is why the notion of Kazakhs being transformed into Russians was meaningful whether treated with earnestness or, as at the Congress of Workers for Sedentarisation, with derisive amusement. Conceptions of nomadic and sedentary life, on the other hand, were not quite so ubiquitous, and when used by the Party they were far less intellectually developed than the conceptual toolkit pertaining to nationality. The decision to stress the nomads' national status rather than an identity based on their lifestyle emerged partly from a lack of common understanding of what it meant to be nomadic.[4] How had political discourse around nomadism come to be so indeterminate? Three factors present themselves for appraisal.

First, Karl Marx had relatively little to say about nomads.[5] Kevin B. Anderson indicates that Marx's theorisation about Asiatic nomadic tribes was not altogether unfavourable, in that he declared them to be devoid of private property and capable of communal forms of production.[6] But as Anderson himself states, what little there was of nomadism in Marx's canon was largely located in his journalistic or unpublished works and would therefore have had less impact on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union than his more famous economic tracts.[7] There, Asiatic nomadic societies are presented simply as stagnant.[8] Nomadic regions are not where history is made. Unlike on matters of statehood or class, therefore, the Bolsheviks came to power in Central Asia with little theoretical commentary on nomadism from which to draw inspiration. Nor did they have any aggressive critique of the nomads' circumstances to motivate change.

Second, nomadism was not generally perceived to be a problem that would linger. At the first all-Kazakh Party conference, a small number of members asserted their view that Kazakhs were nomadic by instinct and would remain so forever.[9] But this was already a minority attitude in June 1921 and rapidly lost what few advocates it had. By the time of the first Party conference of the Kyrgyz branch, in March 1925, no such claims were made.[10] For various reasons, including the instability of the nomadic economy, the supposed desirability of life in a socialist urban environment, and the new hoped-for possibilities of technological innovation and financial investment, it was apparently assumed that the remaining nomads of the former Tsarist Empire would settle shortly after the Civil War. Marx may also have played a role in this, as by describing nomadic cultures as stagnant, he placed them at a fixed and early stage in human progress.[11] They would therefore have to change very quickly to keep up with the swiftly developing socialist society liberated by the October Revolution. If they were soon to voluntarily go extinct, then, there would have seemed little reason to agonise about nomads and how best to manage them.

Third, in terms of cultural heritage, leading members of the Communist Party were often European and overwhelmingly sedentary. The early leaders of Central Asian Party branches such as Aron Vainshtein and Mikhail Kamenskii originated from Russia or Eastern Europe. Other prominent figures with a Central Asian background had often received an education in urban centres or were 'mostly partially

acculturated to Russian culture'.[12] Thus even if they hailed from the 'nomadic heartlands' of central Kazakhstan, for example, usually they had long ago ceased to practice nomadism, if indeed they ever had.[13] Lower down the echelons of the Party, basic requirements of literacy excluded many still-migrating communities.[14]

As the 1920s progressed, this situation did begin to change. Pastoral herders were brought into the administration, often attaining apparently significant positions despite poor literacy. Typically, though, their appointments were made on the basis of their nationality or lineage, not their nomadic heritage.[15] It is instructive to compare this state of affairs with the importance of having grown up in a proletarian household when applying to join the Communist Party elsewhere.[16] By systematically promoting members of the proletariat and demoting the bourgeoisie, the Party effected a radical redefinition of class in the former Tsarist Empire and created cadres of individuals fully willing to embrace the new definition, with the proletariat in a foremost position. No such alteration took place regarding nomads, who made their way into leadership positions by dint of their national or tribal identity.

In any case, in the early years of the (New Economic Policy) NEP when the trajectory of the period was being set, the Party was run largely by Europeans with no personal experience of nomadism, or by settled Central Asians. It also had a disproportionately greater presence in urban centres and this perpetuated its ignorance of conditions in rural areas. This was so despite the great efforts taken by the Party to embed itself in the countryside.[17] Thus the firsthand nomadic perspective was as excluded from Communist Party congresses as it had been from the meetings of tsarist officials. Thinking on the matter was cursory.

Thinking was also poorly informed. As one Party member complained: 'On the steppe now, as earlier, any information is completely lacking.'[18] A scarcity of knowledge, or a rich abundance of ignorance, further defined the Soviet view of nomads. It was partly a product of Party members' backgrounds and their reliance on information gathered in the imperial era, which was significant but not expansive.[19] Tsarist Orientalist scholarship was still a relatively new endeavour at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tsarist organs had tried to make a systematic distinction between settled and nomadic Central Asians and had failed. By what criteria could such a difference be recognised? Migration and

mobility were not unique to nomads and the habit or frequency of movement was hard to measure. Reforms under Mikhail Speransky, Governor-General of Siberia, conflated nomads with vagrants on the largely pejorative grounds of what both groups lacked: a particular place of residence, currency, a sophisticated culture and so on.[20] At different times, there was inconsistency also over the legal recognition of nomadic land.[21]

In the NEP era 'cattle-herder' (*skotovod*) was frequently used in place of the word nomad despite the fact that cattle-herding was also something sedentary peoples did.[22] Thus, even when it appeared in discussions of nomadic affairs, *skotovod* lacked some important specificity. The Party only occasionally used the word 'nomad' (*kochevnik*) in a precise, discriminating manner.[23] The Party also had trouble defining and describing the smallest nomadic social unit.[24] *Aul* was most commonly used, but *khoziaistvo*, 'family' and 'homestead' were also employed.[25] There was no clear, common agreement on how many individuals any one of these units contained.

There is evidence, therefore, of numerous efforts to learn more about nomads throughout the 1920s. Regional studies proliferated, investigating the predominant agricultural activity of a particular area, its natural conditions, potential productivity, the land norms of the nomads nearby and local political structures.[26] One inquiry into Party cells launched in February 1927, for example, described the majority of the population in the far south of Kazakhstan as semi-nomadic, located in one area during the winter and migrating in the summer months.[27] Under a heading helpfully entitled 'Questions that need answering', the authorities there revealed the extent of their ignorance.[28] Questions were a mixture of economic, political and social or cultural issues: the whereabouts of *aul* soviets; the number of communities in an 'administrative *aul*' (*adm-aul*); the size of the population in an *adm-aul*; the number of clans in an *adm-aul*; the main leaders of these clans; the time of the summer migration; migratory routes; the distances between summer and winter campsites; the size of *aul* Party cells; the age, education, social origins and occupation of cell members; how cells operated during migrations; and how frequently they convened.[29] Assuming that the inquiry asked questions for which there was no ready answer, the Party appears no better informed about its network of cells than it was about the population they supervised. Three years later the Party was still launching such regional investigations, including a commission for the identification of nomadic

and semi-nomadic regions, though this time in the context of collectivisation.[30]

Data produced in these reports could be unhelpfully specific or hopelessly broad. The following division of agriculture in Turkestan dates from 1925:

> a) settled-agricultural, without any signs of the nomadic way of life; b) nomadic, with cattle herding, without any signs of settlement or agriculture; c) agricultural semi-settled, with remnants of the nomadic way of life such as migration within the boundaries of a single agricultural community, with a predominance of farming over cattle-herding, and d) cattle-herding semi-nomadic, with hayfields and rudimentary agriculture near to the farmstead, but with a predominance of cattle-herding over farming.[31]

This less ambitious typology was also created in 1925:

1. Agricultural-cattle-herding, that is where agriculture predominates
2. Cattle-herding-economic, that is where cattle-herding predominates[32]

'Remnants', 'predominance' and 'signs' were not quantitatively defined. The methodology by which they were identified was not made explicit.

Some of the most important features of Soviet thinking about nomadism, then, were indifference, intellectual superficiality and ignorance. With that said, there were some subtle patterns and some obvious consistencies in the way the Party understood its nomadic population. The Bolsheviks were not to be put off by a lack of trustworthy information. The many studies they launched spoke of their ignorance but also an awareness of complex social realities for which the state lacked data. Possibly these realities were of intrinsic interest to some Party observers. To others they were of interest only to the extent that they obstructed the Party's goals, as understanding the population remained essential for governing it, educating it, taxing it.[33] In some cases the consistencies in Soviet understandings of nomadism were the intellectual legacies of the tsarist era that survived 1917, not being something the Bolsheviks took their ideological hammer to. In other cases the new Bolshevik ideology did inform perceptions of nomadism,

but largely in an indirect or corollary manner. Additionally, substantive disagreements did exist between Party members, laypeople and scholars. Clearly, all of this would have an influence on how nomads would be treated in the first years of Soviet history.

Backwardness

By a wide margin, the characteristic most consistently applied to nomads in the NEP era was backwardness (*otstalost'*).[34] Backwardness meant a lack of cultural or economic development. It was associated with banditry and lawlessness, illiteracy, poor health, sanitation and hygiene, obsolete technology, patriarchy, destitution and shortage, acute class differentiation and a lack of political awareness. All these things were applied to nomads in the Soviet period as they had been in the late tsarist period; this was absolutely a view shared by the officials of the old regime and most of the Central Asian intellectuals and nationalists who joined the Communist Party during and after the Civil War.[35]

Importantly, backwardness was attributed to all the Central Asian peoples. But nomadism was an aggravating factor. Cattle-herding alone was considered a gainful practice and its value to the Union-wide economy was frequently remarked upon, but this was only so among sedentary communities. Nomadism was believed to diminish the productivity of pastoralism in Central Asia, and the same was said of reindeer herding in Siberia.[36] Nomadism thus did not only correlate with backwardness but caused it or exacerbated it.[37] It was blamed for acute inefficiency.[38]

Nomadism was also associated with obsolete forms of social organisation. Many nomadic pastoralist communities were structured around lineage and genealogy. The *uruu* in Kyrgyz or *ru* in Kazakh were tribes which claimed a very distant shared ancestor. These tribes were then again internally segmented. Solidarity among these groups was often high, reinforced through custom and determined partly by an individual's ancestry: 'Each [Kazakh] nomad was expected to know his or her genealogical background (*shezire* or *zheti ata*) at least to the seventh generation.'[39] Senior Party members often had only a weak grasp of this, and spoke erroneously of 'clans', but still thought of these structures and principles with scorn.[40] It was believed that they compromised a citizen's loyalty to the Soviet project; that they 'presented obstacles to

the more universal modalities of identification that both nation and state embody.'[41] They were also seen as regressive, in that they hindered the development of class consciousness, and were unlikely to survive any encounter with Soviet achievements. A key proponent of this view was Turar Ryskulov, who occupied various significant positions in the Party apparatus. For Ryskulov, tribal relations were a boon to 'exploitative elements' in a society.[42]

This negative Party view of nomadic pastoral society was connected to attitudes held more broadly.[43] During the Civil War, Russian staff in the Red Army were deeply disappointed with Kazakh troops, characterising them as 'not military stuff ... lazy and physically ill-adapted to military training'.[44] Others who fought Central Asians developed no higher esteem for them.[45] European peasants of the Kustanai region had their opinions summarised in a Party report in 1922. They apparently considered local Kazakhs to be indolent, abject and uneducated, too preoccupied with self-inflicted hunger to be properly organised.[46] Among labourers in mid-1923 it was believed that young Central Asians received preferential treatment over Russians, possibly an early example of *korenizatsiia* or the promotion of ethnic minorities in their own territories, which caused generalised hostility towards nomadic and sedentary peoples alike.[47] Officials and managers called nomads 'savage'.[48] Other Russians outside the Party system were resentful that nomads had to occupy so much land to yield so little produce.[49] The invasion of Russian farmland by nomadic communities before, during and after the Revolution cemented the popular view that nomads were a regressive force in postwar reconstruction efforts. Other ongoing sources of tension in the region, such as the conflict with the Basmachi, likely did not help to ease the atmosphere of suspicion or resentment.[50]

These prejudices predated the Civil War. 'Nomads were the age-old enemies of Muscovy and the Russian Empire', and there remained in late tsarist culture a suspicion of the 'nomadic barbarism' of Central Asia.[51] Up until the early eighteenth century Russian peasants were still regularly being taken hostage by raiding bands of Turkic nomads and others.[52] As Russian colonisation of the steppe accelerated from the 1730s onwards, inter-ethnic hostilities had only intensified.[53] As such, Sergei Solov'ev, one of the late nineteenth century's most influential Russian historians, 'depicted Russia's historic and geographic destiny as

the expulsion of Asiatic nomadism from Europe and the conquest of the transitional steppe zone between Europe and Asia for the superior, sedentary civilization of the West'.[54] While the 'small peoples of the far north' were granted the role of the noble savage in Russian literature, the nomads of Central Asia had a more fearsome reputation as brutish kidnappers or, according to Russian missionaries, as victims of Tatar Islamic propaganda.[55]

Thus when Victor Radius-Zenkovich, as an ethnic Russian and native of Arkhangelsk, said in June 1921 that he expected nomadic living conditions to be even worse than those normally associated with 'backward peoples', he was surely repeating longstanding and widespread cultural prejudices.[56] In fact, once he'd familiarised himself with nomadic life as a member of the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars, he found existence on the steppe to be worse still, darker than could have been anticipated and limited by 'death and degeneracy'.[57] That his opinion of nomadism only got worse on contact may be evidence of what was more prominent in the early Soviet period: the Bolsheviks' own socialist telos and their insistence that everyone in the USSR could and should progress. In this context, backwardness was not so much an insult as a quantifiable or objective state of being. The Communist Party believed that each of the peoples of the USSR could be placed upon a hierarchy of development with many European nations at the top and many Central Asian nations at the bottom.[58]

This hierarchy was not permanent. Although nomads were backward, they were not inherently so. They could be caught up in the slipstream of revolutionary progress if they settled. Then, they could encounter the 'conditions of civilisation'.[59] This distinguished the Party's official conception of nomadic backwardness from cruder forms of prejudice, which more likely treated backwardness as an essential characteristic.[60] It is notable that Party documents can rarely if ever be described as racially bigoted, and when the capacity of nomads to rescue themselves was questioned it was seldom done so on a racial basis. In other words, nomadism was not formally associated with any innate deficiencies on the part of its practitioners; one Communist Party member came closest to this view when he said in June 1921 'the soul of a nomadic population sits in them [Kazakhs] very strongly', but such expressions were rare.[61] Nomads were thereby included in the revolutionary fervour for reinvention, reforging, the improvement of the self.[62] All this meant

that senior Party members used abusive terms like 'savage' to describe nomads less often, despite prevalent cultural stereotypes and the use of such language outside the Party, but it also made nomadic backwardness a measurable variable in the effectiveness of governing policy by an administration aiming to eradicate it.

Nomadism was also seen as highly unstable.[63] This view was compounded by a less emotive economic critique, based on observation. During the 1920s, the nomadic economy moved from crisis to crisis as a result of violence, disruption, mismanagement and bad weather, and those who heard about this, or saw it for themselves, drew conclusions about the nomadic lifestyle. The case is made clearest by this article from *Pravda*, published in 1927:

'DZHUT!'

> '*Dzhut*' is the most awful scourge of the cattle-herding nomad. The population of Kazakhstan stands before the threat of great tragedy every year.
>
> When '*dzhut*' seizes the expansive regions of the nomadic population, it carries off a hundred thousand heads of cattle.
>
> What is '*dzhut*', and what causes it? . . .
>
> The conditions and living habits of the nomad do not allow the possibility of preserving food in sufficient quantity to properly feed cattle over the course of the long winter. In those years when the winter is typical, that is, with little precipitation, no sharp fluctuations in temperature, small amounts of snow and yielding soil, cattle can cope with the task of acquiring food. But when snow is accompanied by rain, or when there is a thaw and then a freeze on the surface of the soil, an icy crust is created, which represents an awful tragedy for cattle; '*dzhut*' . . .
>
> Over the decade this tragedy has been visited upon Kazakhstan three times; in 1917 it affected all the regions of Central Asia, in 1921 it gripped the whole expanse of the north-western region of

> Kazakhstan, in 1927 '*dzhut*' made its way through the 18 *volosts* of the Semipalatinsk *Guberniia*. The most awful effects of '*dzhut*' were in 1921, when '*dzhut*' coincided with a year of famine. Not only cattle perished, but people too. The exact figures for the deceased are not known, but around 70% of cattle in the region died. In that year, in the period of the Civil War in Central Asia and famine in the Volga region, the state did not have the possibility to provide the necessary aid to those regions suffering from '*dzhut*'...[64]

To the readers of such material, and eyewitnesses of periodic *dzhut*, nomadic herds seemed less stable than their sedentary counterparts and more vulnerable to external shocks.[65] Nomadic regions, it followed, were the least reliably productive regions of their republic.[66] The prevailing feeling was of permanent crisis. Just as Party reports in 1920 described nomadic communities on the brink of famine and collapse, and Party newspapers reported on the continuing series of crises as they occurred, regional agricultural organs imputed a 'crisis condition' to the nomadic economy in January 1930.[67] Few outside the *aul* were in any doubt that the lifestyle exacerbated the problem.[68]

Some Party members with Central Asian heritage talked of nomadism more approvingly. But when they did so, it was often in opposition to the hated colonising policies of the late tsarist era. One figure who exemplified this trend was Seitkali Mendeshev, a former school teacher who held important positions in Kazakh and Union-wide institutions.[69] Though clear that nomads were overwhelmingly and increasingly impoverished, Mendeshev seldom failed to blame this on tsarist exploitation and censured others for criticising nomadic backwardness without appending this essential context.[70] Later in the 1920s he even drew comparisons between tsarist and Soviet policies.[71] Others of a similar mind claimed that the eviction of nomads by Russian peasants from the best land led many nomads to settle in an abortive attempt to stay alive. Here, then, the decline of nomadism is associated with historical injustice rather than historical progress.[72] This was the closest most Party members came to celebrating Central Asia's nomadic heritage, but it was not the same as saying that nomadism was a fruitful endeavour. The small number of nomads in the Central Asian membership helped to make full understanding less likely. European contempt or pity was merely replaced with a sense of injustice.[73]

If nomadism was quintessentially backward and unstable, it was the antithesis of progress. This dichotomy manifested itself in Soviet culture. The 1929 film *Turksib*, directed by Viktor Turin, features 'a totally contrived contest between the old and the new, mounted Kazakhs attempting to outrace a locomotive', a humiliating proposition for any rider and their steed.[74] The locomotive does not only humiliate, however. While the film's portrayal of Kazakhs is far from respectful, the eponymous railroad is presented as bringing prosperity to the whole region.[75] The benefits of modern technology were not quite offered openly to the nomads, but nor were they held just out of their reach in an effort to subordinate them. In *Turksib*, socialism and its use of technology would improve nomadic lives, and this was the stated intention behind the camera: Turin's film was produced by Vostok-Kino, a studio established to use technology to enlighten the USSR's Eastern peoples.[76]

Agency and Settlement

Placed alongside one another, *Turksib* and the *dzhut* article cited above build upon a familiar trope: the nomads' helplessness in the face of nature set against the Soviet state's increasing mastery of it. A reductive environmental determinism, whereby Central Asians only practised nomadism because their natural surroundings allowed no alternative, featured in much Soviet thinking. Mendeshev claimed that 'the position of the [Kazakh Republic] is such that there are places where agriculture is completely impossible' and that, woeful or not, nomadism was the only viable lifestyle in some areas.[77]

Some of this view was shared by Alibi Dzhangil′din. Another key figure in Central Asian politics, Dzhangil′din had led a colourful life prior to the Revolution and commanded a Red Army battalion during the Civil War.[78] Embedded within Dzhangil′din's analysis was a certain respect for the complexities of nomadic practice and identity. He cautioned his Party colleagues that it was impossible to be certain about nomads without first having lived amongst them and properly learned their customs.[79] Yet, even more explicitly than Mendeshev, Dzhangil′din believed that nomadism was a natural reaction to a hostile natural environment. He repeatedly emphasised the fragility and instability of nomadic life, but depicted constant migration as a vicious

circle in which nomads were trapped: utterly dependent on cattle because they had no crops, unable to grow crops because they had to migrate to keep their cattle alive.[80]

Though Dzhangil′din and Mendeshev both agreed that nomadism was a response to an unforgiving environment, they drew somewhat different implications from this. The corollary of Mendeshev's emphasis on historical injustice and the difficulties of the landscape was that outright condemnation of the nomadic economy was unhelpful, and nuances should be recognised. He counselled that sedentarisation was not the only feasible option for nomads, and that alternative improvements to their lifestyle could be found in the short term.[81] Dzhangil′din, on the other hand, was very clear that nomads fervently desired to settle and should be helped to do so, allowing for a more scornful description of nomadism itself.[82] Dzhangil′din appears closer to the mainstream. There was a widespread assumption, often repeated or implied, that Central Asians chose nomadism solely as a last resort.[83]

This only mattered if nomadic regions could be made more suitable for sedentary agriculture, of course, but the 1920s were a time of supreme confidence in humanity's ability to defeat nature. Initially there seems to have been more scepticism about this among Central Asian Party members. Gradually, however, Moscow's infectious faith in technology's ability to conquer the natural world made its way southwards.[84] This faith was certainly misplaced. The authorities' decision to 'deliberately ignore nature' caused the construction of the Turksib immense problems, and this same pattern would arise during collectivisation, to more tragic effect.[85] As the Party became increasingly sure of its ability to overcome nature with technology and concerted effort, nomadism lost its *raison d'être* and the nomads' lost their excuses.

Socialism, as well as settlement, was considered irresistible for nomads. In fact, there was a limited effort to present nomads as especially susceptible to the lures of this life. First, nomadic life was presented by some as a form of 'primitive communism', that is, classless and egalitarian, going against the grain of much Party thinking.[86] Second, it was argued by Soviet scholars that nomadic women were subjected to less restrictive gender norms because nomadism afforded family life a certain informality that was closer to the socialist ideal. In theory this meant that the Communist Party's family policies would

meet with less reactionary aggression in nomadic regions, where men would be more comfortable with the rising status of women in public life.[87]

This attitude bears instructive similarities to tsarist beliefs. For periods during the imperial era, nomads were thought to be less devoutly Islamic than the sedentary peoples of Turkestan, and therefore more amenable to assimilation into a pluralistic Russian nationalism.[88] It was argued that Turkic nomads had only recently and superficially been 'Islamised' by Tatar merchants under the rule of Catherine the Great. This is a claim Allen J. Frank refutes, suggesting that its appeal came from advocates of Russification who hoped that nomads would be receptive to Orthodox Christianity.[89] Again in the imperial context, it was further argued that the wretchedness of nomadic existence made nomads more willingly complicit in their own colonisation because of the obvious benefits of Russian sedentary life.[90] Within the Communist Party, the widely recognised inadequacy of nomadism played a similar role but, instead of Orthodoxy, the offer was socialism.

Class

If nomads wanted to stop migrating, were notionally given the technology and wherewithal to do so and still failed to settle, the Party had a class-based explanation. Though the Party struggled to distinguish between nomadic and sedentary communities, it nevertheless sought to distinguish between poor or powerless and affluent or powerful nomads.[91] In the Soviet telling, the latter perpetuated nomadism to keep the former under its control.[92] Poor nomads lacked their own means of subsistence and were forced to follow their bourgeois oppressors from pasture to pasture. On arrival at a new pasturage the wealthy lazed about and had their herds tended by the poor in return for a small allowance of foodstuffs.[93] Migration again followed, to deny the poor the time required to establish their own herds and become self-sufficient. The wealthy further sustained their power by controlling the use of nomadic pasturage and by perpetuating tribal violence.[94] The nomadic lifestyle and class stratification thus reinforced one another.

This analysis was systematised according to the Bolshevik predilection for methods of social categorisation with pretensions to scientific accuracy.[95] Some Party members preferred to describe

impoverished nomads or those of low social status as *batraks*, meaning labourers engaged in manual, usually agricultural, work.[96] Alternatively, a *bedniak* was a poor peasant or herdsman, a *seredniak* was a peasant or herdsman of moderate wealth, and the *bais* and *manaps* (sometimes *bai-manap* or *bai-kulak*) were wealthy or influential nomads or members of the nomadic bourgeoisie.[97] The meanings of these phrases were not quite equivalent across Central Asian nomadic and European sedentary contexts, but the implications, manifested in the Party's treatment of those labelled as one or the other, were comparable.[98] In southern regions class was also used to discredit autonomous local figures leading their own armed bands.[99] Sometimes this was a somewhat abstract or explicitly ideological discussion, as when class conflict was used to justify Party rule or explain the failings of developmental projects.[100] At other times it was a deeply practical matter relating to everyday questions of administration and budgeting.[101]

The precise meaning and consequences of this class system were made clear by figures such as Aron Vainshtein. Born into Vilnius' substantial Jewish population, Vainshtein joined the Communist Party in 1920 and was sent from his post in Belarus to join the governing institutions of the new Kazakh Republic in March 1922.[102] Central to Vainshtein's vision was the unquestionable class stratification of the *aul* and its role in perpetuating nomadic practice.[103] He seems to have considered it his role in Orenburg, then the Kazakh capital, to educate the provincial Central Asian members in proper Marxist doctrine. He admonished listeners for failing to read and understand Marx's works, and explained to members that stratification was not only a fact in 1923, but had been since at least the mid-1890s. He sought to prove this with meticulous detail, offering percentages of rich and poor Central Asians by region at a time when reliable information on the population was known to be scarce; many attendees questioned the origins of his data, revealing doubts that he tersely rebuked.[104] For him, stratification could be measured in livestock. He conceptualised cattle, horses and sheep as instruments of production, to be redistributed or collectivised much as industrial machinery might be.[105] He expressed his irreconcilable intolerance for the practice of class exploitation by the *bais* and his intention to eradicate class stratification with haste.[106]

Vainshtein was one of the first Party members to talk coherently about methods of sedentarisation. He presented himself as a man ready

to grasp a nettle that his more timid colleagues would rather leave to seed. A special fund needed to be created, he said, to create exemplary settlements of former nomads for others to imitate. This was supported by Vainshtein's firmly held belief that 'the population wishes to settle'.[107] He was a pugnacious speaker. He upbraided Smagul Sadvokasov, an outspoken critic of punitive taxation, and summarised Sadvokasov's line with a quote from Tsarist Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin: 'You are in need of great upheavals, we are in need of a great Russia.' 'But what you need, Comrade Sadvokasov', Vainshtein concluded, to laughter from the assembled members, 'I'm very afraid to say and do not want to utter.'[108]

Dzhangil′din was also comfortable with the application of Marxist analysis to nomadic society. In March 1923 he was publicly accused of fraternising with reactionary Mullahs and nomadic *bais* during his travels with the Red Caravan.[109] His muddled response fully accepted the existence of stratified economic classes in the *aul*. To defend himself from bourgeois sympathies, he countered that by enjoying the hospitality of class enemies *he* exploited *them*, thereby giving reactionary elements a taste of their own medicine.[110] Members disagreed more broadly about whether the Party should cooperate only with the *bedniaks* or whether it should also seek the support of the *seredniaks*, something the Central Asian Bureau recommended to the Kyrgyz Party branch.[111]

The class typology itself was not accepted by everyone. In the early years, Party members disagreed, sometimes vehemently, about whether there really was an established class system in nomadic society. In some documentation, previously colonised peoples are presented as one half of the Bolsheviks' coalition alongside the European working classes, implying a classless society in the former.[112] Others accepted that nomadic society was stratified, but not in the same way as in sedentary regions touched by capitalism. At the third Kazakh Communist Party Congress in 1923, delegates heard stories of wealthy *bais* handing out the leftovers of each of their meals to queues of sullen nomadic *bedniaks*, or lending a horse to a disadvantaged pauper only to demand crippling payments of food and other goods in return.[113] Mendeshev, present at the Congress, did not repudiate these stories of exploitation but would not have them attributed to capitalism. For him, capitalist forms of exploitation could not yet be found in 'the purely nomadic Kazakh *aul*'.[114] To describe exploitation between nomads, he preferred a Russian

term with connotations of debt slavery: *kabal'noe otnoshenie*.[115] Critical as he was, then, of some social relations in nomadic communities, his refutation of capitalistic influence had serious implications for nomadism. 'Here, labour and means of labour', argued Mendeshev, 'do not yet play such a role [as they did in the sedentary economy].'[116]

Importantly, though the Bolsheviks' mission was to destroy the class system, a classless nomadic society was not necessarily preferable. Most often, an absence of classes of the capitalist kind was a sign that a society had yet to undergo the capitalist stage of development. This meant that the exploitation witnessed in such a society was of a different sort and the society itself was caught at an earlier period of development; it was backward. When secretary of the Kazakh Party branch (a role previously held by Mendeshev), Filipp Goloshchekin sided with those who preferred 'semi-feudal' as a means of describing the structures of nomadic society.[117] Nomadic feudalism originated in the work of Boris Vladimirtsov, an expert on Mongolian peoples, trained in the tsarist era, whose studies of Ghengis Khan and Mongol rule over Russia would be hugely influential on later Soviet scholars.[118] Goloshchekin would come to lead efforts to collectivise the nomadic economy, and by that point his opinion had become preeminent and unassailable.

The distance between nomads and the regime meant that matters of social identity and 'unmasking' were quite different for nomads than for urban populations.[119] As Ali Iğmen writes: 'In Central Asian nomadic societies like that of the Kyrgyz, NEP culture did not exist in the same way that it did in the European Soviet Union.'[120] Rather, the social structures common to nomadic pastoralists in Central Asia interacted with the Party's conception of class stratification, and the outcome of this interaction was complicated. For some theorists, tribal hierarchies were very much separate from class hierarchies, whereas for others they became at least equitable (this would partly depend on whether they thought capitalism had reached the *aul*).[121] Even for the second group, though, power and influence derived from heritage and kinship did not correlate perfectly with material wealth, making it harder to reconceptualise tribal and family leaders as class enemies. Often the *bais* and *manaps* identified as despots or exploitative bourgeoisie by the Party were in fact the victims of competition between tribes. Influential Party members from one grouping could persecute representatives of another, rather than attacking particularly wealthy individuals.[122]

Still, there were some similarities between the use of class as a social category among both Russian peasants and Central Asian nomads. As well as the common matters of loyalty and exploitation, the Party was a little inconsistent in either case about how its actions affected the class system.[123] It frequently claimed that its policies struck a blow against the authority of the nomadic bourgeoisie, but there is also evidence that it aimed to widen class differentiation in order to intensify class resentments and expedite class war.[124] Class became an easy means of explaining any kind of salient resistance to Soviet power among nomads as elsewhere.[125] It is further noteworthy that no common conception of a single nomadic class gained approval, despite the presence of more counterintuitive 'anomalous' classes in Bolshevik thinking of the time.[126]

Scholarship

Beyond Party and peasantry, it is worthwhile sampling the opinion of a third group: scholars. Amid the institutional disarray of the Soviet 1920s, any distinction between scholars and Party activists was a fine one. Certainly some Bolsheviks presented themselves as intellectuals as much as administrators, often with good reason, but a division is made here between those who wielded power, those who directed the apparatus of the state, and those who held only influence, intellectuals whom the Party consulted but could choose to disregard.[127] Even if these scholars were never able directly to dictate Party policy, their studies were intended to influence the thinking of senior Communists, not to act as a blueprint for state actions. As such they are treated as scholarly interventions. A.N. Donich's *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula* [*Problem of the New Kazakh Aul*] was published by the Kazakh Gosplan in 1928, the year of the first, localised forced sedentarisation efforts.[128] He starts his book with a literature review that demonstrates the parallel disagreements amid Party members and amid scholars.

The first body of opinion among Soviet scholars is represented for Donich by M.G. Sirius and S.P. Shvetsov, who both argued that the nomadic lifestyle was perfectly adapted to the environment of the steppe and, if anything, should be deliberately revived.[129] Donich quotes Shvetsov: nomadism has been preserved in Kazakhstan not because Kazakhs are backward, but because 'he [the nomadic herdsman] cannot be different in the presence of his given environmental conditions'.[130]

Another of Shvetsov's assertions, made in 1926 and quoted here from historian Talas Omarbekov, augments this view: 'the annihilation of nomadic life in Kazakhstan would signify not only the death of steppe livestock-herding and the Kazakh economy, but also the transformation of the arid steppe into a deserted wilderness'.[131] Sirius in turn argued that a fully developed agricultural economy in Kazakhstan was impossible because profitable agriculture was environmentally unsustainable in all but the most peripheral regions of the republic.[132] Shvetsov and Sirius' acceptance of environmental limitations was more popular among Party members early in the 1920s. Later in the decade it became a minority opinion.

The second prevailing attitude among Soviet academics was, according to Donich, in opposition to the first but less intellectually developed. Donich chose M.B. Murzin as its representative, and quotes Murzin as follows: nomadism impoverishes its practitioners and inevitably leads to intermittent crises; 'The fundamental and unavoidable prerequisite for cultural development ... is the settlement of nomadic communities.'[133] Whereas Murzin favoured forced settlement, other writers such as A.P. Pototskim agreed with his diagnosis but offered an alternative prescription, namely preferential state investment in sedentary agriculture across the republic to tempt nomads onto the farms.[134] Major Party figures would have found much to agree with here, though, like Pototskim and Murzin, at times they disagreed about the appropriate action to take.

With thesis and antithesis declared, Donich offers synthesis.[135] He agrees with Shvetsov and Sirius that nomadism had been the most suitable means of exploiting the hostile terrain of the steppe, but he poses the question: is it worth exploiting the steppe at such a penurious level of development? His answer amounts to one of the most emphatic assessments of the problem it is possible to find in any Soviet source from this time:

> Schooling, libraries, museums, the theatre with its props and scenery, the postal system, the telegraph, telephone, the publication of newspapers, medical aid (particularly in the area of birth control), sanitary conditions, financial matters, the electrification of the *aul*, the development of industry on a contemporary scale, the use of the majority of domestic implements (beginning with the separator) – all this demands settlement and is inconceivable without it.[136]

For Donich, the point was not the long heritage of nomadism, nor its economic productivity, but its irreconcilable incompatibility with modern life.[137] With such a clear conception of the future in mind, the author proceeds to argue that no one had yet proved that the Kazakh Steppe could not be adapted for the purposes of sedentary agriculture.[138] A self-assured ally of those Party members who had come to see the steppe environment as a surmountable challenge, Donich commits much of the rest of his book to proposals for sedentarisation.

There were other trends in the scholarship of the day that resembled Party debates in a less direct way. Ivan I. Zarubin's short academic pamphlet *Spisok narodnostei Turkestanskogo Kraia* [*A List of Peoples of the Turkestan Territory*] was published in 1925.[139] Zarubin's principal aim was to define and distinguish the nationalities of Soviet Turkestan at the time of the national delimitation, but he wrote his piece with some sensitivity for the importance of nomadism as a qualifier of group identities.[140] He was one of a number of Soviet academics who adopted a self-consciously complex system of ethnic categorisation in Central Asia, in response to the diversity they perceived in real life.[141]

Zarubin depicts Turkestan as a region containing a mix of amorphous national groups, where one's identity might change from day to day or could simply encompass more than one nationality at a time. But points of sharp differentiation did exist around the islands of settled Central Asians that were scattered across nomadic areas. Here, settled farmers had chosen a nationality and cited it emphatically whenever asked to self-identify. Zarubin had an explanation for this. These farmers were more self-conscious about their national identity because they wanted to displace the other, less favourable identities that would otherwise have been ascribed to them by nomads. One such identity was *sart*.[142] There had been some confusion over the provenance of *sart*.[143] Zarubin, failing to locate any '*sart* dialect', declared that it was not a nationality but originally the Kazakh word for Russians. Its definition had subsequently expanded to encompass any untrustworthy sedentary peoples.[144] Settled Central Asians did not like this pejorative appellation, nor did they wish to be associated with Russians, so they began more forcefully referring to themselves as Uzbek or Tajik, for example, to counter the use of *sart*. As sedentary communities took greater pride in their nationality, the nomads around them did so too, thereby becoming more likely to define

themselves as Kazakhs when asked. Zarubin here credited nomadism with a demonstrable role in the generation of identity.

In keeping with this argument Zarubin further contended that, among the Turkic peoples of Soviet Central Asia, there was a meaningful difference between those who still practised nomadism and those who had adopted a sedentary or semi-sedentary way of life.[145] As the adoption of settled agriculture accelerated national differentiation, the settlement of some nomads hastened their 'Turkification' and therefore their divergence from Uzbeks, whose heritage was Iranian.[146] Nomadism suppressed the Turkic aspects of many nomads' identity, but an essential ethnic distinction such as this remained in waiting until settlement facilitated its more salient expression.

Zarubin's study is fallacious but useful in that it alights on the intersection between nomadism and nationality that had been present in thinking since before the Revolution. The scholarship of the 1920s was clearly influenced by Marxism, but also by tsarist academic currents, notably imperial academia's fascination with nationality.[147] Many of the Russian Empire's ethnographers drew inspiration from Johann Herder's *volksgeist* and expended much energy dividing the Tsar's various subjects into nations.[148] As the work of Francine Hirsch and others has shown, the Communist Party would only intensify and accelerate this trend.[149]

In the ethnographic schools of late Imperial Russia, one can find the typical condescension and racial supremacism so vilified by Edward Said and other critics of Orientalism.[150] Mongol and Turkic nomads were, in the view of one imperial scholar lecturing in 1851, more destructive for civilisation than plagues, floods or volcanoes. Their nomadism made them even more backward than the sedentary peoples of the Orient.[151] Yet, as the work of Vera Tolz has shown, there were also nuances in the Russian scholarly attitude towards Asiatic nomads that belie easy assumptions about the arrogance of European civilisation.[152] Some argued, for example, that the tribal system of the steppe nomads was not necessarily inferior to the settled lives of Russian peasants. This view was augmented by a generalised respect for the culture and history of Central Asia, for which Russian scholars sometimes indulged in self-congratulation.[153] The Tsar's Frontier Commission, based in Orenburg, had scholars migrate with nomadic Kazakhs in order to better understand their customs and dialects, with one linguist developing an abiding love for the Kazakh language.[154] Importantly, however, the

imperial administration established agricultural schools in the Zhetysu and Semipalatinsk regions, designed to encourage nomads to settle.[155] This gives some indication of how far Russian scholarly admiration for Kazakh culture would ever extend, and to what extent this admiration was shared by the state.

Moving back into the Soviet period, the effect of these precedents was a slight corrective against the dismissal of non-Russians as backward. Alongside typical portrayals of the nomadic *aul* as a micro-despotism, an expedition made to Mongolia by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in the mid-1920s drew modestly positive conclusions about the nature of Mongolian nomadic life, for example.[156] Soviet scholars also followed the precedent set by Marr and Ol′denburg by criticising the relationship between European academia and imperialism, and would go on to incorporate non-Russian pre-revolutionary sources into their analyses (including ancient Greek, Roman and Chinese materials).[157]

More significantly, though, Soviet scholars continued to divide Central Asia up into national groups, and Soviet ethnography was more totalising than its earlier tsarist iteration.[158] We see this in Zarubin's modish effort to describe nomadism's role in the formation of national identities. Zarubin informs his readers that he could not have written his text any earlier because he was so reliant on the first four volumes of the 1920 All-Russian Census. He emphasised the indispensability of the census whilst simultaneously acknowledging its various inaccuracies.[159] This is a reminder of how little material was available to administrators and academics alike in 1925. The 1926 census, on the other hand, is a reminder of how the sparse material available was affected by the intellectual proclivities of the day. Zarubin, for example, had strenuously argued against the inclusion of *sart* as a national category for census takers in 1926, because of his belief that *sart* stemmed from economic or agricultural circumstances, not ethnic ones.[160] This might be read as a small defence of the importance of agricultural categories in opposition to national ones, though it will be shown than nationality became a dominant feature of the census materials nonetheless. The 1926 census was a product of scholarly and Party cooperation.[161] The priorities and perceptions of both groups are therefore in evidence in a single source. A short review of the census demonstrates the national question's effect on the Soviet conceptualisation of nomadism.

The 1926 Census

The 1926 census was the first of its kind to be held across the entire Soviet Union, and was a massive undertaking. Regarding previous attempts, the 1920 census was limited geographically by ongoing military clashes, and left out large swathes of Central Asia.[162] A second census in 1923 focused only on urban areas, thereby again excluding nomads.[163] Both had, in the view of the census-takers of 1926, lacked a properly scientific approach to social categorisation, and this had yielded a dizzyingly long and incoherent list of national identities. It is again indicative of the political and intellectual atmosphere of the mid-1920s that a lack of precision about the different nationalities of the Soviet population should have been a cause for concern, and that the Soviet administration expended such considerable energy to avoid repeating this mistake in 1926. Building on extensive pre-revolutionary ethnographical work, the writers of the 1926 census produced a series of standardised national categories into which identities deemed subnational or tribal could be assimilated.[164] This was intended to prevent the proliferation of non-standard or highly idiosyncratic identities, with some success.[165]

Hirsch contends that the national categories of the 1926 census were a crucial phase in the creation of the multinational Soviet state. But she is clear that for some in rural areas the national identity attributed to them seemed arbitrary or meaningless. Indeed, many were unfamiliar with the concept of nationality itself, and so treated their status as a matter of convenience rather than fact.[166] Even in the 1930s, for example, some Kazakhs were found to refer to themselves as Kirgiz when in the company of Russians, as Kirgiz had been their official Russian-language name until 1925 and the Kazakhs wanted to make themselves understood.[167] Other historians confirm Hirsch's overall view.[168]

The 1926 census should be taken as one of many incidents wherein the Communist Party devoted enormous attention to the perceived national differences of Central Asia – differences that were not meaningful to some who lived there – and examined differences in agricultural activity or lifestyle with less acuity. The evidence for this claim is the absence of any kind of clearly defined nomadic category in the published results of the census, which were released in a series of vast multi-volume publications in the late 1920s. Section one, volume eight

of the census lists the people of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz regions according to nationality, native tongue, age and literacy, but fails to mention nomadism.[169] Section two, volume 15 of the census concerns the economy of the two republics, and divides the population into ten categories according to their economic role, such as labourer, unemployed or dependent.[170] It also goes on to distinguish between famers, herders and agricultural workers on peasant farmsteads.[171] All this only hints at nomadic identity since all farmers were likely to have been sedentary but not all herders were nomadic. Finally, section three, volume 42 contains information on family life, place of birth and period of residence at the site in which the census was taken.[172] Information here shows a highly mobile population, and information on the 'radius of migration' for nomads was extracted more than once from the census data, though any distinction between habitual and temporary migration here seems fraught with potential inaccuracies.[173]

This is not to say that Central Asians must have identified first and foremost as nomadic or sedentary, or would have regarded a census question on the matter to have been eminently pertinent.[174] Nomadism was an important shared heritage, as indicated by the complaint from the *bais* mentioned above that sedentarisation turned Kazakhs 'into Russians'.[175] But in the view of various historians, the predominant means of self-identification among Central Asian nomads under the Tsar had been one's genealogy, kinship or tribe.[176] Nor is it to say that distinctions based upon either lifestyle or lineage were necessarily more ontologically valid than national ones. Indeed, national categories may have achieved a kind of dominance because of their utility and growing meaningfulness, in regional centres and villages as well as in Moscow. Rather, the Communist Party's decision to divide Soviet Central Asia up into a collection of nations simply came at the expense of other ways of seeing the region. While the nomadic-sedentary divide was not forgotten, it received nothing like the intellectual energy that nationhood did.

As a starting example of how this epistemological decision led to neglect, David Lane confirms the deep but overlooked significance of agricultural practice in his article on ethnic and class stratification in Soviet Kazakhstan, when he says: 'The urban-rural dichotomy was one of the main ways in which differential incorporation of the indigenous population persisted.'[177] That is, the incorporation of many Kazakhs into the Party apparatus gave the impression of equality between

nations, but masked another inequality. In terms of access to the Party, and as indicated earlier in this chapter, urban Kazakhs were in a privileged position in comparison to their rural compatriots. As nomads were by definition rural, the Party's blind spot for nomadism created a vicious circle, in which urban people joined the Party, lacked the insight necessary to attract nomads, and so welcomed new generations of members also recruited largely from the cities.

Conclusion

The 1926 census is representative of a trend across various policy areas. Eagerness to identify and institutionalise national difference in Central Asia would distract from the management of nomadic peoples, sometimes to their detriment, sometimes to their benefit. The national delimitation of the region itself was obstructive because, among other reasons, the administrative reorganisation it necessitated delayed and complicated the collection of demographic data, forcing at least one scholar to postpone his research into nomadism until the procedure was complete.[178] Class was another system of categorisation that distracted from some of the nomads' unifying characteristics by focusing on what apparently divided them.

Nomadism itself thus enjoyed only limited attention, and here there were disagreements pertaining to the desires of the nomads themselves and the viability of alternative agricultural practices in certain parts of Central Asia. Prevailing attitudes towards these contentious issues shifted over time. Differences of opinion should not be overstated, however. Indeed, there was a near consensus about the nomads' most obvious unifying characteristic that was, according to the Party, their backwardness. Lack of faith in the productivity and stability of the nomadic economy was a constant and, with some important exceptions, those who resisted it generally offered little more than palliative comfort by giving historical or environmental context.

Where discussions of nationality and class circled back round to nomadism it was often by way of backwardness. In the Party's hierarchy of progress for each of the Soviet nationalities, a propensity for nomadism was a signifier of underdevelopment, though it was not made a defining characteristic of any national identity or identities. Given the widespread faith in socialism to bring about prosperity, and the

comparable impoverishment in Central Asia, dismissing Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and others as inherently nomadic may have appeared appallingly callous, in that it would have excluded them on an ethnic basis from the socialist future made possible in 1917. Indeed, national delimitation itself was thought of as a conduit for economic progress that would help to overcome nomadism and its concomitant destitution. Class stratification, especially in the semi-feudal model, was both symptom and cause of backwardness, as were the nomads' systems of social hierarchy based upon lineage and genealogy.

The consensus that nomadism was unproductive and unstable emerged to a large extent from the cultural norms and preconceptions of Communist Party members, which led them to interpret the economic emergencies experienced by nomads after the Civil War as the swan song of an outdated lifestyle. Nomadism took its form in the Soviet imagination from old, instinctive prejudices dating from the tsarist era and 'a tradition in the understanding of civilizational markers'.[179] This was then identified as a problem by models derived mostly from Marxism. The Party was ideologically antipathetic to backwardness. The ultimate consequence of all this was simple; almost every major Party figure concurred that it would be best if nomads settled and the lifestyle was extinguished.[180] Notwithstanding statements made in defence of nomadic practice at the earliest Party events, the compact against nomadism was finalised long before widespread and systematic collectivisation.[181] In contrast, the methods of sedentarisation (allowing the process to occur naturally, offering incentives and using coercion) and the management of pre-sedentarised nomads were more fractious topics at Party conferences and committees for a longer period of time.

Ultimately, it is telling that the aspect of nomadism on which most Party members agreed was also the aspect most easily justified with base prejudice. As much as there were disagreements about the proper understanding and management of nomads, a cardinal feature of Soviet analysis in this area was imprecision and half-thinking, a blind spot for the specificities of the lifestyle. It is not clear that the Party ever thought in terms of a nomadic problem or question. This would imply a holistic approach that was never taken up. Disagreement did not stem from a multiplicity of plans, but because there was no plan. Despite considerable efforts to learn more about the nomadic population, made

up of academic studies, surveys and Party investigations, the NEP state never quite looked directly at nomadism.

Some of the things it concerned itself with instead, such as economic conditions and tribal hierarchies, were often seen through an ideological lens as aspects of class or national difference, but might also be considered constituent or epiphenomenal aspects of nomadic practice, making the Party's omissions even more fundamental.[182] The emphasis on genealogy and kinship was far stronger among nomadic communities in Central Asia than among sedentary groups, for example. But even if this causal link is not accepted, to understand the treatment of nomads in the 1920s it remains important that the nascent Soviet state did not choose to prioritise nomadic practice, in all its variations and evolving manifestations, as a single, unified governing problem. Doing so might not have given the Soviet state any more valid or effective insight into Central Asian life than it had in actuality, and would likely have been extremely difficult to achieve with any nuance, but it would surely have changed the state's behaviour.

It is true that later Soviet academic sources, scholars of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, engaged in a prolonged argument about the validity of Vladimirtsov's model of feudal nomadism. These indeed were theoretical debates, drawing on a canon of Marxist intellectual developments to create social models for nomadic life, but for the practical matter of managing nomadism in Central Asia they arrived much too late.[183] Party documentation from the 1920s presents us with organisations offering *ad hoc* resolutions to the problems posed by a nomadic population; implementing and reversing policies, protecting and persecuting families, making predictions and regretting them, estimating quantitative data and then refuting them. The effect of all this would ultimately be deeply unforgiving.

