

THE 1916 NATIONAL LIBERATION UPRISING IN ZHETYSU PROVINCE IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE HISTORICAL FATE OF KAZAKH AND KYRGYZ REFUGEES WHO FLED TO CHINA

El levantamiento de liberación nacional de 1916 en la provincia de Zhetysu, en Asia Central: el destino histórico de los refugiados kazajos y kirguisos que huyeron a China

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to highlight the archival data on the disastrous consequences inflicted on the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples during their forced relocation to China. The main approach to the study of this problem is a system-structural method of research