CHAPTER 2

NOMADIC LAND

Most descriptions of the Central Asian plains offer no more than a flat, featureless landscape. Readers are asked to imagine themselves confronted by a 'vast swathe of steppe-land', a 'void', a 'desert expanse', or 'seemingly unending expanses of steppe', alongside nomads who travelled lightly and unobstructed towards an oblate horizon.[1] The scale of the Central Asian plains has always been a gift for writers seeking descriptive detail, and the habit of emphasising empty enormity is not new. Tsarist and Soviet-era sources are replete with the same images. The dispersal of a small nomadic population over a huge geographical area was a frequent theme, as were the hostile natural conditions with which it contended daily.[2] Newspapers described the Communist Party's Red Yurts as 'islands in the steppe', artfully conveying both the perceived ideological submergence of the people and the flat, sea-like continuity of the territory.[3]

This is a trope in multiple colonial histories. Soviet commissars looked upon steppe land as an ocean much as European visitors to pre-colonial North America had done.[4] Emptiness further connotes purity. Europeans commonly believed that pre-colonial landscapes were in a natural state, unsullied by intensive human activity and therefore beautiful and unproductive.[5] Painting a detailed and truthful picture of historical landscapes prior to colonial exploitation is as much a challenge for the historian as it was for the colonists.[6]

Land further south in Russian Turkestan was perceived differently. Here the plains gave way to mountains and oases, a less monotonous landscape. Articles in *Pravda* omitted references to emptiness and

expanse when discussing Turkestan, and instead made use of specific topographical features and social spaces.[7] The highly concentrated population of Uzbekistan and its 'agricultural infrastructure' earned a different reputation for the region, as a potentially lucrative source of cotton first for the Tsarist Empire and then the Soviet Union.[8] Cotton farming would be energetically endorsed by the early Soviet administration in Turkestan, to the great detriment of Turkmen nomads and others who lived in regions unsuited to cotton farming.[9] The Communist Party's plan was to create a trade network between Turkestan and the northern steppe, exchanging cotton from the former with grain from the latter. Thus if the steppe was an ocean, the Turksib railway was a bridge connecting two landscapes of important economic value.[10]

Still, an incomprehension of local customs applied in the south as on the steppe. Among the often deeply religious communities of Turkestan, the tsarist colonial administration lacked the knowledge and conceptual framework necessary to efficiently exploit religious legal systems, and administrators struggled to comprehend the nuances of *waqf*.[11] For nomads, land use customs were as commonly overlooked as misunderstood, lost in the endlessness of the landscape but also obscured by prejudices about the primitive nature of nomadic life and culture.[12] In extreme cases Europeans alighted on the same assumption made in the American Arkansas valley, that natives 'had no concept of property rights'.[13] Again, such misapprehensions are a habit of imperial power. The consequence was that the nomads' complex shared typography – the means by which 'Khans and Sultans traditionally wielded their power' – would be reduced in status by new legalism: adapted, warped or destroyed.[14] As Kate Brown states in her epigrammatic piece:

> Land that to Kazakh nomads had been a flowing body of winter and summer pastures marked with ancestral burial grounds became to the Europeans who conquered it a series of parcels, surveyed and assigned value in square meters and millions of rubles.[15]

This chapter will progress chronologically, describing and analysing the various ways nomadic land was shared out. Writing about European Russia, James W. Heinzen describes this kind of ground-level

regulation as where 'the social revolution found its real reflection, as the revolutionary state met rural Russia'.[16] This communicates the significance of the process both in Russia and in Central Asia.

Under the Tsar

The impact of Russian colonial rule on the land customs and land uses of Central Asian nomads is a complex story beginning long before the nineteenth century, but it was in the latter half of the 1800s that migration southwards escalated, much of it voluntary.[17] These were primarily Russian *muzhiks* (peasants), looking for new land to settle after an earlier wave of Cossacks had fortified the area and battled its inhabitants.[18]

The tsarist government's early efforts were not always intentionally destabilising for the nomadic population of Central Asia, though the effects could still be disruptive.[19] Regulations in 1868 declared that the Ural'sk, Turgaisk and Semipalatinsk *Oblasts* were 'state lands given to the Kazakhs for collective use'.[20] The Tsar later revised this ruling to advise that, in 1891, all these lands were the state's to bestow and that peasants could claim the land they settled there as 'private property'.[21] With the land question in European Russia intensifying and more peasants demanding land, this legal shift encouraged ever greater numbers of migrants to head south. The Tsarist Resettlement Administration was established in 1896. Between the year of its creation and 1909 it supervised the arrival of 640,000 European settlers to the best lands of the steppe.[22] Many more left for Central Asia following the upheavals of 1905.[23] This migration was again accelerated from 1906 by the Stolypin reforms.[24]

On arrival the Russian *muzhik* 'disrupted the nomadic economy'.[25] Nomads were cornered into ever-smaller plots of the region's least fertile land, with few in the imperial administration turning attention to their plight.[26] The Bolsheviks would find a direct numerical correlation between the arrival of Russian settlers and the decline in nomadic numbers, and a tendency for more and more crops to be grown by a dwindling number of people, representing for them the concentration of power and wealth.[27] Sedentary communities too began to find the process of colonisation unbearable. The Basmachi revolt, characterised in Soviet historiography as banditism and in some post-Soviet scholarship

as a movement for national liberation, was if nothing else a sustained assault on European settlers, as in Ferghana where Kyrgyz nomads rose against colonists and were brutally repressed.[28] Mass upheaval in 1916 was in part provoked by hostilities arising from conflict for land use; this was certainly the early explanation adopted by some Soviet organs.[29] Inter-ethnic violence was most acute in Turkestan, as vividly described by Jeff Sahadeo.[30] In part connected, this region was also noteworthy for the relative richness and diversity of its political movements.[31]

Decolonisation

During and after the Civil War old imperial arrangements continued to be unmade all over Central Asia. Tsarist symbols and monuments were changed or destroyed.[32] Similarly, tsarist structures of land use and land ownership began to disintegrate as nomadic and sedentary Central Asian communities alike expelled Ukrainian and Russian settlers from the region.[33] This shared some similarities with the massive upheaval in land ownership in European Russia, where peasants turned on rural landowners en masse.[34] The process in Central Asia had a more explicitly ethnic character, however, with representatives of the imperial power expelled as if from a newly sovereign foreign land. Adolf Joffe, then a member of the Turkestan Commission, described a 'wild terror' between Russians and Kazakhs.[35] An estimated 40,000 Slavic peasants were expelled from Turkestan at this time in events presented by Niccolò Pianciola as 'an extreme measure of pacification between nomads and farmers'.[36] This was a process of decolonisation.[37]

The pace and intensity of decolonisation varied by region, as did the vehemence of support offered by local organs. The post-revolutionary era did not want for energetic denunciations of various tsarist colonial injustices, but none were so condemned as land acquisition. Solicitations and appeals received by Moscow from Central Asia were frequently prefaced with comprehensive condemnations of the tsarist past describing 'unrestrained exploitation', 'unlimited requisitions' and the 'stealing' of land before the Revolution.[38] The hated Resettlement Administration often drew fierce criticism, as did the Cossacks, the Tsar's 'tool' for bringing Central Asia to heel.[39] These criticisms helped to justify decolonisation as, of course, did the Bolsheviks' nationalities policy, which led some local elites to

see the expulsion of European settlers as a component of national emancipation: 'Central Asian Bolsheviks … conceived of decolonisation as a fundamental downgrading of central influence and intervention.'[40] Regarding nomads, as applied more generally, after the Revolution the legal position of nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz was improved, to the detriment of Russians.[41]

In spite of this strength of feeling, the first Bolshevik administration in Turkestan amplified resentments by treating Central Asians with contempt and signs of nationalism among them with hostility, prompting a call from Lenin for reconciliation with the local population.[42] The administration was replaced by new ruling cadres who were more sympathetic to the region's nationalists, though the battle with the Basmachi, who enjoyed local support in driving out Russian settlers, would continue for many years.[43] Meanwhile the numerous nationalists accepted into new cadres began drawing what they wanted from Leninist rhetoric.[44] Some treated the Bolsheviks' 'instrumental' support for national autonomy as recognition of 'essential' national identities.[45] This stronger interpretation of nationalities policy was particularly evident amongst Uzbeks, and in Tashkent currents of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism contributed to the political culture.[46]

The language of Kazakh Soviet organs at the time was marked by a somewhat similar interpretation of nationalism as seen in Turkestan.[47] The generosity of the Kazakh spirit was contrasted with the rapacious greed of Russian arrivals; some nomads, it was suggested, tragically believed that there was no free land left in Russia (why else would they arrive in such numbers?), and so Russian settlers should be treated magnanimously on the capacious steppe.[48] European settlers were blamed for keeping the Kazakhs in a state of economic backwardness.[49] Yet, at times, language at the first All-Kazakh Party Conference in June 1921 suggested more interest in post-imperial reparations than post-imperial freedoms; the assertion of grievance, not independence, in once nomadic lands. This grievance would linger. In 1926, a resolution from the Semipalatinsk Guberniia Committee began with a denunciation of the Tsar's colonising policies, and the imperial theft of the best Kazakh land that was said to still affect economic relations.[50] A year later, at the sixth all-Kazakh Party Conference, the pre-Revolutionary ejection of Kazakhs from the best land was once again cited as a reason for continuing economic underperformance.[51]

While Kazakh authorities absorbed fewer emphatic nationalists than did their colleagues in Turkestan, Orenburg did follow Tashkent's lead in claiming ownership of the changes unfolding in land use.[52] On 2 February 1921 the Kazakh Central Executive Committee declared that all land formerly owned by the Resettlement Administration should be returned to the Kazakhs.[53] In December of that year instructions for the redistribution of this land were published.[54] In March 1922, land deemed to have been occupied illegally since the Revolution was also placed into the hands of the working Kazakh population, and the Steppe Constitution of the same year improved the rights of Kazakhs.[55] Areas occupied by Cossacks were targeted specifically.[56] Regional committees were mandated to distribute all free land quickly, favouring Kazakhs first and other nationalities second.[57] Russians were thereby displaced by nomads and others, and their proportion of the population of the Kazakh Republic diminished substantially between 1920 and 1926.[58] The pressure on Europeans to head north would have come in many forms.

For their part, central organs in Moscow expressed a complicated mix of approval for and suspicion of the expulsion of European settlers.[59] The Bolsheviks saw themselves as harbingers of post-colonial emancipation, but they were equivocal when Central Asians decolonised land. In part, decolonisation was one aspect of a wider process by which different national groups gained more exclusive access to natural resources located within their new national territories.[60] Some clearly acknowledged that the process was unavoidable. Land use was the question *du jour* across much of the former Russian Empire and the Bolsheviks knew that a canny handling of the matter was critical for the early consolidation of their power.[61] As one state document put it: 'The fundamental question defining the interrelations between the native and immigrant European population is, surely, the land question.'[62] In Central Asia this meant negotiating disputes that manifested themselves as ethnic antagonism, as well as supervising some coordinated expulsions.[63] The Bolsheviks' inherent suspicion of nationalism beyond that which they could control therefore led to alarm at some of Tashkent's pronouncements, but the weakness of Soviet power in the region meant direct confrontation had the potential to do more harm than good.[64] Central organs in Moscow issued legislation supporting some of the expulsions of European settlers, and equal access to water between the indigenous and settler populations was declared in September 1920.[65]

Part of the Party's response to this situation was its early programme of land reform in 1921–2, provisions for which were introduced by Moscow in July 1920.[66] Matching the stated ambitions of the day, land reform was presented not only as a means of empowering the working classes, but as an anti-colonial measure, nearly an extension of spontaneous decolonisation.[67] It sought simultaneously to harness the revolutionary energy of nomadic decolonisers and to control their behaviour, replacing their actions with Party-led efforts to reconstruct land use norms where they had been revolutionised and create a system more conducive to modernisation and development.[68] Yet the programme was run by 'national communist' Party members like Sultanbek Khojanov, whose more radical interpretation of anti-colonial reforms would trouble Moscow.[69] Thus the notional objectives of the land reform, including the equalisation of land use rights between Russians and Central Asians and the settlement of nomads, also bled into the outcomes of spontaneous decolonisation, in the sense that both were associated with inter-ethnic conflict and its resolution in the favour of non-Russians.[70] Pianciola identifies two phases in the land reform: an earlier more violent period in the first half of 1921 followed by a more gradual process from the summer of 1921 onwards.[71]

Tashkent, clearest in its support for the rectification of past injustices, led Land Reform. The Ninth Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic made provisions for the liquidation of Russian farmsteads established after 1916 and the confiscation of 'surplus' land from Russian settlers in nomadic and semi-nomadic regions most affected by colonisation.[72] Early land reform was a geographically concentrated event, occurring principally in nomadic and semi-nomadic areas of the Semirech'e region, where colonisation had been intensive and would be most intensively reversed.[73] The greatest number of evictions thus took place there.[74] Turkestani authorities claimed that 161 Russian villages were liquidated and over 980 square miles of land were confiscated in the Turkestan Republic between 1921 and 1922.[75] Of that number, nearly 110 square miles were seized in the predominantly nomadic territories that would become Kyrgyzstan alone.[76] Doubts were cast on the accuracy of these figures due to the haste with which the work was carried out, with haste most likely a euphemism for spontaneity, in that much of this was not work carried out and monitored by the Party but action taken independently by local communities.[77] The Party formally

stated that nomads were to be given land to settle and lands remaining nomadic were to be rearranged to stimulate economic growth.[78]

The long-term impact of the first land reform was limited, and the Party blamed this on its circumscribed authority at the time of the reform, as well as the changing priorities of the New Economic Policy.[79] Any impact achieved seems to have manifested itself in disruption and further chaos for nomadic and sedentary peoples alike. In particular, very many exiled peasants returned to their original land, some in only a short time.[80] Given its geographic specificity, early land reform was primarily a Turkestani project but Kazakh authorities made similar efforts using legislation from Tashkent as a template. This led into a more widespread effort to control land use in nomadic areas and dictate nomadic migrations.[81]

Each alteration in land use and land ownership was a localised revolution with considerable import for those involved. In the spring of 1921, one community of Russian settlers near the town of Atbasar became subject to a decree from the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) about the return of farmsteads to the working Kazakh people. Petitioning for appeal, the farmers placed heavy emphasis on the effort they had invested in ploughing the soil and planting crops over a great distance, only to have their work destroyed by nomads who, having heard about the new decree, arrived with their livestock and 'boldly' allowed their herds to take pasture over the freshly ploughed fields.[82] The Russians' harvest was destroyed and, fearing hunger, they fled to Kokchetav (now Kokshetau).[83] When displaced in this manner it was most common for peasants to petition for new land somewhere in European Russia.[84]

It may be tempting here to assume that agricultural borders in Central Asia had evaporated, as the arbitrary wandering of nomads lost all restraint and local organs emblazoned the chaos with slogans of indeterminate meaning. No doubt this is how some evicted Russians interpreted events. But the implication that an ordered Russian administrative landscape was being replaced by nomadic anarchy should be avoided. Rather, parts of the landscape were returning to an alternative system less discernible to the state but mutually understood by nomads. As indicated by Edward Schatz, '[t]he Kazakh nomadic pastoralists had a loose, but still notable, attachment to territory'.[85] Nurbulat Masanov goes further, describing the nomads' relationship to

land as complex and dictated by concrete conditions.[86] Some may have trampled Russian crops randomly, in a spirit of vengeance, but they more likely understood their actions as the re-establishment of older tribal and agricultural boundaries, not to be found on any Russian map, but deeply meaningful nonetheless.

Petitions submitted by European communities might also create the image of a mass invasion by nomads and others, but in the same year settlers succeeded in seizing new land.[87] In many parts of the former Tsarist Empire legislators capitulated to Russian peasants, who took advantage of revolutionary upheaval to expand the borders of their land just as some nomads did.[88] Not all settlement was understood as illegal colonisation in these years, and all centrally devised legislation was inconsistently applied.[89] Some displaced settlers seem to have taken to the road temporarily before returning to their old farmsteads, provoking further rancour.[90] The Party employed surveyors to negotiate terms between settlers and nomads who were happy to lease their land in return for funds.[91] The impression is given of various Party organs, in the centre and on the periphery, issuing resolutions that sought only to reflect and influence the prevailing *zeitgeist*.

A resolution of the second Federal Committee for Land Affairs, produced in December 1921, exhibited this tendency. It too sought to give some structure to decolonisation in a context of considerable lawlessness, while later legislation took on different priorities and aims. It also reveals the attitudes of a central organ that was seeking generalisable principles for a territory as large and diverse as the USSR became, and thereby constitutes an early Union-wide legal framework for the regulation of nomadic land use.[92] The resolution called for an end to all Russian settlement in the newly established autonomous republics, identifying nomads as one group that particularly struggled with colonisation before 1917.[93] In part, the confidence with which the committee called a halt to colonisation presumably came from the belief, documented in the resolution, that ten million *desiatinas* of desert and semi-desert in Soviet Central Asia would never be suitable for sedentary farming anyway, and would be left for nomadic use.[94] There is a certain fatalism here about the finite extent to which socialism could overcome climactic realities. Common also in the Central Asian regional parties just after the Civil War, this fatalism was not shared by many in urban Russia and would be supplanted by a lethal self-confidence in later years.

Broad legislative tracts such as this resolution were cited locally to justify changes in circumstance. In mid-1921, 330 migrants from near Kaluga in Russia received a plot of land in the Akmola Guberniia for the cultivation of crops.[95] The next year, the prohibition on colonisation imposed by the Federal Committee for Land Affairs was applied retrospectively, and the land was reclaimed. All 330 settlers were told to return to Kaluga. Though they raised opposition to this decision, claiming that their land was being used and so was not eligible for redistribution, their protests were ignored and Kazakhs moved their animals onto the farmland. Destitute and homeless, the settlers made their way to Petropavlovsk, where authorities paid for their train journeys back to central Russia.[96]

Foreseeing a more orderly state of affairs once decolonisation was brought under control, the Federal Committee for Land Affairs' resolution made provisions for the democratic engagement of nomads. It indicated that annual migration put nomads at a disadvantage when negotiating land use, as they could not be kept in constant contact with administrators. As such, the committee requested that these administrators exercise special thoughtfulness when providing for the land needs of nomads, and pay close attention to local custom.[97] Future delineation of land, and the selection of plots for industrial or agricultural development, was to be confirmed at special agricultural congresses with local nomads in attendance. Nomads, the resolution asserted, should be involved in district, *guberniia*, *oblast* and republic-level decision making whenever internal borders were to change.[98] Calls for a democratic element of regionalisation in nomadic areas persisted, implying that it was never satisfactorily achieved. Indeed, many of the resolution's demands, such as the provision of water and food supplies to nomads at different points of their seasonal migration, look like a fanciful early extravagance.[99] Aside from the paucity of available resources, such assurances could also be voided by competing interests.

On 19 April 1921 the Federal People's Commissariat of Agriculture (Narkomzem RSFSR) made an attempt to dictate the path of nomadic migration along the Ural River. Nomads were given permission to pasture their livestock on a seasonal basis on the west side of the Ural delta, on the opposite side to a collection of Cossack fishing communities.[100] This was a *post hoc* authorisation of something that was clearly already happening, since regulation for the practice had been devised only lately.

A month before the Commissariat's ruling, temporary encampment within one *verst* of high tide was prohibited along the Ural, to maintain some distance between fishing Cossacks and herding nomads.[101]

In any case the prohibition continued to be ignored. In February 1922 Glavryba, the body charged with supervising the Cossack fishermen, contacted Narkomzem RSFSR about the situation on the delta.[102] Since autumn 1921 the riverbanks had undergone a 'mass occupation' from arriving nomads.[103] Plant fodder on the delta had been trampled or consumed by nomadic herds. Some nomads had done some fishing of their own, which Glavryba referred to as 'poaching'.[104] The effect on the fishing industry was said to be catastrophic. Local fishermen had to travel further in search of fodder for their own livestock, and fish were scared into deeper waters by the presence of animals so close to the banks. Glavryba warned that, if the situation did not improve, the Ural River might share the fate of the Emba further east, which had lost all value to the fishing industry.[105] Most interestingly, Glavryba blamed the 'connivance of the local economic organs' for the influx.[106] Glavryba asked Moscow to intervene, enforce its earlier ban, and establish clear and recognised borders between two enterprises: nomadic animal husbandry and sedentary fishing. Of course, to do so meant confronting the Federal Committee for Land Affairs' promise that nomads should not be denied access to water resources during their seasonal migrations.

Controversy was surely exacerbated by the Cossacks' popular association with tsarist-era colonisation. Perhaps in deference to this association, the affair was treated as a matter of national autonomy to be resolved by national organs of state. Narkomzem RSFSR forwarded the complaint from Glavryba to its Kazakh counterpart in Orenburg, and the Kazakh Central Executive Committee consequentially sent a delegation to the Ural estuary to investigate.[107] But for Moscow's part it seems to have been assumed that the Cossacks would remain in place. Before hearing the results of Orenburg's excursion to the north Caspian, Narkomzem RSFSR asked Orenburg what measures were being taken to prevent further migration to the banks of the Ural, implying that the displacement of the Cossacks was undesirable.[108] Cossacks were not seen as colonisers and the democratic involvement of nomads in the dispute came perhaps only with the involvement of national institutions. Certainly the case had an ominous precedent. A complete prohibition of private fishing on the banks of the Aral and Caspian Seas had already

contributed to a crisis for the Iomud tribe of nomads, exacerbated by ill-considered border controls.[109]

At this early stage the practice and politics of decolonisation could work in the nomads' favour. As made clear by petitions from dispossessed Russians, the boundaries of nomadic pasture buckled during and immediately after the revolutionary period. The Party's counter-imperial platform in Central Asia made official condemnation of the nomads' actions more difficult. Nomads themselves were afforded substantial rhetorical support.[110] There is even the suggestion that administrative borders established before 1923 were designed to concur with nomadic territorial divisions.[111] Any benefits from the temporary extension of pasture must be balanced against the overall destabilisation and further ruination of agriculture in Central Asia, of course, and mitigation of the nomads' actions was also nevertheless attempted. The Party could ill-afford to allow the chaotic and unstructured wanderings of the nomads, as their migrations were often perceived, to disrupt any enterprise at random. The Party's answer was to permit nomads to choose their own pastureland but with the condition that their choices not threaten the stability of other communities.[112]

Clearly this specification was frequently ignored, but not always. When sedentary areas were considered economically indispensable, they were more likely to be protected. The fishermen of the Ural would eventually become associated with a larger developmental plan for their region, far more important than individual farming families in Akmola or Atbasar. In the Semirech'e area, nomadic migration near the Turksib Railway's construction sites was supervised exceptionally closely.[113] The success of major industrial projects like the Turksib was of far greater concern to the economy of the Soviet Union than the viability of the occasional farmstead. Not only were nomads kept away from construction efforts, but sedentary agriculture in neighbouring lands had to be pursued with renewed vigour to feed industrial workers.[114]

Not for the last time, the Party's policy on post-colonial emancipation came into conflict with the imperative of economic development, and certain internal borders had to be recognised by nomadic communities for the new system to flourish.[115] Even as nomadic migrations were extended, the principle that they can and should be contained and controlled by the Party stood firm.

Asserting Control

In the face of precipitous macroeconomic ambitions, there is evidence that the Federal Committee for Land Affairs made efforts to maintain its 1921 ruling and to support nomadic interests. It demanded the presence of regional Party leaders at commissions on nomadic affairs, for example.[116] But as other laws proliferated and economic organs squabbled over priorities, alternative principles for the definition and use of nomadic land were introduced in law.[117] These reflected the changing circumstances of the time. The politics of decolonisation was beginning to lose its intensity, and inter-ethnic violence was extant but less widespread.[118] Provisions for the occupation of certain areas by sedentary farmers might therefore be made with less fear of provocation. Also, the legislative cacophony of the earliest years was being stifled. Administrative structures were gaining some limited coherence. Local Party members expressed confidence in the growing formalisation of Soviet power in Central Asia by describing an institutional hierarchy of regional and district committees, each with their own jurisdiction and powers, and by entrusting this hierarchy with the resolution of controversies regarding the use of land.[119]

For the Kazakhs, a declaration on Land Organisation for the Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and Settling Population of the Autonomous Kazakh Socialist Soviet Republic was produced in March 1924.[120] This declaration was the product of cooperation between major institutions in Moscow and Orenburg (still at this time the capital of the Kazakh Republic), and it contained two significant clauses on the question of land use. First, in areas dominated by animal husbandry where the question of land use was no longer considered contentious, tracts of land were to be found and partitioned for the pursuit of other agricultural activities, the nature of which would depend on local environmental conditions. Where arguments emerged during the act of partition, these would be resolved on a case-by-case basis at special land commissions or other agricultural institutions.[121] Second, especially intractable arguments over land use were to be passed upwards within the administrative hierarchy, to be solved by *uezd*, *guberniia* or republic-wide bodies.[122]

The land commissions mentioned in the declaration were at the front line of regionalisation efforts in the Kazakh Republic.[123] They had been

operating since 1922, but their role and formation were standardised in 1924. Three to five local individuals would typically constitute a commission.[124] Their personal details were recorded when they were vested with judicial competence, and documentation reveals that they were normally men, as young as in their early 20s, who would not have to be Communist Party members, though among Russian peasants youth was the characteristic that most often correlated with Party membership and the same may have been true on the steppe.[125] Commission members were expected to have some experience in agriculture but would not need higher educational qualifications.[126] These men sat at the bottom of a complex institutional system that was further refined later in the decade, but their authority was considerable, given their lack of training.[127] Unlike the legal people's courts operating in European Russia after 1920, the land commissions did not require the oversight or presence of a trained professional or judge.[128] In 1925 alone, Kazakh land commissions resolved over 4,000 disagreements.[129] For administrative purposes, these cases were divided into 16 separate types of dispute, including the allotment and demarcation of farmland and the location of nomadic migratory routes.[130]

A glimpse of how these commissions operated further reveals the changing logic of land governance nearly halfway through the decade. In March 1924, a group of 94 nomadic Kazakhs in the eastern half of the republic sought permission to settle, and utilised the state's petition system to request resources to make their new farming activities a success.[131] These 94 individuals amounted to 18 households in a nomadic community of 32, and from the remaining 14 tents dissent was raised about the petition. A *volost* land commission considered the case on 21 April 1924, and found that the proposed settlement would affect the winter pastureland of the nomads who wished to continue migrating. A month later the *uezd* land commission concurred with the original verdict, but on 11 August 1924 the Semipalatinsk Guberniia's land commission, which had also been consulted, decided that it had insufficient evidence to intercede. The nomads hoping to settle recalibrated their plan, distancing their proposed settlement from their fellow nomads' winter pastures and resubmitting their petition.[132] The remaining nomads then complained that the alternative proposal would destroy their seasonal hayfields and complicate their access to water.[133] Not until 12 August 1925 did the *uezd* land committee finally rule in

the settling nomads' favour. The borders of a new sedentary farm were established, and use of land within those borders by nomadic herds, formerly permissible, became illegal.

At this point, protesting nomads sought to employ the decolonising nationality politics that had been applied so effectively in years before. They pointed out that, at the hearing of the final *uezd* land commission in August, not a single Kazakh who spoke Russian competently was in attendance but the proceedings had nevertheless been held in that language. The translator's ability was poor, and the land commission thus 'did not get to the essence of the case'.[134] It seems the 1921 resolution's doubts about the difficulty of including nomads in consultative processes were justified. Yet the politics of decolonisation were in decline. The Russians at the land commission may have had a cultural prejudice in favour of settlement, but it was a prejudice increasingly shared by *guberniia*-level organs, which upheld the *uezd* land commission's decision at an open congress on 16 November 1925.[135] Most interestingly, the nomads who petitioned to settle adopted another feature of the Party's rhetoric at this time, apparently dismissing national differences and instead opting to call their still-migrating fellow Kazakhs 'kulak-*bais*'.[136] The combination of Russian and Kazakh words here may have been the translator's invention, but assuming it is a fair rendering, the term implies that stubborn affluent nomads were agitating to keep their community in the past. In a sense there may have been some truth to this, given the greater capabilities of nomads with larger herds to continue migrating. Either way, it is instructive that class-based insults were becoming the language of choice for astute nomads petitioning a commission of Russians, even as the agenda of post-imperial reparation was losing its resonance among administrators. Class and economic development had notionally been part of the first land reform but as an agenda they had become secondary to decolonisation.[137] They were now becoming the predominant guiding principles of internal land use.

Bais and *manaps* were becoming the chief antagonists in Communist Party propaganda, recast as Central Asia's native bourgeoisie.[138] It was argued that minor despots thrived in nomadic society and kept nomads trapped by a primordial lifestyle so as to better exploit their labour. One means of doing this was controlling access to land and water. The Tsar was said to have created and empowered a bourgeois class of nomads

whose loyalty was bought through the distribution of land and resources.[139] The Soviet state's regulation of land and water thus became a slogan of liberation as well as a pillar of Soviet agricultural policy in Central Asia, and settlement became a manifestation of class war.[140]

Taking greater control of land and regulating its use was a way to stop wealthy Central Asians doing the same to the detriment of poorer nomads.[141] This was the political benefit of guaranteeing sufficient water access for nomads and settlers.[142] The declaration on Land Organisation from 1924 included an unequivocal clause on the matter. It again specified that nomads and semi-nomads could under no circumstances be prohibited from using water resources, even when those resources were under constant use by sedentary communities. The declaration did however recognise the necessity of protecting wetlands from damage by nomadic herds, another reminder of the vandalism Glavryba and others saw in itinerant cattle herding.[143] The competing needs of the nomadic poor, sedentary agriculture and industry all had to be balanced.

There was a deficiency in the internal logic of hurting the bourgeoisie by undercutting their ability to provide or deny resources. An example of this resides in the actions of the Semipalatinsk Guberniia's land commission. Despite the absence of wetlands nearby, the commission disregarded concerns that a new farm would obstruct nomadic access to water. On the one hand, the *bais* among the remaining nomads may have been strengthened by the commission's decision, since nomads would look to them to provide an alternative water source. On the other hand, the nomads with permission to settle had theoretically freed themselves from the power of the *bais* forever.[144] Settlement too was progressive and emancipatory, and water was a necessity for it to work. Who then got the water – migrating nomads under the power of the *bais* or newly settled nomads liberated from the *bais*' oppression? Such decisions were a double-edged sword.

In spite of these evident contradictions, certain commitments of the early years were reaffirmed just before the moment of national delimitation in 1925. The state continued to assert its right to distribute land between nomadic and sedentary communities and to dictate pasturage sites for nomads during their seasonal migrations and at their points of rest. Land appropriate for sedentary farming would be offered to nomads hoping to settle, with provisions notionally guaranteed for

infrastructural development and water access.[145] Nomads were promised free passage to designated migratory points.[146] Yet for the purposes of further development and the swift resolution of conflicts, governing frameworks would again be changed in ways that did not safeguard provisions promised by the Party. The administrative processes by which disputes were resolved remained of immense importance to the management of nomadism, and Article 207 of the Land Code of the RSFSR garnered particularly acute attention. The first Land Code was introduced for the RSFSR in 1922 under Lenin's personal supervision, after which other Soviet republics set about creating their own, though the collectivisation of agriculture in the early 1930s would render them largely obsolete.[147]

Across Central Asia, the power of the Land Commissions and other local bodies was constrained between 1924 and 1927.[148] As well as using changes in the Land Code to centralise, Kazakh Republic-level authorities made further efforts to extend their power and authority over the conciliation of disagreements in January 1927 and later in 1928, years when Union-wide economic policy was also taking a more interventionist direction.[149] All this was justified as a way for Party members to triumph over patriarchal or bourgeois elements in rural areas.[150] The result of this decision was the centralisation of power.[151] Land commissions were not uniformly sympathetic to nomadic needs, but their place at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy at least gave them some understanding of local affairs. Central organs were hardly in a position to appreciate the ambiguities of nomadic land-use, and it was their authority that had been strengthened by later reforms. Their economic priorities were macroeconomic, Union-wide.

Further Land Reform

In the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast, precursor to the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, this centralising tendency manifested in political upset. In 1925, a year before Filipp Goloshchekin began his Little October in the Kazakh Republic, a number of figures in the Kyrgyz establishment complained that the policies of First Secretary Mikhail Kamenskii amounted to the colonisation of Kyrgyz land and showed preference for Russians.[152] Thirty Party members ultimately signed a letter signalling their dissatisfaction with Kyrgyz Party actions,

including the partial preservation of the Tsar's colonial legacy and a decision to ignore the complaints of local activists on one side and an increasing capitulation to Moscow on the other.[153] Tellingly, these 30 oppositionists anticipated reprisals from central organs and were proved right to have done so, suffering personal attacks from Kamenskii and officials from the Central Asian Bureau.[154]

'The Thirty' had good reason for disquiet. The administration was continuing to retract some of its more generous accommodation of equalised land rights and decolonisation. In mid-1925, land under use by European settlers was formally categorised as 'sedentary-agricultural' in the Kyrgyz and Kazakh regions formerly of Turkestan.[155] This was more than a semantic shift. It placed the land at one end of a spectrum with 'cattle-herding-nomadic' occupying the other extreme, and thus connoted an exclusively sedentary area safe from potential nomadic interference or a transient nomadic population.[156] Even as its appreciation for the diversity of agriculture in Central Asia improved, the Party's thinking became more binary. 'Sedentary-agricultural' status would at times entitle areas to more onerous taxation but also more state support for the development of agriculture. The change applied to land allotted to Europeans by 'agricultural organs of Soviet power and organs of the previous power.'[157] Subtly, the legacy of tsarism could be overlooked.

In July 1925, the Land Settlement Administration in former Turkestan recommended that *all land* deemed suitable for agricultural development should be treated as predominantly sedentary regardless of the actual demographic realities in evidence.[158] This was justified by the sharpening crisis in the size of nomadic cattle herds and the apparently urgent need to induce settlement.[159] The Land Settlement Administration was in many ways the Soviet iteration of the Tsar's Resettlement Administration, to the extent that it hired many of the latter's personnel and utilised some of its data.[160]

It was in this context that another programme of land reform was conceived and implemented, this one pertaining to those lands administered by the Central Asian Bureau. This largely excluded Kazakhs but, as will be discussed here, included Kyrgyz. As with many of the Party's agendas, the premise of the reform was simultaneously vague and sweeping in scope, and varied according to local specificities. For Beatrice Penati, the reform 'was part of an effort to integrate the local

population into the framework of the Soviet State'.[161] As such, in Uzbekistan the reform involved the seizure of land for larger economic projects like irrigation and sharecropping. As with the first such effort, the second land reform also had a clear and much-vaunted redistributive aim, though greater emphasis would be placed on the equalisation of classes rather than nations. Indeed, Russian land holdings would be strengthened by the second reform.[162]

For the Kyrgyz authorities, rocked by accusations of a new concerted colonisation, a key justification for the second land reform was the failures of the first. The Party reported that working Kyrgyz complained about the inadequacies of the first reform and the tendency of indolent paupers to squander the land they received earlier in the decade through inactivity and lack of cultivation.[163] Since the reform, complained the Special Commission on Land Organisation (an organ of the all-Union Party), land organisation in former Turkestan meant little more than land surveying, an excessive deference to past customs and practices, and the ongoing creation of multiple smallholdings, to the great detriment of the Union's macroeconomic goals. For the future, the creation of smallholdings should be prohibited except where land can serve no greater alternative purpose. Single large *auls* should be prevented from consolidating in one territory, as this would strengthen the minor despots therein.[164] Land and water reform was absolutely another attempt to break the economic and political power of the nomads' upper classes.[165]

While the Kyrgyz territory continued changing its administrative status and structures in 1926, each of its regions generated and resolved a great number of legal cases relating to water access, agricultural practice, land use and land ownership, all in an effort to formalise and control Central Asian agriculture, all the while generating masses of new information for Party leaders.[166] The reform prompted another wave of investigations into sedentary and nomadic territory alike, as the administration strained to know all there was to know about the agricultural and economic facilities of its territory.[167]

Unlike the first land reform, the second was intended to affect principally sedentary areas, and so it did, but its impact was felt among nomads and not only indirectly. The nomads most affected by the reform were those to be found in the southern regions of Kyrgyz territory.[168] Both agricultural and cattle-herding communities were explicitly to be

involved in reforms even if they were not on the local land register, providing their absence from it could be explained by the famine of 1917 or the upheaval of the Civil War; in this manner transient *auls* of all kinds could be enveloped into the unfolding operation.[169]

Reforms created disputes between communities and earned the administration further ire, though that same administration complained about the continuing passivity of poor Kyrgyz in the face of emancipation.[170] Passivity was in turn blamed not on the failures of the reform to fulfil its purpose, but on disbelief among the poor that such a plan was realisable.[171] If the redistribution of land did not quite provoke class war, there is evidence that it further heightened disputes between sedentary and nomadic communities. Moderately affluent sedentary peasants apparently expressed alarm that only their land would be taken for development or reapportionment, and were insistent that nomads should see their land reserves depleted as well.[172] Fears that former nomads would ruin the neighbourhood were the mirror image of nomadic concerns about diminishing pasture. The rumours and realities of land reform exacerbated anxieties and social tensions but not in the neatly class oriented way intended by the Party; a nomadic-sedentary divide was one alternative cleavage.[173]

The Kyrgyz administration took steps to ensure that migrating nomads would not undo its handiwork. Migration into a zone undergoing land organisation was forbidden. Migration outside of land apportioned for that purpose was also forbidden. Instability in land use was a core preoccupation of the regime. The implications of much land organisation were increasingly punitive for nomads.[174] The disruption caused by the reform compounded ongoing hardships and shortages of land and cattle, causing some nomads to settle, a pattern repeated in isolated pockets of Kyrgyz territory.[175] The second land reform was more efficacious than the first, but also had its limitations. The Central Asian Bureau claimed that national delimitation had expedited land and water reform, but the opposite appears to have been the case.[176]

Class and Development

Sensitivity about European colonisation did not disappear. Decolonisation remained a potent motif in the Party's language well into the 1920s, as in the continued casting of the Resettlement Administration in the

role of villain. In practice, too, decolonisation continued, but its implementation became more complicated and compromised. The Soviet authorities came to utilise data from the administration to guide their various agricultural reforms, potentially imbibing more of the Tsar's own misapprehensions as they did so.[177] European land holdings became protected and, when it was Central Asians effectively doing the colonising by settling permanently on nomadic pastures, organs up and down the institutional hierarchy were amenable. The administration was steadily including more mechanisms for the development and settlement of land within its jurisdiction. Decolonisation and economic development or modernisation had not always been opponents and had at one point informed one another, but this relationship did not last.[178] In later years some of those who encouraged decolonisation were condemned as counterrevolutionaries.[179]

Support for nomadism also lingered. Still in 1925, the revision of land use norms was apparently intended to ease the congestion of nomadic regions and migration routes. Yet it was acknowledged that such routes were ever-narrowing and ever-diminishing, forcing nomads to share less and less pasture.[180] In 1926, village soviets in the Belovodsk Okrug of Kyrgyzstan were informed that cattle herders were having their land seized from them by native Kyrgyz and others, in spite of the land being specifically reserved for cattle herding.[181] Soviets were urged to take measures to end the lawlessness, to bring criminals to book. Soviets were further informed that, if the invasion continued, those in authority nearby would be held responsible and removed from their posts.[182] A door to the continuation of nomadic practice and the preservation of migratory routes was, it was made clear, to be left open, but it was barely ajar.[183] Caveats were added that sedentary agriculture need only be pursued where conditions allowed it.[184] This was an acceptance of the limitations of socialist endeavour, but it would not last forever.

It is of crucial importance that any protection of nomadic subsistence was always intended, ultimately, to bring nomadism to an end. Ensuring access to water undermined the retrograde influence of the *bais.* Giving land to settling nomads encouraged others to follow suit. Attempts to induce settlement among nomads were often justified as a way of breaking the power of the *bais* and liberating poor nomads, but the actual rationale was larger and more profound than that.[185] The nomadic

economy was always believed to be inefficient. At a time of widespread food shortages in urban areas, the large tracts of land required to sustain a relatively small nomadic population seemed poorly employed.[186] When the state set about categorising territory by economic strength and agricultural practice, nomadic regions and impoverished regions were found to be the same thing. This was true in both the Kazakh and Turkestan Republics from the beginning of the decade, and Moscow took its own clear interest as well, as evidenced by the existence of the Special Commission for the for the Study of Nomadic Districts and the importance of the Special Commission for Land Organisation in both Kazakhstan and Turkestan.[187] Much intra-Party debate in the 1920s was characterised by a growing belief that the kind of animal husbandry practised by nomads was productive only to the level of subsistence.[188]

With the Kazakh Party extending the ambition of its developmental aims, it found its administrative structures wanting. The Collegiate of Higher Control over Land Disputes was the foremost supervisory body for land use for much of the 1920s.[189] It predated the Kazakh Commissariat of Agriculture but would become part of that larger body, and collected a good deal of documentation from land commissions and other organs throughout its time in operation.[190] But its oversight of local land commissions was severely hampered by its own lack of resources, and doubts about the efficacy of the commissions themselves had already become a matter of real concern by 1925.[191] Theoretically the Collegiate acted as a Court of Cassation for the commissions, resolving cases mired in disagreement. But with insufficient personnel most of its cases were forwarded to organisations in Moscow, where files were lost or forgotten for years at a time.[192] In this context the land commissions looked unaccountable, and the predominance of Europeans in the commissions caused ongoing concern. Similar criticisms were made about other agricultural authorities, whose inattention to contentious land use was said to be aggravating ethnic tensions.[193]

In former Turkestan, administrators noted their lack of knowledge about nomadic regions and the resources and affluence therein, and bemoaned the predominance of small-scale agricultural efforts in these areas as well.[194] As the decade went on, the Party continued to complain about the limitations of time, the continuance of shortages, and the difficulties of governing sparsely populated nomadic regions.[195]

As nomads found themselves restricted to the least navigable, least productive land, so the Party found the geography of nomadic regions least auspicious for proper governance.[196] Whole swathes of Kyrgyzstan were omitted from macroeconomic projects because they were nomadic.[197] Meanwhile, progress in sedentary areas remained slow but appeared achievable.[198] Disputes over the proper use of resources arose. Central organs insisted that their inventories should not be used to support district- or *okrug*-level land reform in former Turkestan.[199] The proper role of the administration's land parties was also disputed.[200]

Nature and the Environment

In the context of such infrastructural inadequacies, with which administrators in Central Asia had surely become well acquainted, it is all the more startling how ambitious the regime remained. A cultural change had taken place in Party organs by this time. In the earliest meetings of the Communist Party's Kazakh branch respect for the steppe's forbidding climate led to an explicit consensus that there were areas of the republic irrevocably unsuited to sedentary farming.[201] Decolonisation was justified for this reason; as tsarist-era Russian colonists could only farm the best land, nomads had been left with the least fertile pastures and a balance had to be redrawn. Similar concessions were made in former Turkestan. In 1925 the Tsarist Resettlement Administration was criticised for exaggerating the natural capacity of nomadic regions to support a large population. It was further claimed that such exaggerations had crept into the working assumptions of the Soviet regime and had to be expunged.[202]

Quickly, however, journalists and Party members became convinced that a properly managed socialist society could overcome any obstacle of the natural environment, and so 'lost interest in nature'.[203] By 1926 Filipp Goloshchekin was heading the Kazakh Communist Party.[204] He contended that substantial investment from the Soviet state would tame the wild steppe, imitating the earlier self-confident boasts of leaders in Moscow.[205] Localised projects such as irrigation and land reclamation became large central initiatives in former Turkestan.[206] The Koshchi Union (Soiuz Koshchi, sometimes Soiuzkoshchi or Soiuz Zharli), a Party campaign in Central Asia, took part in various agricultural and developmental endeavours.[207] All these projects were evidence that the

Party had become convinced of its ability to make more Central Asian districts habitable.[208]

As well as taking control of administrative regionalisation, central Party figures were asserting control over the natural environment.[209] It was argued that nomads had struggled on the infertile lands left to them by tsarist colonisers because of retrograde nomadic practices.[210] Development became inevitable and backwardness inexcusable. Nomads could no longer use their hostile homeland as an excuse not to join the socialist, sedentary future, and any land could serve a purpose more productive than nomadic pasture.

The extension of cultivated land, particularly fields of grain but also cotton and other agricultural produce, was an avowed Party aim as early as 1921.[211] But the Party's growing self-assurance about humankind's mastery over nature encouraged policy makers to expand their ambitions ever deeper into the arid steppe and distant foothills. Meanwhile the common assumption that the nomadic economy was irredeemably inefficient had never left administrators or Party members. If nomadic regions were economically underperforming, it followed that the extension of sedentary regions, in the form of cultivated land, would improve the region's economy. By 1928 post-imperial sensitivities would no longer act as a brake on agricultural policy, which was always configured throughout the decade in regionalising terms; documentation might discuss the region's growing 'sown area', the 'extension of cereal farming' or the 'extension of the limits of arable farming'.[212] The number of ploughed *desiatinas* was a foremost measure of economic development for Party members, and the crop yield from these *desiatinas* could be cited to signify economic devastation or improvement.[213]

Perhaps the most indicative phrase comes from a formal report by the All-Union Central Executive Committee in November 1928. Here, the committee emphasises the importance of 'expediting the inclusion of vacant land into the economic revolution'.[214] Here again is implied the old trope of an empty expanse of nomadic land and a dynamic, transformative revolution waiting to crowd it with productive activity. Towards the very end of the 1920s, rural areas across the USSR witnessed a new kind of colonisation, led by the Red Army and the '25,000-ers'.[215] As in the Great Plains of North America, it was forgotten that these lands were not necessarily vacant, but populated

by a people whose lifestyle was invisible to the forces of, respectively, capitalism and communism.[216]

Conclusion

By the late 1920s the attitudes and ambitions of the Party were inflated enough to justify the oncoming collectivisation campaign, and another blow to the nomadic economy was due. In 1928 the Kazakh Republic prepared reluctantly for the arrival of 500,000 new immigrants, an influx supervised from Moscow.[217] Migrants were to be directed to land selected for its fertility in the north of the republic or along the Turksib railway line.[218] The Kazakh administration under Goloshchekin defended its right to specify where migrants should be allowed to settle, and chose two vast plots of land in the Ural and Petropavlovsk Okrugs.[219] As in the early years of famine, organs of state were compelled to delimit space on the steppe by circumstances beyond their immediate control, as the decision to encourage half a million Europeans into the Kazakh Republic was taken by central organs in Moscow.[220] The reappearance of Europeans on the steppe of *dzhut* at the height of this influx intensified concerns about Kazakh citizens. In January 1930 the Kazakh People's Commissariat of Agriculture offered up a list of areas where state organs, already overstretched by immigration and defined by the poverty of their natural resources, might buckle.[221] Within a decade, the Kazakh Communist Party had gone from supporting the right of Kazakhs to use land as they saw fit to overseeing an influx of 500,000 migrants to the best lands of the republic. Many more would follow. Immigrant groups were largely composed of the 'special migrants', kulaks exiled from their homes in Russia during the collectivisation campaign.[222]

The forces that led to the reconfiguration of nomadic land use had been reflected in the Bolshevik Party's two most salient policy platforms in Central Asia, national emancipation and economic development. The Party's emphasis on national identity was utilised by nomads and Central Asians both in and out of the Communist Party to justify the reclamation of land colonised by Europeans, creating a distinction between legally and illegally owned land. The Party's urge to select and support industrial zones, rationally disperse immigrants, undermine indigenous leaders and, most of all, pursue agricultural efficiency

necessitated further distinctions and changing principles, whether based on lifestyle, economic output or the presence of natural resources. The tsarist administration had been developing a similar system of land use, albeit with less speed or sophistication, and so after something of a hiatus the Party was overseeing a process begun by Russian Imperial officers. It is revealing that the tsarist administration in Turkestan specified in law in 1886 that land used by nomads was to be left undisturbed, given that the opposite occurred.[223] As with decolonisation, the Party was sometimes seeking to take ownership over older, grander processes occurring outside of its immediate control, though it was ideologically comfortable with the results it anticipated.

Land ownership heightened the Party's sensitivity to the instability and poverty of nomadic communities, as a high proportion of nomads in the population often correlated with low levels of productivity, but efforts to change land ownership principles created problems while looking like a solution. New territorial and agricultural distinctions separated nomads from the resources they needed, and reminded administrators that the extension of cultivated land could increase a particular region's economic output even as it inconvenienced local people. For Zere Maindanali, the steady expansion of agriculture into nomadic regions brought nomads into the crosshairs of the Party when collectivisation began.[224] Systems of reconciliation were widespread, but were difficult to supervise and seemed to carry an inherent European bias. This made land commissions and regional soviets less responsive to an early body of legislation that was strikingly clear in its defence of nomadic interests. As the decade ended, central and regional organs introduced new laws with substantively new aims and priorities, focused as they were on macroeconomic concerns embedded in the first Five Year Plan.

CHAPTER 3

BORDERING NOMADS

In March 1925, the first meeting of the Kyrgyz Communist Party Oblast Committee received a letter from Joseph Stalin.[1] The General Secretary had warm words for the assembled Party members. Citing its location along the Sino-Soviet border, he claimed that Kyrgyzstan had an especially important role in the diffusion of Soviet ideas to the east. By raising Kyrgyz national culture and building a new economy, the region could act as a beacon for nearby communities as yet living in a 'patriarchal feudal bourgeois' state.[2] Such rhetorical gestures drew from Vladimir Lenin's canon of anti-imperial pronouncements, though they might also be interpreted as a nascent act of Soviet empire building.[3]

The creation of the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Oblast, as Kyrgyzstan was then known, had been a contentious affair. Party members were expelled after arguments about the proper form of the Kyrgyz Republic and its relative power alongside a larger Uzbek counterpart. National delimitation everywhere provoked such disputes but no more so than in Central Asia.[4] Former representatives of various nationalist or non-Bolshevik political movements, once absorbed by the Party, began defending and extending the territorial autonomy of their national republics, and this naturally put them into competition with one another.[5]

The March 1925 letter from the centre thus touches on the two contentious kinds of border making then taking place around Kyrgyz territory. First, the changing significance of a border between Soviet and non-Soviet territories. Second, the ongoing consolidation of a national border between Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz lands within the Soviet space. These two processes were different in an important way: in the second

case, Soviet authorities held sway over each side of the border and thereby had more control over the meaning of the border and the terms by which it could be crossed. These terms could be made more flexible as local circumstances required. But both processes were implicated in the creation and division of national spaces, and this lead to common intractabilities. Whereas Chapter 2 considered the internal, administrative or agricultural delimitation of land and land use, the present chapter will look at borders of a national character and their effect on nomadic life. The two topics necessarily overlap at times. Both, for example, are partly products of *raionirovanie* or regionalisation, a policy that began as an attempt to divide Soviet land into economically efficient units but became part of the creation of national territories.[6]

The emergence of national borders was the most obvious interface between the governance of nationalities and of nomads, and the point at which the contradictions between the two became most acute. The Bolsheviks developed a national conception of land and divided up territory between different nations. This strictly national basis for the generation and maintenance of borders was fairly new in Central Asia, and suited the region's nomadic areas like an ill-fitting garment.[7] Nomads were not easily attributed to any one locale and their lifestyle caused them to habitually disrespect the proprieties of national territorial division by crossing borders without formal sanction. Nomadic principles of land use clashed repeatedly with national ones.

The responses of administrators to the innumerable quandaries produced by these clashes reveal much about the direction of Soviet thinking over the course of the 1920s. It was in borderlands that a community's nomadic habits were most frequently overlooked in favour of its national identity. The state's fixation on national difference distracted it from differences of agricultural practice, often to the nomads' disadvantage. This pattern began changing as the decade closed, but to no more beneficial effect. It manifested itself in a series of high profile disagreements between republic-level organs. Some of these will be discussed here in a rough chronological order.

The Bukey Province

In late 1921 authorities in Moscow sought to resolve an ongoing territorial dispute between the predominantly Russian city of Astrakhan

and Urda, a small town now in far-western Kazakhstan.[8] The dispute concerned two parcels of land located between the Ural and Volga Rivers. First was 10,677 *desiatinas* of land connected to Lake Baskunchak, a landlocked body of salt water around 160 miles north of the Caspian Sea. Second, not far from the first, was the 50,977 *desiatinas* of land covered by the 'Regular Nomadic Encampment' (Ocherednoe Kochev′e), a large portion of pasturage once claimed by nomads but increasingly leased for use to Russian farmers.[9] Both Astrakhan and Urda claimed administrative jurisdiction over these areas, which sat in an old, agricultural borderland and a relatively new, national borderland.

In the late eighteenth century the Russian Tsar ruled the lands between the Volga and Ural Rivers. After clashes with nearby Cossacks, Kazakhs had originally been forbidden from migrating into this region from the east across the Ural River.[10] This ruling was overturned in 1801 when, with the Tsar's official sanction, Sultan Bukey led a collection of Kazakh families over the Ural River and established a new, notionally autonomous Bukey Khanate, known also as the Inner Horde, on Astrakhan's doorstep. This khanate was more integrated into the Russian state than its counterparts on the steppe, but conditions varied. Conflicts arose between farmers and nomads over the use of land, and imperial soldiers were called upon to keep the peace.[11] When Bukey died in 1845 the khanate was formally abolished and its people came under the jurisdiction of Astrakhan.[12] Though this changed the administration of the region, the population remained predominantly nomadic in contrast to its sedentary Russian neighbours.[13]

The Tsar had used the topography of the region to place people into administrative categories and thereby to control them. The Ural River first kept Cossacks and Kazakhs apart, then it distinguished between two groups of nomads, one more assimilated into the empire than the other. The river was a convenient administrative symbol, used to define the terms of St Petersburg's control. Later in the nineteenth century, colonial officials came to operate on the assumption that certain topographical features placed geographical limits on the expansion and consolidation of imperial power.[14] When the Bolsheviks took charge they introduced a new priority beyond topography and administrative convenience: the recognition of national difference. To respect and represent the population living in the former khanate, a Bukey Guberniia was included in the new

Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (KASSR) in 1920.[15] The *guberniia*'s governing centre became Urda. Of course this would not arrest the enormous centralisation of power in Moscow, but the newly national conception of authority meant significant differences.

There was some confusion over the ethnic composition of the Ocherednoe Kochev'e area, as some reports describe land there as Kalmyk as well as Kazakh, but the great majority of correspondence treats the land as Kazakh alone.[16] The key distinction in the dispute became Urda's inclusion into the Kazakh Republic. This licensed it to govern Kazakhs and represent their interests. Astrakhan, with its significant Russian population, was predisposed to defend Russians.[17] This raised administrative or economic disagreements between the two to matters of national autonomy. During the dispute, the central authorities of the Kazakh Republic wrote to Urda.[18] They proclaimed their explicit intention to protect the interests of the Bukey Guberniia. While a matter of bureaucratic expediency and land management may have been more astutely resolved by local figures working in regional centres, the involvement of republic-level organs brought a new national, political element to the ethnic tensions and profound agricultural differences that had survived 1917.

Perhaps in deference to the ongoing significance of these differences, it was the central People's Commissariat for Agriculture (Narkomzem RSFSR) that considered Urda and Astrakhan's land disputes and produced a declaration.[19] To do so it brought together two representatives of the Kazakh Commissariat for Agriculture (Narkomzem KASSR) and one member of the Astrakhan Guberniia Committee (Gubkom).[20] The declaration stated that both the land near Lake Baskunchak and the Regular Nomadic Encampment should be considered Kazakh territory. All those Russians living continuously within either area retained their rights to land use, but now on the basis of Kazakh law and under governance from Urda. Russians not permanently resident in either area but using land therein were offered a choice by the declaration; take up occupancy within the Kazakh Republic and live by its rules, or move to the Astrakhan Guberniia and lose all rights to use Kazakh land. All Russian farmsteads newly deemed illegal had to be dismantled by 1 March 1923.[21] The forced emigration of sedentary Russians would leave vacant contested pastureland and other resources essential to the lives of local nomads. We see here the decolonising potential of Bolshevik governance

in the early 1920s, manifested across the USSR's post-colonial spaces.[22] In this case, however, the potential would barely be realised.

Astrakhan was informed of the commissariat's declaration, and ordered to fulfil its requirements, on 18 October 1921.[23] The next day the Astrakhan Gubkom questioned the wisdom of the decision, and delivered a report to Narkomzem RSFSR.[24] The report made the concession, possibly tactical, that the Regular Nomadic Encampment had officially been owned by Kazakhs.[25] But, long before the Revolution, land had been leased back to Russians on a haphazard basis and they had ploughed up more and more of the encampment. Productive farmland had been created, yielding crops as well as increasingly large herds of cattle, larger even than those of the Kazakhs.[26] Besides, it was argued, the Kazakhs did not even use the land. It had become Russian by custom.[27] Astrakhan also indicated that the Russian population of both the Baskunchak tract and the Regular Nomadic Encampment was larger than the local Kazakh population, and that further colonisation by the Russians had been permitted and regulated by two Krai Congresses of Soviets since the Revolution.[28]

As the administrative centre of a largely Russian *guberniia*, Astrakhan argued that it should govern areas where Russians were a majority. Urda, as part of the KASSR, was less appropriate for the task. The nationality of the populations in question was not the only relevant factor, however. Astrakhan also presented nearby farming communities as positively as possible in an effort to protect them from disestablishment. By emphasising their productivity, Astrakhan brought attention to the comparative backwardness of the Kazakh nomads who apparently enjoyed the sympathies of authorities in Urda.[29] Astrakhan therefore admitted the presence and importance of nomads in the debate, but only in terms of the threat they posed to productive farmers.

Some of Astrakhan's account was questionable. Studies conducted in 1920 found a population of 239,300 in the Bukey Guberniia and described no less than 99 per cent of this number as Kazakh, the remaining 1 per cent being Russian. In no other Kazakh-run *guberniia* were Russians found to be such a minority.[30] The reliability of these statistics seems low not least because, as is clear from the dispute between Urda and Astrakhan itself, the official location of the Bukey Guberniia was ambiguous. Nevertheless, Narkomzem RSFSR had seen reports on the preponderance of Kazakhs in the Bukey Guberniia by late 1922, and this can only have damaged the credibility of claims made by

Astrakhan about the number of Russians on the borderlands.[31] Most probably, ambiguity arose from the lack of consensus on what constituted residence and land-ownership. Because much of the Kazakh population was regularly migrating and its habits were poorly understood by local Russians, Astrakhan was able to underestimate the number of Kazakhs and the extent of their land use, either through mistake or wilful misunderstanding. Other organs were free to exaggerate it.[32]

Astrakhan's resistance continued through 1922 and into the following year. Twice in 1923, in April and August, Narkomzem RSFSR made declarations stating that it saw no credible reason to reverse the original decision it had made in October 1921.[33] Repeatedly over this two-year period, the authorities in Moscow endorsed the principle that the Bukey Kazakhs should be managed by Kazakh organs of state. Whilst simultaneously appealing against Moscow's ruling, Astrakhan made efforts to demonstrate compliance. In 1922 the *guberniia*'s eleventh Congress of Soviets conceded that chaos had been created by the unsystematic settlement of nomadic territory, and that Russians had encroached on swathes of land far larger than had originally been intended.[34] These claims, though accurate, bear some resemblance to the rhetoric of many in the Kazakh branch of the Communist Party at this time, and may have been a symbolic accommodation of the prevailing anti-colonial discourse.[35]

As previously stated, decolonisation existed only as a potentiality in this case. Astrakhan's conciliatory sentiments belied the hardship experienced by those actually living on the borderline between *guberniias*, because the unregulated settlement of land by Russians was continuing apace. In April 1923, Narkomzem RSFSR demanded an explanation from the Astrakhan Gubkom for the 'onslaught' continuing in the Bukey Guberniia.[36] In spite of Bukey's membership of the Kazakh Republic, Russians from neighbouring Astrakhan were still using the land there, disrupting nomadic life in the area. This became a matter of concern for some figures in Moscow.[37] Nomadism complicated the management of the borderland because it affected the behaviour of people on both sides. Nomads came and went. Sedentary communities used this as justification for the settlement of new land, acting on Astrakhan's pretence that nomadic areas were vacant or under-utilised. Thus sedentary Russians were at least as likely to ignore the border as nomads were, despite common stereotypes of the nomad as a feckless wanderer.

How was this being allowed to happen? The Astrakhan Gubkom had argued in 1921 that Urda would favour the nomadic minority, placing productive Russian farmsteads under threat at a time of extensive food shortages. Ignoring this warning, Narkomzem RSFSR had granted Urda control over the disputed areas, specifically declaring that Russian farmers would henceforth live by Kazakh laws. The invasion of cultivated arable farmland by nomadic herds did indeed seem probable. Yet a year-and-a-half later the opposite was happening. Apart from the generalised weakness of the state apparatus at this time, another explanation is that this territorial dispute was fought in national terms. The Kazakh government stated its commitment to 'the defence of the interests of the Bukey', and therefore to the competencies of Urda as a centre of the Kazakh Republic's power, but not to the nomads nearby.[38] Narkomzem RSFSR was adjudicating at a time of official sensitivity to the dangers of great power chauvinism, and its rejection of Astrakhan's arguments should be understood in this context.[39] Nomadism may have caused or exacerbated the dispute in the first place, but it was resolved by bodies speaking more for Russians and Kazakhs than for farmers and nomads, and the extension of nomadic practice was subsequently raised mainly by administrators in Astrakhan scare-mongering about the intentions of those in Urda.

The formal extension of Kazakh borders to encompass nomadic lands might at first seem like an early sign that nomadic life would be respected under Communism. In fact it was a sign that national, territorial identity was gaining formal recognition, replacing the old tsarist principles of topographical and administrative expediency. This meant Kazakh bodies were likely to govern lands in which Kazakhs predominated, irrespective of whether those Kazakhs were nomadic or how well those nomads would be treated. Indeed, even as the Kazakh national border was firmly set in place to the west of the Ural River, the agricultural borders of sedentary farming extended eastwards. The defence of national jurisdiction was taking priority over the defence of nomadism here and elsewhere along the Caspian, such as around the Garabogazköl Lagoon.

The Garabogazköl Lagoon

While around the northern coast of the Caspian Sea nomads were in competition for land with Russian peasants, along its eastern coast and

around the Garabogazköl Lagoon nomads competed with each other. In the final stages of the Civil War new Soviet authorities seemed to anticipate the establishment of peaceful coexistence between tribal peoples in this area, but they were disappointed. Bolshevik reports describe a multitude of attacks and counterattacks between Kazakh and Turkmen nomads. In July 1922 it was noted, for example, that since the beginning of that year Kazakhs from the Adai Uezd had stolen 350 camels and 1,000 rams from Turkmen communities in the neighbouring Krasnovodsk Uezd, an administrative division containing many Turkmen and governed from Krasnovodsk (now Türkmenbaşy).[40] As with Astrakhan and Urda, this conflict necessitated a journey across a new national border. The Adai Uezd was part of the KASSR. The Krasnovodsk Uezd was then part of the Turkestan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (TASSR) and would in 1924 join the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic.

Initially, Soviet authorities tried encouraging Kazakhs to return livestock to Turkmen tribes in exactly the quantities that had been stolen since before 1919, but to no avail. Stealing was in any case a relatively minor concern. Murder, raids and attacks were all described and condemned.[41] Between January and July 1922 four Turkmen were killed by Kazakhs. In response, six Kazakh women had been abducted and a number of cattle stolen. Though four of the women were subsequently returned, two remained kidnapped, and the Turkmen planned further reprisals.[42]

The whole Adai region was notorious. The Adai were originally a tribal grouping within the Kazakhs' Younger *Juz* who rebelled against tsarist authorities in 1870.[43] Violent protests split the Kazakh elites in the area, some of whom sided with the Russian administration and were rewarded, whilst others continued to resist taxation and the confiscation of pasturelands and were brutally repressed.[44] The tradition of resisting authority carried over into the Soviet era. Alibi Dzhangil′din visited the Adai and Turkmen borderlands in 1922–3.[45] He reported that the population of the Adai Uezd, whom he called *adaevtsy*, migrated perpetually throughout the year. This migration took them annually over the Kazakh-Turkestan border and into land used by Turkmen. Though he considered them loyal to Soviet power, Dzhangil′din placed heavy emphasis on the primitive life of the *adaevtsy*, presenting them as helpless in the face of bad weather and a hostile natural environment.[46]

Adaevtsy were also used as examples of the most destitute of the region's population by foremost Party members.[47] Their status as a lineage group brought with it common Soviet assumptions about the inherent backwardness of societies structured around kinship ties. Briefly part of the Turkestan Republic, in October 1920 the Adai Uezd was enlarged to encompass two nomadic districts of the Krasnovodsk Uezd. It then joined the KASSR and was thus designated as Kazakh.[48]

In contrast, administrative bodies based in Krasnovodsk felt able to speak on behalf of local communities who would be designated as Turkmen.[49] In post-Soviet historiography the Turkmen tribes are sometimes distinguished from the other titular nationalities of Soviet Central Asia by their particular interpretation of Islam.[50] As with Kazakh tribal confederations like the Adai, however, genealogy and kinship were vitally important to Turkmen allegiances. The 'extraordinary ethnic complexity' of Central Asia applied as much to Turkmen as to Kazakhs, and it would be inappropriate to suggest that the disorder along the shores of the Caspian Sea was the product of clashes between just two distinct national groups.[51]

There is evidence that some in the Soviet administration understood this. Some reports contain no references to Kazakhs or Turkmen at all, preferring tribal designations such as Dzhangil′din's use of *adaevtsy* and Iomud. The Iomud were another tribal grouping, soon to be incorporated into the Turkmen nation.[52] When the Adai Uezd expanded southwards and claimed land formerly governed by Krasnovodsk, resident Iomuds showed little appreciation for this administrative reorganisation, and local organs struggled to contain Adai-Iomud conflict.[53] While on his excursion from Fort Aleksandrovsk during the Russian Civil War, Dzhangil′din had received help from local inhabitants organised by Tobaniiaz Alniiazov.[54] For his prominence and respect among the Adai, Dzhangil′din named Alniiazov chairman of the Adai Uezd Revolutionary Committee. Alniiazov became as much part of the inchoate Soviet apparatus as any other local elite, but typically his 'attitude towards Soviet power was not simple'.[55] Like Dzhangil′din, Alniiazov was sensitive to the social and political structures of the Adai. He modelled himself as the 'Khan of the Adaevtsy'.[56] In 1922, acting on the violence between local peoples, Alniiazov assembled a military brigade and led a raid over the Kazakh border.[57] He thereby ignored the sanctity of the boundary with Turkestan.

The Alniiazov example broadcasted the central Communist Party's limited power around the Caspian Sea, and further demonstrated that the loyalties dividing the people of the Ustyurt Plateau were more those of kinship than nationhood. Strikingly, many regional organs lacked the acuity to see this. They clung to the view, or maintained the pretence, that the paraphernalia of nationhood would fix ongoing tribal tensions. They took the new Kazakh-Turkestan border seriously even as many nomadic communities habitually traversed it, probably unaware of their transgression. This mentality would become both cause and symptom of the region's conflicts. That this was so is immediately clear from the further measures taken by the state to bring order to the Ustyurt Plateau.

On 6 April 1921, before Alniiazov's raid, the Krasnovodsk Uezd-City Executive Committee convened a 'Kazakh-Iomud' Conference in Krasnovodsk.[58] Its agenda was as follows:

(1) The establishment of borders between Turkmen and Kazakh migrations
(2) The liquidation of the Kazakh-Iomud conflict.[59]

The conference felt unable to resolve the first matter. Kazakhs of the two districts that had recently left the jurisdiction of Krasnovodsk and joined the Adai Uezd complained that their water sources and pasturage were over the border to the south, and so they had to enter Turkestan to survive.[60] Attendees decided to allow the Kazakh and Turkestan governments to solve this problem, and as a temporary solution they sought to dissuade Kazakhs from migrating too close to areas where conflict with Iomud was more likely. Around the Garabogazköl Lagoon, in particular, Kazakh nomads were advised to migrate along a specific route. Turning to the second item on their agenda, conference members demanded an immediate cessation of all hostilities.[61] Hostilities did not cease for several years. The occurrence and subsequent failure of these staged events are manifestations of common trends in the relationship between state and nomad. First, there is the startling assertiveness of a new administration that thought itself capable of resolving long-standing antipathies with a talking shop. In this context, the reckless ambition of later policies and campaigns seems less remarkable.

Second, easy assumptions about the inherent disorder of nomadic society must be avoided, but abduction and raids were not new

phenomena among these communities. Kazakh concepts such as *barymta* (cattle rustling) and *qun* (blood feud) suggest that nomads saw such practices as more a part of everyday life, and less a crisis of lawlessness, than Soviet administrators were prepared to accept.[62] By accusing the Adai and Iomud of stealing cattle, and thereby conceiving this act as an infraction, new authorities followed the lead of tsarist officials who had so misunderstood the rules of nomadic custom.[63] Customary vengeance was one of many practices criminalised during the 1920s. This criminalisation would take on a more formal Union-wide character later in the decade, but already in 1921 the Soviet state was predisposed to sweep away some habits of nomadic life.

Third, the Krasnovodsk conference spoke of a Kazakh-Iomud conflict, but also of a Kazakh-Turkmen border. A key source of the former, it was believed, was disrespect for the latter, as it was best to keep warring tribes apart. Immediately this necessitated the intervention of nationwide authorities, and focus shot from the fundamentals of nomadic existence to the high politics of national jurisdiction. Like the plight of nomads in the Bukey Guberniia, the idiosyncrasies of nomadic life and death on the Ustyurt Plateau were again subsumed into a nation-based understanding of Central Asia. Even a peace agreement signed on 8 August 1921 bore the names of representatives from the Kazakh and the 'Turkmen-Iomud' people, both quasi-national rather than tribal affiliations, in the fashion of a diplomatic accord.[64]

Borders negotiated between nations created new problems for migrating nomads, whether Kazakh or Turkmen-Iomud. In the 1920s the Mangïshlak was one of the few places where nomads continued to migrate perpetually throughout the year, and any new boundary separated people from resources that they had long used but over which no legal ownership was agreed.[65] The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs had to try and supervise the expulsion of communities who found themselves on the wrong side of the divide.[66]

Another Kazakh-Iomud conference took place in Krasnovodsk on 25 July 1922, but it was hardly constructive. Turkmen representatives complained about the small number of Kazakhs in attendance. They speculated that perhaps the Kazakhs simply had no desire to establish peaceful relations. There were no Kazakh delegates from any Adai institution present on the day, and those Kazakhs who had made the journey were from families already migrating within Krasnovodsk

territory. They were unable to negotiate alone without the authority of the Adai Uezd, the government of which had previously given its full support for the conference. It was declared that nothing more could be achieved that day without members of the Adai Uezd itself, and again that higher republic-wide authorities should involve themselves in the dispute.[67]

Higher organs of power were indeed gripped by dispute at this time, confirming that this was a matter of republic-wide and therefore national importance. The extension of the Adai Uezd southwards to include the Garabogazköl was strongly resisted by the Central Executive Committee of the Turkestan Republic. One committee member, Nikolai Iomudskii, claimed to have taken part in an expedition to the coastline and to have been well informed on local circumstances there. Given that Iomudskii was a member of one of the Iomud's leading families, his experience might have been assumed. In any case he suggested that the prevalence of wells and pastures around the Garabogazköl would force Turkmen into Kazakh land and that this would exacerbate tensions. Though he supported the principle of a border, his stated aim was a border that reflected the social realities of the area.[68]

Iomudskii, as an Iomud and member of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee, is likely to have espoused a particular conception of those social realities. Whereas Adai committees chose to emphasise the number of armed Iomuds on Kazakh land, reports originating from Krasnovodsk and its higher authorities tended to present the Kazakhs as the perpetrators of violence.[69] Already the vested interests of different national committees were pitting them against each other, meaning that border disputes were associated with national prestige and status rather than local questions of agricultural practice. Thus the option of abolishing the border altogether or making it legally porous was not considered as it would complicate jurisdiction; the argument focused on the placement of the border. Regardless, Iomudskii did not get his way. Documentation from the Central Asian Bureau in 1924 describes the formalised national borders of Soviet Central Asia, including the new Turkmen Republic that emerged out of western Turkestan. Certainly, the Bureau and others recognised the ethnic heterogeneity of the borderlands between the Kazakh Republic and its neighbours, remarking, for example, that many Kazakhs in or around the new Uzbek SSR were arable farmers, making them very difficult to distinguish from Uzbeks.[70]

The Krasnovodsk area is noted for the predominance of only two major livelihoods: sedentary fishing and nomadic animal husbandry.[71] But no extension of Turkmen jurisdiction into the Adai Uezd is recorded at this time.[72]

It is difficult to say whether a border better placed, or a border less stringently observed, could have encouraged greater prosperity in the area, but the economy of the Adai Uezd remained one of the weakest in the Kazakh Republic for the rest of the decade. By the 10 April 1929 it had been made into an *okrug*, a new Soviet economic region, and the Kazakh Central Executive Committee (KTsIK) and the Kazakh Soviet of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom KASSR) presented the All-Union Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) in Moscow with a joint declaration 'on the liquidation of the Adai Okrug of Kazakhstan'.[73] In the two years since the process of *raionirovanie* turned the Adai Uezd into an *okrug*, the declaration claimed, the region had consistently underperformed economically.[74] With only 177,000 registered residents, despite its considerable size, the Adai Okrug contained a disproportionately small amount of the republic's population. Sixty-seven per cent of its budget came from subsidies, and its entire budget (1,021,000 rubles for 1928–9) was the equivalent of only 1.4 per cent of the republic's overall budget. The principal economic activity of the *okrug* was still nomadic animal husbandry. Only 2 per cent of the population was described as sedentary; 23 per cent was semi-nomadic; 28 per cent was nomadic with a migratory radius of up to 300 *versts* and 47 per cent was nomadic with a migratory radius of 1,000 *versts* or more. These nomadic communities reportedly remained impoverished and highly unstable. The trope of the wandering nomad at the mercy of the elements was as clear in this declaration as it was in Dzhangil′din's 1923 report.[75] KTsIK and Sovnarkom KASSR further admitted in 1929 that half of the region was always outside of the state's control, wherever its administrative centre was located, because of the infrastructural inadequacies of the *okrug*.[76] In this respect the Adai Okrug had barely developed since the end of the Civil War.

Back in 1922 the Kazakh and Turkmen communities of this region had shared a nomadic lifestyle. As even top agents of the Russian Communist Party became aware, a common preference for nomadism did nothing to ameliorate the often fierce rivalry between groups of Central Asians, but it did mean that such conflict differed in some

respects from that witnessed in the northwest of the republic.[77] The two agricultural communities competing over the outermost reaches of the Bukey Guberniia seemed loath to co-exist in the same space. The matter was simpler still because agricultural practice appeared to correlate more neatly with nationality. Disagreements arose over where to draw the line between nomadism and farming, Kazakhs and Cossacks, and in the deliberations on this question we see prevailing attitudes towards nomads emerge. In contrast, Turkmen and Kazakh nomads crossed paths repeatedly around the Garabogazköl Lagoon and on the Mangïshlak Peninsula. This, along with their historical enmity, made the effective positioning of two national jurisdictions considerably more difficult. Indeed, in the second case the Party overlooked tribal animosities beween two groups of nomadic pastoralists, for whom kinship loyalties were profoundly important. But the Party's use of national identity as a diagnostic tool to identify social ills had comparable effects in both cases.

Changing Priorities

Many flashpoints across Central Asia featured the same combustible mixture of nationalism and nomadism, borders and migration, localised disputes and centralised rulings. Authorities struggled to establish peace between Turkmen and Uzbeks as they did between Turkmen and Kazakhs, acknowledging that the strength of kinship ties in nomadic regions made national delimitation more contentious.[78] New borderlands witnessed conflict that postponed state investment in agriculture.[79] Along the KASSR's border with what became Uzbekistan, it was reported in 1922 that nomads were continuing to travel south to trade, as they had done for generations. Typically Kazakhs would exchange their cattle for bread and other farming produce. On their return journeys, militiamen at the border would find the nomads' bread supplies and accuse them of speculation. The food would be requisitioned (sometimes for the border guards' own consumption), and occasionally nomads were arrested.[80] The land in and around Tashkent, bearing an ethnically diverse population, was forcefully contested by Kazakh and Uzbek officials at different points in the 1920s and again nomadism became a feature of the debate.[81]

Before the delimitation of Turkestan into national republics, authorities were aware of the disparities between agricultural groups

and the wide dispersal of local nomads.[82] After Kyrgyzstan left the Turkestan Republic it entered the legislative framework of the RSFSR, and this change exacerbated confusion about the legal status of arriving settlers and their use of land. Such debates lingered on for years.[83] Nomads in the new Kyrgyz-Uzbek borderlands identified themselves in multiple ways, making it harder to quarantine them behind the Kyrgyz border.[84] Some became residents of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast but claimed ownership of Uzbek land, others found themselves left outside of their titular republics and were forced to lobby for membership. It was even briefly suggested that the Kyrgyz Oblast become part of the Kazakh Republic.[85]

In all these disputes, a determination to treat the people of Central Asia as discrete nations who could be divided by borders complicated nomadic life. Yet, as the decade progressed, the administration's priorities subtly changed, and this had an impact on the way such disputes were resolved. This is most clearly in evidence in a ruling made on the Kazakh-Siberian border in 1928.[86]

Before 1917, Cossacks had been at the vanguard of the Tsar's colonising forces in Siberia and on the Kazakh Steppe. Many of the first farmers to settle on the Russian Empire's southern frontier were Cossacks, who withstood initial hostilities with Turkic nomads and stabilised their hold over new land. This had the effect of preparing the area for the arrival of Russian peasants.[87] Between 1896 and 1909, the imperial Steppe Governor-Generalship absorbed 640,000 new settlers.[88] Over a longer period, 1867–1916, the borderlands between Siberia and Akmolinsk witnessed a population increase of 100 per cent.[89] Between 1911 and 1913 alone the population of formerly Kazakh lands rose by over half a million.[90] George J. Demko reveals that a large majority of these newcomers penetrated the steppe from Siberia's southern fringe, raising tensions in newly contested areas.[91] War and revolution expedited this process, pushing refugees deep into Siberia and Central Asia.[92] In 1917, branches of the Union of Siberian Farmers emerged in towns across northeastern Kazakh territory.[93] Given the history of colonisation up to this point, animosity between Cossacks and Kazakhs was especially acute. From over in the westernmost areas of the republic, fighting between Ural Cossacks and Kazakhs forced 300,000 Kazakhs to flee in 1920.[94]

For the Soviet administrators of the mid-1920s, this was not mere history. Up to nine years after the fall of the Tsar, in a resolution on local

agricultural development, the Semipalatinsk Guberniia (Governate) Committee described a region cursed with inter-ethnic tensions and profound inequalities, and a nomadic economy in a 'state of decline', blaming all this on the colonising policies of the Tsar and the unregulated influx of new migrants since the revolution.[95] Semipalatinsk shared a long northern border with Siberia, and the population of the *guberniia* was not only living with the legacies of colonisation but still experiencing it. In the view of the committee a powerful clique of Cossack and Russian landowners were continuing to surface and exploit the dispossessed poor. Competition for free land was forcing nomadic communities into rivalry, with weaker groups being ejected.[96] It was the explicit view of the committee that the tsarist administration had stolen land from working Kazakhs and handed it to Siberian Cossack soldiers, and that land seizure had continued after February 1917.[97] Here again nationality and nomadism were at work together. Northeastern authorities in the KASSR pitted Russians and Cossacks against Kazakhs, and blamed Russians and Cossacks for the increasing instability of the nomadic economy. Nomadism intensified national tensions, and the extension of the rights of Kazakhs, as a national group, was perceived as a solution to nomadic problems.

The Semipalatinsk Committee proposed therefore that northern steppe lands owned by Ural and Siberian Cossacks should be returned to Kazakhs, regardless of those Kazakhs' agricultural habits. There were precedents for this decision, including a similar decree made in April 1921 and a declaration made in 1922 by the Akmolinsk Guberniia, which also bordered Siberia, that land wrongfully taken from the native Kazakh populace should be returned.[98] But it would be no easier extricating European settlers than it was Turkmen nomads around the Garabogazköl. The agricultural economies of northern Kazakhstan and southern Siberia were so interconnected that at one point the Kazakh Soviet of Labour and Defence had even considered the formal unification of the Siberian and Kazakh People's Commissariats for Food Supplies, though the proposal had been deemed unacceptable.[99] Unsurprisingly, given earlier events further west, anger in Semipalatinsk over the power of Cossacks and Russians also expressed itself in a border dispute. This is a dispute that can only be fully understood in the context of the anxieties just described, about the legacy of historical colonialism, the impact of colonialism as a current force and the state of the nomadic economy.

In 1924, the Semipalatinsk Guberniia Committee sought to push its own jurisdiction northwards, into the Siberian Krai. The Kaukul′skaia Volost was a small administrative division of the Kupino district, then part of the Omsk Guberniia in the Siberian Krai and, ultimately, the RSFSR. Kupino itself was a town close to the Siberian-Kazakh border, northeast of Pavlodar. Authorities in Semipalatinsk identified the Kaukul′skaia Volost as populated primarily by Kazakhs, and brought this to the attention of KTsIK. It was argued that the whole *volost* should be made part of the Semipalatinsk Guberniia. This request was first submitted at least as early as 19 March 1924, and then again on 4 September 1925. The demand was justified on the basis of familiar 'national cultural' factors, essentially, that Kazakhs should govern Kazakhs.[100]

As along the border of the Bukey and Astrakhan Guberniia, territorial disputes between Kazakh and Siberian authorities were understood in national terms and would be decided by republic-level institutions. But once again, a factor of key importance to the proper management of these divided areas was agricultural practice. When the KTsIK first sided with Semipalatinsk in November 1925, and made a provisional declaration that assimilated the Kaukul′skaia Volost into its neighbouring Kazakh Guberniia, it also stipulated that strip farming in the *volost* be immediately and entirely prohibited. Apart from the actual redrawing of borders, this is the only provision the KTsIK recommended before presenting the decision to its presidium.[101] It should be asked what would have been of greater consequence to the everyday lives of the Kazakhs in the Kaukul′skaia Volost: that they be made members of their titular republic, or that agricultural practice be firmly regulated? Given the disregard eventually shown to the Bukey nomads by their Kazakh authorities, the answer was most likely the latter. The stipulation from KTsIK might be read as a rare occasion in which the interests of nomads were weighted equally alongside the principle of national territorial autonomy. Actually, the relative importance of nomadism was also increasing in the judgements of other actors involved in the dispute.

In spite of KTsIK's clear response to the question, disagreements over the Kaukul′skaia Volost were not over. In late February 1928 the Presidium VTsIK looked at the matter, though no conclusion was reached until May of the same year. Then, VTsIK noted the demographic features of the area, which after a period of *raionirovanie* had been placed inside the larger Siberian Barabinsk Okrug.[102] Outside of Kupino, the contentious

volost encompassed 17 *auls*, which together contained 2,008 individuals. Only 59 of these people were Russian, the rest Kazakh. Yet opinion within the *volost* was apparently divided. The mainly Russian population of Kupino itself was set against any transfer. Furthermore, if the town were moved, then the continuation of strip farming would be unavoidable, as the Russians there would not countenance a ban any more than the new farmers of Astrakhan had done. It was for these reasons that VTsIK resolved to leave the Siberian-Kazakh boundary where it was, in addition to one more pivotal factor that clearly demonstrates the changing intersection between border making and nomadism in this case. The report from VTsIK summarised its position with these words:

> In conclusion, the economic life of the Kazakh population in these village councils in no way differs from the life of the surrounding Russian population: they pursue farming, and partake in a sedentary way of life, know the Russian language and have the most peaceful and benevolent relations with the Russian population. The economic gravitation of the aforementioned population points towards the regional centre of Kupino, and the close proximity to the railroad is certain.[103]

There is a telling distinction here between the reasoning of central officials in Moscow in 1928 and the claims and recommendations made by authorities much earlier in the decade. In the Bukey Guberniia and Adai Uezd, the sheer number of Kazakhs in particular areas was justification enough for the state to transfer them into the embrace of their own republic where they would ostensibly be safeguarded against the lingering effects of imperialism. Regarding the Kaukul′skaia Volost in 1928, VTsIK acknowledged the predominance of Kazakhs there but went on to demonstrate the state's increasing sensitivity to agricultural practice, a sensitivity which was leading to the very first Soviet attempts at forced sedentarisation in that same year. Nationality and agricultural practice are both present in the considerations of VTsIK, but nationality was becoming less important, and it seems possible that the Kaukul′skaia Volost would have more likely joined the KASSR if its Kazakhs were predominantly nomadic.

KTsIK itself had implicitly moved in this direction as well. It had emphasised the sheer number of Kazakhs in the Kaukul′skaia Volost,

and was siding with a committee that made declarations about the crippling legacy of tsarism and the requisitioning of land from Russians and Cossacks. Yet the immediate ban on strip farming it had planned could have been a sign of acceptance that membership of the Kazakh Republic alone was not sufficient to protect a Kazakh from colonisation. The Semipalatinsk Committee knew this well enough. By way of reassurance, when rejecting Semipalatinsk's demand for Siberian land, VTsIK suggested that Siberian authorities pay closer regard to the interests of rural Kazakhs.[104] In 1928 the state was learning the significance and resilience of nomadism as an administrative problem, and discounting matters of nationality as a result.

The important similarities between the Russians and Kazakhs of the Kaukul′skaia Volost were not beyond dispute. Back in 1924 when the disagreement began, a local citizen had petitioned in favour of Semipalatinsk. Nashmetdin Aityganovskii was a resident of the *volost* and claimed that of the four regions then governed by Kupino, all but one were dominated by cattle-herding Kazakhs, not arable farmers. Perhaps VTsIK suddenly realised that Aityganovskii's claim still held true later in 1928, when it altered its position. Having declared the previous May that nothing would change, on 12 November 1928 it moved large sections of the Kupino District into the Pavlodar Okrug, the new Kazakh authority, which then bordered much of Siberia. Siberian officials protested ineffectually. Another likely catalyst for the extension of Kazakh borders may have been the trialling of a state farm in the Kaukul′skaia Volost. The farm was a sizeable sheep-rearing enterprise, and from its provisional basis it quickly grew in size without formal direction from supervisory bodies to do so. It was the land falling under the control of this state operation, spanning across various communities, that was divided between Siberian and Kazakh jurisdictions. One-third of the farm remained in place, two-thirds came under the management of Pavlodar. Siberian resentment about the decision continued, but in 1935 the Kazakh Republic assimilated the final third of the land involved.[105] Though the original ruling on the Kaukul′skaia Volost was therefore reversed, this was justified on the same agricultural and economic bases that had originally superseded national ones.

The Siberian case shows once again that national and agricultural identities competed for the attention of the Communist Party, and the emphasis here on agricultural practice over nationality was not unique:

in trying to settle disagreements between Kazakh and Uzbek officials, Soviet authorities carefully reviewed the economic, ethnic and administrative implications of each borderline.[106] Nevertheless, whether based upon national or economic principles, borders continued to inconvenience those who migrated nearby, as events along the Sino-Soviet border make clear.

The Sino-Soviet Border

Territorial disputes between Soviet authorities would never have quite the same dynamic as those between the USSR and China. Among other differences, Moscow could not act as a final adjudicator with a foreign power, and nomads evaded Soviet power when they entered China. Indeed, Soviet administrators in eastern Kazakh and Kyrgyz regions had to work hard not simply to manage nomads, but to avoid driving them away.

The province of China that bordered Soviet Central Asia was Xinjiang, sometimes referred to as Chinese Turkestan, a majority-Muslim region with established cultural connections to the nomads of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Republics.[107] In spite of Chinese assimilationist policies of the late nineteenth century, Xinjiang had shared its migratory populations with the Russian Empire and contained many Turkic nomads.[108] Nomads had a long history of entering Xinjiang whenever the atmosphere in Russia became threatening, and returning when rumours suggested that the situation had improved.

China was at least as fragmented and unstable as Central Asia in the early twentieth century, however, and was little more empowered to control its people or borders than the Bolsheviks would be. From 1912 to 1928 the Xinjiang province was under the military rule of Yang Zengxin. The Yang administration treated non-Han peoples such as the Turkic nomads with an imperialist's disdain and maintained power by encouraging nomadic groups to fight each other, tactically arming some and neglecting others.[109] With martial rule and internecine struggle on both sides of the Sino-Russian border, during the Civil War boundary markers between the two former empires were changed or destroyed at will. At one point Chinese border outposts deliberately receded, to draw migrating nomads closer to the boundary and then demand tribute

from them. In 1920 local authorities in Xinjiang bought approximately 60 square kilometres of land near Lake Zaysan from a Soviet *uezd* commissar, who subsequently followed the tract into China and escaped.[110] Boundary lines were a common site of mismanagement: in the revolutionary years the border with Persia was closed, creating immense hardship for the Iomud who migrated over it to trade.[111]

After the Civil War and throughout the 1920s, despite Chinese demands, the boundary between Chinese and Soviet territories was never officially altered. It was, however, repeatedly ignored or changed without consent. New Soviet authorities were in no position to terminate the well-established tradition of cross-border migration; China was not the only space in which communities were able to seek refuge. During the years of famine in the early 1930s, it is estimated that 200,000 Kazakhs fled to Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, as well as China, and never returned.[112] Not all such refugees were nomads, of course. Sedentary communities also escaped over porous borders. Yet all were in a state of migration, whether transitory or habitual, and thus function as another example of the Soviet administration's treatment of itinerants alongside those nomads who traversed the Sino-Soviet border as a way of life.

The last emigration from tsarist lands had occurred in 1916. In response to intense violence and imperial repression there took place a 'mass exodus' of Kyrgyz and others eastwards.[113] Emigration into China continued into the immediate Soviet period. Perhaps betraying their ignorance about the typical state of affairs on the steppe, central authorities in Moscow were immediately alarmed at the scale and breadth of the wave. Sovnarkom RSFSR's Soviet of Labour and Defence discovered that Central Asians from both the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk Guberniias had left Soviet land, heading into China and Mongolia. They blamed mistakes made by Siberian bureaucrats in the management of food supplies, reinforcing the common Soviet association of nomadism and transhumance with duress and economic hardship.[114]

The Turkestan Republic's Sovnarkom was also in no doubt as to why China had gained so many more Central Asians. Its Zhetysu region had seen huge demographic decline as its population headed east, and the Turkestan Sovnarkom blamed the severe and destructive policies of the Tsar. On 14 June 1923 it sent a letter to VTsIK that criticised the former

imperial government in strident terms and alleged that up to 100,000 Kazakhs and Kyrgyz had emigrated before the October revolution. The communiqué was intended to acquire sympathy and subsidy for these migrants. As the thousands of travellers had entered Xinjiang, it went on, they were met by several regiments of Chinese soldiers, who unleashed an 'avalanche of fire'. Up to 1,000 were killed. Notably, the letter insists that this experience was not so horrific as the treatment these communities had suffered under the Tsar in 1916, and so they carried on eastwards.[115]

In 1923, with the Tsar gone, it was claimed that around 15,000 members of these very same communities had arrived back in the Zhetysu area, and a further 15,000 were on their return journeys. A census of the rural population in the Zhetysu Oblast in 1920 recorded a slight increase in numbers, made up of returnees from China.[116] Certainly, the Soviet Union witnessed a very sizeable influx of refugees who had originally entered Xinjiang in 1916, sometimes described as 'victims of the White Terror', beginning as early as 1917 and 1918 and continuing into the 1920s.[117]

Chinese authorities were accused of placing a myriad of obstacles in the path of those returning. What called them home? The Turkestan Sovnarkom listed the October Revolution, the land reforms of 1921 and 1922, the reversal of colonial trends and the involvement of the Kazakh masses in socialist construction as reasons for the retreat, which is not completely incredible given the diametric distinction, fully intended, between these policies and those associated with the Tsar. Hardship in Xinjiang and the usual patterns of migratory practice are also tenable, partial explanations. In any case, the 30,000 new Soviet citizens identified by Turkestan authorities were said to be appearing without shoes, outer clothing or any of the resources necessary for survival. The Sovnarkom therefore requested 6 million rubles to provide for fodder and materials so that these itinerants could feed their livestock and build new homes, and asked that the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (Narkominodel) ensure the unimpeded progress of Kazakh returnees into Soviet territory.[118]

The content of the Turkestan Sovnarkom's request is remarkable for a number of reasons, but most important is the sense of inevitability with which it describes the arrival of around 30,000 refugees into Soviet territory. Clearly it was understood that these new citizens would present

a huge logistical challenge and would demand a substantial amount of extra resources. Closing the border entirely would likely have alienated Soviet power from much of its internal Kazakh and Kyrgyz populace, but the option of controlling, directing or slowing the influx is never mentioned. Probably no such option existed, as the state infrastructure along the periphery of Soviet Central Asia was deficient in this as in so many other respects during the decade. There is also a sense of opportunism in the proposals. If 30,000 were coming, they would at least increase the population in the Zhetysu Oblast, which had declined dramatically from 1916 to 1920.[119] The Turkestan Sovnarkom also saw that the wretched state of the nomads among those returning offered a chance to provide them with the materials they needed to build permanent residences and settle for good, making further migration less likely.[120]

In accordance with the wishes of the Turkestan authorities, Georgy Chicherin, head of Narkominodel, instructed his commissariat to facilitate the reintegration of the 30,000. The Presidium VTsIK also commissioned the People's Commissariat for Nationalities (Narkomnats RSFSR) and Narkomzem RSFSR to produce a plan for aid and economic support. The subsequent plan included the establishment of control points, at which incomers received medical inspection and veterinary care for their livestock; the transference of refugees to particular locations; the provision of food, clothing and rubles at the state's expense; and the distribution of loans, seeds and timber for the construction of new arable farms or mixed arable-livestock farms.[121] The final stipulations of the plan are clear evidence that state organs in Moscow were complicit in the Turkestan Sovnarkom's plan to settle those returning as soon as possible after they crossed the border.

The extent to which Soviet aims were realised is difficult to ascertain. If local bodies could barely identify and maintain a Sino-Soviet border, let alone police it, it is unlikely that they would have been able to establish a comprehensive relief effort for incoming refugees, replete with a transport network, seeds, timber, food and medical aid.[122] Though ambitious, this would not be the last time the state offered aid to immigrants. After national delimitation and the creation of a discrete Kyrgyz region in eastern Turkestan, Kyrgyz authorities immediately took responsibility for processing migrants from China, such as the 225 families whom were promised help by VTsIK in May 1926. These

refugees complicated the management of agricultural and cattle herding activities in the area, and the provision of aid created new Party management problems.[123]

In time, authorities began worrying less about incomers than escapees. At a closed meeting of the Kazakh Communist Party's Krai Committee on 8 August 1928, members considered a report from the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) about the 'significant number' of Kazakh households emigrating to China. Despite the increasingly repressive treatment of Kazakhs at the time, Party members appeared deaf to the echoes of 1916. The meeting concluded that these emigrants, whom it described as generally of average prosperity, were leaving the steppe due to widespread misunderstanding about plans for the confiscation campaign. The committee's raft of solutions included a recommendation that Krai-level and local newspapers make fresh efforts to explain what confiscation would entail, and to emphasise plans for the return of all illegally confiscated cattle.[124]

Later that year, in October 1928, violence along Central Asia's eastern border was related to the Presidium VTsIK in a secret telegram. Some kind of functional border guard was by then in place, and meaningful attempts at stopping emigration were resulting in armed conflict. The fatalism of the Turkestan Sovnarkom had gone. But control was hardly in the hands of the state. The border crossing, described in Russian as either *perekhod* or the more specifically nomadic *perekochevka*, continued in spite of the violence. Sometimes nomads native to Xinjiang joined the fighting to help Soviet nomads escape. On 16 August 1928 150 Chinese Kazakhs attacked the border militia with rifles and forced Soviet soldiers to retreat. The OGPU had reinforced the regiments on the boundary line, and VTsIK dispatched a diplomatic mission to Xinjiang to find out more about the lives of Soviet Kazakhs beyond the border.[125]

Flight to China remained a key means of resistance for Central Asians during the collectivisation campaign that began at the end of the 1920s.[126] Kazakhs at war with state organs within the USSR even sought to develop and maintain links with those who had already emigrated, as part of a wider struggle against Soviet power.[127] This is another example of how the battle to draw and police borders in the region exacerbated political tension. But the porous Sino-Soviet border also informed prevailing economic understandings of nomads,

as they returned from China destitute and requiring subsidy. As in the poverty-stricken Adai Uezd, the decreasing pasture lands beyond the Ural River and the Cossack-dominated Semipalatinsk Okrug, the nomads appearing on the Soviet side of the border in Zhetysu looked economically useless and burdensome.

Conclusion

Like all borders, those of Soviet Central Asia generated political and social realties as much as reflected pre-existing ones.[128] In each of the cases discussed above, conflicts over use of land and resources were shaped by the emerging national administrative structures that absorbed tribal and ethnic antipathies and sought to resolve them. It might first be assumed that these new structures would have benefitted nomadic populations. The importance of national jurisdiction prompted authorities in Krasnovodsk, Urda, the Adai Uezd and Semipalatinsk to defend the interests of their compatriots even when they were found beyond the borders of their national territories. Yet the interests of the nation in fact acted as a doppelgänger to the interests of the nomad; they looked alike but were quite different, and the prioritisation of national interests was a bad omen for nomadic communities. In the long term, from the later economic underperformance of the Adai region and the continuing expansion of arable farming east of Astrakhan it is clear that the assertion and retention of national jurisdiction did little to support nomadic pastoralism.[129]

The creation of the national republics was based on a political judgement: that each nation identified within the borders of the former Tsarist Empire should have its own (limited) territorial autonomy or localised representation.[130] But within these national territories political considerations often gave way to economic ones.[131] The educated, urban Central Asians working for the Party could empathise with nomads of their own nation only a little more than could members of other nationalities. Once given their own jurisdictions, these administrators were incentivised to emphasise the importance of borders that demarcated and protected their authority but complicated nomadic life. With prospects for international socialism looking bleak, the border with Xinjiang proved no less important after the Revolution than before it.

After the national delimitation of Central Asia, as the Soviet administration turned its attention more concertedly to economic development, it became more sensitive to agricultural practice, and this informed the resolution of border disputes, but in the later 1920s the state's increasing sensitivity towards nomadism did not make it a more benevolent force. The Party's association of nomadism with backwardness had only become stronger, as had its determination to transform the Soviet countryside with haste.

CHAPTER 4

TAXING NOMADS

The tax collectors of early Soviet Central Asia endured difficulties that were remarkable for their universality. When a concerned citizen of Akmola wrote to the Soviet of People's Commissars in Moscow, expounding the effects of ruinous taxation on a figurative, enterprising baker, he reprised Adam Smith's famous declaration on the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer and said baker.[1] In 1923, at the Third All-Kazakh Oblast Conference, a Comrade Kharchenko described the frustrations of a redistributionist at work in rural areas:

> . . . if we take a cow from the *bai* and we give it to the pauper, who was tending the cow for temporary use, then the pauper will eat the cow and again we must take a new cow from the *bai*.[2]

The insatiate greed of the poor, and the self-perpetuating logic of a tax policy designed to satisfy it, are enduring themes.

Kharchenko was making reference to the nomadic practice of *saun*, whereby affluent Kazakhs lent livestock to their less fortunate peers for an agreed period, on the understanding that the poor would tend the animal and the two Kazakhs' families would share any resulting foodstuffs.[3] Some in the Communist Party viewed *saun* as exploitative, and sought to intervene by formally transferring ownership of the cattle to the poor, though not all nomads accepted their analysis.[4] Note that wealth in this context is represented by the size of a nomad's herd.[5] At the time that Kharchenko spoke in March 1923, there was further argument within the Communist Party over how nomadic livestock should be viewed: as a

means of production, or simply as a product for consumption.[6] Taxing communities that shared or exchanged herding duties was not simple, and interference was placed in contradiction to the nomads' own tribal laws.[7] Typical administrative problems associated with taxation were deriving new expression from the particularities of nomadic life.

Nomadism was one of a number of issues that affected the development of the tax system in early Soviet Central Asia. Here tax is defined very broadly to include efforts at wealth redistribution, wealth procurement and confiscation. All are complex processes, products of an increasingly ambitious state apparatus. The Party sought to modernise the tax system by attuning its demands, in a very limited manner, to the capacities of the nomadic economy. Yet this effort was always hampered, and quickly overwhelmed altogether, by the Party's deep commitment to transforming nomadic life. Transformation took the familiar forms of post-colonial emancipation, at first, accompanied and followed by economic development and class war, all of which could obscure the specificities of nomadism itself. As always, the severe impoverishment of much of Central Asia following the Civil War, and the extreme weakness of the Soviet administration in many areas of that same region, are essential contextual details. It is in spite of these details that the Party hoped to utilise taxation to radically alter the society it governed.

This chapter attempts to follow a number of fairly complex institutional disputes from inception to conclusion, and as such adheres closely to certain state organs. Kazakhstan, the home of most of these state organs, thereby claims primary focus, though many observations can be carefully generalised to the nomads of the whole region. Certainly the overall aims of the administration, and the frustration of those aims, were not specific to any one Central Asian republic.

The Tax-in-Kind

Central Asia as a whole was not awash with taxable goods at the beginning of the Soviet era. The uprisings of 1916 were partly a response to ever-worsening economic circumstances, and the conflicts of that year, and the Tsar's punitive reaction meant that Central Asia received news of the Russian Revolution in a state of economic crisis.[8] The Civil War gravely exacerbated hardships. Extended violence, confiscation and disorder crippled the agricultural productivity of both settled and

nomadic communities, and families began emigrating or succumbing to starvation.[9] Agricultural output in Turkestan all but collapsed. Local livestock numbers crashed and grain imports from Russia were terminated.[10] War Communism had been a catastrophe and famine ensued.[11] The remaining peoples of the former Tsarist Empire had fared little better, and food shortages were legion.[12]

Part of the Bolsheviks' response to this crisis was of course the New Economic Policy, formally introduced in March 1921.[13] Pressure had been building for this approach that was intended to stabilise prices and hasten economic recovery.[14] To a large extent, the New Economic Policy (NEP) meant an overall reduction of state intervention in the rural economy, and the reconfiguration of what intervention continued.[15]

These alterations in governance were not manifested evenly in Central Asia. Consistent with broader trends, in the early years of NEP the influence of state policy on migrations amongst the Kazakhs was brought to a minimum.[16] By 1923, livestock numbers had seen modest increases, and the number of families without the means to feed themselves receded.[17] Given the simultaneous decrease in the population of the republic, and the view that the NEP contributed to the creation of a 'budgetary shortfall' there, it is not easy to judge whether the policy was a success or failure in the early years, but it was certainly of significance.[18] Alternatively, the Party also made more strident efforts to transform life in Central Asia during the NEP in a way it did not in European Russia.[19] Decolonisation and land reform represented major efforts at transformation less characteristic of the NEP as a whole.

Tax and requisition policy in the 1920s also vacillated between non-interference and intervention. The emphasis on diminished economic regulation and the discouragement of arbitrary confiscation in the NEP allowed political concerns about class stratification in the countryside to intensify, and this eventually warranted more concerted intervention.[20] In this way, concerns about class informed the taxation of nomads. As in other aspects of the Party's relationship with nomads, however, the first most salient factor to influence taxation in nomadic regions was not class but nationhood. This influence was initially minimal. Nomadism itself enjoyed a direct unfiltered connection with the development of tax policy.

A significant early reform to Soviet tax practices came on 21 March 1921, when the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) made a declaration 'on the replacement of the requisitioning of food and

raw materials with a tax-in-kind'.[21] As the title suggests, the tax-in-kind (alternatively described as a 'produce tax') was formally disassociated from the haphazard requisitioning of domestic goods that was practised under War Communism, after an earlier version of the tax had been rejected in January 1919.[22] The legislation was therefore accordant with the NEP more widely, and applied across the Soviet polity, but could be and was adapted by regional administrations such as those now established in Central Asia.

The tax-in-kind was first adapted for the peculiarities of Central Asia in April 1921 when the Turkestan Central Executive Committee approved its introduction. The Kazakh Republic made its own alterations to the tax-in-kind in May 1921.[23] The Soviet of People's Commissars in Orenburg (Sovnarkom KASSR) produced a kind of explanatory decree, outlining new levels of taxation on dairy products for the republic.[24]

First, the western territories of the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (KASSR) were made subject to a relatively lower rate of taxation on dairy.[25] Western Kazakh *guberniias* collectively owed 17.4 million *pud* of grain in tax at this time, and were considered some of the most imperilled by famine.[26] Any family with one animal in these regions would thus pay three pounds of purified butter.[27] Families owning two animals would pay four pounds, families with three to five animals paid five pounds, and families owning six animals paid six pounds. In contrast, families in the eastern Semipalatinsk and Akmolinsk Guberniias paid an additional two pounds of purified butter each, starting with families owning one animal being taxed at a rate of five pounds, and so on. Regional variations were not unusual for the time, it should be said. Some of the most impoverished areas of European Russia were also granted tax concessions, for example.[28] Yet most instructively, article 5 of the decree from Sovnarkom KASSR further specified that '[n]omadic families in *all guberniias of the KASSR* [emphasis added], owning up to two cows, are exempt from the tax on butter'.[29] Nomads of modest means were thus to pay up to four pounds of butter less than their sedentary compatriots in the west, and six pounds less in the east.

As in Turkestan, these principles are unlikely to have been enacted completely or immediately, but they are indicative of the Kazakh Party's early positioning. All these alterations to Moscow's original decree reveal an administration ready to adapt its tax regime to match perceived variations in wealth: variations between regions, between families, but

also between agricultural practices or lifestyles. In doing so, the administration continued a process dating from pre-revolutionary times, identified by Yanni Kotsonis. Kotsonis argues that, in common with trends in the USA and Western Europe, late-tsarist and early-Soviet tax levels were based more on what individuals could pay, and less on what the state needed from day to day.[30] The state requisitioning of 1919 to 1921 was therefore 'in many ways a regression', whereas the tax-in-kind was a sign of progress, albeit mitigated by the Soviet state's desperate urge to strengthen itself by acquiring greater resources.[31] Both Orenburg and Moscow officially extracted less produce from famine-struck regions, and to some extent moderated their demands on poorer families, to allow the most impoverished parts of the economy to recover. Orenburg took the further step of extending exemptions to nomads, as the vulnerable practitioners of a lifestyle believed to be particularly unproductive.

The unfortunate position of many nomads served as justification for the next significant alteration to the tax-in-kind on 28 June 1921. The second session of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee (KTsIK) placed emphasis on the hunger and hardship faced by nomadic cattle herders before declaring an overall exemption for nomads and semi-nomads from taxes on meat, leather, dairy produce and wool until the end of that year.[32] As was typical of the NEP period, KTsIK further announced that nomads and semi-nomads were free to sell any surplus produce. Comparable official sanctions of localised market trading were being granted across the former Russian Empire at this time.[33] In the Kazakh case, no levy would be imposed on barter at trading fairs, where nomads traditionally sold their goods for other commodities. In fact, KTsIK recommended that the Kazakh People's Commissariat for Food Supplies (Narkomprod KASSR) utilise these fairs to distribute products otherwise unavailable to nomads by means of free exchange.[34] The declaration made no attempt to distinguish between poor and rich nomads. Within two months of the first intervention by Sovnarkom KASSR, all nomads and semi-nomads had come to be understood as a single entity for the purposes of taxation, at least until January 1922. Alongside regional and wealth-based variations in the new regime's proportionate taxation system, a nomadic-sedentary distinction was recognised, perhaps because the subtler system of the previous year in which nomads were simply taxed less was harder to implement. Now nomads would not be taxed at all for these resources.

Describing the nomads' economy as uniquely fragile was straightforward, and led to an appealingly straightforward solution: do not tax them. But the later reforms of the NEP era would seek to create a tax policy that was more than just proportionate. Tax-in-kind was a temporary solution, installed only until monetary taxation could feasibly be enforced Union-wide.[35] It would undergo a range of changes, particularly as agricultural development intensified and industrialisation, in Central Asia as elsewhere, became a foremost priority.[36] The tax-in-kind thus exemplified further trends drawn from the tsarist period through to the 1920s by Kotsonis. These include the use of tax as a tool for the state to learn about and transform society.[37] Proportionate tax levels could not be established unless legislators understood the economy intimately, and a nuanced application of levies further empowered the state to alter economic and social behaviour in a singular manner characteristic of its modernity.[38]

The ways the Kazakh administration understood and wished to change the population of the Kazakh Republic are neatly exemplified in a report submitted to the first All-Kazakh Oblast Conference by Mukhtar Samatov in June 1921.[39] Samatov, a former member of the Alash Party, was soon to be appointed to Narkomprod KASSR, and his views are revealing.[40] First, he singled out nomads as a distinctly needy group, arguing that they suffered most from pre-revolutionary urbanisation, when the wealth of the rural economy was transferred to and concentrated in the cities.[41] He therefore suggested that any taxation of nomads should be accompanied by the state provision of bread to nomads, amounting to another system of exchange.[42] Second, Samatov referred to the issue of class. His warnings about class stratification under the NEP echoed debates underway in Moscow, where the figure of the kulak was of increasing prominence.[43] To address fears of a less equal society, Samatov called for a phalanx of highly trained tax collectors, recruited from the Party's most conscientious members. These collectors would assertively but tactfully identify kulak elements in the Kazakh countryside, and take their resources for the subsidy of heavy industry.[44] Third, Samatov compared the old system of wartime requisitioning to tsarist exploitation of the steppe and claimed that the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars had lowered tax rates in the previous month to compensate Kazakhs for years of imperial oppression. Exemptions would blunt the differences between Kazakhs and European settlers.[45]

For elements of the Kazakh Communist Party, it was not enough simply to recognise nomadism in the tax system. Rates immediately following the Civil War were necessarily more permissive than many administrators were comfortable with, but the ultimate ambition of the Party was to use every tool at its disposal, including taxation, to transform society and its economic relations. In Samatov's proposals we see the foremost preoccupations of the new administration, and an indication that variable rates would be repeatedly adapted in response to those preoccupations, though not always in the manner Samatov intended, in the coming years.

The tax-in-kind was introduced at a point when the Communist Party was still anxious about separatist tendencies in Central Asia and the Soviet state's infrastructural strength was at its lowest. Reparations for past imperial misdemeanours were a major part of the Bolsheviks' agenda, and those groups deserving of reparations were thought of as different nations emerging from a period of tsarist oppression.[46] Russians and other European nationalities were presented as the perpetrators and the beneficiaries of imperialism, and were penalised in Central Asia. Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and others were seen as victims, and received subsidy.[47] Samatov placed the first tax exemptions granted in Central Asia within this broader effort to penalise or reward certain nations, and thereby transform post-colonial society. It is clear that he was not the only one to do so.

At the same time that Samatov delivered his report, arbitrary requisitioning of a different kind was taking place to the south, as Turkestani authorities oversaw the confiscation of goods and 'agricultural surplus' from European settlers.[48] In Turkestan the NEP came earlier for nomads and other Central Asians than for Slavic peasants. In February 1920 a state monopoly on wheat was imposed for Slavic and Cossack communities alone, while the following month a tax-in-kind on wheat was introduced for 'majority Muslim districts' only.[49] For some time the principle of 'differentiated requisitioning' operated in the region.[50] Thus, in both Turkestan and Kazakhstan, tax rates varied not just for different producers but for national minorities as well.

For some in European Russia, the use of requisitioning and variable levies as a means of decolonisation caused unease. On 19 September 1921 the People's Commissariat for Food Supplies in Moscow (Narkomprod RSFSR) submitted a formal request that VTsIK overturn

the decision of its Kazakh counterpart and cancel the tax exemptions installed for nomads in June of that year.[51] This cancellation would apply to dairy products and leather, both of which would again be taxed in areas struggling with shortages. The Presidium VTsIK took the request seriously enough to call for further information to justify the repeal.[52]

Narkomprod RSFSR argued that tax exemptions on nomads would curtail the state's resources too greatly, meaning that supplies could not be delivered to other communities in need. More strikingly, the institution called on VTsIK to take measures to preclude 'similar separatist demonstrations'.[53] At a time of economic crisis, when suspicion of pan-Turkic separatism in Central Asia was still potent, this association of economic concessions for nomads with a dangerous, bourgeois nationalism would have carried major political significance.[54] Unlike the interpretation of decolonisation the Party sanctioned, which engendered concessions to formerly colonised peoples within the Soviet system, it implied a desire to separate from Soviet power and thereby undermine it. It represents a different use of the same nationality-based understanding of the people of Central Asia endorsed by Samatov and others.[55]

Indeed, Narkomprod RSFSR cited a suspicion of separatist nationalism that would become increasingly prominent later in the Soviet period when regional elites were arrested and shot for nationalist tendencies.[56] Contrasting conceptions of nationalism in competition here are redolent of a more significant disagreement between Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Lenin dating from before the revolution. In broad terms, Lenin was sceptical about the existence of distinct national groups, but acknowledged and made concessions to nationalism in the former Russian Empire in a pragmatic effort to control Russian imperialism and earn the support of non-Russians. Perhaps less than a rigid theoretical correspondence, which may not have been possible given Lenin's preference for functional pragmatism regarding the National Question, what Samatov shared with Lenin was a particular disposition, a tendency or preference for supporting the non-Russian former subjects of the Tsar in a post-colonial context.[57] Stalin's tendencies were different. He unambiguously accepted that nations existed, but on this basis would become more fearful of their counterrevolutionary potential and eventually sought to strengthen

Union-wide institutions at the expense of national organs of power.[58] The disquiet in Narkomprod RSFSR about the concessionary nature of the Kazakh tax system constitutes precisely the kind of suspicion Stalin also harboured.

Soon after Narkomprod RSFSR made its request, a representative of the Kazakh Republic at the Presidium VTsIK wrote back to the Kazakh Central Executive Committee in Orenburg.[59] He claimed to have witnessed earlier meetings of Narkomprod RSFSR that concluded that all resources must be taken from nomads on the basis of exchange, a position not dissimilar to Samatov's. At the latest negotiations taking place in Moscow, however, Comrade Kotliarenko of Narkomprod RSFSR argued instead that the contentious tax exemptions contravened the constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR, to which the Kazakh Republic then belonged), and would precipitate terrible economic problems. According to his communiqué, the Kazakh representative had countered that Kotliarenko and his peers lacked a full appreciation for the nomadic way of life. Their earlier insistence on requisitioning pork fat and eggs had driven around 1,000 Kazakh families over the border into Mongolia.[60] Besides, he had said, the declaration that introduced these tax concessions had already been translated into Kazakh and was in force; any annulment would cause yet more administrative instability and undermine the authority of the Kazakh government. Then, after the Presidium had deferred judgement and adjourned, a member of VTsIK had apparently told the Kazakh representative that the idea of a cancellation originated not from Narkomprod RSFSR, but from the Orenburg Guberniia Executive Committee (gubispolkom), officially under the jurisdiction of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee and based in the same city. The gubispolkom governed a Kazakh region with a high proportion of European settlers and would soon leave the jurisdiction of the Kazakh Republic altogether. It had complained that tax concessions for nomads were exacerbating tensions between Kazakhs and Russians, whereupon Narkomprod RSFSR took up the case.[61]

The Orenburg Guberniia Executive Committee was not the only regional authority to complain about tax exemptions for nomads. The Guberniia Executive Committee in Astrakhan also governed a Russian-dominated area on the border of the Kazakh Republic, and had raised similar concerns on 16 July 1921. Though it accepted the tax

concessions in full, it warned the Kazakh central authorities against policy that 'relates to one nation alone and clearly shows allocation based on nationality'.[62] To those of Lenin's disposition, this would most likely have looked like an expression of great power chauvinism, an objection on the part of the imperial power to its perceived demotion similar to widespread reaction against *korenizatsiia*.[63]

Perhaps to preclude any such characterisation, Narkomprod RSFSR often reworded these arguments in economic terms. In October 1921 it emphasised to the Kazakh government that nomads, rather than Kazakhs as a whole, already enjoyed exemptions from the taxation of eggs and meat.[64] By eschewing a national category in favour of one based on agricultural activity, it perhaps sought to depoliticise the negotiations (having done the opposite in the preceding month). But subsidiary authorities more commonly understood the matter as a national one because Europeans were assumed to be exclusively sedentary, and so the tax exemptions were exclusively for Kazakhs.

Administrators of a particular nationality tended to protect their own, and documentation from central organs gives only a partial picture of the tax system at this time because local bodies retained considerable powers to enforce their own levies.[65] Thus Party members complained that free trade went on in some regions, whilst requisitioning continued unabated elsewhere.[66] In summer 1922 a member of the Kazakh Ministry for Internal Affairs registered a series of complaints about the collection of taxes from nomads in the northwest of the republic. He claimed that nomads were paying above the legal rate, and connected this with the predominance of Russians in the administrative apparatus.[67] He accused corrupt officials, likely to be Russian, of enforcing local monetary taxes unfairly.[68] Similar complaints about the taxation of Kazakhs were made in the Kustanai Guberniia nearby.[69] This was localised corruption, but it was not simply inconsistent with government policy; it was an inversion of government policy. Whilst central organs gave tacit or explicit support for post-imperial reparations to certain nations, Russian bureaucrats utilised the same typology of taxpayers based on nationality to ignore the nomadic-sedentary divide and overlook provisions for nomads. Other regional organs appear to have made informal agreements wherein Russians and Kazakhs were taxed differently, simply for ease of administration.[70] Russian peasants themselves reportedly resented the privileges, perceived or real, granted

to non-Russians and this surely further incentivised Russian officials to bend the rules.[71]

The point is, first, that tax was seen by the Party as a means of social change. Second, for members like Samatov, the social phenomenon most in need of change was the post-colonial disparities between Kazakhs and Russians, an agenda that plainly necessitated some distinction between national groups. Third, therefore, governing bodies from the largest and most central to the smallest and most local understood lower tax rates for nomads as a matter of national identity. These tax rates were both defended and attacked in national terms, depending on an administrator's attitude towards the agenda of post-colonial reparations. Russians were less likely to be amenable, Kazakhs more so. This was true whether they worked inside or outside the KASSR, as the manoeuvres of the Russian-dominated Orenburg Guberniia Executive Committee show.[72]

This whole dynamic was further in evidence when tax policy was drawn into ongoing arguments about national jurisdiction. Like Narkomprod RSFSR, local departments run by non-Kazakhs were also held accountable for the mass migration of Kazakhs into Mongolia and China from the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk Guberniias. In March 1922, Kazakh authorities suggested that the tax-in-kind had been improperly levied by Siberian tax collectors upon nomads in the borderland region between the Kazakh Republic and Siberian territories.[73] Kazakhs responded to the economic pressure by moving eastwards and out of Soviet control, and it was claimed that memories of belligerent treatment were keeping them there.[74] This was a border dispute between regional powers that would erupt again later in the decade.[75] In this case, Kazakh authorities connected the onerous taxation of migrating nomads by non-Kazakhs with the encroachment of Russian authority into the Kazakh Republic. The importance of taxing nomads properly was used to defend the republic's territorial integrity, and tax rates based on lifestyle or agricultural preference again became conflated with nationality. Similar cases arose between Uzbek and Kyrgyz administrators later in the 1920s.[76]

The extreme difficulty of developing, and then implementing, a coherent tax policy in a post-colonial context may explain why initial disagreements over tax exemptions were not formally resolved. The nomads' right to keep all their dairy produce and leather was always due for expiry at the end of 1921 anyway, and on 8 January 1922 the Kazakh

Council of People's Commissars ratified the Work and Cartage Tax. Instructively, a poster-sized publication printed to inform citizens of the Kazakh Republic about the implications of this new tax specified that settled Kazakhs would be treated as Russians in terms of tax levies.[77] The document thereby emphasised that the difference between Kazakhs and Russians was nil unless lifestyle intervened; between the lines the poster was disavowing any 'separatist demonstrations'. But the problems of 1921 looked set to continue. The document further declared that tax rates for the semi-nomadic and nomadic population would be decided by *guberniia*-level organisations, with the single limitation that these rates not exceed those specified in other legislation.[78]

Some efforts were made in 1921 to tax nomads in a manner proportionate to their wealth or behaviour. As foreseen in May by the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars, the variable rates of the tax-in-kind would apply to nomads owning more than two animals. Party members worried about rich nomads, the nomads' equivalent of the dangerous kulak class, from the very beginning of NEP. We see this in Samatov's report. But it was his other principal concerns, nomadism and nationality, that caused the greatest contradiction in the tax-in-kind. Nomads were recognised as an impoverished group, crippled by violence and drought, and the state made some attempt to moderate tax policy for them just as it had done geographically for the western regions of the KASSR. But the state apparatus lacked the sophistication necessary to tax a little less, and within months tax collectors were told not to tax at all. As no Europeans were considered to be nomadic, Russian and Ukrainian settlers around Astrakhan and Orenburg took this to be a sign of national favouritism. This is not surprising given the Party's endorsement of post-colonial reparations. Tax collectors, legislators and ordinary citizens conflated nationality and lifestyle, and the former took precedence in the way the debate unfolded. This seems to have advantaged financial organs concerned about the loss of revenue engendered by such blanket exemptions.

The Agricultural Tax

Taxation in kind formally ceased in 1924. The single Agricultural Tax had been introduced in 1923, and by the end of the following year it was officially collected only in currency.[79] The Agricultural Tax coincided

with a period of three or four years during which the state had to procure most of its agricultural produce at market rates, which were often prohibitive.[80] While the procurement apparatus developed, nomadism would again find expression in the tax disagreements of the time. Though tensions between nationalities in Central Asia would not dissipate (they were particularly resurgent after 1929), heightened post-colonial disagreements gave way to more practical debates over the taxation of nomads as the administration became more bureaucratic and more ambitious.[81]

The Agricultural Tax was adapted for the needs and capabilities of the KASSR, much as the tax-in-kind had been, on 7 June 1924. The alterations produced a document, the 'Instructions for the implementation of the single Agricultural Tax', and sections 112–18 of this document outlined new tax exemptions for nomads. This time, however, nomads had to be moving to a sedentary way of life to qualify.[82] A Turkestani declaration 'on land organisation in nomadic and semi nomadic districts' similarly stipulated settlement as a prerequisite for exemption status as the Agricultural Tax was introduced.[83]

The kind of social transformation the Party felt able to achieve had developed from the relatively simple aim of allowing the nomadic economy to stabilise and the more demanding task of helping the Central Asian economy recover from years of colonial exploitation. Now the state sought to bring an end to seasonal migration, as relieving the tax burden on settling nomads was perhaps designed to do. This was not a new aspiration but it may be one of the earliest pan-regional efforts to systematically incentivise settlement through one of the state's foremost policy tools: taxation. The decision to publish instructions also implies an attempt by central authorities to gather tax yields more evenly, with less corruption and fewer anomalies than before.

This all seems less a change of direction than a way of making tax collectors more receptive to the specific demands of the Party after a period defined by wayward local officials. The Soviet state of the 1920s suffered from a kind of weakness or disorder from which it was constantly seeking to escape, and given complaints in previous years about the lack of direction from central authorities in the implementation of the tax-in-kind, clearer instructions for local committees was one way of doing this.[84] Difficulties would continue to arise, however, and instructions could be anything but clear. Nomadism,

as a practice and a social category, would perpetuate problems for poorly organised republic-level organs and legislators who had no shared view about how nomads should be treated or what they should become.

The initial source of confusion and obstruction in the Kazakh republic would be sections 112–18 of the 'Instructions . . .' that were published in June 1924. In the first two months after their publication, they seem to have been ignored entirely. On 5 August 1924, the People's Commissariat of Finances for the RSFSR (Narkomfin RSFSR) wrote to its Kazakh counterpart (Narkomfin KASSR) instructing it finally to implement sections 112–18, meaning the granting of tax privileges to cattle-herding nomads and semi-nomads who were in the process of settling and taking up arable farming.[85] Thirteen days later, the Kazakh financial commissariat sent a circular letter out to all *guberniia* financial departments. In accordance with a request from Narkomfin RSFSR and sections 112–18 of the 'Instructions . . .', the letter said, nomads judged legally to be transferring to a life of arable farming should now be granted exemptions from the collection of the Agricultural Tax.[86]

It is not wholly clear how official this directive was, since it was delivered by circular letter rather than by decree or declaration. This ambiguity may help to explain the contradiction created between the letter and another major piece of legislation that had been introduced on 17 April 1924. The declaration 'On the land-development of the nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settling population of the Autonomous Kazakh Socialist Soviet Republic' was a long document that principally applied to land ownership rights, but its 52nd article concerned the provision of tax privileges for the settling nomads.[87] As with the 'Instructions . . .', the wording of this article was pivotal. Aid was promised to the 'working nomadic and semi-nomadic population of the Kazakh Republic, transitioning to a sedentary position'; this aid was 'for the pursuit of arable and arable-livestock-raising activity'.[88] Aid included loans of farming equipment and livestock, for repayment within ten years; grain, for repayment within five years; timber for the construction of housing and farm buildings; agronomic assistance; and, crucially, exemptions from state-wide and local taxes for up to five years.[89] Such promises had been made in Turkestan before.[90]

Already by 1924 the significance in Soviet tax law of the figure of the settling nomad was evident. But there was no consensus about how he or she should settle, if it was to be a permanent transition. The trouble

experienced by the Soviet state in acquiring grain, and the wish of some in the administration to vastly extend the amount of Kazakh land under cultivation, had helped place sedentary farming high on the agenda, but what kind of sedentary farming?[91] When enforcing the Agricultural Tax's 'Instructions . . .' in August 1924, Narkomfin KASSR had specified that only nomads transitioning to settled arable farming would benefit from tax exemptions. Article 52 of the declaration 'On the land organisation . . .', introduced two months before the Agricultural Tax, more generously granted exemptions to nomads transitioning to arable farming *or* arable-livestock farming. So how many new farmers would be granted exemptions?

The circular letter from Narkomfin KASSR caused consternation in regional offices across the Kazakh Republic, particularly in the east. Complaints began flooding in from September 1924.[92] The distinction between purely arable and arable-livestock farming, like the taxation of dairy and leather, might seem mundane, but in a place like Soviet Central Asia at a time like the 1920s these were questions of huge significance to the everyday life of the population. Often it could mean the difference between survival and extinction. The Akmolinsk Guberniia Executive Committee discussed the letter on 11–12 September, and resolved to petition the Kazakh Central Executive Committee immediately for the preservation of tax exemptions as foreseen in article 52.[93] It went on to argue that any reversal in these exemptions would bring the settlement of nomads to a complete halt. The tenor of its correspondence indicates the alarm caused by the change; the Committee concluded one telegram by saying that it would take any lack of reply as a sign of the centre's acquiescence.[94] The Semipalatinsk Guberniia Executive Committee demanded urgent clarification from the Kazakh financial commissariat on the proper implementation of tax policy.[95] Describing the pressures placed upon the settling population by the Agricultural Tax, it too complained that the effect of the circular letter would be to suspend further settlement.[96] Antagonism between new Soviet institutions was far from uncommon in the USSR as a whole, and became associated with *vedomstvennost'*, the tendency of those in charge of certain organs to protect the interests of themselves and their staff, much as members of the same nationality also acted favourably towards each other.[97]

The Kazakh People's Commissariat for Agriculture (Narkomzem KASSR) began its own campaign against the change on 4 September 1924, when it raised the matter at the Federal Committee.[98] Eleven days later it wrote to the Kazakh Central Executive Committee, making its case in clear and forceful terms. According to the latest position taken by Narkomfin KASSR, settling nomads were only subject to tax exemptions if they intended to take up purely arable farming. This was in breach of article 52 from the declaration 'On the land organisation . . .' and was, according to Narkomzem KASSR, an absurdity, as purely arable farming was extremely rare within the Kazakh Republic. The economy of the republic was dominated by livestock; article 52 was supposed to reflect this fact. That is why Narkomzem KASSR had received various requests for clarification from regional organs, because nomads would not settle if the promised tax exemptions applied only to unfamiliar agricultural practices. Narkomzem KASSR stated that its complaints at the Federal Committee had been ineffectual, and that KTsIK should take the matter forward and annul the letter sent out in August by Narkomfin KASSR. Without an annulment, hardly any exemptions would be applied.[99] On 18 October 1924 Narkomzem KASSR contacted the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars, asking it to publish the declaration that had introduced the Agricultural Tax to the Kazakh Republic, so that any misunderstandings could be resolved. At this point Narkomzem RSFSR also suggested that tax exemptions should be extended to the working poor (*batraks*) and the homeless.[100]

KTsIK had been in contact with Narkomfin KASSR since 25 September, making enquiries into the contradiction in tax policy that had emerged.[101] The defence, when it came in early October, served to complicate the disagreement. In implementing the 'Instructions . . .' to the Agricultural Tax, Narkomfin KASSR had simply been equalising the tax exemptions enjoyed by nomads with those granted to migrants, that is, settlers mainly from Eastern Europe and Russia. Migrants, it was argued, also paid tax when they settled if they did not establish the right kind of farming (that is, solely arable). The institution flatly denied that regional organs were having trouble understanding and imposing these tax policies.[102] The dispute was shifting. It had begun with an emphasis on the importance of arable farming, but was turning to the significance or otherwise of the nomads' status. Why should nomads be granted more generous and sympathetic exemptions than other itinerant groups? For a

financial body interested in simplifying the tax system this may have seemed a good question, whereas for an agricultural body like Narkomzem KASSR the difference between habitual nomads and migrants of farming heritage would have been pivotal.

In a further letter to the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars, this time on 31 October, the financial commissariat became more combative.[103] It accused its agricultural counterpart of lacking clarity in its definitions of those groups who should be granted tax exemptions. Sometimes, Narkomzem KASSR distinguished between taxpayers 'by lifestyle criteria', that is, as nomadic, semi-nomadic and so on.[104] At other times, it used criteria based on economic behaviour or output, such as cattle herding and semi-cattle herding. Narkomfin KASSR described further references to the homeless and to *batraks* as completely incomprehensible; if it was decreed that all *batraks* settling on virgin lands were to be treated as migrants, there would not be a Kazakh in the republic who had to pay the Agricultural Tax.[105] A tellingly similar conflation between vagrants and nomads had caused problems in tsarist times.[106] Narkomfin KASSR suggested that it would be enough for tax exemptions to be granted on the basis of a change of agricultural activity, from cattle herding to arable farming, and a change of living space. Under these principles, the additional social categories of nomadic and semi-nomadic were superfluous; anyone setting up a new farm in a new place is basically a migrant. A new category, encapsulating nomads and semi-nomads as well as homeless migrants who were habitually sedentary, would be sufficient.[107] If the nomadic-sedentary divide was replaced with a migrant-settled one, the provisions made in article 52 of the declaration 'On the land organisation . . .' specifically for settling nomads would become void. But the administration of tax exemptions would become much simpler if all eligible people were grouped into a single, elementary category.

Again, nomadism was being pushed out of the tax system in favour of alternative methods for distinguishing between taxpayers. As well as administrative expediency, nationalism lay in the background just as it had done in debates over the tax-in-kind. Migrants, rather than nomads, were more likely to be European settlers with a well-established culture of arable farming. Both were wandering populations the state sought to pin down, but in applying the same strict incentive for arable farming alone to both groups, Narkomfin KASSR was hugely advantaging

Russians and others over Kazakhs, many of whom lacked expertise in extensive crop farming.

Before continuing to discuss the disagreements of 1924, it is worth briefly asking what, or who, produced these difficulties in tax policy. At heart, the conflict sat between two contradictory pieces of legislation: the adaptations made to the Agricultural Tax, and a declaration on land use. Both were ratified within two months of each other. Neither were minor reforms, but significant statements of Soviet law. Earlier in the decade contradictions in the tax-in-kind had been between nationality and nomadism and were the product of inadequate implementation. In contrast, contradictions in the Agricultural Tax were written into the legislative texts, implying a certain administrative incoherence or incompetence. But a conflict accidentally created by incautious bureaucrats would surely have been more easily resolved, whereas Narkomfin KASSR soon found itself in a competition, mediated by Sovnarkom KASSR and KTsIK, with regional organs and Narkomzem KASSR.

Institutionally, the Agricultural Tax pitted financial organs against agricultural ones. Narkomfin KASSR was potentially more concerned with the preservation of state revenues, and wanted to reduce the number of citizens eligible for tax exemptions as far as possible, whereas Narkomzem KASSR was most sensitive to the fragilities of the rural economy and wanted to safeguard future harvests. Their respective positions placed them at either ends of the dichotomy described by Kotsonis: Narkomzem KASSR argued for more proportionate taxation, measured against the population's ability to pay, whereas Narkomfin KASSR felt the state's need to extract what it required.[108] In Moscow Narkomzem RSFSR, by far the largest of the capital's commissariats, resisted the use of class-based categories for the peasant population because, according to James W. Heinzen, it hoped to avoid alienating the 'most progressive stratum' of the rural population and thereby confounding its own efforts to educate and modernise the countryside.[109] It was widely accused of being 'pro-peasant'.[110] Possibly Narkomzem KASSR was similarly motivated by its more acute understanding of the agricultural situation in the Kazakh Republic. *Vedomstvennost'*, institutional defensiveness, may also have been at work.

Whether as a product or cause of these countervailing bureaucratic interests, different conceptions of the taxable population also came into

competition. Nomads were understood as comparable to migrants by Narkomfin KASSR; both were being encouraged to settle, so both should be granted tax exemptions on the same terms. Narkomzem KASSR thought tax exemptions for nomads should be equal to that of *batraks*, and thereby put emphasis on their general destitution, and wished to preserve nomads as a special category of taxpayer with special privileges. In the latter case, they would be defined by their agricultural capacities, which no longer included only their transhumance, but also their lack of experience in purely arable farming. It is perhaps not surprising that this aspect of their identity should be emphasised by the republic's foremost agricultural body.

One trend discussed often in histories of the USSR is notably absent from the 1924 debates: the centre-periphery dynamic. Though many regional organs complained about the imposition of the 'Instructions . . .', Narkomzem KASSR did as well. Rather than oppressive zeal, other inhabitants of the Kazakh centre – Narkomiust, Narkomnats KASSR, Gosplan and Sovnarkom KASSR – approached the question with detached ambivalence, as will be described. Narkomfin KASSR was only the centre of the periphery, of course, and may have been under pressure from Narkomfin RSFSR in the supreme centre of Soviet power. Yet, given Moscow's complicity with the contradictory policy embedded in article 52 of the declaration 'On the land organisation . . .', such a conflict cannot be taken for granted.[111] As has and will be seen, disagreements in the centre combined with complaint and confusion in the regions. James Hughes notes a similar situation in his analysis of procurement practices in the late 1920s and argues that policy was produced in a 'centre-local dialogue' between Moscow-based and Siberian officials.[112] This seems an appropriate model for many of the contemporaneous trends witnessed in Central Asia.

By late October 1924, the Council of People's Commissars was already considering a new declaration to resolve the contradiction in tax policy, an idea to which the Kazakh financial commissariat was openly opposed.[113] Various bodies were consulted on this change. The Kazakh Inspectorate of Workers and Peasants said that it did not object to the reinstatement of tax exemptions for newly created arable *or* arable-livestock farmsteads, but avoided direct comment on the matter of migrants and nomads.[114] Gosplan KASSR was also measured. It did argue that there was ambiguity over how long the exemptions should be

granted, either three or five years, and recommended the latter figure.[115] The People's Commissariat for Justice (Narkomiust KASSR) had more specific advice about the wording of the new declaration. It suggested that exemptions from the Agricultural Tax should be applied to new farmsteads that could be said to have undergone one of the following transformations:

(a) from cattle-herding (nomadic) forms of economic activity to arable.
(b) from semi-cattle-herding (semi-nomadic) to arable.
(c) from cattle-herding (nomadic) to an arable-cattle-herding form of farmstead.[116]

Interestingly, the decision to include 'nomadic' or 'semi-nomadic' in brackets appears to have come from a joint meeting of the People's Commissariat for the Nationalities (Narkomnats KASSR) and Sovnarkom KASSR on 17 November. The rationale for this is not clear.[117]

Word-for-word, however, Sovnarkom KASSR adopted the formulation quoted from Narkomiust KASSR above. In mid-November 1924 it resolved to extend the exemptions outlined in the 'Instructions . . .' to nomads transitioning to an arable-livestock-herding farmstead, in accordance with article 52. Although semi-nomadic Kazakhs officially had to take up purely arable farming to qualify for exemptions, Sovnarkom KASSR included a further clause that dictated that semi-nomads engaged in arable-livestock-herding enterprises would be granted exemptions if they had changed their place of residence. This measure was presumably intended to prevent sedentary communities from claiming to be recently settled semi-nomads, but in practice it was another concession to Narkomzem KASSR. In a further coup for the agricultural commissariat, exemptions were also offered to *batraks*, as suggested, regardless of their agricultural behaviour.[118] The whole struggle had lasted less than four months. Article 52 and its proponents were vindicated.

The eventual cost of this decision became evident the following year, after the national delimitation when the KASSR had its borders reorganised and extended. The new Kazakh Republic was considerably larger, though old legislative arrangements remained in place. So in October 1925 the Kazakh government generated forecasts for the financial requirements of Article 52, as it was to be implemented, during

1926. The republic would need 1.9 million rubles of Union funds, non-repayable, to cover the cost of tax exemptions and aid. It also required 4,673,827 rubles of Union funds to be dispensed as loans to help the Kazakh and Kyrgyz rural populations.[119] Precisely these funds were granted to the Kazakh Republic on 8 October 1925 by the Economic Council of the RSFSR, albeit after some delay.[120]

In the beginning of 1926 the specifications of tax policy generated and endorsed by Union-wide and Kazakh organs were again questioned, this time by a member of Narkomzem KASSR, the organisation that had fought so vehemently for the arrangement. Aliaskar Alibekov, a member of Narkomzem KASSR and formerly of Alash, expressed his personal view that the 'moment of settlement' was extremely difficult to identify.[121] Nomads themselves did occasionally sow crops to provide fodder and sustenance at different stages of their migratory journeys.[122] Given this, how was it possible to distinguish between a long-established nomadic camp harvesting crops before embarking on its winter migration, and a newly created sedentary farm, made up of former nomads who were in the first stages of growing crops? Both enterprises could be defined as arable-livestock-herding, both could contain *batraks.*[123]

The anxiety from Narkomfin KASSR the previous year appears to have had some legitimacy. Purely arable farms would have looked much more distinct from nomadic camps. The migrant category would have placed less emphasis on a specific moment of transformation from habitually nomadic to habitually settled, as migrants could have settled and then resettled without having to change their status in the eyes of the state. But Alibekov's position does not necessarily represent a *volte-face*. His complaint ranged further; what the government needed at the time was reliable, stable agricultural production, but it had legislated to induce tumult in the rural economy. Nothing could cause greater disturbance than mass settlement, which would create a multitude of new, fragile farming enterprises needing support and initially producing little.[124] Failure to determine the moment of settlement and tax accordingly was not a reason to extend and rationalise tax rates, but maybe to cancel them altogether. Rather than acknowledge the validity of the approach defended by Narkomfin KASSR, Alibekov may have preferred to return to the exemptions enjoyed by nomads under the tax-in-kind. Possibly this is what Narkomzem KASSR had also wanted in

its dispute with Narkomfin KASSR, but it compromised and accepted instead the special treatment of settling nomads and *batraky*, categories that, when taken together, could be applied to most nomads if not necessarily most Kazakhs.

Tax collection in Turkestan and its descendant republics was similarly complicated, similarly contested. In the late tsarist era nomadic Kyrgyz had been known to spuriously accept the label of farmer to acquire certain land use privileges.[125] During the first Soviet Land Reform resources and tax exemptions had been granted to those Central Asians occupying newly reclaimed land. Such privileges were a core component of the new regime's anti-colonial agenda.[126] At the first Party Conference of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast in March 1925, attendees promised various privileges to cattle herders under their care.[127] Yet the 'decision to collect taxes in cash rather than in kind from 1925' exacerbated economic crisis in the region.[128]

Promises were cheap. The Party's own rhetoric was so misleading as to constitute deceit. There were alternative means of legally extracting resources from nomads, such as a severe 300 ruble fine or three months of forced labour imposed for the private sale of cattle for purposes of resale.[129] Then there were the familiar stipulations, of profound consequence for those seeking to meet them. As in the Kazakh Republic, nomads were granted tax exemptions and other privileges on the proviso that they settled. These exemptions lasted for one year, and were delivered alongside a host of other privileges intended for communities in regions undergoing land ownership reform and cooperating with the authorities. Cooperation meant, in the nomads' case, that they not relocate before land apportionment was finalised in their area.[130] In effect, they were required to settle in a place of the Party's choosing. There are also signs of disagreement within the Turkestan administration about the type of sedentary agriculture that should have been expected of settling nomads, 'agricultural' or 'agricultural-cattle herding'.[131] Tax policy thereby solicited two transformations, one from nomadic to sedentary, one from old principles of land ownership to those generated by the Communist Party.

Nomads were notionally offered timber resources, though now this was only to build houses when they settled rather than to build or repair seasonal, temporary shelters.[132] Even the tsarist administration, and a few isolated Party members, had realised that nomads needed timber

whether or not they intended to settle.[133] For the financial year 1925–6, in the nomadic and semi-nomadic parts of Kyrgyzstan and the south-eastern regions of Kazakhstan, those involved in land organisation projects such as settlements were to be loaned resources and granted a ten-year variable repayment period.[134]

Repeated attestations to the nomads' impoverishment only served to further justify incentives to settlement, as nomadic pastoralism was by the mid-1920s uniformly held to blame. One regional report from the village of Suzak in September 1925 noted that the nearby sedentary communities were struggling, but that an even worse situation prevailed among nomads. Most families had no more than two cattle, those owning more than ten made up between 2 and 4 per cent of the whole population.[135] Trade among all these communities was at a minimum (lack of trade was also a signifier of poverty in the imperial period).[136] Tax revenue, nevertheless, was raised.[137]

The advent of the Agricultural Tax and variable rates of exemption and obligation intensified anxieties in former Turkestan, but especially in nomadic regions. Authorities complained about the abject poverty of these places but simultaneously about how little was known of these areas and their assets.[138] Due to profound financial limitations, local committees did not have the means to properly investigate their area of jurisdiction, but were still told to produce comprehensive data on who qualified for each exemption in short order.[139] Information on the nomadic population was scant and not systematically categorised, in Bolshevik terms, into different levels of affluence.[140]

Tellingly, regional Kyrgyz authorities satisfied themselves with dividing their population into just two groups: agricultural and cattle herding.[141] Leaving aside the failure of this system to distinguish precisely between nomads and settled peasants – a failure repeated, of course, by national and class categorisations as well – this simple dichotomy was reductive for the myriad variations of agricultural activity that it neglected. It even overlooked the 'agricultural-cattle-herding' social form to which the administration granted tax exemptions. Yet it is these two simple categories that were then subdivided by wealth. Those considered agricultural had any cattle they owned translated into a proportionate amount of arable land to give an overall level of wealth measured in farmland; those considered cattle herding had any arable land they had translated into heads of livestock to

give an overall level of wealth measured in livestock numbers. In such convolution is visible the source of so much of the arbitrary and disproportionate requisitioning to follow.[142] Even in the application of class the Kyrgyz Communist Party expressed its enthusiasm for recruiting the *seredniak* in the battle for socialism, defining a *seredniak* as someone who occasionally but not always hired labour.[143] Enthusiasm to find a halfway point in agriculture was less pronounced. As ambition continued to exceed capacity, taxation proved increasingly difficult to levy, and Kyrgyz authorities created plenipotentiary institutions to achieve greater tax yields.[144]

The principle of tax exemptions for both newly settled and still-migrating nomads remained embedded in the tax system. The sixth All-Kazakh Conference in November 1927 heard that around a third of all livestock herding groups were exempt from the Agricultural Tax.[145] But the ambiguities of taxpayer categories continued to obstruct. In the Akmolinsk Guberniia at the end of 1926, for example, the Agricultural Tax had barely been collected. Guberniia organs listed how much of tax owed had been amassed in percentage terms, by region and by the agricultural activity of the taxpayers. The highest proportion paid was 39 per cent, in the Atbasar Uezd from arable farmers. Most regions did not surpass 20 per cent. Only 21 per cent of arrears for previous years had been secured.[146] A key reason for the delay was the large number of petitions submitted over the incorrect calculation of tax rates, with communities refusing to pay anything until their complaints had been addressed.[147] Many such complaints were likely to be over the definition of the community: nomadic or semi-nomadic, habitually settled or newly settled. The Gur′ev Okrug Committee noted some success in the collection of the Agricultural Tax from sedentary groups, but was struggling with levies on nomads.[148] Such complexities would serve as a pretext for more belligerent tactics.

In the mid-1920s the identity of the nomad within the tax system was elaborated, attacked and defended. Whereas the special treatment of nomads under the tax-in-kind was confounded by the politics of nationality, often hard-won exemptions for nomads under the Agricultural Tax looked unviable because of bureaucratic inadequacies and the pressing needs of state procurement. An agenda for incentivising settlement had entered Central Asian tax systems from a well-established political consensus, but tax collectors were poorly equipped

to recognise this social transformation when they saw it. Financial organs sought to promulgate arable farming so that collectors could more easily identify settlement in practice, and gather larger grain yields. Agricultural organs sought to utilise the nomadic and *batrak* categories of taxpayer to exempt a rural population which could not take advantage of subsidies for purely arable farming. The Kazakh government sided with agricultural organs, but the result was a prohibitively complicated tax policy with extensive exemptions and low yields. Kyrgyz administrators placed what little information was available into reductively simplistic categories and went on demanding payment. Party members would eventually give up on crafting proper, systematic, gradated tax demands for different nomadic groups, whilst continuing to heap ire on one stratum of society.

Taxing the Despots

Comrade Iaroslavskii arrived at the third All-Kazakh Oblast Conference in March 1923 with issue 11 of *Red-Kazak-Stan*, a Soviet periodical published the previous year. To laughter from the floor, he mockingly read aloud the following passage:

> That country is considered wealthy, in which a wealthy population predominates. Where the poor are a majority, there all the population is considered poor . . . In Russia, 80% of the population is made up of peasants; they are a poor people, therefore the Russian state, taken as a whole, must be considered poor.[149]

Perhaps sarcastically, Iaroslavskii admonished his audience for sniggering, suggesting instead that such misunderstanding was saddening.[150] This was absolutely not a Marxist point of view, he said, but the analysis of a person who 'had not yet escaped the nomadic domestic economy'.[151] No group should be taken as a unit. Any population, even a nomadic one, could be divided between rich and poor.

The belief that rich could be distinguished from poor in any nomadic community had been firmly held by many Party members from the foremost days of the NEP. As mentioned earlier, class was one of the three key issues associated with taxation in Mukhtar Samatov's report to the first All-Kazakh Conference, in which he said that imprecise acts of

wealth redistribution would unite poor and rich against the Party.[152] Accordingly, the very first adaptations to the tax-in-kind entailed lower rates for poorer nomadic families as well as poorer regions.[153]

To an extent this was a matter of saving those most in need. Some early efforts at gradation were shaped by the desperate economic circumstances of the time. Reports from the Red Caravan expedition emphasise this point.[154] Famine relief policies in western Kazakhstan in 1922 involved acquiring and distributing cattle so that for every three people in a family, that family owned just one cow. Horses, camels and sheep were ignored to expedite the redistribution of dairy cattle, which would provide the most long-term sustenance.[155] These very early redistributive efforts were driven by the exigencies of starvation, something simultaneously exacerbated by Party policy. Yet this was a small part of a larger transformation of nomadic society and a revolutionary redistribution of wealth and power. Confiscating the possessions of the rich became principally a means of breaking the rich.

That the rich needed breaking was the least contentious aspect of the Party's class-based analysis of nomadic society. Wealthy or powerful nomads were always despots. The Kyrgyz Oblast Committee (Obkom) described with anger the system of authority at work in rural Kyrgyzstan controlled by the *manaps*. Here Kyrgyz *manaps* were tribal chieftains and, in nomadic communities especially, 'wealthy herd owners' who were granted the ignominious status of Nepmen during the 1920s.[156] 'By means of the most bare-faced bribery' the *manaps* maintained power and influence within their communities.[157] This included control of the use of land and the demand of tribute paid in livestock from less powerful Kyrgyz. Livestock acquired in this way would be distributed among a *manap*'s kinsmen to sustain loyalty and pay the 15 or 20 henchmen each *manap* apparently used to intimidate others and to perpetuate tribal violence. The Kyrgyz Obkom saw the unregulated interchange of cattle as a disaster for all but a small minority of the nomads themselves.[158] It further dismissed the *manaps* as 'exploiters' with no connection to Soviet power, but plenty of prior loyalty to the tsar. The position of the *manaps* had indeed changed considerably on contact with tsarist authority. They often served as mediators between officials and Kyrgyz, and were authorised to dispense justice, though they were not quite integrated into the tsarist administration in the way that leaders brought into Party cells and commissariats during the NEP were.[159] Nevertheless, the

Obkom planned to undermine the usury of the *bai-manap* through the provision of resources.[160]

When Iaroslavskii shared his favourite extracts of *Red-Kazak-Stan* in 1923, he was joined by Aron Vainshtein, newly arrived from Belorussia to run the Kazakh Party.[161] Vainshtein levelled his astringent criticism against the *bais*, the wealthier stratum of authority in Kazakh society who played a similar ideological role to the kulak in the Bolshevik worldview. The *bais* were accused of deliberately hindering the processes of settlement for which poor nomads yearned. Vainshtein drew on the well-established view that the *bais* sought to isolate and preserve the nomadic lifestyle because it facilitated their exploitation of the poor.[162] Part of his solution to this problem was a direct tax on the *bais*, the results of which would be used to subsidise the settlement of less affluent nomads.[163] His proposal looks much like an incipient form of the Agricultural Tax as it was implemented in the KASSR the following year.

While it was agreed that *manaps*, *bais* and others preserved mini despotisms in nomadic communities, undermining Soviet power and prolonging the practice of nomadism, punitive taxation against them was not immediately accepted by everyone. Vainshtein's ideas did not pass without criticism at the 1923 conference, for example. One attendee cited a region of the Ural Guberniia where livestock numbers were still so low that to distinguish between levels of wealth would be an absurdity. He went on to reprimand Vainshtein for misunderstanding the nomadic way of life.[164] Seitkali Mendeshev was also hostile, and his perspective perhaps had something in common with the article ridiculed by Iaroslavskii. Mendeshev argued that the taxation of rich Kazakhs must remain secondary to the subsidy of Kazakhs overall; that Central Asia's colonial past meant that no Kazakh was yet rich enough to endure Vainshtein's treatment.[165] For a brief moment here national categories of taxpayer were being used to squeeze out class-based categories of taxpayer, just as they were confounding nomadic-sedentary categories under tax-in-kind. The social realities of nomadic communities also complicated talk of exploitation and wealth. Tribal elites at the top of tribal hierarchies were not always considered the same as the bourgeoisie atop a class system, and treating them the same was not necessarily desirable or effective.

Nevertheless, the Agricultural Tax came to be seen as an instrument for the eradication of nomadic despots. The debates of 1924 were

principally about who was not taxed, but it is worth emphasising that exemptions were only intended for settling nomads, and migrating nomads were being assessed and levied at this time. Though their financial commissariat had been sceptical, the Kazakhs' agricultural commissariat had persuaded Sovnarkom KASSR to include exemptions for *batraks* into the Agricultural Tax. Yet whoever was included in the exemptions, it plainly did not protect the *bais*. In 1926 the Kazakh Party committee explicitly encouraged the use of variable tax levels to weaken *bai* families; their exile and the confiscation of their property was further endorsed in August 1928.[166]

Notwithstanding matters of tribe and mobility, all of this clearly has parallels across the Soviet polity. The early decision to specify who should not be taxed (the *batraks*), rather than come to an agreement on who should be taxed (certain of members the despotic classes), bears comparison with similar debates in Moscow. Narkomzem RSFSR had also experienced problems identifying members of the rural population who should be taxed or penalised, preferring similarly to focus on those who should not. Its early agricultural strategies relied upon the survival and cooperation of affluent peasants, and so it resisted efforts to target the top strata of peasant farmers and expressed doubts over the kulak threat.[167] This was difficult to articulate openly in the political atmosphere of the late 1920s, however, as it became less admissible to treat the Russian peasantry as a single group with whom the state must cooperate.[168] Other organs would go on to accuse Narkomzem RSFSR of a 'wager on the strong', an echo of Stolypin and tsarism.[169] Perhaps Narkomzem KASSR had also found itself reliant on wealthier rural communities but, unable or unwilling to defend the *bais*, it instead had opted to advocate tax exemptions for the politically acceptable category of *batrak* and extend this group to include as many families as possible who might otherwise have been deemed *bai*. In fact it was the despotic categories, those qualifying for ruinous confiscation, that came to be spuriously expanded.

The administration conceived of different ways to undermine nomadic despots. Land-leasing from *manaps* to poor nomads was one practice the Party sought to eradicate by offering loans of its own. The administration in effect hoped to supplant *manap* and *bai* influence with abundant resources it simply did not have.[170] But the notional redirection of livestock through punitive confiscation remained the primary means of

emancipating poor nomads. Party members thought of nomadic wealth as something quantifiable in livestock, meaning that quantities of livestock equated to levels of power.[171] The story was the same across Central Asia – indeed, across the USSR – at this late stage in the decade. Whether for a newly independent nation or a legally protected nomad, confiscation would become a frenzy, even for the more than 50 per cent of Kyrgyz cattle herders who were attributed two heads of cattle or fewer in local reports.[172] Confiscators increasingly overestimated the quantity of cattle owned by families, thereby purposefully pushing them into the spurious category of *bai* or *manap* and leaving them with nothing.[173] Collectivisation by this time was underway.

Conclusion

Debates relating to the taxation of nomads or the confiscation of their property in Central Asia reveal a nascent administration vacillating between a series of competing priorities. Should taxation be proportionate to the payer's ability to pay or to the state's need to extract? Should nomads be recognised as a discrete group for the purposes of varying tax rates, and at what rate may nomads be taxed? Should taxation recognise the legacies of imperialism, seek to compensate previously colonised national groups, and punish the old imperial culture? Was there a meaningful stratification of wealth in nomadic regions, and if so, could the richest be effectively taxed into extinction? Overall, was a revolutionary, transformative tax policy deliverable, and how radically could it effect change? During the NEP, these questions were negotiated at different, overlapping times. Of all the decisions made, the last ones were the most calamitous for nomadic peoples.

The first official tax policies, which followed a period of ruinous confiscation and straddled a time of chaos and extreme hardship, made considerable concessions to nomadic communities. In recognition of the nomads' fragile position at a time of economic crisis, tax exemptions for nomads were conceived and defended as a matter of principle. These exemptions were quickly conflated, however, with a broader series of concessions granted to non-Russians in Central Asia and a series of punitive measures imposed on European settlers, especially in Turkestan. As nomads were never European, any concessions made to nomadism were considered a symptom of a dangerous nationalism, even separatism.

Ironically, it was a comparable kind of nationalism that led Russian administrators at local level to undermine the concessions in their own isolated manner. Nomadism, as a discrete category, featured in the financial policies of Soviet Central Asia from the earliest days of the NEP, but it was tainted by the nationalist discourses of the time.

It was further undermined by widespread anxieties about how to administer variable rates. Once it was agreed that settlement was to be incentivised by reward and punishment in tax rates and privileges, the problem of identifying the 'moment of settlement' become more salient, as did the question of what form settlement might take.[174] As in all policy areas, the Party lacked the infrastructure and information necessary to induce transformation among nomads in anything but the most blunt and disruptive way. Financial imperatives and the organisations that represented them further abraded the post-imperial consensus by stressing the productivity of European farmers and the nonexistent returns from investing in nomadism.

All the while, the principle that nomads should be taxed differently from sedentary communities was sabotaged by the insistence that rich nomads should be taxed differently from poor ones. Opposition to the idea of class stratification among nomads was thin, but there was some considerable resistance to the practical proposition that different nomadic classes could be identified and taxed differently. This would be suppressed, leaving individuals liable to the accusation of being a member of the nomads' own bourgeoisie, an increasingly elastic category of class criminal which countermanded concerns of lifestyle or nationality. It is true that recalcitrant nomads who refused to settle were in no way officially protected from higher taxes after a few brief years following the Civil War. But it was the complete abandonment of nomad as a meaningful category of taxpayer, hewn as it was into classes, which was most injurious.

CHAPTER 5

(DE)MOBILISING NOMADS

On 20 May 1922, 12 years after Pyotr Stolypin's famous 'tour of the steppe' in 1910, a collection of Communist Party leaders, functionaries and investigators departed from Orenburg on a great expedition.[1] On their way they would visit various villages and *aul* communities, also alighting at the towns of Orsk, Turgai, Atbasar, Akmolinsk, Petropavlovsk, Pavlodar and Semipalatinsk.[2] The expedition was to be led by three representatives of the Kazakh Central Executive and Regional Committees. A kind of manifesto for the group was published by Kazakh authorities.[3] Its three stated aims were:

(1) The investigation, inspection and instruction of local Party Soviets and professional organs and the study of local working conditions.
(2) Political-educational work and economic 'agro-propaganda'.
(3) Practical medical and veterinary aid to the population.[4]

A complaints bureau would be managed by a member of the Kazakh Committee of Justice, a political department would liaise with regional bodies, and veterinary information points would be held alongside medical clinics for the benefit of the local population.[5] The group was named the Red Caravan.

The Red Caravan acted as an inspecting, instructing and galvanising arm of the regional Communist Party executive. On arrival at the Orsk region of what was then a northwestern area of the Kazakh Republic, the Red Caravan gave orders to local bureaucrats for the alleviation of famine and the improvement of sanitary conditions, among other measures.[6]

It also began the flurry of reports sent to Party leaders in Orenburg, who used them when devising legislation.[7] The Caravan's favoured themes in its reporting of nomadic life were shortage, destitution and need.

The Red Caravan worked on similar issues both independently and together with the Red Army. A representative of the Red Army's recruitment office travelled with and answered to the leader of the Red Caravan. During expeditions, this figure was expected to arrange meetings with civilians to explain the nature and aims of the Red Army and to discuss local military affairs. When the Red Caravan came across military companies, the Red Army's representative was obligated to inspect and correct political-educational activities within the group, thereby fulfilling an extra supervisory function on behalf of central authorities.[8] It seems that the Red Army was sometimes conceived of as an institutional conduit for the establishment of a network of Party cells, which would eventually supersede the army across the republic, moderate the activities of serving soldiers, and augment the state's governing apparatus.[9] In preparation for this handover the army published internal propaganda.[10]

The Caravan produced a considerable number of reports on many north-western *volosts*, principally by talking to local community leaders and party cells.[11] *Volost*-level information was subdivided into *aul*-level detail, in an effort to create a comprehensive topography of need.[12] Caravan leaders repeatedly called for a concerted crop-growing campaign to ease the suffering in destitute nomadic areas during the first famine.[13] Many from the Red Caravan went on to occupy significant posts in the Kazakh Communist Party, taking their experience of urgent economic border-making with them.[14] In fact, many of the Party's most prominent members, such as Seitkali Mendeshev, Mukhamedkhafii Murzagaliev and Alibi Dzhangil'din, were sent on investigatory missions between 1920 and 1922. They were all personally practised in solving territorial disputes and assessing local deprivations, and this was a habit the administration would not lose.[15]

All this offers lessons on the realities of early Soviet Central Asia, perhaps the most salient being the regime's own lack of knowledge about its rural population and the deficiencies of its infrastructure in the countryside. To send key figures out on a fact-finding mission was an admission of the ignorance of the Communist Party and the difficulties of alleviating this ignorance without extraordinary measures.[16] The immense, inescapable inadequacy of the new Soviet state's adminis-

trative capacities in the nomadic regions of Central Asia was so central to the Communist Party's thinking in the 1920s as to be almost a tenet of its ideology. To quote Stephen Blank:

> Although the Kirrevkom [Kazakh Revolutionary Committee] could purge enemies freely, it could not purge Kazakh backwardness. Thus, it retreated further into fantasy and frustration. Lenin's suggestion about allocating gramophone records and players translating from Russian and moving from Aul to Aul to propagandize villagers demonstrates Moscow's utter incomprehension of local conditions.[17]

Even before the Civil War, tsarist Russia had bequeathed a mixed state institutional inheritance to the Bolsheviks.[18] In certain areas the empire had recognised the *kochevaia volost*. These *volosts* were not static locations but were, in fact, bands of nomadic yurts dispersed over areas of variable size and containing variable numbers of people. In places, the borders of sedentary *volosts* were also flexibly defined.[19] This was a partial acceptance of local realities. Governing bodies in Orenburg sub-divided their territory into 'administrative *auls*' and, in response to the challenge of administrative units which roamed the steppe at will, nominated special representatives in each nomadic *aul* for the purposes of communication. In the Siberian-governed region of the steppe, an administrative *aul* might typically contain between 50 and 70 tents.[20]

The Bolsheviks thus had to reconcile the grandiosity of their aims with the heterogeneity of their governing structures. Heavy-handed attempts to control distribution during the Civil War had failed.[21] For months after the war the governors of some administrative zones were unaware of which national republic they had joined, making it impossible to build a chain of command.[22] Managing nomads wherever they were to be found was a challenge. Their erratic distribution within nomadic territory, the unfamiliarity of state employees with the nomadic way of life, and the deficiency of Party activity in the nomadic *aul* all slowed the pace of 'cultural-pedagogical work'.[23] This matter arose at the first All-Kazakh Party Conference in Orenburg in June 1921 amid complaints about the lack of central direction, the amateurishness of leading institutions and the disarray of their regional counterparts.[24] Even by November 1928, one Party comrade felt able to use the

evocative phrase 'organisational helplessness' to summarise the state's capabilities.[25]

Petty corruption, bribery and incompetence hindered state action and alienated nomadic communities, and in the early years Party members worried that poor communication links meant nomads were unaware of the help that was formally offered to them.[26] Later on in the 1920s, weak lines of communication were held to blame for widespread fears about new confiscation practices.[27] *Aul* soviets operated more fitfully than their village equivalents, and this complicated taxation, education and recruitment.[28] Concerns about banditry led the Party to postpone some of its early propagandising efforts and investigatory expeditions, especially in Kyrgyzstan, perpetuating ignorance about the condition of nomadic regions.[29] Lawlessness itself was not easily overcome in this context; congresses held to resolve tribal disputes were hard to publicise, and so were hardly attended.[30] Census materials from before and after the Civil War were incomplete and misleading, and at least some in the administration saw this.[31]

Infrastructural problems were considered less acute in the Russian-dominated northern provinces of the early Kazakh republic, as suggested by a report on the Orsk Uezd of the Orenburg Guberniia in 1922.[32] This signifies the association between nomads and backwardness, but also the genuine disparity between different areas in terms of communication and travel networks. In 1930, by which time Orsk and Orenburg had left the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (KASSR), statisticians counted just 600 cars in the entirety of the remaining republic.[33] Party officials believed that the absence of other kinds of transport, such as canals and railroads, had inhibited the productive capacity of arable farming in Central Asia and would continue to do so under Communist rule without major construction works.[34]

State employees were as green as the organisations they populated. Rosters of Kazakh committee members from 1925 list men as young as 22, with no higher education or Party membership.[35] Isabelle Ohayon notes a similar level of immaturity among cadres in Kyrgyzstan.[36] This cohort made rulings on issues of real consequence for the daily life of nomads and others. Decisions about the legal boundaries of nomadic migration routes, for example, could be a matter of starvation or success for both nomads and the farmers they bypassed.[37] Important regional organs were critically underfunded and suffered from a lack of

much-needed technology and resources.[38] On 10 November 1928, the All-Union Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) noted the weakness of the Kazakh Republic's judicial structures. As courts functioned very slowly, local governing organs were forced to leave even the most violent crimes unpunished, and the perpetuation of blood feuds was a particular concern.[39] A common complaint submitted to regional committees related to the widespread theft of livestock. This problem had still not abated in early 1933, and was still being blamed on administrative incompetence.[40]

Further to the organisational helplessness of the early Soviet administration, the Red Caravan's expedition also attests to the Communist Party's aim of cultural transformation. During the New Economic Policy (NEP) period, the Party embarked on 'campaigns to enforce the new way of life' as part of a broadly defined 'cultural revolution' in all areas of the former Tsarist Empire.[41] 'The new way of life' in the Soviet Union included domestic matters of health and consumption, sanitation and hygiene, often referred to in Russian as *byt*. It also included the worldview and outlook of the population, its complicity with Bolshevik rule and the ideological principles upon which it was based, such as class consciousness and female emancipation. By 'rallying the *bedniak* and *seredniak* mass against the *bai* in the *aul*' the Party hoped to foment class conflict amongst nomads.[42] The position of women would be another flashpoint.[43] Both the Caravan's 'medical and veterinary aid' and 'political-educational work' should be understood in the context of cultural transformation.[44]

Soviet strategies for transforming nomadic culture reflected the Communist Party's belief in a hierarchy of cultural development in which nomads could be found only at the lowest levels.[45] As the Kyrgyz Oblast Committee put it in November 1927:

> The backwardness of the native population in nomadic districts, the remoteness of nomadism from cultural-political centres, the availability of natural forms of economy, the tribal conflict of different groups all make up the economic and social basis for work among the nomadic population.[46]

Often, nomadic culture was less to be transformed than replaced with something better. The Party spoke of the 'battle with the survivals of

tribal-patriarchal relations' based upon nomadic economic practice.[47] It sought instead the bestowal of civilisation and 'real culture'.[48] Where nomadic culture was to continue, it was to be 'raised' to an explicitly higher, and explicitly better, level by Party operatives.[49] All this was called the 'Sovietisation of the *aul*'.[50]

The universalising aims of early Soviet cultural policy might be associated with the imposition of a specifically European socialist culture on nomads and others, an act of cultural imperialism.[51] At the least, the Communist Party was guilty of cultural vandalism. It sought to replace patrilineal principles of inheritance and land ownership with collective ones devised by the administration, for example.[52] Nomadic regions were also subject to antireligious propaganda.[53] A. Turgunbaeva presents the Soviet 1920s and 1930s as a revolution in Kyrgyzstan which effected a decisive break with past cultural and economic traditions, although the author goes on to emphasise the progress generated by this rupture.[54] Alternatively the Soviet conception of *byt*, like the whole project of national construction itself, might also be understood as a recognition of cultural specificities rather than just a pretext for their destruction.[55] Hence, in a circular letter from the Kyrgyz Oblast Party in 1926 'it was confirmed that the specifics of political educational work among the nomadic population is defined by the specifics of its economy and *byt*'.[56]

For Adeeb Khalid, the Party's objectives in this area bear comparison with the aims of some non-Bolshevik Central Asian intellectuals. The Jadids argued, for example, 'that the progress of Islam and the nation required that women be educated and that they take an active part in public life … Their main concerns were education, child marriage, polygyny, and, increasingly, unveiling.'[57] But the motivations of the Communist Party were different, and their agenda more expansive:

> the Soviet regime had its own goals that had to be achieved through a massive mobilization of the population … The population had to be mobilized by the new institutions, but it also had to be taught new ways of thinking about politics. A network of Red Teahouses, Red Yurts, and Red Corners sprang up at many points in the region.[58]

One of the advantages of this 'mobilizational' interpretation is that it denotes a deepening relationship between the behaviour of the

population and the objectives and functions of the state, a strengthening of the state. Ohayon describes a process of 'lineage-based mobilization' that leads to comparable ends.[59]

In a situation of administrative weakness and lawlessness, exacerbated by the geographical and conceptual gulf between nomads and Party members, any major commitment to altering the minds and everyday lives of nomadic Central Asians may appear incongruous. But cultural transformation and state building were mutually dependent. In Party documentation, phrases like 'culture' and 'cultural work' carry an enormous range of different meanings and connotations, some economic, some political, some administrative.[60] Just as settlement, first and foremost, but also 'industrialization, urbanization, secularization, education, universal literacy, and territorial nationhood' were all expected to create a new culture, so a new culture made these things easier.[61] The target of cultural work, backwardness, was associated with banditry.[62] This was all '... part of an effort to integrate the local population into the framework of the Soviet state'.[63] As a means of gathering information the Red Caravan excelled because so many of the services it offered doubled as methods for learning about the nomadic population and thereby strengthening the state's authority. This is presumably why a photographer and a scholar also joined the troupe.[64] State building in tsarist times was also dependent on local transformations, of course, but of a far less nuanced and exhaustive kind: 'Russia needed to build its empire in the steppe. That meant it needed peace, more Kazakhs to choose a settled lifestyle, an end to Kazakh raiding, and safer passage for trade caravans.'[65]

Soviet cultural and social policies also had economic implications. As Matthew Payne argues, many Central Asians (and all nomads) were 'production outsiders', unaccustomed to the conventions of the industrial workplace.[66] They would need protection as well as additional guidance. Reports of Kazakhs, potentially recently settled, damaging buildings and allowing their livestock to do the same would have prompted the Party to adapt a rural lifestyle to an urban environment.[67] In May 1930 the Aktiubinsk Okrug Committee recommended that the administration of newly settled *aul* communities should be organised with reference to the 'cultural-domestic specificities' of the population in question.[68] This might have involved emphasising the importance of hygienic domestic conditions, for

example, something that would also be of repeated significance in the Party's dealings with nomadic women.[69] Attempts to change gender roles had a revolutionary function too.[70]

The Red Yurts

The state furthered its pursuit of cultural transformation and state building in nomadic regions by using travelling institutions. This helped it overcome the distance that was the definitive feature of its relationship with nomads. In order to mobilise, the state went mobile. The Red Caravan's services were provided to nomads on the move, *in situ*, rather than in the artificial conditions of a congress or court hearing. '"Nomadic" soviets' followed herding communities between pasturelands.[71] Red Wagons, 'mobile enforcement and propaganda units', operated in a similar fashion.[72]

The quintessential exemplar of Soviet state building among the scattered communities of the nomads is the Red Yurts.[73] These were bands of medical and legal experts, veterinary specialists, tutors and Party propagandists, offering the benefits of their expertise and distributing educational publications.[74] Normally Russian by ethnicity, with men predominating further up the chain of command, these professionals came mainly from Moscow and Russia's other urban centres. According to Paula A. Michaels, they were often accompanied by one or more local guides, who also functioned as translators.[75] The groups would roam the region in yurts decorated with a red flag to signal their purpose and their affiliation with the Party.[76] Expeditions could last months, but groups would seldom offer their services to a particular nomadic *aul* for more than five to ten days before moving on. One group saw 3,000 individuals during a three-month summer period in 1927 alone.[77] Like so many of the state's endeavours, the Red Yurts were understaffed and underfunded, but they clearly had their admirers in the administration.[78]

The Red Yurts were not controlled directly from one central authority. Regional bodies employed Yurts with enthusiasm.[79] Their mobility and flexibility made them seem an indispensable method for engaging with nomads on various domestic, social and everyday matters, with the Semipalatinsk, Syr-Darya and Zhetysu Guberniias all recognising the utility of the Red Yurts and committing more resources to their expansion in the later 1920s.[80] All this may explain the

campaign's surprising longevity. In 1926 there were 39 Red Yurts operating in the Kyrgyz Oblast.[81] In 1928 the All-Union Central Executive Committee noted the success of the Red Yurts campaign and recommended its continued use.[82] The following year approximately 134 yurts were active on the Kazakh Steppe. By 1939 this number had declined to less than 12.[83] Yet there seems to have been some recognition in the USSR after World War II that the persistently nomadic behaviour of some Central Asians still required a state willing to come to them. By 1952, in the era of late Stalinism, 273 Red Yurts were back in operation.[84] They remained an effective conduit between state and shepherding communities after Nikita Khrushchev took power and on into the period of Leonid Brezhnev.

The Red Yurts were explicitly intended to replace the elders and other authority figures native to nomadic society: 'They should be advisers to the nomadic population, and its foremost guides to the Sovietization of nomadic *volosts*, and also its guides for socialist construction.'[85] Typical instructions to Red Yurt staff read as follows:

> . . . to carry out work with delegates and through them attract the mass of women, organise discussions about the meaning of the liquidation of illiteracy, about the working aims of delegate meetings, about the participation in social work, about female rights, about the Communist Party, about the Komsomol [the Young Communist League], about the raising of children, the rules about marital age, about *kalym* [bride price] . . .

and so on.[86] The Kyrgyz Oblast educational authorities held these to be the main priorities in nomadic regions: 'the systematic familiarisation of the population with all measures taken by Soviet power', the medical education of *aul* residents, propaganda and the liquidation of illiteracy.[87] Given the great number of the Red Yurts' objectives, they function as a vehicle with which to explore the full range of the Party's efforts at changing the everyday lives of nomadic peoples.

Education

In the most general terms, the Red Yurts were an educational institution, and manifested both the continuities and differences in

education policy from before and after the Soviet takeover. In tsarist Central Asia, education had often been of a religious nature. A few Russian educational institutions were established, initially for Russian settlers and later for Central Asians, and some boarding schools began accepting nomadic pupils on a seasonal basis. Heavy emphasis was placed on learning the Russian language.[88] The empire's priority was to train literate agents with a dual purpose: to act as links between nomadic communities and the colonial administration, and to act as a conduit for new agrarian techniques. In isolated cases, children were encouraged to practice the agricultural practices they learned on land near their school buildings.[89]

Bolshevik education policy was more ambitious in principle but limited in effect. The Communist Party emphasised education in early childhood as a foremost means of social transformation.[90] Education was seen as the state's way of accessing the minds of nomads, precipitating voluntary behavioural changes in agriculture, health and social order, while also effecting a larger political transformation. All could potentially prove beneficial for an *aul*, a *guberniia*, a republic and the Union.[91] As in tsarist times, education combined some academic subjects with training in agricultural technique. Educational institutions for nomads were still dominated by Russians, often fairly affluent and urban. They brought with them their urban Russian attitudes and assumptions.[92] But Soviet education also included new subjects, techniques and points of emphasis. Schools run specifically for women grew considerably in number in the latter half of the 1920s, for example.[93] The building of a network of educational institutions, offering their services to nomads, was one of the administration's explicit aims.[94]

To reach nomads, the Party turned to portable institutions. The Red Yurts stood out as a 'point of strength for rural political-educational work'.[95] Mobile schools were also established and run to accommodate nomads.[96] Even later in the NEP period, when fewer and fewer Party members anticipated a long-term accommodation of nomadism, Guberniia committees were planning to create cadres of nomadic tutors and mobile schools alongside the more conventional textbooks and educational grants.[97] The Union Council of People's Commissars insisted on the further construction of stationary schools in regions dominated by nomads in August 1928, but the principle of nomadic educational institutions which moved to meet their pupils seasonally had by then been long-established.[98]

Besides schools and the yurts, education was something almost any Party or state organ could do. Even the Red Army recruitment official who travelled with the Red Caravan had an educational function. In between explaining the army's policies and activities to civilians, this figure was tasked with the establishment of schools and libraries in any military units he came across during his journey. Once organised, the official would leave the unit with instructions for the further development of these educational endeavours.[99] The Red Caravan itself, in its capacity as a fact-finding expedition, confirmed the pressing need to improve literacy among nomads, and insisted that Russian Party members educate themselves about local custom and practice.[100]

Literacy was an aspect of education that received acute attention in directives relating to yurts and other such institutions.[101] The ability to read enabled nomads to absorb the messages of propagandistic and didactic texts, most notably newspapers, and illiteracy was a major obstacle in the recruitment of and communication with nomads, a barrier to their mobilisation.[102] As such, literacy became a prevailing Party ambition and also a cornerstone of social mobility. Attendees of literacy classes could be made Party members and encouraged to act as role models for their fellow nomads.[103]

By emphasising reading and writing, the Party set itself a considerable challenge. Literacy levels, low in Russia, were even lower in Central Asia. Though things had begun to change in the nineteenth century, nomadic culture was traditionally oral, including in its transmission of Islam.[104] Thus the All-Union Central Executive Committee noted that much of Central Asia began the Soviet era in a state of almost total illiteracy.[105] According to one estimate, over 90 per cent of the Kazakh *aul* population was illiterate in 1920.[106] Later Soviet publications estimated an even lower literacy rate among Kyrgyz just before the Revolution, and widespread illiteracy was a key concern of the first Kyrgyz Party conference in 1925.[107] The early literacy campaigns were less effective in rural areas and were hampered by contradictions but it is notable that, leading into the 1930s, these campaigns have been presented as one of the Soviet administration's least ambiguous successes.[108]

Red Yurts and other mobile institutions were also involved in Party recruitment and ideological education, a cause for concern among leaders:

> The remoteness of the *aul* from the governing centres; the disconnectedness of the *aul*; the low cultural level of its clannic existence; the nomadic economy [all] hold back the growth of the technical and political literacy of the *aul* communist and lead to the subordination of the interests of the Party to the interests of the clan, of the group and of the *bai* elements.[109]

In an assault on the 'political illiteracy' of Party members and membership candidates, authorities in the Akmola region arranged educational expeditions, assemblies of peasant delegates and ideological courses which would deliver Communism to the countryside.[110] In instructions published in November 1926, course convenors were advised to begin their tutelage based on an assessment of their pupils' knowledge. It was deemed essential to hold an introductory group discussion, in which the 'leader should speak as little as possible' in order to discover the issues that most interested his or her pupils.[111] On matters of political theory the pedagogue's role was to encourage nomads to discover Communism for themselves: 'The old question "lecture or discussion" should be decisively resolved in favour of the latter.'[112] Nevertheless, certain Party priorities were repeatedly impressed upon new members, who were made well aware of the social structures of nomadic society that had to be expunged, variously described as 'patriarchal', 'tribal', 'capitalist' or simply as '*bai*'.[113] In 1923 Kazakh Party cells received a 90-hour course in political economy, produced in Moscow.[114]

Literacy for Party membership hopefuls was again a priority, as some arrived at assembly points completely illiterate. If the Party was to function as an educational institution, it itself had best be educated. A Kazakh Communist Party census from January 1927 revealed that only 35 per cent of members had received a formal education, and 25 per cent of all members were wholly illiterate. In one Kyrgyz region in the late 1920s, 50 per cent of all presidents and vice-presidents (all ethnically Kyrgyz) were illiterate.[115] Other ethnic Party branches in Central Asia admitted worse results. The need for basic education was clearly not imaginary.[116]

To the frustration of the Party, nomads were among the groups who were hardest to engage in notionally democratic and Party processes.[117] This partially undermined *korenizatsiia*. Translated by Terry Martin as

'indigenisation', *korenizatsiia* was the process of adapting the administration of a republic to have it reflect that republic's titular nationality. In Central Asia this policy began to have meaningful impact between April and July 1923 when 'mechanical *korenizatsiia*' was instituted, mainly involving the dismissal of Russians from senior office and their replacement with members of titular national groups such as Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.[118] The caveat to this point is that *korenizatsiia* was primarily about nationhood, not lifestyle. Thus the Party's frustration might have been more acute if its aim was to reflect differences in economic behaviour, such as nomadic pastoralism, rather than just Central Asia's perceived national content. As it was, because nomadism was seldom an essential national marker (sometimes it was a relative one), the frustrations associated with it were a less direct obstacle to the *korenizatsiia* agenda. Nevertheless, difficulty in recruiting nomads meant a failure to develop the administration's power in nomadic regions. The Party blamed its lack of influence among nomads on the predominantly affluent stratum of Central Asian society from which it continued to draw members.[119]

These members in fact had a mixed impact on the Party's capabilities. As time went on, tribal leaders such as the Kyrgyz *manaps* were brought into the more localised segments of the administration and began to affect its actions. They were able to use their status among the population nearby to achieve the Bolsheviks' agenda, and brought their knowledge of local lineages and hierarchies into the Soviet state's purview. On one hand, they helped to mitigate some of the ignorance and impotence of the state at the local level, making such Party members very valuable. On the other hand, tribal rivalries and long-standing animosities also infiltrated the Party along with its new membership, making Party cells and committee meetings a new venue for competition between tribes. To the exasperation of senior officials, the administration yielded to new forms of favouritism and partiality in the service of feudal estates. Even as the Party fought backwardness, it found itself being made backward. Eventually, though, particularly in Kazakhstan, the Party learned to manipulate tribal rivalry to expedite its repressive measures. It encouraged Kazakhs to compile lists of leaders in rival communities to identify targets for confiscation.[120]

In Party documents education, literacy and ideological instruction formed a tight association of mutually relevant agendas along with

agronomic training. The belief in education as a means of improving agricultural technique predated the Revolution and was widespread in the USSR during the NEP.[121] A report from the 'agitprop department' of the Kustanai Guberniia, dated March 1922, exemplifies the trend.[122] According to the piece, the agitprop department was then recruiting the best agronomists of the region to work with the local newspaper *Steppe*, to help the publication answer the questions of its readers relating to the proper cultivation and division of land and adaptation to drought conditions. The department also produced a series of pamphlets on related matters, including 'Questions of a drought-struck economy', and ran monthly agricultural courses. At the same time, the department was cooperating with the Red Army on matters of internal Party propaganda, and advising educational organs on the liquidation of illiteracy.[123] The agitprop department apparently combined all this with work more befitting of its title, such as the coordination of Party activities among the scattered communities of the *guberniia*.[124]

Such was the conflation of educational and agricultural policies, that the Kazakh People's Commissariats of Education (Narkompros) and Agriculture (Narkomzem) spent the summer of 1924 arguing over which organisation was best placed to manage education in rural areas.[125] Originally controlled largely by Narkomzem, collective farm and *aul* schools were transferred to the jurisdiction of Narkompros by central organs, something Narkomzem briefly protested. After all, some of the Party's greatest agricultural challenges, including the prevention of livestock epidemics and anticipation of climactic shocks, were contingent on state-directed education.[126] Narkompros defended the decision on two levels; first, that Narkomzem's conception of education was too narrow, and, second, that Narkompros would better manage all aspects of rural education, including its agricultural aspects.[127] Certainly this was a major matter, since *aul* schools were said to play the most 'decisive role' in the countryside.[128]

Given all this, mobile institutions were also expected to provide agricultural instruction, beginning with the Red Caravan.[129] 'Agricultural soviets' sought to actively include nomadic and semi-nomadic society into the improvement of agriculture through instruction and propaganda whilst also offering veterinary aid and protection from wolves, perhaps as incentives for the nomads' complicity.[130] An army of agronomists was required for such a task,

but the administration struggled to find sufficient numbers, and all the Party's extravagant pledges must be read alongside its shortages of resources and personnel.[131] Still, the same process of state building feels present: 'Local agricultural specialists functioned as an interface between the regime and the rural population.'[132] The Koshchi Union was a further conduit for agricultural knowledge and state power. It was intended to promulgate new, superior forms of behaviour and then enforce those behaviours not only through cooperation and support but also patronage and financial coercion.[133] Though it functioned primarily in settled and semi-nomadic areas, the Koshchi Union did engage with and recruit nomads, building bases within particular *auls* and then connecting these with other local cells to create unified regional branches.[134]

Nomadic Women

Among all the Red Yurts' notional objectives, of primary importance was work among women, to which some yurts were entirely devoted. Michael Rouland associates the campaign almost entirely with women and matters related to gender.[135] The Bolsheviks brought to post-revolutionary Russia a commitment to transforming women's role in both domestic and public contexts.[136] In Central Asia this same agenda interacted with local cultural and religious practices, but was no less radical; indeed it may have seemed more so.[137] The proper position of women, hotly contested within the Party in the 1920s, was deeply intermeshed with questions of culture and everyday life.[138] It was also connected to the strengthening of Soviet power structures. The 'involvement of women in Soviet construction' was a revealing motif.[139] Women were said to have a 'passive attitude' towards Party work, Party membership, and democratic engagement.[140] Activating a new revolutionary attitude among women would bring them into Party and state structures. As well as swelling Party ranks, this was expected to further the Party's agenda in a more abstract sense. Gregory J. Massell argues that, in the absence of a substantive industrial working class in Central Asia, some conceptualised women as a 'surrogate proletariat' in Central Asia and the Russian far north, meaning an alternative oppressed group who could be liberated and then put to work building communism.[141] This would have economic as well as political consequences. It meant giving nomadic women

work in the rural economy, which would increase the countryside's productive capacity.[142]

The Soviet conception of female empowerment encompassed many changes in behaviour and belief, including their participation in collective labour, Party membership, voting, improved literacy and economic independence. The Communist Party also sought to undermine and ultimately eradicate certain customs, such as polygamy and *kalym*.[143] *Kalym* was a dowry or bride price.[144] A 'day for the cancellation of *kalym*' was celebrated by Kazakh Party cells in 1923, and the following year in October it and similar practices were formally banned through reforms to the criminal code.[145] Here the Soviet Union was continuing a subjugation of non-Russian legal and social practices that had begun long before 1917, but such measures were also part of the Communist Party's increasingly antagonistic relationship with religious norms and activities.[146] Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev drew these issues together most concisely in 1921: 'cultural backwardness and religious fanaticism go hand in hand, completing and mutually reinforcing each other'.[147]

Like other policies, campaigning for the betterment of women's lives was an interdepartmental effort.[148] At times this appears to have undermined the case for a strong central *zhenotdel* or women's department, which was denied an official role, centrally and regionally, in famine relief efforts in 1922 because its brief was considered insufficiently relevant.[149] On the other hand, gender politics were not relegated to the prerogative of a lonely subcommittee, formed to fulfil the demands of one of Moscow's ideological preoccupations. The Koshchi Union was expected to be sensitive to issues of gender.[150] Regional committees regularly discussed 'work among women' alongside finances, communications and governance, and published newspapers for working women.[151] Women were seen as the primary conduit for the improvement of domestic hygiene and public health in the *aul*, and were targeted with leaflets advising on these matters.[152] Though the Union-wide *zhenotdel* was formally dissolved in 1930, it continued to function in some regional republics into the following decade.[153]

The emancipation of women required educational programmes and Party-led instruction at conferences, though it seems these were more common in settled regions.[154] Specifying a schedule for each seminar and conference was a concern for Narkompros, which was perhaps worried that such novel forms of political engagement could easily be

derailed by unpractised participants.[155] At conferences, a high premium was placed on the discussion of practical, everyday issues that would appeal to a woman 'as a mother, as a builder of the economic life of the *aul*'.[156] At the third Kazakh regional congress of *guberniia* women's departments, held on 4 June 1922, delegates enjoyed lectures on the economy of the Kazakh Republic and society under the NEP. An excursion into the countryside was also organised, where attendees could familiarise themselves with new methods of collective childcare and upbringing under Communism.[157]

Though central and regional institutions, large and small, acknowledged the Party's objectives for women, the associated tasks seemed daunting. By various criteria of development women lagged behind men, and as nomads similarly lagged behind sedentary communities, so nomadic women formed one of the neediest groups in the Union. From the beginning, the administration recognised gender difference in the nomadic *aul*. All nomadic women were exempt from the Kazakh Work and Cartage tax in early 1922, for example.[158] If literacy was rare among nomads in the early 1920s, it was almost unheard of among nomadic women, and as such they were particularly targeted by literacy campaigns, with a phalanx of female literacy instructors envisioned by the Kazakh Party branch in November 1922.[159] Shortage of personnel also affected the women's agenda, with the Party observing a critical lack of relevant trained professionals, including doctors and midwives.[160]

The recruitment of women into the Communist Party was another challenge.[161] On 29 June 1925 the leader of the *zhenotdel* of the Dzhalal-Abad Okrug Committee complained about the lack of women in Party and state positions, stating for example that *volost* conferences of the Koshchi Union were required to contain 15 per cent women but could not even meet that low quota. The leader partly blamed the lack of women in such positions on the lack of literate, active women of the native population available.[162] Where women did involve themselves, Russian women could outnumber those of the titular republic by a considerable margin.[163] There is also evidence of anxiety about the quality of female recruits: the Kyrgyz *zhenotdel* cautioned that women must be assessed for their eligibility, based on their Party activity and literacy.[164]

When the administration turned its attention to nomadic women it was troubled by the same particularities confronted by educational and

other institutions: the scattered distribution of the population and changing seasonal circumstances. The 'hostile attitude from the male part of the population to the involvement of women in the work of the Soviets' was also noted.[165] Again, mobile institutions seemed an appropriate bridge over such disobliging terrain. The Red Yurts were intended to create 'a link between Party workers and the broader female masses'.[166] As one *guberniia* committee further stated in March 1927, '[t]he Red Yurt is the proven form of work among women of the nomadic population'.[167]

The Red Yurts carried the Party's larger political slogans into the countryside. They marked the occasion of 8 March (International Women's Day), for example, and were encouraged to increase their activity on that day.[168] But their most striking characteristic is the intimacy of the relationship they sought to create with women. They were expected to arrange consultations with pregnant women (as well as debtors and other potentially vulnerable people in need of legal aid).[169] They convened women-only literacy classes. They received funding for instruction on home economics, needlework, singing and drama.[170] They offered women legal advice. In their campaigning against *kalym* they intervened in the formal and cultural aspects of marriage.[171]

The Red Yurts also tried to make contact with nomadic children, to work 'among the *aul* youth.'[172] As with women, young people were seen as instrumental for the 'sovietisation of the *aul*' and as vitally important for the future industrialisation of Central Asia.[173] Yurts were expected to work closely with the Komsomol, with literacy again a priority.[174] Within the subgroup of youth, the Party again distinguished by gender. *Kruzhki* (circles) for young girls were convened. Young girls were to be taught to read, but the local Party branches revealed the limits of their radicalism by encouraging girls to also study the domestic arts of embroidery and handicrafts.[175]

The Red Yurts' focus on hygienic and sanitary conditions among nomads further necessitated access to the private lives of families, as did the detachments of medical staff hired by the Party to tour nomadic regions offering aid.[176] They sought to create patient histories for the nomads they saw by asking women about their first menstruation, the age at which they lost their virginity (women were apparently asked simply when they got married) and how many children they had.[177] These seemed intrusive questions for many, and rumours subsequently

spread that the Red Yurts kidnapped girls to put them to work in distant cities.[178] Doctors working with the Red Yurts also administered smallpox vaccinations and offered advice on food hygiene.[179]

The Red Yurts were not the Party's only conduit for disseminating medical expertise. Stationary 'medical points' or centres employed doctors and other specialists to offer services to visiting nomads.[180] Medical staff of this kind in the Gur'ev Okrug in 1926 apparently became despondent about the isolation of the nomadic population and the impossibility of properly engaging with it, submitting complaints which local Party leaders were keen to rebuff.[181] Scattered over a wide area, nomads continued to make difficult patients, which worried one attendee of the Alma-Ata Okrug conference who spoke of the common illnesses that afflicted nomadic communities.[182] In August 1928 a five-year plan was developed for the growth of a public health system 'in rural and particularly in nomadic regions' of Kazakhstan, and in Kyrgyzstan the Party made efforts to improve health and reduce disease among its nomadic communities.[183] For veterinary assistance beyond the Red Yurts, regional bodies were also in talks with authorities in Moscow about 'the strengthening of the zootechnical veterinary network'.[184]

In all cases, the opportunities for cultural misunderstanding were clearly legion. The new doctors of Central Asia, including those employed by the Communist Party to work on the Red Yurts, were generally secular, educated in European Russia, and politically conscious.[185] Sarah Cameron makes clear that female emancipation among Kazakhs (who were less likely to wear a veil, for example) did not become as heightened a political controversy as it did among Uzbeks.[186] But there was nevertheless resistance to the Red Yurts among nomads in Central Asia and Siberia.[187]

The seminal piece on the Red Yurts campaign is Michaels' *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia*.[188] Michaels places the yurts alongside forced settlement and collectivisation as a series of imperial policies used to colonise and control Central Asia.[189] From this compelling analytical perspective, the education, health and artistic funding that flowed from the centre to the periphery mitigated Soviet crimes but did not negate them.[190] Cultural work was intended to overcome the primordial conditions of the nomads, whose 'very existence attested to everything the Bolshevik activists despised as primitive, antimodern, and backward'.[191] Michaels further makes a distinction

between two types of medicine in her study, 'biomedicine', which was advocated by the Yurts and the Soviet state more generally, and 'ethnomedicine', native to Kazakh nomadic culture.[192] This choice of words reveals a position close to that of Virginia Martin, who seeks to avoid a crude dichotomy between 'traditional' (Kazakh) and 'modern' (Russian) culture in her own work.[193] Soviet medicine was associated with culturedness but also with productivity and the control of typhoid and other dangerous diseases. As with other educational endeavours, sanitation in the *aul* made nomads less of a nuisance to the state, and made them into healthier, more productive, more useful citizens. It was assumed that the medicine of the nomads themselves, associated with backwardness, would hinder these efforts.

Whether or not all of the policies discussed here constitute cultural imperialism must be placed within this book's wider characterisation of Soviet power in Central Asia. As acknowledged, nomads did sometimes experience Soviet power as colonial subjects might, but this does not necessarily make the USSR an empire or the Communist Party innately hostile. Emotional antipathy towards nomads is seldom conspicuous in Party documentation. Further, the processes at work during the NEP also fit within models of modernisation – a concept retained here despite being rejected, with good justification, by other scholars – and post-colonialism. The pertinent differences between the latter two paradigms and imperialism are also the differences between subjugation and state building. The assault on nomadic gender norms, religiosity, forms of knowledge and social structures was intended to bring nomads into the Soviet system, not under it. In practice this distinction was fragile. When confronted with the difficulties of governing nomads, the Party's willingness to compromise its aims was severely limited, and so Soviet state power continued to manifest itself in nomadic regions largely as a series of arbitrary impositions rather than a collaborative or at least predictable process. But the mobility of some Soviet institutions, and the expansive nature of their aims, demonstrate some consideration of the specificity of nomadic life and an attempt to bring nomads to socialism, and socialism to nomads. In its functional impact socialism is here largely indistinct from modernity, with both its negative and positive connotations. In the enthusiastic adoption of the Red Yurt method by regional bodies and national organs, the acknowledgement of and tolerance for some

nomadic customs and the intolerance for others, we see also post-colonial state building.

Conclusion

Perhaps more vividly than in any other policy area, the state's treatment of nomadic women demonstrates the depth and intimacy of the social and cultural changes for which the Party hoped. Health, sanitation, marital relations, handicrafts and leisure time all came under the jurisdiction of authorities outside of the traditional structures of nomadic society. It is unsurprising that, in these most personal and private aspects of life, the state was at its most dynamic, using the conventional transportation means of the nomads themselves to propagandise and transform. As proved true later in the Soviet period, though again in reference to nomads, 'violence was much less effective if one's goal was to have people brush their teeth, wear underclothes, read books and boil the meat they ate', and so the state had to innovate.[194] The state went mobile to mobilise as well as transform, as demonstrated in particular by its education and literacy campaigns, which were designed to make the messages of the Party more accessible to nomads, and by Party recruitment, which tried to bring nomads into the apparatus of power. Of course, one of the intended effects of the decision to go mobile, part of an effort to mobilise nomads for socialist construction, was that the nomads themselves would demobilise and settle; this is shown by the Red Yurts' advocacy for agriculture as well as the wider connection made between cultural progress and settlement. But, importantly, this was only one part of the agenda and the campaign's other provisions were not contingent upon settlement.

To elaborate a little more on this trend for fact-finding expeditions, medical campaigns and educational projects to migrate around nomadic regions, what is initially so striking about these practices is that they differ so dramatically from more commonplace connotations of Soviet history. We might more readily imagine the Soviet state as an immovable, unyielding framework of institutions or an unresponsive, stagnant bureaucracy, highly formalised and very much of physical bricks and mortar, which is what has made the high walls of the Kremlin or the reticent façade of the Lubyanka such apposite visual metaphors for Soviet power. Could there be any greater contrast between these

Muscovite landmarks and the entourages of the Red Caravan, the Red Wagons or the Red Yurts? In place of the byzantine paperwork for which Soviet Commissariats became notorious, small-scale Party cells travelling in Central Asia were necessarily cut adrift from centralised authority, albeit with clear instructions in hand. In nomadic territory, at least, Soviet power for a period roved the landscape in search of a hearing, rather than hiding its inner machinery away behind imposing, impregnable and immovable architecture.

This should not be understood as the state's coming to terms with the nomadic lifestyle as much as finding imaginative ways to overcome its obstructions.[195] But its reasons for overcoming these obstructions, and its efforts to do so, carry within them an important implication. Ultimately nomadism was considered profoundly disempowering as well as culturally and economically inferior. While it migrated with nomads to dismantle their culture, as tsarist agents had, the Soviet state also sought to give nomads a foothold in the socialist system it believed it was creating. The Party's consideration of the nomads' position complicates its status as an imperial institution.

The 1920s closed with the Party's educational ambitions unfulfilled. On 17 October 1929 a representative of the KASSR informed VTsIK that there was no principle of compulsory education in the republic, nor could or would there be without further funding from Moscow.[196] Education remained a priority for some time, therefore, and Party members continued to conflate it with all other kinds of development into the 1930s. Sedentarisation was, for some in the administration, a quintessentially progressive policy, and so it should come as no surprise that the Committee for Sedentarisation counted children's nurseries and literacy among some of its most important measures.[197] The committee also discussed the building of roads and hospitals and the management of Party cadres.[198] The connection between the Committee for Sedentarisation, the First Five Year Plan, and the changing direction of cultural policy in the USSR and in the KASSR may indicate how activities were going to change in the early 1930s.[199] Most state organs, though not all, would stop migrating just as nomads were forced to.

CHAPTER 6

COLLECTIVISATION

Collectivisation haunts each chapter of this book. The period in the late 1920s and early 1930s in which rural communities had their property confiscated, were dissociated from their land, forced into new agricultural collectives and in many cases were arrested, exiled or executed makes its presence felt in analysis of any facet of nomadic life under the New Economic Policy (NEP) as a portent of things to come. In the longer story of the nomadic experience of Soviet power, it is definitive: a specific feature of the collectivisation campaign in Central Asia was that it almost totally terminated nomadism. Following the campaign, nomadism was pursued by a small proportion of those who had practised it before collectivisation began. This applies across ethnonational divides, to the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Kalmyks, Buryats and others alongside 'the smaller nationalities of the Far North'.[1]

The Communist Party came to call this process of termination 'sedentarisation', implying that it was of a piece with other, earlier settlement initiatives and the product of an orchestrated campaign.[2] This is misleading; it was in fact just one part of a humanitarian catastrophe, precipitated by the Party but hardly coordinated by it, and culminating in millions of fatalities. Collectivisation so disrupted Central Asian life that many of those forced to settle are better characterised as refugees than nomads regardless of their habits before famine struck. Nomadic pastoralism was thus primarily a collateral victim of collectivisation instead of its target; caught in a vortex of displacement and hardship rather than singled out and persecuted. Even at this most tragic moment, then, the Party's thinking was dominated

and motivated by other problems, imagined or real. Nevertheless, the results of this period make it impossible to draw compelling conclusions about nomadic life in the early Soviet period without regard to collectivisation. Though sedentarisation cannot be disconnected from the other 'collectivisation famines' of the early 1930s, neither can it be disconnected from the treatment of nomads in the 1920s.[3] Collectivisation was inherently a means of settlement, even if it was not conceived as such and originated as something different. The population of new collective farms was, after all, expected to be sedentary.

The most grievous effects of collectivisation, on nomads if not in general, were felt in the Kazakh Republic, the Soviet national territory with the largest nomadic population of any in the USSR.[4] Accordingly, in the history of Central Asia, the Kazakh experience of collectivisation has received the most scholarly attention.[5] Though some questions remain unanswered even in this area, studies of collectivisation in Kazakhstan therefore constitute the most extensive resource for understanding the collectivisation of nomadic communities.

Politics in the Kazakh Republic began to shift around the time that Filipp Goloshchekin was made First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party in 1925.[6] Goloshchekin's belligerent influence is clearest from his statement, quoted below, which was taken as a credo for the Kazakh Republic's Committee for Sedentarisation in November 1930:

> Sedentarisation is collectivisation.
> Sedentarisation is the liquidation of the *bai*-semi-feudalist.
> Sedentarisation is the annihilation of tribal relations.
> Sedentarisation is the meaningful ascent of the economic and cultural prosperity of the aul working masses and it is thereby their liberation from the *bai* cabal.[7]

Here, in a rallying call for collectivisation, Goloshchekin marshals all of his Party's most salient hostilities towards nomadism, relating to class exploitation, backwardness, tribal anachronisms and economic inefficiencies. That the statement was adopted in 1930, when collectivisation was well underway, is indicative of the *post hoc* manner in which settlement and collectivisation were conflated and made part of the march towards productivity, modernity, socialism and progress, though the dichotomy between nomadism and progress it implies is something

Goloshchekin had earlier endorsed. Coercive collectivisation might be understood as the Communist Party's response to its powerlessness in rural areas and the ineffectiveness of its governing mechanisms there, and this seems particularly fitting for the Kazakh and Kyrgyz regions, where the strength of lineages and kinship loyalties frustrated figures like Goloshchekin and made progress in nomadic areas so much harder.[8] A dramatic solution was envisioned.

In 1926 Goloshchekin instituted his 'Little October'. On the notional basis that the 1917 Revolution had bypassed the Kazakh countryside, he oversaw a period of intensified political repression. Political arrests and executions increased both in society at large and at the top of the Kazakh Communist Party, though those who resisted collectivisation and other policies, often drawn from the nationalist parties which the Bolsheviks had assimilated after the Civil War, did not go without a fight. All this was accompanied by a more uncompromising centralisation of power.[9]

Increasingly powerful, Goloshchekin was keen to begin collectivisation in Kazakhstan at a greater pace than elsewhere in the USSR.[10] Efforts at collectivisation started, partly on a regional basis, in the Kazakh Republic in 1927 and 1928.[11] Talk began of strengthening democracy in the *aul* so that poor nomads could themselves elect the *bais* for oppressive levels of confiscation.[12] This idea is obviously comparable to the method of 'social influence' practised elsewhere in the USSR, and collectivisation in Kazakhstan manifested other Union-wide trends.[13]

In Moscow, concerns had been growing about the power of the Russian kulak. It was argued that the permissive economic conditions of the NEP had allowed wealthy peasants to exploit their poorer neighbours and withhold food reserves to extract the best price from the state.[14] As Joseph Stalin's grip over Party policy strengthened, his language regarding the kulak became more severe, as during his trip to Siberia when he set about criminalising any peasant's resistance to or obstruction of procurement.[15] State reserves of grain and other goods dropped to crisis levels and local committees turned to violent, arbitrary requisitioning. On 21 April 1928 the Agricultural Tax system for the Federal People's Commissariat of Agriculture (Narkomzem RSFSR) was reformed to increase demands on kulak peasants. The NEP, the Soviet Union's economic model since 1920, was discontinued and replaced with Stalin's first Five Year Plan. A second crisis in grain procurement

followed another poor harvest in 1928–9, and the Party's commitment to repressive measures hardened.[16]

Nomadism gave these procurement crises a specific character.[17] If the kulak hoarded grain, nomadic elites stopped any grain from being grown, with major negative macroeconomic consequences. The commonplace view of nomads as unproductive and backward, associated with semi-feudalists and their exploitative labour relations, achieved a renewed salience as economic policy changed.[18] On 11 September 1928 the Kazakh Petropavolvsk Okrug Committee dispatched a secret communiqué to all the regional Party committees within its jurisdiction.[19] Under the popular slogan 'the Sovietisation of the *aul*' the letter declared a new direction for state action. Since the fifth Kazakh Party Conference, policy would now seek to foster the political consciousness of the poor and its emancipation from the *bai* cabal.[20] To achieve these two aims, the committee sanctioned greater confiscation of livestock from the *bais. Bai* families in nomadic regions with a herd of over 400 were to be evicted and their property seized; *bais* in semi-nomadic regions with herds of over 300 livestock would be treated similarly. To expedite this process, the committee also devoted more energy to identifying and distinguishing *bais* from other nomads. It encouraged members of rival tribes to report one another as class enemies.[21] By associating the *bai* identity, and therefore criminality, with large herds of livestock, the Party turned a mark of prestige among nomads into a mark of transgression.[22] Later in the year, it would gather in further resources from the rural economy by escalating efforts at retrieving debts owed under the Agricultural Tax.[23] In November 1928 the Alma-Ata Okrug Party conference discussed the escalation of its campaign against the 'semi-feudalists', including the further confiscation of cattle.[24] The whole process of 'debaisation' originally targeted 700–1,000 families but quickly expanded. It focused not only on the rich but the politically influential. As argued by Isabelle Ohayon, this curtailed society's capacity for organised resistance.[25]

In March 1929, amid concerns about the health of cattle stock, regional committees were still complaining that too few resources were being extracted from the Kazakhs.[26] From late 1929 onwards collectivisation in Central Asia again intensified, now in explicit response to the first Five Year Plan.[27] It was thus exacerbated, though not quite instigated, around the time commonly associated with the

Stalin administration's 'Great Turn' or break from the NEP and other Party positions.[28] The Plan demanded that the Kazakh Party branch increase the pace of collectivisation.[29] The Committee for Sedentarisation, which was formally recognised by Kazakh Presidium in April 1930, worked with the various charts and tables of economic aims produced by Moscow in conjunction with the Plan.[30] The Plan also had the characteristic effect of bureaucratising the process of forced settlement.[31] Stalin, it is clear, knew about the Party's actions in Kazakhstan and their unforgiving consequences.[32] Between 1928 and 1930 up to half of all Kazakh families were collectivised, a figure that by this latter date was matched in most regions of the USSR.[33]

Although bourgeois elements were the target of the bellicose rhetoric, all nomads, *bai* and *batrak* alike, would suffer the full force of collectivisation.[34] The regime had had trouble enough distinguishing between classes under the NEP and, in any case, interest in the distinction was increasingly disingenuous. All nomads were further implicated by their use of land. Increasing grain yields in Central Asia meant increasing the amount of land sown for harvest, a project nomads had consistently confounded. The fewer nomadic migrations, the more land available for newly collectivised farming communities.[35] Given this, it is not so remarkable that, in 1930, the First Kazakh Congress of Workers for Sedentarisation discussed the prior failure to extend cultivated land whilst at the same time lamenting the administration's lack of success in settling nomads.[36] By then, the increase of one kind of land (cultivated) at the expense of another (pasture) was a euphemism for the social transformation that collectivisation became. The logic was largely old, but was imposed now with a new brutality.

Locating the wealth of the nomads within Soviet territory was problematic too, as a working knowledge of nomadic migratory routes was still in the developmental stages.[37] Confiscation was ultimately arbitrary, imposed at ruinously high levels on ever larger numbers of people as the Party's class categories became ever more elastic.[38] The curious paradox of renewed chaos masquerading as centralised planning was not unique to Central Asia and has been identified elsewhere. In Siberia, quotas for the number of kulaks to be repressed were introduced specifically to increase grain yields and were affected by the power struggles of local elites.[39] Sarah Cameron contends that confiscations in Kazakhstan were characterised by a high level of

violence in which regional bureaucrats took the opportunity to misapply the law and enrich themselves.[40] Violence, for Robert Kindler, was a definitive characteristic of the period, enacted not simply by an active state onto a passive citizenry but in multiple directions from multiple perpetrators.[41] The period from 1930 to 1933 witnessed massive uprisings among Kazakhs. Further forms of resistance included the premature slaughter of cattle to exploit stocks before their seizure by the state and, as rumours of violent confiscation began to spread, hundreds of thousands of Central Asians passed over the eastern border into China and elsewhere, with many not returning. Many nomads would emigrate in an effort to retain their herds. Party newspapers made feeble efforts to alleviate the fears of those who remained. Other nationalities, such as the Cossacks, protested against crippling requisitions in various ways too.[42]

Those who did not escape and who refused to join collective, sedentary agricultural endeavours were threatened with internal exile or arrest. Legislation passed during the collectivisation campaign sharpened punitive measures against dissidents, which included death by firing squad or ten years in prison and the confiscation of property.[43] Victims of these laws were understood as class enemies.[44] Between 1930 and 1931 the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) condemned 6,765 citizens of the Kazakh Republic to 'kulak exile'.[45] Party members who publicly disagreed with collectivisation and other policies were condemned, often as nationalists, and ostracised or deported.[46]

Collectivisation subjected nomadic society to profound deprivation and destabilisation. Core components of the region's agricultural economy, such as irrigation, were disrupted.[47] Multiple families of both nomadic and sedentary heritage were displaced and forced to travel in search of shelter and sustenance. The Party then took steps to settle these itinerants. Notwithstanding that, according to Niccolò Pianciola, forced settlement remained 'a low priority' in 1930 and 1931, the bulk of the process occurred between the years 1929 and 1933 within a timeframe not dissimilar to the period of collectivisation and anti-kulak campaigning elsewhere in the USSR.[48]

Some of the methods of forced settlement used in this period were more intense, more coercive variations of the kind of techniques discussed in preceding chapters; some Red Yurts, for example, began withholding their services from nomads who refused to settle.[49] Confiscation was intended to penalise nomads and exhaust their reserves.

Slightly more novel, however, was the use of violence to force nomads to terminate their habitual migratory customs, settle and thereby undergo enormous cultural as well as spatial and economic change. This occurred towards the end of the collectivisation campaign in communities already wracked by famine, often fleeing the massive requisitions imposed by the Party. The Soviet state employed armed militia to approach itinerant Kazakh communities and force those present to a prearranged 'point of settlement'.[50] Some points of settlement would boast crude purpose-built domestic constructions, but in many cases nomadic yurts would simply be arranged into rows, like an orderly new village. New villages were given names as incongruous as 'Rosa Luxemburg', a trend that began in Russian regions.[51] Though cases continued to emerge of nomads pledging to remain in place and then moving on, often the community's livestock were rounded up, many confiscated and the rest moved into new pens. Their owners were told that releasing the animals was a criminal offence, earning immediate and severe punishment.[52] Sometimes, then, the state did not so much settle people as settle livestock, leaving nomads with no other option but to pitch their tents within walking distance of their most important resource. At other times nomads were settled too far from their herds' nominated pasturage, making it impossible to tend them properly.

This whole process was more uncompromising and coercive even than that described by Sheila Fitzpatrick with regard to collectivisation in European Russia.[53] Most former nomads lacked the technology and expertise to pursue sedentary agriculture but, more crucially, they would likely have known that their point of settlement, hurriedly and carelessly chosen as it often had been by state employees, was usually insufficiently fertile to support animals all year every year.[54] Animals starved as their fodder depleted, and nomads starved as their herds depleted. Those forced onto collective farms endured the same hardships. Many agricultural farms were expected to flourish in totally unsuitable environmental conditions, were established in areas without access to water and were subjected to absurd levels of taxation.[55] The Party conceptualised all this as another means of liquidating private property and socialising the means of production.[56]

The Kazakh Republic witnessed a collapse in the number of livestock and massive demographic decline in these years.[57] While by 1927 there was some evidence that the Kazakh economy was stabilising, food

reserves among Kazakhs had only recovered from the meagre levels that followed the Civil War.[58] Pastoralists were among those most vulnerable to famine.[59] Current estimates have it that 90 per cent of livestock perished during collectivisation. Alternative means of sustenance were scant and famine was sustained. Epidemics were exacerbated by malnutrition.[60] The loss of livestock in Kazakhstan was much larger than the Union-wide average and, even if there had been communities with secret hoards of grain in the countryside, nomads they were not.[61] State agents persisted with confiscation in the face of shortages.[62] Settlement unquestionably intensified the famine, but it was also perpetuated by administrators who spoke of it as a solution, and by starving nomads who were forced to discontinue their seasonal migrations and approach towns and farmsteads to beg for food.[63] Starvation may have been a more effective inducement to settlement than the violence that helped to cause it.

Famine partly brought an end to the collectivisation campaign. In 1934 there seems to have been some internal acknowledgement of the scale of the crisis.[64] By that time around 1.5 million individuals, one-quarter of the Kazakh Republic's population, had died as a result of collectivisation; 1.3 million of those who died were Kazakhs.[65] Matthew Payne thus points out that the fatalities were 'highly ethnicized', noting that: 'the state expended enormous resources to avoid "mass extermination", unfortunately it was rather indifferent in monitoring the use of these resources'.[66]

By the end of the 1930s Kazakh nomadism had lost all but a tiny fraction of its former practitioners; a small number of communities retained some transhumant practices far beyond this point, and the Party also sought to revive nomadism in certain portions of Central Asia in an effort to regenerate livestock numbers.[67] Other processes coordinated by the Party fundamentally changed Central Asia and its hospitability for nomadism, including mass population movement and displacement.[68] Large groups of citizens, culturally sedentary, arrived onto the Kazakh Steppe. Some of these citizens were Russian kulaks sent to join collective farms, around 51,000 of whom arrived in 1930 alone.[69] Others, the so-called twenty-five-thousanders, were often former urban dwellers, mostly Party members, who arrived to accelerate work on the collective farms.[70] In the late 1920s and early 1930s the Kazakh administration was making hurried preparations for

the arrival of these new settlers. This involved the delimitation of new arable farmland, putting renewed pressure on migrating nomads who were expelled from the best pasture.[71]

Then, even as the OGPU was exiling Kazakhs from their land and their republic, many more citizens were arriving into the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (KASSR) under the supervision of that same organ of state and placed in one of the republic's notorious Gulag camps.[72] The Karlag camp was established in 1931 and covered 281,000 acres of land alone.[73] Though the Gulag system was clearly designed to keep people in one place, it was also one of various ways in which sparsely populated land came to host high concentrations of people and acquire macroeconomic significance. The overall influx of migrants and prisoners was an additional part of the Party's programme for transforming the Kazakh Republic into a productive territory of the Union. Representing another form of mass itinerancy, it accelerated the state's attempts to regionalise and control movement. The Party noted the incongruity of nomadism in a land of collective farming.[74]

In the Kyrgyz case collectivisation exhibited some of its own dynamics. Unlike its Kazakh counterpart, the Kyrgyz Republic was not considered a grain-producing region. It was expected to receive grain rather than produce a surplus of its own. This circumscribed the ambitions of collectivisation, precluding some of the excesses seen elsewhere. The Kyrgyz authorities did argue that collectivisation would bring the products of cattle herding into a more workable distribution network, among other benefits.[75] But early attempts at agricultural transformation in Kyrgyzstan were not successful. The Komsomol and other institutions made some efforts to redistribute land under the NEP. In response, growing tensions in Kyrgyz communities led to violence that the Party understood as a concerted bourgeois effort to withhold progress, settlement and voluntary collectivisation. At one point a Komsomol member and an applicant for Party membership were both intercepted on the streets of Frunze, taken into the forests nearby and beaten. A member of the Koshchi Union had his nose broken.[76]

As elsewhere, therefore, confiscation was initially presented as a product of spontaneous class war and was perpetuated through the harsh treatment, arrest and repression of those who resisted, typically characterised as kulaks or similar. Thousands were eventually exiled.[77] But the Kyrgyz authorities seem to have deferred in receipt of

instructions from Moscow when the Kazakh Party branch forged ahead. When orders came, in August 1928, to target the so-called *bai-manaps* with a new aggression, the Kyrgyz *obkom* delayed implementation by seeking clarification from the Central Asian Bureau. As a consequence, 'nominal collectivisation rates' in Kygyzstan were lower in 1928 and 1929 than in the rest of the USSR.[78] Benjamin Loring argues that many noticed the disparity in levels of repression between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz territories and consequently relocated their livestock to Kyrgyz jurisdiction in the late 1920s.[79]

Nineteen twenty-nine was a turning point for the Kyrgyz as for others. Any deferral of collectivisation came to an end. The campaign was well underway in Kyrgyzstan by 1931, when the regional Party received copious correspondence from Moscow advocating a faster pace and the further prioritisation of cotton cultivation and arable farming.[80] Kyrgyz authorities centralised the collectivisation effort to maintain pace. By 1935 an estimated 80 per cent of cultivated land had been collectivised. Collective farms for the production of cotton were attempted in Kyrgyzstan but were not as successful as in Uzbekistan due to the mountainous Kyrgyz landscape. Most collective farms were oriented around animal husbandry.[81] Lack of resources and workers, ubiquitous features of the collectivisation campaign, were especially acute in Kyrgyzstan. But the collectivisation of pastoralists still progressed at a slower rate than in Kazakhstan and continued into the latter half of the 1930s.[82] In the mountain regions of Kyrgyzstan, and along the border with China, authorities appear to have been a little more tentative in their approach and mistakes in the collectivisation of nomads were acknowledged.[83] Though this decision was later revoked, some nomadic peoples were initially granted special dispensation to retain ownership of some animals.[84]

As everywhere in Central Asia, nomads were frequently forced to sell their livestock to Russians in exchange for grain so that they could pay their quotas of grain to the state. For those who experienced it, collectivisation still occurred at breakneck speed, and similar processes of repression and intimidation attended the process.[85] Livestock numbers dropped precipitously and famine caused many casualties. Refugees from Kazakh lands exacerbated hardship.[86] The Kyrgyz population reacted fiercely to its treatment. Authorities sought to recruit impoverished Kyrgyz for the collective persecution of *manap* families,

but this sharpened resentment. Attacks by Basmachi rebels increased. Settler communities of Russian peasants also resisted collectivisation as they did in the European parts of the USSR.[87]

As in Kazakhstan, nomadic practice lingered on among some Kyrgyz; in 1939 the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic specified that Kyrgyz nomads migrating outside of their republic could participate in elections to their 'local' soviets through use of electors. Still at this stage the familiar problem of finding local, geographically specific institutions to administer nomadic peoples went stubbornly unresolved.[88]

Conclusion

The Communist Party presented collectivisation and sedentarisation to non-Russians as a doorway to a host of modern benefits introduced, in historical terms, as quickly as one might open a door and walk through.[89] It was to be facilitated by the voluntary persecution of the native bourgeoisie by the native toiling masses. It was therefore connected, for its perpetrators, to some of the significant agendas that had influenced the management of nomads during the NEP, particularly class and economic development.

Yet with the discontinuation of the NEP and the imposition of the first Five Year Plan, the treatment of nomads changed. Any pretence that nomads would settle voluntarily, at a pace deemed satisfactory by the Party, was dropped by Goloshchekin and others. Previously, the settlement of nomads had often been seen as an inevitable corollary of other policies covering a broad range of governing issues: land ownership, taxation, education and so on.[90] But it then became the intended outcome of coordinated violent coercion in the wider context of agricultural transformation. The macroeconomic demands of the centre affected the treatment of nomads more than previously. The Party then created an economic and political environment in which nomadism was no longer intensely arduous but was, rather, impossible. Across the entire Central Asian region, the itinerancy of habitual nomadic migration became the itinerancy of refugeedom. Any variegation or vacillation in the treatment of nomads became obsolete when collectivisation became a Union-wide model with fatal consequences for millions.

CONCLUSION

On 6 June 1922 the Kostanay regional agricultural department received a petition from a group of nomads. In their petition, these nomads claimed to have lost both their winter and summer pasturelands and to be in a state of desperation. In June 1919, Russian settlers had apparently created 15 new farmsteads in the north of what would become the Kazakh Republic. As was typical for such settlers, their new farms covered the very best land of the petitioning nomads' winter pasturage. Since then, the area put aside for the same nomads' summer pasturage had also been seized for the creation of six new homesteads by settlers. The nomads were left with no place to sow their own crops and hay. They had to seek accommodation within other *auls*. Once, when they had tried to deny the settlers more land, two people had been killed. The nomads asked the regional agricultural department to conduct an investigation and to prohibit any further unauthorised land seizure by settlers.

The department responded almost immediately. It conducted interviews with local nomads who confirmed that 'since time immemorial the Kazakhs of the region have occupied winter pasturage' nearby. As quoted by the Soviet authorities, they went on: 'The Russians considered it their sacred right to occupy our best land.'[1] The nomads had not appealed straight away, believing that their interests would not be protected, and instead lost the battle with the settlers and moved on. It was not until the creation of the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic and the decreed transition of land to the Kazakhs that the nomads decided to petition for the retrieval of their pastures. They

turned to various authorities with no success, but were still hopeful that their land might be returned before the next harvest, so that they could avoid spending the winter in accommodation with other *auls*.

The department also heard the settlers' perspective. They claimed to have established their farms with the permission of local Soviet authorities but, when they had been settled in the land for only 15 days, they had their new buildings sacked by raiding Kazakhs. The Russians appealed for help from the local militia, which was able to impose some order. In 1921 authorities created a new boundary on the outskirts of the settlements, delineating the land-use activities of the Kazakh and Russian populations.

Continuing its investigation, the regional agricultural department heard contradictory accounts of how the Russians acquired permission to settle. Possibly, two mutually hostile groups of nomads had been involved in the dispute. One group had given the Russians permission to settle in the other group's pasturelands. Alternatively, Kazakhs had been tricked into signing an incomplete agreement, with their potential illiteracy and the probable use of Russian likely each playing a role. In any case, the delineation of lands had not been performed with common assent. Accusations of banditry on the part of the Kazakhs had been exaggerated or fabricated by the settlers, the department heard. Nomads had apparently been apportioned alternative pasturage but many had wandered into other areas looking for suitable land or support. Ethnic tensions were fierce.

In response to the petition, the department decided to double the cost of land rental payments imposed on the settlers, prohibited the cultivation of seized Kazakh lands and demanded that, following the recovery of their harvest in autumn 1922, the settlers vacate their farms and homesteads or face forced eviction. This was a partial fulfilment of the nomads' requests, as one more winter in accommodation with other *auls* seemed inevitable, and the department also recommended that those nomads with small herds should themselves settle to avoid complete impoverishment and to act as an example to other nomads in the midst of Kazakh land. The matter was later passed to higher organs of Soviet power in the region, which confirmed the department's decision and reasserted that the settlers should vacate their farmlands by the end of the year. It was also specified that these exiled Russians should be found some alternative land.[2]

In retrospect this story exhibits many, though not all, of the trends that would define the treatment of nomadic peoples in the 1920s. More specifically we see here much of what made the New Economic Policy a distinctive period in the governance of Soviet Central Asia. Strife frequently arose between communities, with different agricultural practices competing for similar resources, including land and water. Often, this was the continuation of a process of colonisation that began before 1917 and about which the new regime initially vacillated. Ethnic grievances greatly contributed to the animosity and violent outbursts. The Communist Party's response to strife, limited in effect by administrative weaknesses and disorganisation, was ordinarily twofold. Local organs could side with nomadic complainants, show explicit support for decolonisation and national autonomy and make efforts to stabilise a strained nomadic economy. Nomads themselves recognised the dissimilarity between this approach and that of the Tsar. Simultaneously, however, natural resources were measured and delimited by use and the nomads were encouraged to settle. This was part of a wider effort to increase the productive capacities of the nomadic population and to find it a place in a new Soviet society where it could be taxed, educated and mobilised in the battle for socialist construction. This effort created conflict and hardship of its own and contained no permanent vision for nomadism itself, which was deemed backward and wretched.

There is a range of explanations for the trends described above. First, the Communist Party's nationalities policy had diversified effects. An early commitment to reparations for the Tsar's crimes caused regional committees to side with nomads who took land and resources from settler communities. Certain rulings in resource distribution also benefitted nomads for similar reasons. But the Bolsheviks' nation-making agenda was intended to facilitate economic development and the conquest of backwardness too. Where the creation of borders and limited national jurisdictions disadvantaged nomads, this was considered an unfortunate corollary at best. It could additionally be an intended consequence of Soviet modernisation and the consolidation of Soviet power, as well as the product of the self-reinforcing logic of national differentiation that became stronger as the era progressed.[3]

Second, in the latter half of the 1920s, a growing consensus that nomadic society was composed of different classes also had a varied impact. Since most nomads were identified as deeply impoverished,

it could result in measures to alleviate poverty in the *aul*. But rapid settlement was considered the surest way of overcoming the reactionary power of the nomads' own despotic classes, and the identification of the *bai* and *manap* as a nomadic bourgeoisie justified the use of deeply repressive measures against certain categories of nomad, categories which became ever larger to suit the aims of Party operatives.

Furthermore, this prioritisation of nationhood and class was symptomatic of a larger trend. Nomads were not a single coherent group and they did not identify as such. Their loyalties were most often decided by genealogy and kinship. Yet, the Soviet state's failure to understand the nomads' divisions on their terms, coupled with its broader ignorance of nomadic norms, might have offered an opportunity to see nomads as a single group with shared interests and habits manifesting the same set of challenges. This opportunity was not taken up. Possibly, the sheer diversity and changeability of practice may have made it too onerous for the Party to conceive of nomadic pastoralism as a single governing problem. But instead of trying, the state manipulated and misrepresented the nomads' kinship loyalties to precipitate internal conflict. It further entrenched other means of overlooking the administrative problems common to nomadic regions. Nationhood segregated nomads vertically. Class segregated nomads horizontally. The Communist Party's attitude towards nomadism as a whole, as a problem of governance, was underdeveloped and ambivalent. This is a paradox at the heart of the story: though the Bolsheviks drew their political ideology from a materialist philosophy, legitimised themselves by claiming the support of a certain economic class and strained to identify citizens by their economic function, they repeatedly overlooked the nomadic-sedentary division between peoples in Central Asia, surely as material and economic a cleavage as it is possible to find.

Partly, this ambivalence was the product of early governing cadres with no affinity for nomads. Most senior Party members came from the European regions of the USSR. High-ranking Central Asian members had typically left the nomadic life, if they had ever practised it, and often came from modernising intellectual movements that saw nomadism as an obstacle to progress. Sat between the socialism of European Russia and the reforming modernisers of Turkestan, nomads struggled to be heard.[4] Early talk of nomadism as an innate predilection of the

freedom-loving Kazakhs and Kyrgyz was quickly silenced. Nationality and class filled a vacuum.

This vacuum is further explained by the fact that most Party members expected nomadism to melt away after the revolution and so did not plan for the indefinite accommodation or management of nomadic practice. Predictions of its immediate demise originated from a conviction that nomadism was retrogressive and that its practitioners would see this when the revolution delivered the progressive benefits of socialism: a better lifestyle, more productive agricultural techniques and new technologies. The kind of state and society that were considered necessary for the achievement of these benefits were also considered incompatible with nomads. The Party looked at nomads and saw illiteracy, tribalism and primitive living conditions, a habit of moving in and out of national jurisdiction and administrative oversight, a tendency to impede other agricultural endeavours, a fundamental illegibility. All this frustrated Soviet statecraft.

Importantly, there were adaptations to this incompatibility. When the Party took steps to protect nomads and strengthen their economy, it did not always do so on the condition that they settle or in anticipation that they would do so quickly. The Soviet state's decision to go mobile, with movable administrative regions, the Red Caravan, Red Yurts and Red Wagons, and efforts to recruit nomads to the Communist Party, legislate for nomadic land use and tax nomads differently, all suggest a possible accommodation of the Soviet state to the peculiarities of nomadic regions. This complicates the extent to which nomads were on an unavoidable collision course with Bolshevik power. The devastation visited upon nomadic communities by Union-wide collectivisation, instituted by Joseph Stalin in Moscow, was surely an inevitable outcome of that campaign. But before collectivisation, certain measures taken by the Party in the 1920s suggest that mass violence, mass fatalities and nomadism's hurried and near-complete destruction were not the ineluctable outcome of 1917. Rather, the Party could acquiesce to nomadic realities, not forever, but at least with a longer period in prospect. During the New Economic Policy the Party's governance of nomads was neither purely destructive nor sustaining, but palliative.

With that said, the catastrophe of collectivisation in Central Asia had its portents. Because nomadism was such a problem for state procurement, the Party felt that it exacerbated the shortages used as justification for

collectivisation, and although the Party offered palliative care to nomads, nomadism evidently did not expire quickly enough. The various subsidies and tax exemptions designed to hurry the pace of settlement were having only modest effects.[5] In 1924 administrators across the republic had expended considerable time and effort negotiating niche tax exemptions for settling nomads, only to see those exemptions cause further confusion. Party members were blunt and candid about their exasperation and lack of patience. A new way of discouraging migration and procuring resources was needed, and it is easy to see how the persecution of the *bais* became associated with settlement. The *bais* kept migrating, so reducing their economic strength could induce settlement and development. Equally, settlement and development would ease communication between the Party and nomads, improve the productivity of the *batraks*, and thereby further undermine the power of the *bais*.[6] All this was conducive to the Party's aims.

The Party also became lethally disinterested in the environmental conditions in which nomads lived. European Party members brought a long-standing prejudice with them to new national branches, that of a featureless and practically deserted Central Asian landscape that could now be adapted to the needs of the state and filled with productive farmers. Nomads were therefore expected to live 'gridded lives'.[7] Support for decolonisation was not only discontinued; it was reversed, as the Party sponsored the arrival of new settlers into apparently vacant land. The Bolsheviks, gripped by a dangerous scientific discourse and at the helm of a growing bureaucracy, also believed that socialism and technology could overcome previously insurmountable natural obstacles.[8] Such post-revolutionary ardour or 'riotous optimism' helped the Party to dismiss the patent environmental and social limitations on success.[9] Warnings about the impossibility of agricultural or sedentary pastoral farming in certain parts of the arid region were increasingly disregarded until nomads lost their final viable excuse for refusing to settle. The result was starvation.

What distinguishes this story from other episodes in the early Soviet countryside are the Bolsheviks' attitude towards non-Russian regions, the worldview of those who came to govern Central Asia and, most significantly, the particulars of the nomadic lifestyle. This book has argued that, in comparison to the Russian peasants who were 'entangled' with the state, nomads were consistently more distanced from those individuals

employed by state or Party.[10] This made the 'total modernisation' of nomadic society much harder before collectivisation took place.[11] In some ways, the state acted upon the nomads in a shallow imitation of modernisation, without anything like the escalating efficiency or rationality that might be associated with such a phrase by its advocates. Its attempts at changing nomadic daily life were energetic, innovative and creative but also under-resourced, arbitrary and piecemeal. Economic change was slow and counterproductive. The Party worked with the sort of population statistics that had become popular in European political culture, but figures on nomads and nomadism were often guesswork.[12]

The kind of ignorance demonstrated by administrators is redolent of imperial rule as maintained before 1917 and elsewhere. Like other European empires, the Soviet Union's system of territorialisation showed insufficient understanding of the occupants of that territory. Nevertheless it sought to develop the distributional infrastructure of nomadic regions so as to better extract resources.[13] Importantly, however, the notion of the USSR as an empire has been compellingly challenged in recent scholarship, not least because its intellectual or ideological motivations were very different from those of other empires.[14] This matters. The Bolsheviks feared being understood as the Tsar's agents dressed in red. Some were also concerned about the reappearance in non-Russian regions of great power chauvinism, a phrase still in use in the latter half of the decade by organs of central power.[15] Many, especially in the local cadres, held a genuine belief in the fairness of regional autonomy. They took various steps to circumvent negative potentialities and achieve a better governing arrangement, including *korenizatsiia*, the creation of national Party cadres and of course the national delimitation of Central Asia.

This whole agenda had a number of effects, some insignificant for nomads, some significant. Of the latter, first, Central Asia moved from being an imperial space to a nationalised space. This changed the priorities with which land was delineated and administered. National ruling cadres territorialised their land, seeking to make productive economic use of the resources for which they were newly responsible. The same cadres jealously guarded their limited national competencies and inchoate national borders, as symbols of their authority. All this complicated nomadic migrations and nomads' access to resources. They also made nomads harder to govern, as migrating communities moved into and out of

segmented national jurisdictions, raising the profile of nomadism as a troublesome local habit which neither local administrators nor distant Union-wide institutions could effectively oversee.

Second, the delimitation created national administrators who were incentivised to pursue a prescriptive model of economic progress for the notional benefit of the backward nationalities now represented in the structures of the Union. This was intended to bring non-Russian peoples up the hierarchy of development and flatten out old imperial disparities of power. Cadres, whether loyal Bolshevik socialists or drawn from liberal nationalist parties following the Civil War, were minded to pit nomadism against progress, not to reconcile one to the other. Indeed, the sooner that nomadism was overcome, the greater the prestige of the achievement and the more respect afforded to a nationality formerly held back by imperial domination but now emerging from the Tsar's long shadow under the guidance of the Party.

This is not to deny the Union-wide uniformity of some of these trends, nor to understate the import of Moscow's direction and control, but to communicate the specific political culture of early-Soviet Central Asia and the intersection of modernisation, decolonisation and nomadism in which the ultimate discontinuation of nomadic practice, the inclusion of nomads into the structures of the state, the achievement of rapid economic progress and a spurious national emancipation *were all of a piece*. Post-colonialism, while not a perfect fit, does this best. In the period 1920 to 1928, former colonies of the Russian Empire were reconceptualised as a collection of nations. Different in their implications from the borders of the Russian Empire's Governate-Generalships, national borders segmented the administrative structures of the region and the administrative mentalities of its local officials, creating a more profound mismatch between the new political geography of Central Asia and the older landscapes of nomadic communities. Local officials were subservient to the metropole and did not achieve anything like sovereignty, though the metropole had itself also undergone dramatic change. Both centre and periphery endorsed some decolonisation and post-imperial reparation but also pursued dramatic cultural and economic transformation, endorsing a model of modernisation that identified, codified and accepted some national characteristics, such as language, and ignored or rejected other characteristics, including nomadism. Some imperial trends thus not

only continued but were also eventually expedited. Most important for nomads was the delimitation, settlement and cultivation of land. But it was also expected that nomads would be built into national cadres and Soviet state structures, usually after settlement but sometimes before, and the state continued integrating nomads after they had settled.[16] Still, the effect of all these processes was generally disruptive.

The treatment of nomads in the period of the New Economic Policy can thus be meaningfully compared to the cessation of indigenous practices and cultures elsewhere in the modern post-colonial world; a product of economic and social changes and state interference that began during the period of modern imperialism but continued with a new dynamic after the collapse of direct imperial rule. Naturally, it also exhibited Soviet specificities, such as the aggressive class war waged on nomads, the formidable self-assurance of officials and the ferocity and scale of state violence. Collectivisation, when it came, was partly the intensification of processes witnessed in the 1920s and partly something new again, changing the relationship between the Soviet state and Central Asian nomads for good.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Semipalatinsk is today known as Semey.
2. *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF), f. 1235, op. 65, d. 159, ll. 10–1 *ob.*
3. Ibid., l. 6.
4. Robert Service, *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), pp. 201–2.
5. Isabelle Ohayon, *La sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline: collectivisation et changement social (1928–1945)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2006).
6. Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe: the collectivization of agriculture and the Kazak herdsmen, 1928–1934', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45/1&2 (2004), pp. 137–91.
7. Sarah Cameron, 'The Kazakh famine of 1930–33: current research and new directions', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 3/2 (2016), pp. 117–32, p. 118; Martha Brill Olcott, 'Pastoralism, nationalism, and communism in Kazakhstan', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 17/4 (1983), pp. 528–44, p. 530.
8. For simplicity's sake we will also include here the practice of transhumance, prevalent particularly in Kyrgyzstan.
9. Carole Ferret, 'The ambiguities of the Kazakhs' nomadic heritage', *Nomadic Peoples* 20 (2016), pp. 176–99, pp. 178–80.
10. Svetlana Jacquesson, 'Reforming pastoral land use in Kyrgyzstan: from clan and custom to self-government and tradition', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 103–18, p. 107.
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M.B. Balakaev, *Kolkhoznoe krest'ianstvo Kazakhstana v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1971).

12. S.B. Baishev, *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi istorii Kazakhskoi SSR (1860–1970 gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Kazakhstan 1974), pp. 88, 118, 121–3; G.F. Dakhshleiger, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie preobrazovaniia v aule i derevne Kazakhstana 1921–1929 gg.* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1965); Sergali E. Tolybekov, *Kochevoe obshchestvo Kazakhov v XVII – nachale XX veka: politiko-ekonomicheskii analiz* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Nauka Kazakhskoi SSR, 1971); Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For an interesting discussion of the potential insight offered by Soviet historians, see Ernest Gellner, 'Foreword', ibid., pp. ix–xxv, pp. x, xiii.
13. Frank Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 140; Eugene M. Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 99; J. William Leasure and Robert A. Lewis, *Population Change in Russia and the USSR: A Set of Comparable Territorial Units* (San Diego, CA: San Diego State College Press, 1966), pp. 99–103; Naum Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1949), p. 323, Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
14. Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2nd edn (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press 1995); Olcott, 'Pastoralism, nationalism, and communism in Kazakhstan', pp. 528–44; Martha Brill Olcott, 'The collectivization drive in Kazakhstan', *Russian Review* 40/2 (1981), pp. 122–42. See also: David Lane, 'Ethnic and class stratification in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1917–39', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17/2 (1975), pp. 165–89; Romeo A. Cherot, 'Nativization of government and Party structure in Kazakhstan, 1920–1930', *American Slavic and East European Review* 14/1 (1955), pp. 42–58.
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22. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (London: Macmillan, 1999); Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism', *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994), pp. 414–52.
23. Niccolò Pianciola, 'Stalinist spatial hierarchies: placing the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in Soviet economic regionalization', *Central Asian Survey* (2016), pp. 1–16. An example of variation is the influence of the Central Asian Bureau, whose jurisdiction included only some of the Central Asian republics. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR) f. 10, op. 1, d. 63.
24. For an introduction to the longer history of this relationship, see: Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University

Press, 1987); David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

25. Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 20.
26. Ibid., p. 31.
27. Steven Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization: interpreting the Kenesary Kasymov Revolt, 1837–1847', *Central Asian Survey* 22/2&3 (2003), pp. 231–52, p. 234.
28. Pianciola and Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe', p. 138.
29. Paul Georg Geiss, *Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia: Communal Commitment and Political Order in Change* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004), p. 156; Peter Holquist, 'To count, to extract, to exterminate: population satistics and population politics in late imperial and Soviet Russia', in Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations*, pp. 111–44, p. 116.
30. Geiss, *Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, p. 158, 161; Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 215–21, 229–33.
31. Marco Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan, 1917–1920', *Central Asian Survey* 9/4 (1990), pp. 59–74, p. 59.
32. Yuri Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens: the Cultural Revolution in the Soviet far north, 1928–1938', *Slavic Review* 51/1 (1992), pp. 52–76; Geiss, *Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, pp. 154–5.
33. Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917* (London: Ithica, 2001), pp. 39, 75.
34. Geiss, *Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, p. 163.
35. Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 128, 151; Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, p. 26.
36. Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, p. 30.
37. Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization', p. 237.
38. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, p. 198.
39. Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization', p. 236.
40. Davé, *Kazakhstan*, p. 38.
41. Robert P. Geraci, 'Going abroad or going to Russia? Orthodox missionaries in the Kazakh Steppe, 1881–1917', in Michael Khodarkovsky and Robert P. Geraci (eds), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 274–310, pp. 292–3.
42. European is used here as shorthand for a population constituted mainly of Russians but also including Ukrainians, Poles and other groups from the westernmost regions of the Russian Empire. Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers: colonization and ethnic conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), pp. 41–53, p. 41.
43. Daniel Brower, '*Law and Custom in the Steppe: the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* by Virginia Martin', *Journal of*

Asian Studies 61/3 (2002), pp. 1047–8; Alexander Morrison, '"Sowing the seed of national strife in this alien region": The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1910', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), pp. 1–29, p. 11.

44. Gulnar Kendirbaeva, 'The national liberation movement of the Kazakh intelligentsia at the beginning of the 20th century', *Central Asian Survey* 16/4 (1997), pp. 487–515, p. 488.
45. Gulnar Kendirbaeva, 'Migrations in Kazakhstan: past and present', *Nationalities Papers* 25/4 (1997), pp. 741–51, p. 741; Peter Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization: promoting progress as tradition in response to the land problem', *Central Asian Survey* 22/1 (2003), pp. 67–81, p. 70.
46. Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization', p. 232.
47. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 41.
48. Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, p. 12.
49. Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 181.
50. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 42.
51. Ibid., p. 42. Zhetysu, which translates from Kazakh as 'seven rivers', was more commonly called Semirech'e in Russian during the imperial era.
52. Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, p. 181.
53. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 44.
54. Ibid., p. 44; Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, 'Population displacement, state-building, and social identity in the lands of the former Russian Empire, 1917–23', *Kritika* 4/1 (2003), pp. 51–100.
55. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 42.
56. Zainidin Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane: 20-e gody* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1997), p. 112.
57. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 26, 97.
58. Kendirbaeva, 'The national liberation movement', p. 508.
59. Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 114.
60. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 37; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, p. 6.
61. R.M. Abdullaev, S.S. Agzamkhodzhaev and I.A. Alimov (eds), *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: K istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti* (Tashkent: Shark, 2000), pp. 429, 466–7.
62. Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan', p. 63.
63. Ibid., p. 61; Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, p. 203.
64. Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan', p. 59.
65. Ibid., p. 63.
66. Baishev, *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, pp. 103, 115; G.F. Dakhshleiger, 'Kazakhstan nakanune NEPa', *Voprosy Istorii* 8 (1966), pp. 20–34, p. 26; V.P. Danilov, M.P. Kim and N.V. Tropkin (eds), *Sovetskoe krest'ianstvo: Kratkii ocherk istorii (1917–1970)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1973), pp. 125–7; Steven Sabol, 'The creation of Soviet Central Asia: the 1924 National Delimitation', *Central Asian Survey*

14/2 (1995), pp. 225–41, p. 237; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 117.

67. Note that the figures cited here also to non-Kazakhs and non-nomads: Masanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury*, pp. 367, 369.
68. Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan', p. 65.
69. Adeeb Khalid, 'Tashkent 1917: Muslim politics in revolutionary Turkestan', *Slavic Review* 55/2 (1996), pp. 270–96, p. 270.
70. Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan', p. 62.
71. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 104.
72. Ibid., p. 111.
73. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, pp. 182, 430–4; Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*.
74. Ibid., p. 439.
75. Ibid., p. 480.
76. Beatrice Penati, 'The reconquest of East Bukhara: the struggle against the Basmachi as a prelude to Sovietization', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 521–38.
77. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, p. 466.
78. Nick Baron, 'Stalinist planning as political practice: control and repression on the Soviet periphery, 1935–1938', *Europe-Asia Studies* 56/3 (2004), pp. 439–62, p. 441.
79. For an earlier interpretation, see: Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (New York: Penguin, 1991); Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
80. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, pp. 21–60.
81. Terry Martin, 'An affirmative action empire: the Soviet Union as the highest form of imperialism', in Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations*, pp. 67–90; Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment'.
82. Sabol, 'The creation of Soviet Central Asia', pp. 225–41.
83. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 2; Davé, *Kazakhstan*, p. 41.
84. Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 121; Adeeb Khalid, 'Backwardness and the quest for civilization: early Soviet Central Asia in comparative perspective', *Slavic Review* 65/2 (2006), pp. 231–51, p. 235.
85. Ibid., p. 239.
86. Uyama Tomohiko, 'The geography of civilizations: a spatial analysis of the Kazakh intelligentsia's activities, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century', *Sapporo Summer Symposium* (1998), pp. 70–99, p. 85; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 112. The diversity of these groups, and the plurality of views within each of them, undermines the rudimentary dichotomy between the Communist Party on the one hand, and Central Asian intellectuals (as a single category) on the other. As will be argued, however, with regard to nomads there was a certain homogeneity of views.

87. Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, pp. 215–16.
88. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, p. 229; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 111.
89. Consider, for example, early arguments about the national identity of Orenburg: Stephen Blank, 'Ethnic and party politics in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1920–1924', *Central Asian Survey* 10/3 (1991), pp. 1–19, pp. 5–6.
90. Michael Stefany, 'Kazakhization, Kunaev and Kazakhstan: a bridge to independence', *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Arastirmalari* 8/16 (2013), pp. 49–72.
91. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, pp. 2–3.
92. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).
93. Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), pp. 140–1.
94. Francine Hirsch, 'The Soviet Union as a work-in-progress: ethnographers and the category nationality in the 1926, 1937 and 1939 censuses', *Slavic Review* 56/2 (1997), pp. 251–78, p. 259.
95. Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment', p. 423.
96. Christian Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924–1941', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 499–519, p. 500. For an alternative discussion of a similar dynamic, see: Nick Baron, 'Nature, nationalism and revolutionary regionalism: constructing Soviet Karelia, 1920–1923', *Journal of Historical Geography* 33/3 (2007), pp. 565–95, p. 593.
97. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, pp. 433–4.
98. Dakhshleiger, 'Kazakhstan', p. 26.
99. Baron, 'Nature, nationalism and revolutionary regionalism', pp. 565–95.
100. Dakhshleiger, 'Kazakhstan', p. 22.
101. Service, *The Penguin History of Modern Russia*, p. 239.
102. G.F. Dakhshleiger, *V I Lenin i problemy Kazakhstanskoi istoriografii* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1973), pp. 121–2.
103. Kurmanov and Sadykov, *Abdykerim Sydykov*, pp. 147, 151–2; Kozybaev, Abylkhozhin and Aldazhumanov, *Kollektivizatsiia v Kazakhstane*, p. 5.
104. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 74.
105. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, p. 445.
106. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing class: the construction of social identity in Soviet Russia', in Martin A. Miller (ed.), *The Russian Revolution: The Essential Readings* (Oxford, Wiley, 2001), pp. 206–35, p. 215.
107. Dakhshleiger, 'Kazakhstan', p. 23.
108. Christian Gerlach and Nicholas Werth, 'State violence – violent societies', in Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 133–79, p. 137.
109. See Holquist, 'To count, to extract, to exterminate'.

110. Brower, '*Law and Custom in the Steppe*', pp. 44–5; Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 511; Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).
111. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 7.
112. Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, p. 4.
113. Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, p. 5.
114. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, pp. 459–60.
115. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, trans. Shelly L. Frisch (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2002), pp. 60–1.
116. Frederick Cooper, 'Conflict and connection: rethinking colonial African history', *American Historical Review* 99/5 (1994), pp. 1516–45, p. 1529.
117. Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts: postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the Cold War', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009), pp. 6–34, pp. 14–16.
118. Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, p. 76.
119. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1519; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2000).
120. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1531.
121. Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts', p. 15.
122. Kate Brown, 'Gridded lives: why Kazakhstan and Montana are nearly the same place', *American Historical Review* 106/1 (2001), pp. 17–48, p. 21.
123. Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, p. 71.
124. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 12.
125. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 4–9.
126. Khalid, 'Backwardness and the quest for civilization', p. 232. Emphasis in original.
127. Ibid., p. 233.
128. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1532.
129. Michael Kemper, 'Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist oriental studies in early Soviet Russia', *Die Welt des Islams* 50 (2010), pp. 435–76. While comparable to that of Western Europe, Russian imperial oriental studies had some distinctive and important features. See: Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
130. Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Routledge Curzon, 2001).
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132. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', pp. 1521, 1540.
133. Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006), p. 65.
134. Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 4.

135. Cherot, 'Nativization', pp. 51–2.
136. Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts', pp. 6–7.
137. On the Russian Empire's racial ideology, see: Alexander Morrison, 'Russian rule in Turkestan and the example of British India, c. 1860–1917', *Slavonic and East European Review* 84/4 (2006), pp. 666–707; Vera Tolz, 'Orientalism, nationalism, and ethnic diversity in late Imperial Russia', *The Historical Journal* 48/1 (2005), pp. 127–50.
138. Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts', p. 7; Isabelle Ohayon, *Sedentarizatsiia Kazakhov SSSR pri Staline: Kollektivizatsiia i Sotzial'nye Izmeneniia (1928–1945)* (Almaty: Sanat, 2008), p. 11. See also: Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
139. Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, p. 107.
140. Michael David-Fox, 'On the primacy of ideology: Soviet revisionists and Holocaust deniers (in response to Martin Malia)', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5/1 (2004), pp. 81–105.
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142. Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), p. 5.
143. Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003).
144. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (London: Yale University Press, 1998).
145. Baron, 'Nature, nationalism and revolutionary regionalism', p. 582.
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147. Gerlach and Werth, 'State violence', pp. 176–8; Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 75.
148. Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman, 'Introduction', in Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman (eds), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 1–22.
149. Michael Khodarkovsky, 'Law and custom in the Steppe: the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian colonialism in the nineteenth century', *Russian Review* 61/2 (2002), pp. 306–7; Brower, *'Law and Custom in the Steppe'*, pp. 1047–8; Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 6.
150. David G. Anderson, 'Turning hunters into herders: a critical examination of Soviet development policy among the Evenki of Southeastern Siberia', *Arctic* 44/1 (1991), pp. 12–22, p. 16; Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, p. 475; Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, *The End of Nomadism? Society, State and the Environment in Inner Asia* (Durham,

NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 1; Viktor Krasil'shchikov, *Vdogonku za proshedshim vekom: Razvitie Rossii v XX veke s tochki zreniia mirovykh modernizatsii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998), p. 9.

151. Anderson, 'Turning hunters into herders'; Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', pp. 52–76; B.O. Baibulatov, *Ot kochev'ia k sotsializmu* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1970); Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1979).
152. James McNutt, 'What is modernization? Eurocentrism and periodization', *Encounters/Encouentros/Recontres on Education* 15 (2014), pp. 121–36, p. 131.
153. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, pp. 8, 153; Krasil'shchikov, *Vdogonku za proshedshim vekom*, p. 10.
154. Humphrey and Sneath, *The End of Nomadism?*, p. 1; Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1516.
155. René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), p. viii.
156. Penati, 'The reconquest of East Bukhara', pp. 521–38.
157. Anderson, 'Turning hunters into herders', p. 20; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, pp. 4, 8.
158. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, p. 439.
159. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 58.
160. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', p. 75.
161. Geiss, *Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, p. 159.
162. Kendirbaeva, 'The national liberation movement', p. 504.
163. Ohayon, *Sedentarizatsiia Kazakhov SSSR pri Staline*, pp. 103–4.
164. Gerlach and Werth, 'State violence', p. 151.
165. An alternative perspective is to be found here: Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 153. See also: David-Fox, 'On the primacy of ideology', p. 86.
166. Gerlach and Werth, 'State violence', pp. 151, 160–1, 174; Paul Hagenloh, '"Socially harmful elements" and the Great Terror', in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 286–308.
167. Edgar notes a less acute failure of a similar nature regarding the population of Turkmenistan, saying that the Turkmen learned to 'speak Bolshevik ... with their own accents'. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 11. This in turn draws from the work of Stephen Kotkin: Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).
168. David-Fox, *Crossing Borders*, p. 6.
169. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1518.
170. Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 500. This is the representation of the early USSR as a post-colonial society, distinct from the use of the post-colonial critique represented by the work of Edward Said: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).
171. Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts', p. 7.

172. Etienne Balibar, 'Europe as borderland', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009), pp. 190–215, p. 192. Emphasis in original. See also: Baron, 'Nature, nationalism and revolutionary regionalism', pp. 565–95.
173. Pianciola and Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe', pp. 190–1.
174. Annie E. Coombes, 'Introduction: memory and history in settler colonialism', in Annie E. Coombes (ed.), *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 1–12, p. 3.
175. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', pp. 1543, 1544.
176. Care has been taken to emphasise 'the colonial qualities of nomadic life in the USSR' rather than to describe the USSR as an empire *per se*; this is a slightly different argument.
177. Cooper, 'Conflict and connection', p. 1524.
178. Ibid., p. 1519.
179. Damira Umetbaeva, 'Official rhetoric and individual perceptions of the Soviet past: implications for nation building in Kyrgyzstan', *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 4/1 (2015), pp. 71–93.
180. Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, p. 80.
181. DuVal, *The Native Ground*, p. 4.
182. Ibid., p. 32.
183. Buttino, 'Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan', p. 64.
184. McNutt, 'What is modernization?', p. 130.
185. Kendirbaeva, 'The national liberation movement', p. 488; Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 105.
186. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 47.
187. Ferret, 'The ambiguities of the Kazakhs' nomadic heritage', pp. 178–80.
188. *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 17, op. 25, d. 1, l. 56 ob.; Pianciola and Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe', pp. 139–40.
189. Boris Mikhailovich Zima (ed.), *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh 1917-1967* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1983), p. 114.
190. Dakhshleiger, 'Kazakhstan', p. 21; Geraci, 'Going abroad or going to Russia?', p. 288.
191. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', p. 68; Pianciola and Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe', p. 140.
192. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'The Russian Revolution and social mobility: a re-examination of the question of social support for the Soviet regime in the 1920s and 1930s', *Politics and Society* 13/2 (1984), pp. 119–41.
193. Jacquesson, 'Reforming pastoral land use in Kyrgyzstan', p. 114; Isabelle Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux: L'indigénisation au kirghizstan soviétique (années 1920–1930)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 145–82, p. 145.

194. Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 43.
195. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. v.
196. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Impact of the opening of Soviet archives on Western scholarship on Soviet social history', *Russian Review* 74/3 (2015), pp. 377–400, p. 394.

Chapter 1 Perceptions of Nomadism

1. Bokatoz Kassymbekova and Christian Teichmann, 'The Red man's burden: Soviet European officials in Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s', in Maurus Reinkowski and Gregor Thum (eds), *Helpless Imperialists: Imperial Failure, Fear and Radicalization* (Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), pp. 163–86.
2. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter TsGARK), f. 1179, op. 6, d. 3, l. 48. The speaker was most likely Idris Koshkunov, who was then deputy chairman of the Kazakh Regional Control Committee: K.S. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana 1920–1946 gg.: Biograficheskii spravochnik* (Almaty: Arys, 2007), p. 202.
3. Tsarist-era arguments about the connection between identity, culture and nomadism are discussed here: Peter Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization: promoting progress as tradition in response to the land problem', *Central Asian Survey* 22/1 (2003), pp. 67–81, pp. 77–9.
4. The idea that settling nomads somehow became more European did predate the Soviet era, though perhaps not with quite the specifically *national* implications we see here: Bhavna Davé, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 38.
5. Sarah Cameron confirms that this included Lenin: Sarah Cameron, 'The hungry steppe: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh famine, 1921–1934', doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011, p. 67.
6. Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 210, 221.
7. Ibid., pp. 5–7.
8. Ernest Gellner, 'Foreword', in Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. ix–xxv, p. xi.
9. *Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter APRK), f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 91.
10. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR), f. 10, op. 1, d. 8.
11. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins*, pp. 156–7.
12. Niccolò Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 101–43, p. 106.
13. The quotation comes from: Davé, *Kazakhstan*, p. 44. See also: Uyama Tomohiko, 'The geography of civilizations: a spatial analysis of the Kazakh

intelligentsia's activities, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century', *Sapporo Summer Symposium* (1998), pp. 70–99, pp. 83, 87.

14. This section of the 1926 Soviet census reveals the extremely low literacy rates in the Kazakh and Kyrgyz republics: *Otdel 1: narodnost', rodnoi iazyk, vozrast, gramotnost'*, vol. 8: Kazakskaiia ASSR Kirgizskaiia ASSR, *Vsesoyuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda* (Moscow: TsSU Soyuza SSR, 1928). See also: Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917* (London: Ithica, 2001), p. 145; TsGARK, f. 280, op. 3, d. 3, ll. 1–7.
15. Isabelle Ohayon places her quantitative analysis in the context of indigenisation: Isabelle Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux: L'indigénisation au kirghizstan soviétique (années 1920–1930)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 145–82.
16. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times, Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 16.
17. Simon Johnson and Peter Temin, 'The macroeconomics of NEP', *Economic History Review* 46/4 (1993), pp. 750–67, p. 760.
18. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 254, l. 101.
19. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kyrgyzstan* (hereafter TsGARKy), f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 17 ob.
20. Steven Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization: interpreting the Kenesary Kasymov Revolt, 1837–1847', *Central Asian Survey* 22/2&3 (2003), pp. 231–52, p. 238.
21. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', p. 70.
22. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 147; TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 17 ob.
23. Ibid., d. 14, l. 14; ibid. f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 14 ob.
24. On the tsarist state's efforts in this regard, see: Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, p. 83.
25. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 14, l. 16; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 109.
26. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 59-59 ob.; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 98–102.
27. *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI), f. 17, op. 25, d. 256, l. 33. The investigation related to the Syr-Darya *Guberniia*.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., ll. 33, 33–7. For more on the peculiarities of the USSR's early regional administrative systems, see: Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism', *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994), pp. 414–52, p. 430.
30. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 171, l. 23. Nomadic regions were some of the last to see the imposition of collective farming: Paula A. Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), p. 165.

31. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 14, l. 13.
32. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 103.
33. Ibid., d. 8, l. 150.
34. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, l. 43.
35. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', pp. 67–8, 75.
36. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 153. The reference to reindeer herding comes from much later Soviet analysis: David G. Anderson, 'Turning hunters into herders: a critical examination of Soviet development policy among the Evenki of Southeastern Siberia', *Arctic* 44/1 (1991), pp. 12–22, p. 15.
37. For a later Soviet judgement of a comparable nature, see: ibid., p. 16.
38. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 1, l. 57 ob.
39. Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (London: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 28; Isabelle Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies: doctrine, local interactions, and political hybridization in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia during the 1920s and 1930s', *Central Asian Affairs* 3/2 (2016), pp. 163–91, p. 166.
40. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 48.
41. Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies', p. 173.
42. M. Asylbekov and Iu. Romanov (eds), *T.R. Ryskulov: Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 3 (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1998), p. 267.
43. Indeed, it is easily recognisable from outside of the Soviet context. See: René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. vii–xi.
44. V.P. Butt, A. Brian Murphy, N.A. Myshov and Geoffrey R. Swain (eds), *The Russian Civil War: Documents from the Soviet Archives* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 95.
45. *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF), f. 130, op. 3, d. 597, ll. 4, 5–6, 14, 21–1 ob.
46. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 350, l. 30 ob.
47. L.C. Gatagova, L.P. Kosheleva and L.A. Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros. Kniga 1, 1918–1933 gg.*, *Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), pp. 146–7. On *korenizatsiia*, see: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 132–4, 140–4.
48. Matthew J. Payne, 'Viktor Turin's *Turksib* (1929) and Soviet Orientalism', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21/1 (2001), pp. 37–62, p. 40.
49. GARF f. 130, op. 7, d. 257, l. 2.
50. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 25, ll. 33, 34, 41–1 ob.; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 61.
51. Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers: colonization and ethnic conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), pp. 41–53, p. 41; Seymour Becker, 'Russia between East and West: the intelligentsia, Russian national identity and the Asian borderlands', *Central Asian Survey* 10/4 (1991), pp. 47–64, pp. 48, 52–3; Charles J. Halperin,

Russia and the Golden Horde (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 7, 10–1.

52. Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 201.
53. Khodarkovsky cites the foundation of Orenburg in 1734 as the beginning of a 'dramatically new, accelerated, and far more intrusive colonization'. See: ibid., p. 158.
54. Becker, 'Russia between East and West', p. 50.
55. Yuri Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens: the Cultural Revolution in the Soviet far north, 1928–1938', *Slavic Review* 51/1 (1992), pp. 52–76, p. 56; Steven Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian internal colonization: the "touch of civilization" on the Sioux and Kazakhs', *The Western Historical Quarterly* 43/1 (2012), pp. 29–52, p. 40; Robert P. Geraci, 'Going abroad or going to Russia? Orthodox missionaries in the Kazakh Steppe, 1881–1917', in Michael Khodarkovsky and Robert P. Geraci (eds), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 274–310, pp. 289–90.
56. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 3, l. 147.
57. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, p. 282; APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 3, l. 147. For a similar discussion of nomadic *byt* or domestic life, see: ibid., d. 2, l. 91.
58. Sergey Abashin, '"Les Sartes, un peuple d'avenir": l'ethnographie et l'Empire au Turkestan russe', in Svetlana Gorshenina and Sergey Abashin (eds), *Le Turkestan russe: une colonie comme les autres?* (Paris, IFEAC, 2009), pp. 353–79.
59. Alylbek Dzhumanaliev, *Politicheskaia istoriia Kyrgyzstana (Stanovlenie politicheskoi sistemy Kyrgyzskogo obshchestva v 1920–1930-e gody)* (Bishkek: DEMI, 2002), p. 348.
60. Tsarist opinions were mixed: Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', pp. 46–7, 50.
61. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 91.
62. Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 5–7.
63. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 159, l. 25.
64. 'Dzhut!', *Pravda*, 19 April 1927. A *volost* and *guberniia* (sometimes rendered governate) were administrative regions of the Russian Empire and early Soviet Union. The former was a subdivision of the latter.
65. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 87, ll. 30–1; GARF f, 1318, op. 11, d. 32, ll. 49–9 ob.
66. GARF f. 1235, op. 140, d. 1029, ll. 5–10.
67. TsGARK, f. 30, op. 1, d. 1090b, l. 39.
68. Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe: the collectivization of agriculture and the Kazak herdsmen, 1928–1934', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45/1&2 (2004), pp. 137–91, p. 140.
69. I.N. Tasmagambetov, M.M. Tazhmin and S.T. Tauekel, *Istoriia otechestva v sud'bakh ego grazhdan: Sbornik avtobiografii 1922–1960 gody*, vol. 10: *Istoriia*

Kazakhstana v russkikh istochnikakh XVI–XX vekov (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2005), pp. 127, 144. Mendeshev would continue to serve in high office, serving as Kazakh People's Commissar for Education 1930–3 and chairman of the Kazakh Committee for Science 1930–7. He was arrested as part of the Party purge in 1937 and executed by firing squad in February 1938. See: Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, pp. 236, 327. Another Party member with views similar to those of Mendeshev was Smagul Sadvokasov, who helped to coordinate an (ultimately unsuccessful) opposition to Filipp Goloshchekin's leadership over a three-year period from 1925 to 1928. Sadvokasov has elsewhere been characterised as a nationalist: ibid., pp. 9, 293. This was an accusation levelled at him after Filipp Goloshchekin began to assert his dominance: Tasmagambetov, Tazhmin and Tauekel, *Istoriia otechestva v sud'bakh ego grazhdan*, p. 14. See also: APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 139.

70. Ibid., l. 124.
71. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 345, ll. 29–30.
72. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 174, ll. 81–82, 114.
73. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 89–91. See also: Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small People of the North* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 204–205.
74. Payne, 'Viktor Turin's *Turksib*', p. 53.
75. Ibid., pp. 39–40.
76. For a discussion of technology in a more explicitly colonial context, see: Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 39.
77. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 128.
78. Tasmagambetov, Tazhmin and Tauekel, *Istoriia otechestva v sud'bakh ego grazhdan*, p. 470; Chingiz Dzhangil'din (ed.), *Alibi Dzhangil'din: dokumenty i materialy* (Almaty: Ana-tili, 2009), pp. 5–7. Dzhangil'din would eventually be tasked with negotiating ceasefires with armed Kazakhs rebelling against the collectivisation campaign in 1930, and in the following year he coordinated efforts to return by force emigrant Kazakhs who had fled into China to avoid repression and hunger. He would survive Party purges and remain at the pinnacle of Kazakh politics until his death in 1953. See: Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, pp. 134, 321; K.S. Aldazhumanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 300.
79. Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhshleiger and M. Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane v vosstanovitelnyi period, 1921–1925 gg: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Arkheologiia Zhane Etnografiia Instituty, 1962, p. 90. Dzhangil'din's emphasis on learning local custom can also be seen in reports from the Red Caravan, in which he played a vital role: APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 339, l. 20.
80. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, pp. 89–91; TsGARK, f. 930, op. 1, d. 3, l. 7; *Chrezvychainyi Komissar (k 125-letiiu*

Alibi Dzhangil'dina): Sbornik dokumentov (1916–1923 g.g.) (Almaty: Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan, 2009), p. 230.

81. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 128.
82. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, pp. 89–91.
83. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 103. To take a further example, the scholar Nikolai Danilevskii argued that historically Mongols and Turks had retained a nomadic existence because of the environment in which they lived. See: Becker, 'Russia between East and West', p. 54.
84. The nature of this disease is described here: Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 50–4.
85. Payne, 'Viktor Turin's *Turksib*', p. 55.
86. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 57.
87. Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1880–1910* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001), pp. 275–6. On this topic note also the historiography referenced by Yaacov Ro'i: Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000), p. 542.
88. Allen J. Frank compellingly argues against this view: Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions*, p. 274.
89. Ibid., p. 276. This story of Tatar merchants proselytising among Central Asians is touched on by Sultan-Galiev here: Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush (eds), *Muslims of the Soviet Empire; A Guide* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1985), pp. 150–1. Note that other late Imperial Russian scholars, such as Vasilii Bartol'd, did not think Islam an obstacle to progress which had to be overcome: Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 155. Russian orientalists of this nature were correspondingly hostile to Russification efforts: Vera Tolz, 'Orientalism, nationalism, and ethnic diversity in late Imperial Russia', *The Historical Journal* 48/1 (2005), pp. 127–50, p. 145.
90. Becker, 'Russia between East and West', p. 59.
91. Baimanaly Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba v Kirgizskikh ailakh (1918–1932 gg.)* (Frunze: Ilim, 1990), pp. 40–4. Even during the Civil War, those Central Asians who resisted the Red Army were cast as bourgeois elements: GARF f. 130, op. 3, d. 712, l. 76.
92. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 79.
93. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, pp. 84–5; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 1, l. 57 ob.
94. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 133–8.
95. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 51.
96. Didar Kassymova, Zhanat Kundakbaeva and Ustina Markus (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), p. 48. A Russian

peasant *batrak* was also 'landless', but the significance of this meaning for nomads is naturally more opaque: Tracy McDonald, *Face to the Village: The Riazan Countryside under Soviet Rule, 1921–1930* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 47.

97. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 95; A. Tursunbaev, *Pobeda kolkhoznogo stroia v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1957), p. 25.
98. Ali Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 31.
99. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 133–8.
100. Ibid., d. 8, ll. 95, 97.
101. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 43; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 99.
102. Vainshtein would return to Moscow later in 1923 to begin work in an all-Union financial organisation, and was eventually shot at the same time as Mendeshev in February 1938. See: Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, p. 104.
103. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 79.
104. Ibid., l. 111–14, 188–9.
105. Ibid., l. 191.
106. Ibid., l. 115.
107. Ibid., ll. 119, 118.
108. Ibid., l. 191.
109. Ibid., 171.
110. Ibid., l. 174. The declarations of Red Caravan committees repeatedly brought attention to the plight specifically of the Kazakh poor, though other documentation from Caravan participants discussed 'kulak-migrants', appearing to accuse Russian peasants of exacerbating the famine among Kazakhs: APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 339: 2, 23 ob., 53, 37.
111. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 10–11.
112. Ibid.
113. APRK, f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, ll. 114, 176.
114. Ibid., l. 187.
115. Ibid., l. 187.
116. Ibid., l. 187.
117. Tasmagambetov, Tazhmin and Tauekel, *Istoriia otechestva v sud'bakh ego grazhdan*, p. 14. Goloshchekin became First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party in September 1925: Michael R. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', doctoral thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, p. 281; Petr Kokaisl, 'Soviet collectivisation and its specific focus on Central Asia', *Agris On-Line Papers in Economics and Informatics* 5/4 (2013), pp. 121–33, p. 128; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 6, l. 115 ob.; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 159, l. 26.
118. Gellner, 'Foreword', pp. xiv–xvi.
119. Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, pp. 9–10.
120. Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent*, p. 31.

121. Asylbekov and Romanov, *T.R. Ryskulov*, p. 267.
122. Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux', pp. 145–82.
123. Central disagreements relating to this matter are discussed here: James W. Heinzen, *Inventing a Soviet Countryside: State Power and the Transformation of Rural Russia, 1917–1929* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004)), pp. 71–2.
124. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 84.
125. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, ll. 226–7.
126. Priests, for example, were at one point considered a single class: Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing class: the construction of social identity in Soviet Russia', in Martin A. Miller (ed.), *The Russian Revolution: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Wiley, 2001), pp. 206–35, p. 215.
127. The mission statement of the Party's Red Caravan, for example, places emphasis on investigation and education, not organisation or coordination: TsGARK, f. 930, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 26–6 ob.
128. A.N. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula* (Kzyl-Orda: Gosplan KASSR, 1928).
129. Both authors are also cited alongside Donich as contributors to the discussion here: Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 268.
130. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula*, p. 1. Donich's citations come from: S.P. Shvetsov, 'Priroda i byt Kazakstana', in *Kazakskoe khoziaistvo v ego estestvenno-istoricheskykh i bytovykh usloviiakh* (Moscow: Narkomzem KASSR, 1926), pp. 93, 101, 102.
131. Talas Omarbekov, *Golomodor v Kazakhstane: prichiny, masshtaby i itogi (1930–1931 g.g.)* (Almaty: Kazakhskii Natsional'nyi Universitet im. Al'-Farabi, 2009), p. 10.
132. Zere Maindanali, *Zemledel'cheskie raiony Kazakhstana v gody nasil'stvennoi kollektivizatsii* (Almaty: KazNU im. al'-Farabi, 2003), p. 6.
133. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula*, pp. 1–2. The quote originates from this document: M.B. Murzin, 'O meropriiatiiakh po osedaniiu i o sposobakh khoziaistvennoi reorganizatsii kazakskogo byta. Tezisy doklada v Komissii Kazgosplana po izmeneniiu metodov khoziaistvovaniia kazakskogo naroda', ed. Kazgosplan (1928).
134. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula*, p. 2.
135. For a concise summary in the historiography of these two competing positions, see: Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 24.
136. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula*, p. 3. The separator referred to by Donich towards the end of the quote is most likely a device for separating cream from milk.
137. Ibid., p. 3.
138. Ibid., p. 4.
139. I.I. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei Turkestanskogo Kraia* (Leningrad: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1925), p. 1.
140. Ibid., p. 9.

141. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 163.
142. For an example of *sart* used in a non-academic context, see this correspondence from a resident of the Kazakh Republic, received by state authorities in 1923: GARF f. 130, op. 7, d. 257, l. 2.
143. Contemporary historiography gives a variety of explanations. Ali Iğmen gives the meaning 'living a settled lifestyle' here: Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent*, p. 31. See also: Abashin, '"Les Sartes, un peuple d'avenir"'; Davé, *Kazakhstan*, p. 38.
144. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei*, p. 15. Edward Schatz's description of the origins of Kazakh identity has certain parallels with Zarubin's ideas. Schatz translates *sart* as agriculturalist, and recounts this Kazakh proverb from a Russian source: 'If a sart gets rich, he builds a home; if a Kazakh gets rich he accumulates wives.' Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, pp. 30, 32.
145. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei*, p. 9.
146. Ibid., p. 14.
147. Zifa-Alua Auezova, 'Conceiving a people's history: the 1920–1936 discourse on the Kazakh past', in Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann (eds), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (Oxford, Routledge, 2011), pp. 241–61, pp. 242–3.
148. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 37.
149. Ibid., p. 5; Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 7–28.
150. Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 130. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).
151. Becker, 'Russia between East and West', pp. 58–9.
152. Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 47.
153. Ibid., pp. 130, 156. Becker, 'Russia between East and West', p. 61.
154. Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, pp. 38, 39.
155. Ibid., p. 146.
156. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', pp. 274–5; Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, pp. 144–5.
157. Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 65; Auezova, 'Conceiving a people's history', pp. 253–4.
158. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 76.
159. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei*, p. 3.
160. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 113.
161. Francine Hirsch, 'The Soviet Union as a work-in-progress: ethnographers and the category nationality in the 1926, 1937 and 1939 censuses', *Slavic Review* 56/2 (1997), pp. 251–78, p. 253.
162. *Otdel 1: narodnost', rodnoi iazyk, vozrast, gramotnost'*, vol. 17: SSSR, *Vsesoyuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda* (Moscow: TsCU Soyuza SSR, 1929), p. v; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 105. This does not mean that isolated demographic studies were not under way in the region, however: Sergali E. Tolybekov,

Kochevoe obshchestvo Kazakhov v XVII – nachale XX veka: politiko-ekonomicheskii analiz (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Nauka Kazakhskoi SSR, 1971), p. 495.

163. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, pp. 105–107.
164. Hirsch, 'The Soviet Union as a work-in-progress', pp. 256, 263.
165. To work around the restrictions, some respondents merged two or more nationalities, referring to themselves as Kurama-Uzbek or Tajik-Uzbek, for example: Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 129.
166. Hirsch, 'The Soviet Union as a work-in-progress', p. 254.
167. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 281.
168. Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006), p. 62; Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, p. 1.
169. This volume reveals the extremely low literacy rates in the republic: *Otdel 1*, vol. 8: *Kazakskaiia ASSR Kirgizskaiia ASSR*, p. 16.
170. *Otdel 2: zaniatiia*, vol. 15: Kazakskaiia ASSR Kirgizskaiia ASSR, *Vsesoyuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda* (Moscow: TsSU Soyuza SSR, 1929).
171. Ibid., p. 37.
172. *Otdel 3: semeinoe sostoianie, mesto rozhdeniia i prodolzhitel'nost' prozhivaniia uvechnost'*, vol. 42: Kazakskaiia ASSR Kirgizskaiia ASSR, *Vsesoyuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda* (Moscow: TsSU Soyuza SSR, 1930).
173. Ibid., pp. 108–109; A. Tursunbaev (ed.), *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva Kazakhstana (1926–iiun' 1941 gg.)*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata: Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii AN KAZSSR, 1967), p. 223; G.F. Dakhshleiger, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie preobrazovaniia v aule i derevne Kazakhstana 1921–1929 gg.* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1965), pp. 308–309.
174. Nor should the census overall be considered a useless source. On the contrary, just regarding mass repression in Kazakhstan, its data would later become vitally important for scholars making estimates for the population decline suffered by the Kazakhs in the early 1930s: M.Kh. Asylbekov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 3: *Kazakhstan v novoe vremia* (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 370; Martha Brill Olcott, 'The collectivization drive in Kazakhstan', *Russian Review* 40/2 (1981), pp. 122–42, p. 124.
175. This is a reference to the extract from the first Congress of Workers for Sedentarisation, quoted at the beginning of the chapter.
176. Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, pp. 28, 30; Kassymova, Kundakbaeva and Markus, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 246; Saulesh Yessenova, '"Routes and roots" of Kazakh identity: urban migration in postsocialist Kazakhstan', *Russian Review* 64/4 (2005), pp. 661–79, p. 663; Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 8.
177. David Lane, "Ethnic and class stratification in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1917–39', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17/2 (1975), pp. 165–89, p. 187.
178. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei*, p. 3.

179. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 263.
180. Ibid., p. 262.
181. Ibid.
182. For more on the Soviet attitude towards lineage societies, see: Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies', pp. 163–91.
183. Gellner, 'Foreword', pp. xiv–xxiv.

Chapter 2 Nomadic Land

1. Mukhamet Shayakhmetov, *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Nomad under Stalin* (New York: Overlook/Rookery, 2007), p. vii; Konrad Muller, 'Behind the mountains', *The American Interest* 7/5 (2012), pp. 61–5; Mukash Omarov, *Rasstrelianaia step': istoriia Adaevskogo vosstaniia 1931 goda (po materialam OGPU)* (Almaty: Gylym, 1994), p. 4; Sarah Cameron, 'The hungry steppe: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh famine, 1921–1934', doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011, p. 31; Shirin Akiner, *The Formation of Kazakh Identity: From Tribe to Nation-State*, *Former Soviet South Project* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), p. 5.
2. Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhshleiger and M. Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane v vosstanovitelnyi period, 1921–1925 gg: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Arkheologiia Zhane Etnografiia Instituty, 1962), pp. 22–32; *Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter APRK), f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 123.
3. The Red Yurts were expeditions of medical staff and Communist Party members who practised on the Kazakh Steppe. See: Paula A. Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), p. 155.
4. Steven Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian internal colonization: the "touch of civilization" on the Sioux and Kazakhs', *The Western Historical Quarterly* 43/1 (2012), pp. 29–52, p. 38.
5. Timothy Silver, 'Learning to live with nature: colonial historians and the southern environment', *The Journal of Southern History* 73/3 (2007), pp. 539–52, p. 541.
6. Ibid., p. 540.
7. 'The sowing campaign in Central Asia', *Pravda*, 11 May 1927.
8. Christian Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924–1941', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 499–519, p. 503; Ian M. Matley, 'The Golodnaya Steppe: a Russian irrigation venture in Central Asia', *Geographical Review* 60/3 (1970), pp. 328–46.
9. Adrienne Lynn Edgar, 'Everyday life among the Turkmen nomads', in Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca (eds), *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 37–44, pp. 42–3.
10. Matthew J. Payne, 'Viktor Turin's *Turksib* (1929) and Soviet Orientalism', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21/1 (2001), pp. 37–62, p. 39.

11. Paolo Sartori, 'Colonial legislation meets Sharia: Muslims' land rights in Russian Turkestan', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 43–60; Philipp Reichmuth, '"Lost in the Revolution": Bukharan *waqf* and testimony documents from the early Soviet period', *Die Welt des Islams* 50 (2010), pp. 362–96.
12. Botakoz Kassymbekova, 'Helpless imperialists: European state workers in Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s', *Central Asian Survey* 30/1 (2011), pp. 21–37, p. 30.
13. Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 7.
14. Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, pp. 80, 81.
15. Kate Brown, 'Gridded lives: why Kazakhstan and Montana are nearly the same place', *American Historical Review* 106/1 (2001), pp. 17–48, p. 27.
16. James W. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state: the People's Commissariat of Agriculture under proletarian dictatorship, 1918–1929', *Slavic Review* 56/1 (1997), pp. 73–100, p. 96.
17. Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 195; Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian internal colonization', p. 44.
18. Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe: the collectivization of agriculture and the Kazak herdsmen, 1928–1934', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45/1&2 (2004), pp. 137–91, p. 138.
19. Peter Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization: promoting progress as tradition in response to the land problem', *Central Asian Survey* 22/1 (2003), pp. 67–81, p. 69.
20. Gulnar Kendirbaeva, 'Migrations in Kazakhstan: past and present', *Nationalities Papers* 25/4 (1997), pp. 741–51, p. 741. An *oblast* was a substantive administrative subdivision of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union.
21. Ibid., p. 741.
22. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1; Alexander Morrison, '"Sowing the seed of national strife in this alien region": The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1910', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), pp. 1–29, p. 11; Robert A. Lewis, Richard H. Rowland, and Ralph S. Clem, *Nationality and Population Change in Russia and the USSR: An Evaluation of Census Data, 1897–1970* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 232.
23. Kendirbaeva, 'Migrations in Kazakhstan', p. 741.
24. Niccolò Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 101–43, pp. 101–102.
25. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', p. 67.
26. Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian internal colonization', pp. 41, 44.

27. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kyrgyzstan* (hereafter TsGARKy), f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 17 ob.
28. Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), p. 225.
29. Zainidin Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane: 20-e gody* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1997), p. 112; *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF) f. 130, op. 28, d. 89, ll. 30–30 ob. Later Soviet historiography would come to understand 1916 differently. See: Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers: colonization and ethnic conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), pp. 41–53.
30. Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 127–8, 197.
31. Sergey Abashin et al., 'Soviet rule and the delineation of borders in the Ferghana Valley, 1917–1930', in S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), pp. 84–118, pp. 94–7.
32. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 123.
33. Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Towards the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), p. 104.
34. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 102.
35. Robert Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden: Herrschaft und Hunger in Kasachstan* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2014), p. 76.
36. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 101.
37. For more on the utility of the decolonisation paradigm, see: Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', pp. 499–519.
38. GARF f. 130, op. 28, d. 89, l. 30.
39. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1; ibid., d. 2, l. 91; *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 17, op. 25, d. 174, ll. 81–2.
40. Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 501.
41. Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 111.
42. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 146; Steven Sabol, 'The creation of Soviet Central Asia: the 1924 National Delimitation', *Central Asian Survey* 14/2 (1995), pp. 225–41; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, pp. 119–20.
43. Beatrice Penati argues that later efforts against the Basmachi became a 'prelude to Sovietization', including the resettlement of large numbers of Central Asians into new lands, which also came to serve the state's economic interests: Beatrice Penati, 'The reconquest of East Bukhara: the struggle against the Basmachi as a prelude to Sovietization', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 521–38, p. 529. See also: Baimanaly Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba v Kirgizskikh ailakh (1918–1932 gg.)* (Frunze: Ilim, 1990), pp. 25–6, 36.

44. The obvious example in the Kazakh case is the Alash Party, sometimes referred to erroneously as Alash Orda: Didar Kassymova, Zhanat Kundakbaeva and Ustina Markus (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), p. 24.
45. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 151.
46. Ibid., pp. 151–2; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 115.
47. Martin also includes Kazakhstan in a list of 'aggressive republics' when it came to the later implementation of *korenizatsiia*, suggesting that central Party organs only expressed their disapproval when conditions for Russians became too onerous: Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 140.
48. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 91. The opposite was indeed the case. The eradication of aristocratic estates in the Russian countryside strengthened the peasant communes which enlarged as urban dwellers returned to their old villages: Lewis Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society: Between Revolutions, 1918–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 41.
49. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 79.
50. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 33.
51. Ibid., d. 6, l. 169 ob.
52. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 346, l. 6.
53. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 337, l. 17.
54. Ibid., l. 19.
55. The phrase 'working Kazakh' was intended to inject a class element to the decolonisation process, and was ubiquitous at the time. Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, pp. 110–11.
56. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 337, ll. 17, 19.
57. Ibid.,, ll. 20–20 ob.; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 61.
58. N.E. Masanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2001), p. 368.
59. Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 88–9.
60. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 136.
61. J.N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812–1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 290.
62. L.C. Gatagova, L.P. Kosheleva and L.A. Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros. Kniga 1, 1918–1933 gg.*, *Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), p. 288.
63. Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 500.
64. In the very early years, for example, any concerns caused by the Tashkent administration were surely overshadowed by the autonomists of Kokand: Abashin et al., 'Soviet rule', p. 97.
65. Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden*, pp. 74–5; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 113.
66. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 74; Abikey Arman Muratuly and Tursun Hazretaly, 'S. Khojanov and the phenomenon of National Communism in

Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the 20-ies. XX century', *Asian Social Science* 10/2 (2014), pp. 93–101; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', pp. 119–20.

67. For the class element of the reform, see: Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 34. On the expulsion of Europeans see: Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden*, p. 75.
68. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 8; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 117.
69. Muratuly and Hazretaly, 'S. Khojanov and the phenomenon of National Communism'.
70. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1; TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 8; Muratuly and Hazretaly, 'S. Khojanov and the phenomenon of National Communism'; R.M. Abdullaev, S.S. Agzamkhodzhaev and I.A. Alimov (eds), *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: K istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti* (Tashkent: Shark, 2000)., p. 442.
71. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 123.
72. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1.
73. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR) f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 147.
74. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, pp. 88–9.
75. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1. Whether in spite of or due to the approximate nature of the figures, near identical numbers can be found here: TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 7. Niccolò Pianciola gives a fuller range of figures here: Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', pp. 101–43.
76. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 7.
77. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, pp. 88–9.
78. GARF f. 130, op. 6, d. 998, l. 4.
79. Beatrice Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power: land-and-water reform in the Uzbek SSR (1924–1928)', *Revolutionary Russia* 25/2 (2012), pp. 187–217, p. 188; TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 74; ibid., 1, l. 75.
80. Ibid., d. 3, l. 43 ob.; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', pp. 129, 138–9.
81. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 346, l. 6.
82. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 25, l. 33.
83. Ibid.
84. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 62; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 136.
85. Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (London: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 29.
86. Nurbulat Masanov, *Kochevaia tsivilizatsiia Kazakhov: osnovy zhiznedeiatel'nosti nomadnogo obshchestva* (Almaty: Fond Nurbulat Masanov, 2011), pp. 442–3. See also: Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian internal colonization', p. 35.
87. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 3, l. 147.
88. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 40.
89. Alan M. Ball suggests that economic regulations and laws passed before 1924 often had little or no effect on the individuals implicated in the legislation:

Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921–1929* (London: University of California Press, 1987), p. 23.

90. Gatagova, Kosheleva and Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 288.
91. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 350, ll. 30–2.
92. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 41, ll. 1–7 ob.
93. Ibid., ll. 1 ob.–2.
94. Ibid., l. 2. A *desiatina* amounted to around 1.0925 hectares.
95. Akmola is now Astana.
96. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 25, l. 34. For a similar example, see: Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 129.
97. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 41, l. 2 ob.
98. Ibid., l. 3.
99. Ibid., l. ob.
100. Ibid., d. 25, l. 115.
101. This decision was made by the *uezd's* Executive Committee on 3 March 1921: ibid., d. 25, l. 110 ob. A *verst* is a now obsolete unit of measurement a little more than a kilometre in length.
102. Glavryba was charged with the regulation of these enterprises on 31 May 1921 by a decree from Sovnarkom RSFSR: GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 25, ll. 110–110 ob.
103. Ibid., l. 110.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., ob.
106. Ibid., l. 110.
107. Ibid., ll. 120, 115, 121.
108. Ibid., l. 13.
109. Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, pp. 359–60; Adrienne L. Edgar, 'Genealogy, class, and "tribal policy" in Soviet Turkmenistan, 1924–1934', *Slavic Review* 60/2 (2001), pp. 266–88, p. 269.
110. Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism', *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994), pp. 414–52, p. 419; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 59–67.
111. Bhavna Davé, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 36.
112. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 41, l. 1 ob.
113. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 156, ll. 94, 122.
114. Ibid., ll. 93, 122. For more information on the effect of the Turksib on local Kazakhs, including nomads, see: Matthew J. Payne, *Stalin's Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001); Matthew J. Payne, 'Seeing like a Soviet state: settlement of nomadic Kazakhs, 1928–1934', in Golfo Alexopoulos, Julie Hessler and Kiril Tomoff (eds), *Writing the Stalin Era: Sheila Fitzpatrick and Soviet Historiography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 59–86. The inclusion of Kazakhs on

industrial sites dominated by Europeans was a frequent source of conflict in the Tsarist Empire, as shown by Jeff Sahadeo: Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, p. 128.

115. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 41, l. 3.
116. Ibid., 1, d. 25, l. 9.
117. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, l. 1.
118. For a concise account of ethnic conflict in the Kazakh Republic, see: Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 59–67.
119. Michael Rouland suggests that 'Soviet consolidation' began in 1925, though this perhaps underestimates the legislative achievements of the previous year: Michael R. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', doctoral thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, pp. 272–313.
120. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, ll. 35–40. The Turkestan Republic had produced comparable legislation the previous year, see: TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 50; ibid., d. 3, l. 1.
121. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, l. 38 ob.
122. Ibid., l. 39. This chain of command was later confirmed by the All-Union Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) and Sovnarkom RSFSR: ibid., op. 123, d. 346, l. 67.
123. Similar commissions operated elsewhere in Soviet Central Asia at this time but their role and form varied, see: Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power', pp. 190, 206. An Uezd was a small administrative division predating 1917.
124. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, l. 39.
125. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 47.
126. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter TsGARK) f. 280, op. 3, d. 3, ll. 1–7. According to James W. Heinzen this was also true of most employees of Narkomzem RSFSR: Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 92.
127. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 346, l. 7.
128. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 15.
129. The actual number of cases cited is 4,202: TsGARK f. 280, op. 4, d. 18, l. 1.
130. For examples of this categorisation, see: ibid., op. 3, d. 3, ll. 17, 22.
131. Ibid., op. 4, d. 30, l. 4. The nomads sought to settle in the Ulanskaia *Volost.*
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid., l. 8.
134. Ibid., l. 4.
135. Ibid., l. 6.
136. Ibid., l. 2.
137. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', pp. 131–2.
138. As in European Russia, the Communist Party struggled to foster class war among the rural population immediately after the Civil War: Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 43.
139. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 3.

140. For an example of the inclusion of the *bais* into this argument from 1926, see: RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 50. Water policy was most significant for the notorious cotton growing efforts of Soviet Uzbekistan: Gert Jan A. Veldwisch and Bettina B. Bock, 'Dehkans, diversification and dependencies: rural transformation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan', *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11/4 (2011), pp. 581–97, pp. 584–5. On class war, see: Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, pp. 29, 54–5.
141. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, l. 20.
142. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 41, ll. 1 ob., 3.
143. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, l. 38.
144. Pianciola also notes contradictions in the Party's approach to such questions: Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', pp. 122–3.
145. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 14, ll. 14, 16.
146. Ibid., l. 18.
147. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, pp. 91–2; K.S. Aldazhumanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), pp. 207–208.
148. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 16; ibid., d. 34, l. 62; GARF 1235, op. 123, d. 346, ll. 6–8.
149. Ibid., ll. 9–11; ibid., op. 106, d. 152, l. 7; Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists*, p. 60.
150. TsGARK f. 280, op. 4, d. 18, l. 1 ob.
151. In the Kazakh Republic the powers of the Collegiate of Higher Control over Land Disputes were extended to reduce dependence on Moscow, representing concentration and centralisation of power at the republic level: GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 346, ll. 6–8.
152. Zainidin Kurmanov and Ermek Sadykov, *Abdykerim Sydykov: lichnost' i istoriia* (Bishkek: Sham, 2002), pp. 127–8.
153. Ibid., pp. 129–30.
154. Ibid., pp. 130–52.
155. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 2, l. 8.
156. Ibid., d. 34, l. 2. The spectrum from 'sedentary-agricultural' to 'cattle-herding nomadic' can be found here: ibid., d. 14, l. 13.
157. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 2, l. 8.
158. Ibid., d. 34, ll. 16 ob.–17; Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power', p. 191.
159. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 18; ibid., d. 3, ll. 68–9.
160. Ibid., d. 34, l. 23; Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power', p. 191.
161. Ibid., p. 188.
162. Ibid.
163. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, ll. 223–4.
164. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, l. 42.
165. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 84.
166. TsGARKY f. 847, op. 1, d. 66.

167. Ibid., d. 43, l. 149; ibid., d. 34, l. 10 ob., ibid., l. 59; ibid., d. 33, l. 1 ob.
168. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 84; TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1. d. 43, l. 149.
169. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 3, l. 1.
170. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 43, l. 192.
171. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, l. 27.
172. Ibid., l. 145.
173. Ibid., ll. 194–227.
174. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 97.
175. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 43, ll. 132–135, 239 ob.
176. RGASPI f. 62, op. 2, d. 562 l. 160; Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power', p. 188.
177. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 103.
178. Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 501.
179. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 136.
180. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 14 ob.
181. An Okrug was a Soviet era administrative region.
182. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, ll. 160–1.
183. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 18.
184. Ibid., ll. 18, 68, 70–1.
185. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 201, l. 30.
186. Simon Johnson and Peter Temin, 'The macroeconomics of NEP', *Economic History Review* 46/4 (1993), pp. 750–67, p. 753.
187. For more on Turkestan, see this economic report from 1922: GARF f. 130, op. 6, d. 998, l. 4; TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 1–5. See also: ibid., d. 14, l. 11; ibid., d. 1, l. 51.
188. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 159, l. 190.
189. TsGARK f. 280, op. 4, d. 18, l. 1.
190. Ibid., d. 101.
191. Ibid., d. 18, l. 1.
192. Ibid., ll. 1–1 ob.
193. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 116, l. 27.
194. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 45.
195. Ibid., ll. 55, 61, 65.
196. Ibid., ll. 80–1.
197. Ibid., ll. 82–8.
198. Ibid., l. 63.
199. Ibid., d. 43, l. 36.
200. Ibid., d. 14, l. 3; ibid., d. 43, l. 56.
201. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, ll. 139–45.
202. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 13 ob.
203. The attitude is perhaps best exemplified by Vladimir Mayakovsky. The full quote is: 'After electricity I lost interest in nature. Too backward.' Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 52. For further

discussion of the trend, and its legacies in contemporary historiography, see: Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 64.

204. I.N. Tasmagambetov, M.M. Tazhmin and S.T. Tauekel, *Istoriia otechestva v sud'bakh ego grazhdan: Sbornik avtobiografii 1922–1960 gody*, vol. 10: *Istoriia Kazakhstana v russkikh istochnikakh XVI–XX vekov* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2005), pp. 13–15.
205. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 1, ll. 57–57 ob. A.N. Donich also includes an excellent summary of the Soviet academic arguments that agree with the position attributed here to Goloshchekin: A.N. Donich, *Problema novogo Kazakhskogo aula* (Kzyl-Orda: Gosplan KASSR, 1928), pp. 1–2.
206. Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', pp. 502–506.
207. Note both the name and the objectives of this declaration from VTsIK and Sovnarkom USSR, produced in June 1926: GARF f. 1235, op. 121, d. 318, ll. 2, 3. See also: GARF f. 130, op. 6, d. 998, ll. 1–4; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, ll. 25, 76. Soiuzkoshchi can be found here: TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 9. Zharli appears to have been a more appropriate alternative to Koshchi in areas of the Kazakh Republic with particular dialects: RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 25. See also: TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 58.
208. For a particularly coruscating critique of this conviction, see: Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, pp. 266–7.
209. Land near Petropavlovsk and Kokchetav was considered particularly ripe for redevelopment: Zere Maindanali, *Zemledel'cheskie raiony Kazakhstana v gody nasil'stvennoi kollektivizatsii* (Almaty: KazNU im. al'-Farabi, 2003), p. 92.
210. This point is made in a protocol from the Plenum of the Kustanai Okrug Committee from February 1926: RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 174, l. 81. Notably the protocol contains a report that divides the *okrug* into three regions rated for their fertility, though at this time in the middle of the decade the southern, least fertile region is deemed inappropriate for agricultural development.
211. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 5, l. 219.
212. GARF f. 130, op. 7, d. 257, l. 5; ibid., f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 25 ob.; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 156, l. 122; ibid., d. 190.
213. GARF f. 130, op. 7, d. 257, l. 5; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 187, ll. 138–9; Gatagova, Kosheleva and Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 407.
214. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 25 ob.
215. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 100; Lynne Viola, 'The "25,000ers": a study in a Soviet recruitment campaign during the first Five Year Plan', *Russian History* 10/1 (1983), pp. 1–30.
216. Brown, 'Gridded lives', pp. 21, 23.
217. This would happen again at an even larger scale in 1933. Michael Ellman confirms that again the Kazakh leadership, even if sceptical or unhappy with the proposals, accepted them without explicit resistance: Michael Ellman, 'Stalin and the Soviet famine of 1932–33 revisited', *Europe-Asia Studies* 59/4 (2007), pp. 663–93, p. 666.

218. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 1090b, l. 2.
219. Ibid., ll. 8–8 ob.
220. Ibid., l. 2.
221. Ibid., l. 39.
222. Kendirbaeva, 'Migrations in Kazakhstan', p. 743.
223. Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization', p. 69.
224. Maindanali, *Zemledel'cheskie raiony Kazakhstana*, pp. 3–5.

Chapter 3 Bordering Nomads

1. Some material in this chapter also appeared in the following journal article: Alun Thomas, 'The Caspian disputes: nationalism and nomadism in early Soviet Central Asia', *Russian Review* 76/3 (July 2017), pp. 502–25.
2. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR) f. 10, op. 1, d. 6, l. 1 ob.
3. Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts: postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the Cold War', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009), pp. 6–34, pp. 6–7. Francine Hirsch suggests that the Soviet nation building agenda, which dominates much of this chapter, was an attempt to reconcile the Bolsheviks' anti-colonial ideology with their wish to rule the entirety of the former Russian Empire: Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 5. See also: Christian Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924–1941', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 499–519, p. 499.
4. Zainidin Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane: 20-e gody* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1997), pp. 146–8.
5. A good early example of this was the disagreement over the status of Orenburg as capital of the Kazakh republic. See: Stephen Blank, 'Ethnic and party politics in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1920–1924', *Central Asian Survey* 10/3 (1991), pp. 1–19, pp. 5–6. Orenburg would remain the capital of the Kazakh republic until 1925 when the city was transferred to the RSFSR. The Kazakh capital was moved to Kyzylorda (formerly Perovsk) until 1929 when it was transferred to Alma-Ata (now Almaty), see: Kokish Ryspaev, *Istoriia Respubliki Kazakhstan* (Almaty: TOO Kursiv, 2008), p. 422.
6. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 34.
7. Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 19.
8. As is evident from correspondence of the time, including this communiqué sent from the Kazakh central government in 1921, letters addressed to the Bukey Guberniia Executive Committee (Bukgubispolkom) were sent to Urda: *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF) f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, l. 86.

9. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 30, l. 1. Some documentation from the dispute uses the rounded figures of 10,000 and 50,000 *desiatinas* to describe the scale of the Baskunchak tract and the Ocherednoe Kochev'e respectively: GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, l. 84. References in the secondary literature to the *ocherednoe kochev'e* are sparse. Clear information on its geographical location, east of the Volga River, can be found in this report from the Astrakhan Guberniia's Agricultural Department (Gubzemotdel), dated 20 October 1921: GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 31, ll. 6–6 ob.
10. Didar Kassymova, Zhanat Kundakbaeva and Ustina Markus (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), pp. 54–5.
11. Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 63–4, 182.
12. In Svat Soucek's summary of these events, the 'elimination' of Bukey's polity in 1845 was an act of deliberate suppression by St Petersburg: Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 197.
13. Allen J. Frank, 'Islam and ethnic relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde: Muslim Cossacks, Tatar merchants, and Kazakh nomads in Turkic manuscripts, 1870–1910', in Anke von Kügelen, Michael Kemper and Allen J. Frank (eds), *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), pp. 211–42, p. 218; Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), pp. 61–2; Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1880–1910* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001), p. 91.
14. Alexander Morrison, 'Russia, Khoqand, and the search for a "natural" frontier, 1863–1865', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2014), pp. 1–27; Svetlana Gorshenina, 'A theory of "natural boundaries" and the conquest of Kuldja (1870–1871): a self-portrait of Russian military and diplomatic elites in St Petersburg and Turkestan', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2014), pp. 102–65.
15. A *guberniia* was one of the largest administrative subdivisions of the late Russian Empire, also used by the Soviet state until the mid-1920s. For more on tsarist border-making: Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, p. 90.
16. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 30, l. 1.
17. As well as Urda's place within the Kazakh Republic, both it and Astrakhan were then part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Territorial membership of the RSFSR alone did not designate a province as Russian, however, so Astrakhan's defence of Russian interests was less formalised. See: Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 15–16; Terry Martin, 'An affirmative action empire: the Soviet Union as the highest form of imperialism', in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in*

the Age of Lenin and Stalin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 67–90, p. 80; Terry Martin, 'Borders and ethnic conflict: the Soviet experiment in ethno territorial proliferation', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (1999), pp. 538–55. Note that from 1926 Russian national soviets were permitted. This created more opportunities for the formal recognition of Russian identity. See: Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 39.

18. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, l. 86.
19. Ibid., l. 84. This was after some consultation with other organs: ibid. f. 3260, op. 1, d. 31, l. 3.
20. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 30, l. 2.
21. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, ll. 85–85 ob.
22. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, p. 88.
23. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 31, l. 1. The Kazakh People's Commissariat of Agriculture was also informed around this time: ibid., l. 2.
24. The first communiqué from the Astrakhan Gubkom can be found here: ibid., ll. 5–5 ob. Its report was received the next day, on 20 October 1921: ibid., ll. 6–6 ob.
25. According to the report, the Regular Nomadic Encampment was originally leased to the Kazakh population of the Bukey Juz, but was subsequently given to them freely: ibid., l. 6; ibid., l. 5.
26. Ibid., l. 6 ob. For an account of this process in late-Soviet scholarship, see: S.B. Baishev, *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi istorii Kazakhskoi SSR (1860–1970 gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Kazakhstan 1974), p. 89.
27. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 31, l. 6.
28. Ibid., ll. 5–5 ob. It should be noted that the Russians encroaching upon Kazakh land would not necessarily have come from Astrakhan or its surrounding area. Pre-revolutionary Russian immigrants came from all across the Russian Empire. George J. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan 1896–1916* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1969), p. 65. A Krai was a large territorial designation.
29. Astakhan may also have had in mind the region's status as a relative stronghold of Kazakh nationalism during the Civil War. See: Uyama Tomohiko, 'The geography of civilizations: a spatial analysis of the Kazakh intelligentsia's activities, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century', *Sapporo Summer Symposium* (1998), pp. 70–99, pp. 88, 96–7.
30. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 25, l. 144.
31. Ibid., ll. 143, 144–6.
32. The claims of the data collected in 1920 look similarly untrustworthy next to George J. Demko's series of maps documenting demographic change in pre-revolutionary Kazakhstan. According to his study from 1969, Kazakhs were barely an absolute majority in northwestern Kazakhstan the year before the revolution, though the Tsarist source material being cited here is also likely to have underestimated nomadic numbers: Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan*, pp. 133–6.

33. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 30, ll. 19, 21.
34. Ibid., l. 1.
35. See, for example: *Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter APRK) f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 79.
36. GARF f. 3260, op. 1, d. 30, l. 19.
37. Ibid., l. 15.
38. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, l. 86.
39. Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism', *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994), pp. 414–52, pp. 416–19.
40. GARF f. 1235, op. 96, d. 751, l. 89.
41. Ibid., l. 20.
42. Ibid., l. 89.
43. Adai nomads migrated even during the winter, and the hardship they suffered in the 1920s was particularly acute. See: Robert Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden: Herrschaft und Hunger in Kasachstan* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2014), p. 67; Mukash Omarov, *Rasstrelianaia step': istoriia Adaevskogo vosstaniia 1931 goda (po materialam OGPU)* (Almaty: Gylym, 1994), p. 8. A Kazakh Juz was a tribal conglomeration.
44. Kassymova, Kundakbaeva and Markus, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 18.
45. Omarov, *Rasstrelianaia step'*, pp. 10, 14.
46. Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhshleiger and M. Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane v vosstanovitelnyi period, 1921–1925 gg: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Arkheologiia Zhane Etnografiia Instituty, 1962), pp. 89–91.
47. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 118.
48. 'District' here is a translation of the Russian *volost*. Though it remained an *uezd*, it was given the formal, more substantive powers of an *oblast*, a second type of administrative region. K.S. Aldazhumanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 196.
49. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, p. 84.
50. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1985), p. 101; Shirin Akiner, *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union* (London: KPI, 1986), pp. 313–27.
51. Adrienne L. Edgar, 'Genealogy, class, and "tribal policy" in Soviet Turkmenistan, 1924–1934', *Slavic Review* 60/2 (2001), pp. 266–88, pp. 18, 266–88; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 8; Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 121.
52. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, pp. 88, 91.
53. Here, Adai committees recommended the creation of a governing assembly representing both Adai and Iomud, though they also restricted interdepartmental cooperation by calling upon Krasnovodsk authorities not to interfere beyond the Kazakh-Turkestan border where Kazakh national jurisdiction began. GARF f. 1235, op. 96, d. 751, l. 20.

54. Fort-Aleksandrov is now Fort-Shevchenko. For Dzhangil′din's own account of this period, see: Chingiz Dzhangil'din (ed.), *Alibi Dzhangil'din: dokumenty i materialy* (Almaty: Ana-tili, 2009), pp. 74–6.
55. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 304.
56. Omarov, *Rasstrelianaia step'*, p. 12.
57. Alniiazov would eventually be arrested in November 1928. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, pp. 304–305.
58. GARF f. 1235, op. 96, d. 751, ll. 4–4 ob.
59. Ibid., l. 4.
60. Water was one resource which the state chose to manage with institutions enjoying authority over multiple republics: Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization', p. 504.
61. A second Kazakh-Iomud conference was scheduled for 1 July 1921, which would discuss conflicts in areas that had not dispatched a delegate to Krasnovodsk. GARF f. 1235, op. 96, d. 751, l. 4.
62. Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 150; Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (London: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 43; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 24.
63. Though by this time, as argued by Virginia Martin, the custom in question had been changed by the forces of tsarist colonialism. Virginia Martin, '*Barïmta*: nomadic custom, imperial crime', in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 249–70, p. 250.
64. GARF f. 1235, op. 96, d. 751, l. 108.
65. Ibid., l. 62.
66. Ibid., l. 84.
67. Ibid., l. 79.
68. Ibid., l. 62.
69. Ibid., l. 20.
70. *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial′no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 62, op. 2, d. 108, l. 92.
71. Ibid., l. 61.
72. Ibid., l. 60.
73. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 345, l. 56.
74. For more on *raionirovanie*, see: Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 34.
75. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 345, l. 56.
76. Ibid., l. 56 ob.
77. L.C. Gatagova, L.P. Kosheleva and L.A. Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros. Kniga 1, 1918–1933 gg.*, *Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), pp. 242–6.
78. Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006), p. 62; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 63, l. 71. See also: Gatagova, Kosheleva and Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 406.

79. RGASPI f. 62, op. 2, d. 563.
80. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 254, l. 98.
81. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, pp. 165–8.
82. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kyrgyzstan* (hereafter TsGARKy) f. 847, op. 1, d. 34, l. 2.
83. Ibid., d. 43, ll. 203–5; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 115, l. 136.
84. Ali Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 31.
85. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, ll. 221–2; Beatrice Penati, 'The reconquest of East Bukhara: the struggle against the Basmachi as a prelude to Sovietization', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 521–38, p. 529; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, pp. 148–55.
86. See also: TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 43, ll. 52, 56.
87. Kassymova, Kundakbaeva and Markus, *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 76, 240, 273–4; Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan*, p. 49.
88. Alexander Morrison, '"Sowing the seed of national strife in this alien region": The Pahlen Report and *Pereselenie* in Turkestan, 1908–1910', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 31 (2012), pp. 1–29, p. 11.
89. Sarah Cameron, 'The hungry steppe: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh famine, 1921–1934', doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011, p. 38; Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan*, p. 114.
90. N.E. Masanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2001), p. 367.
91. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan*, pp. 49–141.
92. Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 54–5; Masanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, pp. 367–8.
93. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 114.
94. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 63; Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 44.
95. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 33.
96. Ibid., l. 33.
97. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 337, l. 17.
98. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', pp. 45–6; APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 337 ll. 17–9 ob.
99. This took place in March 1922: GARF f. 130, op. 5, d. 504, l. 60. It should be added that one of the principal justifications for this proposal was also the development of transport infrastructure, particularly the Turkestan-Siberian Railway or *Turksib*.
100. GARF f. 1235, op. 122, d. 287.
101. Ibid.
102. Barabinsk is a town north-east of Kupino, between Omsk and Novosibirsk.
103. GARF f. 1235, op. 122, d. 287.
104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.
106. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, pp. 165–73.
107. S. Frederick Starr, 'Introduction', in S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 3–24), p. 3.
108. Frank Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 140; James A. Millward and Nabijan Tursun, 'Political history and strategies of control, 1884–1978', in Starr, *Xinjiang*, pp. 63–98, pp. 63–4.
109. Kassymova, Kundakbaeva and Markus, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 68; James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 184.
110. Kassymova, Kundakbaeva and Markus, *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 67–9; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, p. 180.
111. Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), pp. 359–60.
112. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 286; Eugene M. Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 101–102; M.B. Balakaev, *Kolkhoznoe krest'ianstvo Kazakhstana v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945* (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1971), p. 376.
113. Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers: colonization and ethnic conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), pp. 41–53, p. 44; Niccolò Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 101–43, p. 101.
114. GARF f. 130, op. 5, d. 504, l. 60.
115. Ibid., op. 28, d. 89, l. 30.
116. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, p. 23.
117. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1 d. 115, l. 126; Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 140; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, p. 185; Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 110.
118. GARF f. 130, op. 28, d. 89, l. 30 ob.
119. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, p. 23.
120. Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, pp. 339–45.
121. GARF f. 130, op. 28, d. 89, ll. 36, 16–16 ob.
122. Matthew Payne confirms that much of the resources promised to newly-settled nomads did not reach them: Matthew J. Payne, 'Seeing like a Soviet state: settlement of nomadic Kazakhs, 1928–1934', in Golfo Alexopoulos, Julie Hessler and Kiril Tomoff (eds), *Writing the Stalin Era: Sheila Fitzpatrick and Soviet Historiography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 59–86, p. 71.
123. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 43, ll. 209, 215, 240–56; GARF f. 1325, op. 121, d. 318, l. 9; Kurmanov, *Politicheskaia bor'ba v Kyrgyzstane*, p. 154; 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 135.
124. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 21, l. 12.

125. GARF f. 1235, op. 140, d. 956, l. 1.
126. Michael R. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', doctoral thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, pp. 291–2.
127. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 312.
128. Madeleine Reeves, 'Travels in the margins of the state: everyday geography in the FerghanaValley borderlands', in Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca (eds), *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 281–300, p. 284.
129. Nor did it necessarily support the economy at large. Steven Sabol, 'The creation of Soviet Central Asia: the 1924 National Delimitation', *Central Asian Survey* 14/2 (1995), pp. 225–41, p. 233.
130. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 5.
131. Asal Khamraeva-Aubert, 'Economic planning and the construction of territorial limits in Soviet Central Asia: the case of the Uzbek SSR', *BASEES European Congress*, Cambridge, 5–8 April 2013.

Chapter 4 Taxing Nomads

1. *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF) f. 130, op. 7, d. 257, ll. 2–2 ob. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 119.
2. *Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter APRK) f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 169.
3. *Saun* is transliterated here from Cyrillic but comes from the original Kazakh word, as does *amanat*, a similar system that worked slightly differently. Typically, *saun* would involve dairy cattle rather than sheep, and it was milk that would be shared out. See: Nurbulat Masanov, *Kochevaia tsivilizatsiia Kazakhov: osnovy zhiznedeiatel'nosti nomadnogo obshchestva* (Almaty: Fond Nurbulat Masanov, 2011), pp. 469–70.
4. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 114. Mukhamet Shayakhmetov, *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Nomad under Stalin* (New York: Overlook/Rookery, 2007), p. 214.
5. Academics have long debated the significance of livestock to Central Asian nomads, and in what sense livestock were conceptualised as wealth. Of principal concern here is that Soviet legislators saw herds as a taxable commodity, but for a review of the literature on the nomadic view of this matter, see: Masanov, *Kochevaia tsivilizatsiia Kazakhov*, pp. 444–50. See also: N.E. Masanov, 'Osobennosti funktsionirovaniia traditsionnogo kochevogo Khoziaistva', in Zhulduzbek Bekmukhamedovich Abylkhozhin (ed.), *Kul'tura i istoriia tsentral'noi Azii i Kazakhstana* (Almaty: Fond Soros-Kazakhstan, 1997), pp. 5–18.
6. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 191.
7. Ibid., l. 139.
8. Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), p. 149; M.Kh. Asylbekov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh*

vremen do nashikh dnei, vol. 3: *Kazakhstan v novoe vremia* (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), pp. 571–601.

9. Ibid.; Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 212.
10. Steven Sabol, 'The creation of Soviet Central Asia: the 1924 National Delimitation', *Central Asian Survey* 14/2 (1995), pp. 225–41, p. 237.
11. Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), pp. 226–8.
12. Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, vol. 1: *A History of the Soviet Union* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 178–9.
13. Ibid., p. 176.
14. Moshe Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 133; Michal Reiman, *The Birth of Stalinism: The USSR on the Eve of the 'Second Revolution'*, trans. George Saunders (London: I.B.Tauris, 1987), p. 16.
15. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power*, pp. 41–2; James W. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state: the People's Commissariat of Agriculture under proletarian dictatorship, 1918–1929', *Slavic Review* 56/1 (1997), pp. 73–100, p. 95.
16. N. E. Masanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2001), p. 369.
17. Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2nd edn (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press 1995), pp. 158–9; Kokish Ryspaev, *Istoriia Respubliki Kazakhstan* (Almaty: TOO Kursiv, 2008), p. 250.
18. Michael R. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', doctoral thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, p. 165.
19. Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), p. 11; Beatrice Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power: land-and-water reform in the Uzbek SSR (1924–1928)', *Revolutionary Russia* 25/2 (2012), pp. 187–217, p. 187.
20. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power*, p. 70.
21. K.S. Aldazhumanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 205.
22. The 'produce tax' description comes from: Franklyn D. Holzman, *Soviet Taxation: The Fiscal and Monetary Problems of a Planned Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 160; Silvana Malle, *The Economic Organization of War Communism, 1918–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 373.
23. Levies on the produce of cattle herding were notionally halved by this change, but in practice higher rates were likely maintained at least until the harvest of 1922. See: Niccolò Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 101–43, p. 115. See also: R.M. Abdullaev, S.S. Agzamkhodzhaev and

I.A. Alimov (eds), *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: K istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti* (Tashkent: Shark, 2000), p. 464.

24. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, ll. 11–11 ob.
25. This included the Ural Guberniia, Orenburg-Turgai Guberniia (as well as the former Kustanaiskii Uezd), the Bukey Guberniia and the Mangïshlak Uezd. Ibid., l. 11.
26. A *pud* was unit of measurement in Imperial Russia, equal to a little over 16 kilograms. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, pp. 205–206.
27. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, l. 11.
28. V.P. Danilov, M.P. Kim and N.V. Tropkin (eds), *Sovetskoe krest'ianstvo: Kratkii ocherk istorii (1917–1970)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1973), pp. 125–7.
29. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, l. 11.
30. Yanni Kotsonis, '"No place to go": taxation and state transformation in late imperial and early Soviet Russia', *Journal of Modern History* 76/3 (2004), pp. 531–77, pp. 537–9.
31. Ibid., pp. 570, 569-574.
32. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, ll. 4–4 ob.
33. Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921–1929* (London: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 21–3.
34. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, l. 4.
35. Holzman, *Soviet Taxation*, pp. 106–107.
36. Christian Teichmann, 'Canals, cotton, and the limits of de-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924–1941', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 499–519; Zh.B. Abylkhozhin, *Traditsionnaia struktura Kazakhstana: Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie aspekty funktsionirovaniia i transformatsii (1920–1930-e g.g.)* (Alma-Ata: Gylym, 1991), p. 47.
37. Kotsonis, '"No place to go"'.
38. Ibid., pp. 535–6, 569–74.
39. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 215–20.
40. K.S. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana 1920–1946 gg.: Biograficheskii spravochnik* (Almaty: Arys, 2007), p. 296.
41. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 5, l. 215.
42. Ibid., l. 218.
43. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power*, pp. 41–3.
44. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 218–20.
45. Ibid., ll. 215–16.
46. The arguments being drawn from here are most comprehensively made by Hirsch and Martin: Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
47. Terry Martin, 'An affirmative action empire: the Soviet Union as the highest form of imperialism', in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds), *A State of*

Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 67–90.

48. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 109, l. 1.
49. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 108.
50. Ibid., p. 112.
51. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26. l. 6.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., l. 8.
54. Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 92–3; Adeeb Khalid, 'Nationalizing the revolution in Central Asia: the transformation of Jadidism, 1917–1920', in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 145–62, pp. 156–9; Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 223.
55. For a similar example in the recent historiography, see: Benjamin Loring, '"Colonizers with Party cards": Soviet internal colonialism in Central Asia, 1917–39', *Kritika* 15/1 (2014), pp. 77–102.
56. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, p. 229.
57. Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (London: Pluto Press, 1975), pp. 60–2; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 4–9.
58. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, pp. 18–28; Hélène Carrère D'Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State 1917–1930* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1992), pp. 36–9. Stalin laid out his theoretical response to the national question in a notorious article in 1913. See: Michael Löwy, 'Marxists and the National Question', *New Left Review* 96/1 (1976); Joseph Stalin, 'Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros', in *Stalin I.V.: Sochineniia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1946). Note also that Yuri Slezkine prefers to emphasise some of the continuities in Lenin and Stalin's thought: Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism', *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994), pp. 414–52, p. 417.
59. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, ll. 49–49 ob.
60. Ibid., l. 49.
61. Ibid., ob.
62. Ibid., d. 26, l. 10.
63. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 151.
64. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, l. 9.
65. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 62. It might be more accurate to add that central organs lacked the authority to impose their will.
66. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 24; Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists*, p. 35.
67. Ibid., d. 339, l. 37.
68. Ibid., l. 52 ob.
69. Ibid., d. 350, ll. 33–33 ob.

70. Ibid., d. 2, l. 23 ob.
71. Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale?', p. 130.
72. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 32, ll. 49–49 ob.
73. GARF f. 130, op. 5, d. 504, ll. 59–60 ob.
74. Ibid., l. 60.
75. GARF f. 1235, op. 122, d. 287.
76. APRK f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, ll. 221–2.
77. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 463, l. 133.
78. Ibid.
79. Holzman, *Soviet Taxation*, p. 160; Evidence of widespread preparations for the Agricultural Tax in 1923 throughout the Kazakh republic can be found here: APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 116, ll. 29–38 ob.
80. Ibid., p. 161.
81. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 151.
82. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter TsGARK) f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, ll. 365, 374.
83. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kyrgyzstan* (hereafter TsGARKy) f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 68–9; ibid., d. 34, l. 50; ibid., d. 43, l. 202; ibid., d. 45, l. 45; ibid. f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 43.
84. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 24; Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', pp. 75–6.
85. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, l. 374.
86. Ibid., l. 373.
87. GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, ll. 35–40.
88. Ibid., l. 39 ob.
89. Ibid. This legislation was eventually ratified in Moscow after some editing. See: ibid., op. 121, d. 318, ll. 1–9.
90. Abdullaev, Agzamkhodzhaev and Alimov, *Turkestan v nachale XX veka*, p. 475.
91. Martha Brill Olcott, 'The collectivization drive in Kazakhstan', *Russian Review* 40/2 (1981), pp. 122–42, pp. 122–6.
92. A sense of resistance from the regions is communicated in various reports from the time, as well as in the examples cited: TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, ll. 367–7 ob., 390–390 ob., 404–405.
93. Ibid., l. 416.
94. The same telegram begins with the statement: 'It is essential in the most urgent fashion to liquidate misunderstanding': ibid., l. 388.
95. Ibid., ll. 397–397 ob.
96. Ibid., l. 371.
97. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 75.
98. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, ll. 404 ob.
99. Ibid., ll. 404–405.
100. Ibid., ll. 390–390 ob.
101. Ibid.,,ll. 389–389 ob., 415.
102. Ibid., ll. 376–376 ob.

103. Ibid., ll. 389–389 ob.
104. Ibid., l. 389.
105. Narkomzem KASSR was in this sense acting similarly to its Moscow-based counterpart (Narkomzem RSFSR), which was sceptical of class differentiation in rural Russia and was accused of treating all peasants as one group: Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 86.
106. Steven Sabol, 'Kazak resistance to Russian colonization: interpreting the Kenesary Kasymov Revolt, 1837–1847', *Central Asian Survey* 22/2&3 (2003), pp. 231–52, p. 238.
107. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, l. 389 ob.
108. Kotsonis, '"No place to go"'.
109. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', pp. 78–9.
110. Ibid., p. 86.
111. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) had been closely involved with the development of this legislation, as well as making the declaration itself on 14 April 1924: GARF f. 1235, op. 102, d. 155, ll. 35–40, 41.
112. James Hughes, 'Capturing the Russian peasantry: Stalinist grain procurement policy and the "Ural-Siberian method"', *Slavic Review* 53/1 (1999), pp. 76–103, p. 103.
113. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 306, l. 389.
114. Ibid., l. 377.
115. Ibid., ll. 367–367 ob.
116. Ibid., l. 378.
117. Ibid., ll. 365 ob., 427–427 ob.
118. Ibid., ll. 306, 362–362 ob., 428–428 ob.
119. TsGARK f. 3260, op. 5, d. 53, ll. 11–11 ob.
120. Ibid., l. 14.
121. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, p. 49; ibid., ll. 36–37.
122. Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (London: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 35; Masanov, *Kochevaia tsivilizatsiia Kazakhov*, pp. 310–1.
123. TsGARK f. 3260, op. 5, d. 53, ll. 36–7.
124. Ibid., l. 36.
125. Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers: colonization and ethnic conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44/1 (1996), pp. 41–53, p. 50.
126. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR) f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 147.
127. Ibid., l. 96.
128. Beatrice Penati, 'The reconquest of East Bukhara: the struggle against the Basmachi as a prelude to Sovietization', *Central Asian Survey* 26/4 (2007), pp. 521–38, pp. 530–1.
129. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 40.
130. Ibid. f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, l. 68.

131. Ibid., d. 14, l. 20.
132. Ibid., d. 43, l. 202.
133. Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, p. 92.
134. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 45. Such pledges had also been made at the level of the Turkestan Republic administration: Ibid., d. 14, l. 20.
135. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 100.
136. Ibid., l. 102; Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids', p. 93.
137. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 111–12.
138. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 1, l. 45.
139. One circular latter to the Turkestani Land Parties in 1925 requested lists of tax exemptions granted within two months: ibid., d. 3, l. 68.
140. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 99.
141. Ibid.
142. Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe: the collectivization of agriculture and the Kazak herdsmen, 1928–1934', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45/1&2 (2004), pp. 137–91, pp. 150–1.
143. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 12.
144. TsGARKy f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 43.
145. *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 17, op. 25, d. 6, l. 127 ob.
146. Ibid., d. 87, l. 173.
147. Ibid., l. 174.
148. Ibid., d. 258, ll. 130–3.
149. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 24.
150. Ibid., l. 25.
151. Ibid., l. 24.
152. Ibid., d. 5, l. 219.
153. GARF f. 1318, op. 11, d. 26, l. 11.
154. The Red Caravan was the name for a team of Party investigators and propagandists that toured central and western Kazakhstan in the very early 1920s before reporting back to governing bodies in Orenburg. Some of its staff would become key figures in the Kazakh administration. For more detail, see Chapter 6.
155. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 339, l. 56.
156. Tetsu Akiyama, 'Why was Russian direct rule over Kyrgyz nomads dependent on tribal chieftains "manaps"?', *Cahiers du monde russe* 56/4 (2015), pp. 625–49, p. 627; Ali Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 31; Brower, 'Kyrgyz nomads and Russian pioneers', p. 49.
157. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 133.
158. Ibid., ll. 135, 133–8.

159. Akiyama, 'Why was Russian direct rule over Kyrgyz nomads dependent on tribal chieftains "manaps"?'; Isabelle Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies: doctrine, local interactions, and political hybridization in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia during the 1920s and 1930s', *Central Asian Affairs* 3/2 (2016), pp. 163–91, pp. 170–1.
160. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 36, 95.
161. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana*, p. 104.
162. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 541, l. 79.
163. Ibid., l. 118.
164. Ibid., ll. 140–1.
165. Ibid., ll. 124–9.
166. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 50; GARF f. 1235, op. 65, d. 159, ll. 10–11.
167. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 86.
168. Hughes, 'Capturing the Russian peasantry', p. 100.
169. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 86.
170. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 3, l. 20.
171. The idea that nomadic wealth was *always* measured in livestock is controversial, but it seems more likely to have been the case during periods of extreme hardship like the 1920s. Didar Kassymova, Zhanat Kundakbaeva and Ustina Markus (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), p. 58.
172. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, l. 100. Note that the tsarist administration in the late nineteenth century had counted its definition of an *aul* as poor if it had fewer than '500 head of livestock' and did not trade. See: Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids', p. 93.
173. GARF f. 1235, op. 123, d. 373, ll. 3, 13–13 ob.
174. TsGARK f. 3260, op. 5, d. 53, ll. 36–7.

Chapter 5 (De)Mobilising Nomads

1. Peter Rottier, 'The Kazakness of sedentarization: promoting progress as tradition in response to the land problem', *Central Asian Survey* 22/1 (2003), pp. 67–81, p. 71.
2. *Chrezvychainyi Komissar (k 125-letiiu Alibi Dzhangil'dina): Sbornik dokumentov (1916–1923 g.g.)* (Almaty: Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan, 2009), p. 230; *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter TsGARK) f. 930, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 87–9. See also: ibid., d. 1.
3. Ibid., d. 4, ll. 26–26 ob.
4. Ibid., l. 26.
5. Ibid., ll. 26–26 ob.
6. Ibid., ll. 2–3.
7. Ibid., l. 89.
8. Ibid., l. 36.

9. See, for example, concerns about the lack of Party cells within the army in the west of the republic: *Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (hereafter APRK) f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 34. The Red Army would also come to be used during the collectivisation drive as the infrastructure of Narkomzem RSFSR was considered untrustworthy: James W. Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state: the People's Commissariat of Agriculture under proletarian dictatorship, 1918–1929', *Slavic Review* 56/1 (1997), pp. 73–100, p. 100. It is also noteworthy in the context of a Soviet administration struggling to recruit and represent nomads that the Red Army only had one regiment of Kazakhs during most of the 1920s: Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, 'Famine in the Steppe: the collectivization of agriculture and the Kazak herdsmen, 1928–1934', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 45/1&2 (2004), pp. 137–91, p. 152.
10. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 350, l. 11.
11. Ibid., d. 339.
12. Ibid., ll. 45–45 ob.
13. Ibid., ll. 2, 20, 23 ob., 53.
14. Ibid., l. 2. K.S. Aldazhumanov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 177.
15. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 254, ll. 56, 98.
16. *Chrezvychainyi Komissar*, p. 230.
17. Stephen Blank, 'Ethnic and party politics in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1920–1924', *Central Asian Survey* 10/3 (1991), pp. 1–19, p. 5.
18. Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 406. There were some important attempts at reform to bear in mind: John A. Armstrong, 'Old-regime governors: bureaucratic and patrimonial attributes', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14/1 (1972), pp. 2–29, p. 8.
19. Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhshleiger and M. Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane v vosstanovitelnyi period, 1921–1925 gg: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Arkheologiia Zhane Etnografiia Instituty, 1962), pp. 26–30.
20. Nurbulat Masanov, *Kochevaia tsivilizatsiia Kazakhov: osnovy zhiznedeiatel'nosti nomadnogo obshchestva* (Almaty: Fond Nurbulat Masanov, 2011), pp. 518, 520–1.
21. Niccolò Pianciola, 'Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920–1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 101–43, p. 107.
22. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 34. It was also briefly argued that Moscow should govern the Ural Guberniia: ibid., d. 254, l. 54.
23. *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 62, op. 2, d. 911, l. 165.
24. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 2, l. 24.
25. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 159, l. 25. This Comrade Povolotskii may have been Aleksandr Moiseevich Povolotskii, then chairman of the state planning commission and member of the Kazakh Sovnarkom: K.S. Aldazhumanov et al., *Narkomy Kazakhstana 1920–1946 gg.: Biograficheskii spravochnik* (Almaty: Arys, 2007), pp. 274–5.

26. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii Kygyzskoi Respubliki* (hereafter TsGAPDKR) f. 10, op. 1, d. 115, l. 135; APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 254, ll. 99–102; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 48 ob.
27. Ibid., d. 21, l. 12.
28. Sarah Cameron, 'The hungry steppe: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh famine, 1921–1934', doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011, p. 59.
29. *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kyrgyzstan* (hereafter TsGARKy) f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 17; APRK f. 1, op. 139, d. 254, ll. 38, 56, 71; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 83–83 ob.
30. *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (hereafter GARF) f. 1235, op. 96, d. 75, l. 79. The involvement of nomads in democratic procedures was an explicit aim for the administration despite the difficulties in achieving it. Consider, for example, plans for the first constitution of the Kazakh Republic, produced in early 1924: Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, p. 100.
31. RGASPI f. 62, op. 2, d. 108, l. 90.
32. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 293, ll. 18–19.
33. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 25.
34. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 87, l. 30; ibid., d. 159, l. 27.
35. TsGARK f. 280, op. 3, d. 3, ll. 5, 7.
36. Isabelle Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux: L'indigénisation au kirghizstan soviétique (années 1920–1930)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49/1 (2008), pp. 145–82, pp. 151–3.
37. Charts listing the 'nature of contentious cases' often included a space for disputes 'about nomadic routes': TsGARK f. 280, op. 3, d. 3, ll. 17, 22.
38. TsGARKy f. 847, op. 1, d. 39, l. 11; TsGARK f. 280, op. 4, d. 18, l. 1.
39. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, ll. 25–25 ob. Edward Schatz cites 'blood revenge' as one of the Kazakhs' traditional forms of authority and control, which the Soviet regime took against. See: Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (London: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 43.
40. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, ll. 15, 48 ob. In 1933 the Kazakh Regional Committee located the incompetence in the collective farming system: ibid., d. 78, l. 10.
41. Matthias Neumann, 'Revolutionizing mind and soul? Soviet youth and cultural campaigns during the New Economic Policy (1921–8)', *Social History* 33/3 (2008), pp. 243–67, pp. 244, 246.
42. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 6, l. 127 ob.; Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 71.
43. Neumann, 'Revolutionizing mind and soul?', p. 248.
44. For further discussion of Soviet cultural policies in the Central Asian context, see: Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006).

45. Cultural-domestic development in nomadic areas could also be found lacking: RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 156, l. 122.
46. Boris Mikhailovich Zima (ed.), *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh 1917–1967* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1983), p. 114.
47. Ibid., p. 201.
48. Yuri Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens: the Cultural Revolution in the Soviet far north, 1928–1938', *Slavic Review* 51/1 (1992), pp. 52–76, p. 58.
49. Baimanaly Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba v Kirgizskikh ailakh (1918–1932 gg.)* (Frunze: Ilim, 1990), p. 115.
50. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 48 ob.
51. A.M. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia v period kult'urnoi revoliutsii v Kirgizii (20–30-e gody XX veka)* (Bishkek: KRSU, 2008), p. 32.
52. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 187, l. 138; TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 12–13.
53. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 48–50.
54. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*.
55. Stefan Plaggenborg, 'Crossing borders: modernity, ideology, and culture in Russia and the Soviet Union', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 56/4 (2015), pp. 901–905.
56. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 115.
57. Adeeb Khalid, 'Backwardness and the quest for civilization: early Soviet Central Asia in comparative perspective', *Slavic Review* 65/2 (2006), pp. 231–51, p. 241.
58. Ibid.
59. Isabelle Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies: doctrine, local interactions, and political hybridization in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia during the 1920s and 1930s', *Central Asian Affairs* 3/2 (2016), pp. 163–91, p. 184.
60. Alun Thomas, 'Kazakh nomads and the new Soviet state, 1919–1934', doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2015, p. 163.
61. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 126.
62. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 63, ll. 72–3.
63. Beatrice Penati, 'Adapting Russian technologies of power: land-and-water reform in the Uzbek SSR (1924–1928)', *Revolutionary Russia* 25/2 (2012), pp. 187–217, p. 187.
64. TsGARK f, 930, op. 1, d. 4, l. 89.
65. Virginia Martin, 'Kazakh Chinggisids, land and political power in the nineteenth century: a case study of Syrymbet', *Central Asian Survey* 29/1 (2010), pp. 79–102, p. 84.
66. Matthew J. Payne, *Stalin's Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), p. 95.
67. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 285, l. 83.
68. Ibid., d. 140, l. 215.
69. This secret letter from the secretary of the Kazakh Obkom, sent early in the decade, indicates that Kazakhs generally made less hygienic tenants: L.C. Gatagova, L.P. Kosheleva and L.A. Pogovaia, *TSK RKP(b)–VKP(b) i natsional'nyi*

vopros. Kniga 1, 1918–1933 gg., *Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), pp. 131–3.

70. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 66.
71. Benjamin Loring, 'Building Socialism in Kyrgyzstan: nation-making, rural development, and social change, 1921–1932', doctoral thesis, Brandeis University, 2008, p. 166.
72. Ibid., p. 295.
73. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 88.
74. Paula A. Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), p. 155; TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 11–12.
75. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 60. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 219.
76. Similar expeditions were practised in the Russian 'Far North'. See: Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 64.
77. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 158.
78. Ibid., p. 161.
79. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 256, l. 79.
80. Ibid., l. 166; ibid., ll. 86–86 ob.; ibid., d. 156, l. 46.
81. Zima, *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh*, p. 131.
82. Michael R. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', doctoral thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, p. 156.
83. Ibid., p. 155.
84. Ibid., p. 156.
85. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 116.
86. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 88.
87. Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 115.
88. Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917* (London: Ithica, 2001), pp. 124, 138–48.
89. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, pp. 6–11.
90. Ibid., pp. 11–3.
91. Consider the conflation of popular awareness of Soviet political principles with 'Soviet power' itself here: Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 210.
92. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', pp. 61, 62–3.
93. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 91.
94. RGASPI f. 62, op. 2, d. 911, l. 165.
95. Zima, *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh*, p. 131.
96. Ibid., p. 130; S. Daniiarov, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo v sovetskom kirgizstane (1919–1930)* (Frunze: Academy of Sciences of the Kirgiz SSR, 1963), p. 106.
97. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 52; ibid., d. 87, l. 217.
98. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 65 ob.
99. TsGARK f. 930, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 36–36 ob.
100. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 339, ll. 20, 37.
101. Daniiarov, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo v sovetskom kirgizstane*, p. 106; Chokushev, *Klassovaia bor'ba*, p. 115.

102. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 48–50.
103. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 162.
104. Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1880–1910* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001), p. 317.
105. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 24 ob.
106. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 60.
107. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 151. See also: ibid., d. 33, l. 137; Zainidin Kurmanov and Ermek Sadykov, *Abdykerim Sydykov: lichnost' i istoriia* (Bishkek: Sham, 2002), p. 144.
108. Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), p. 47; Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 397; ibid., pp. 400–401.
109. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 48.
110. Ibid., d. 285, l. 217.
111. Ibid., l. 219.
112. Ibid., l. 219.
113. Ibid., d. 174, l. 102; ibid., d. 116, l. 62; Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', p. 77.
114. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 1–4.
115. Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux', p. 153.
116. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 201; Romeo A. Cherot, 'Nativization of government and Party structure in Kazakhstan, 1920–1930', *American Slavic and East European Review* 14/1 (1955), pp. 42–58, p. 54.
117. Ibid., p. 53; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, ll. 15, 19; TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 9.
118. Terry Martin, 'An affirmative action empire: the Soviet Union as the highest form of imperialism', in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 67–90, 140–4. See also: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 102–6.
119. A. Bogdanov, 'The Koshchi Union in Kazakhstan', in Rudolf Schlesinger (ed.), *The Nationalities Problem and Soviet Administration* (Oxford: Routledge, 1956), p. 94.
120. Ohayon, 'Lignages et pouvoirs locaux'; Ohayon, 'The Soviet state and lineage societies', pp. 163–91.
121. James W. Heinzen, *Inventing a Soviet Countryside: State Power and the Transformation of Rural Russia, 1917–1929* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), p. 57.
122. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 350, ll. 11–11 ob.
123. Ibid., l. 11.
124. Ibid., l. 11 ob.
125. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 362, ll. 195–195 ob.
126. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 61.

127. TsGARK f. 30, op. 1, d. 362, ll. 195–195 ob.
128. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, l. 52.
129. TsGARK f. 930, op. 1, d. 2, l. 2.
130. Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, p. 177. In certain respects nomads were being treated little differently from other members of the rural population: Heinzen, *Inventing a Soviet Countryside*, p. 3.
131. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 19.
132. Heinzen, *Inventing a Soviet Countryside*, p. 7.
133. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 9–10.
134. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 129, l. 224; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 208, ll. 76, 85–6; Bogdanov, 'The Koshchi Union', pp. 90–100.
135. Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', p. 176.
136. Elizabeth Waters, 'The modernisation of Russian motherhood, 1917–1937', *Soviet Studies* 44/1 (1992), pp. 123–35, pp. 123–4; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 68.
137. Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*, p. 53.
138. Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front*, pp. 68, 232. For a discussion of the relationship between women and culture in the 1930s, see: Julie Hessler, 'Cultured trade: the Stalinist turn towards consumerism', in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 182–209, p. 201.
139. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 9.
140. Ibid.
141. Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974). See also: Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 66.
142. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 6.
143. Ibid., ll. 5–13; TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 184.
144. Didar Kassymova, Zhanat Kundakbaeva and Ustina Markus (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), pp. 135–6.
145. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 6. Hélène Carrère D'Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State 1917–1930* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1992), p. 165. For further discussion of the Soviet state's reform of religious practice, see: Shoshana Keller, 'Conversion to the new faith: Marxism-Leninism and Muslims in the Soviet Empire', in Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky (eds), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 311–34.
146. For more on the Soviet Union's treatment of women and religious custom in Central Asia, see: Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 204–40; Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 214.

147. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush (eds), *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union* (London: Chicago University Press, 1979), p. 148.
148. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 463, l. 54.
149. Ibid. Heinzen discusses comparable interdepartmental disputes here: Heinzen, '"Alien" personnel in the Soviet state', p. 75. Despite the ruling, each Kazakh *guberniia's zhenotdel* was expected to enlist women specifically in the battle with typhoid in 1922: APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 243.
150. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 9.
151. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 63, ll. 32–8; RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 285, l. 70; ibid., d. 236, l. 141. Gender equality was also explicitly written into drafts of the Kazakh Republic's first constitution in January 1924: Dakhshleiger and Abilova, *Sotsial'isticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane*, p. 102. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 12.
152. Ibid.
153. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 156.
154. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 8.
155. Ibid., ll. 5, 6.
156. Ibid., l. 6.
157. APRK f. 139, op. 1, d. 463, l. 276.
158. Ibid., l. 133.
159. Ibid., l. 59.
160. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 116, l. 21.
161. Ibid., d. 236, l. 141.
162. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 80.
163. Ibid., p. 85.
164. TsGAPDKR f. 10, op. 1, d. 8, l. 112.
165. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 5, 9.
166. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 81.
167. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 256, l. 79.
168. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 89.
169. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 256, l. 79.
170. Ibid. On use of theatrical *kruzhki*, see also: Aldazhumanov et al., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p. 399.
171. Ibid., d. 156, ll. 46–46 ob.
172. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, l. 24.
173. M. Kh. Asylbekov et al. (eds), *Istoriia Kazakhstana: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 3: *Kazakhstan v novoe vremia* (Almaty: Atamüra, 2010), p. 402. See also: Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 70.
174. TsGARK f. 81, op. 1, d. 665, ll. 24, 25, 27, 30.
175. Ibid., l. 29.
176. Zima, *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh*, pp. 132–3.
177. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 158.
178. Ibid., p. 159.

179. RGASPI f. 17, op. 25, d. 156, ll. 46–46 ob.
180. Ibid., d. 208, ll. 45, 47.
181. Ibid., l. 47.
182. Ibid., d. 159, l. 189.
183. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 65; Zima, *Sovetskii Kirgizstan v dokumentakh*, pp. 132–3. The Russian Sovnarkom also instructed Kazakh authorities to provide a five-year plan to include more children in public schooling.
184. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 61.
185. Waters, 'The modernisation of Russian motherhood', p. 126.
186. Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', pp. 81–2. See also: Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*.
187. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', pp. 65, 68, 70; Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 159.
188. Michaels, *Curative Powers.* Michaels is cited indispensably here and elsewhere. See: Cameron, 'The hungry steppe', pp. 61, 206; Rouland, 'Music and the making of the Kazak nation', p. 176.
189. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, pp. 1–8.
190. Ibid., p. 7. This argument bears some similarities to that of David Lane: David Lane, 'Ethnic and class stratification in Soviet Kazakhstan, 1917–39', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17/2 (1975), pp. 165–89, pp. 172–3.
191. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 153. Another historian with a similar position to Michaels is Matthew J. Payne. See: Matthew J. Payne, 'Seeing like a Soviet state: settlement of nomadic Kazakhs, 1928–1934', in Golfo Alexopoulos, Julie Hessler and Kiril Tomoff (eds), *Writing the Stalin Era: Sheila Fitzpatrick and Soviet Historiography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 59–86, p. 63; Payne, *Stalin's Railroad*.
192. Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. xiii.
193. Michael Khodarkovsky, 'Review', *Russian Review* 61/2 (2002), p. 306.
194. Slezkine, 'From savages to citizens', p. 66.
195. Turgunbaeva, *Formirovanie sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia*, p. 116.
196. GARF f. 1235, op. 73, d. 21, l. 21 ob.
197. These were listed alongside the building of telephone lines and the provision of medical aid. See: TsGARK f. 1179, op. 6, d. 5, l. 2.
198. Ibid., d. 1, ll. 3, 8, 10.
199. For an example of the Committee's comprehensive engagement with the five year plan, see: ibid., d. 5, ll. 15–6 ob. See also: Michaels, *Curative Powers*, p. 165.

Chapter 6 Collectivisation

1. Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Towards the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), p. 107.

2. Three salient terms for the process of settlement present themselves. *Osedanie* and *osedovanie* suggest incidental or voluntary settlement, for example, as a response to incentives: *Rossiisskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii* (hereafter RGASPI) f. 17, op. 25, d. 339, l. 92. *Sedentarizatsiia* is the state-led (or enforced, coercive) process of settlement: M.K. Kozybaev, Zh.B. Abylkhozhin and K.S. Aldazhumanov, *Kollektivizatsiia v Kazakhstane: tragediia krest'ianstva* (Alma-Ata: Ministerstvo narodnogo obrazovaniia Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1992), p. 15.
3. Sarah Cameron, 'The Kazakh famine of 1930–33: current research and new directions', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 3/2 (2016), pp. 117–32, p. 118.
4. Niccolò Pianciola, 'The collectivization famine in Kazakhstan, 1931–1933', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25/3&4 (2001), pp. 237–51, p. 237.
5. Cameron, 'The Kazakh famine of 1930–33'.
6. Sarah Cameron, 'The hungry steppe: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh famine, 1921–1934', doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011, pp. 51–3.
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Conclusion

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GLOSSARY

adaevtsy:	members of the Adai tribal group in what is now western Kazakhstan.
aul:	a small community, in the nomadic context it might refer to an encampment, a migrating group or family.
bai:	a member of a senior or wealthy stratum of society sometimes fulfilling a customary or ceremonial role. These individuals were cast as class enemies in the ideology of the Communist Party.
barymta:	a feature of customary law involving the taking of livestock.
batrak:	a poor rural labourer.
bedniak:	a poor peasant or nomad.
byt:	the activities and habits of everyday domestic life.
guberniia:	an administrative region of the tsarist era, still used in the early Soviet period.
kalym:	a dowry or bride price.
korenizatsiia:	the recruitment of non-Russians to serve in the Party and state organs of their titular republic or region.
manap:	a tribal chieftain; the *manap* took on a similar role to the *bai* in Communist Party ideology.
obkom:	an *oblast* committee, the governing Party organisation of an administrative region.
oblast:	an administrative region of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union.

okrug:	a Soviet administrative region.
perekhod:	crossing, such as over a border.
perekochevka:	migration between encampments.
qun:	a blood feud.
raionirovanie:	regionalisation; the process of creating new administrative and territorial regions.
seredniak:	a peasant of mid-ranking wealth.
uezd:	a small administrative region.
vedomstvennost':	the tendency of institutions to protect their own narrow interests at the expense of broader goals and policies.
volost:	a small administrative region, a subdivision of a *guberniia*.
zhenotdel:	a women's department, an institution of the Communist Party dedicated to the emancipation of women

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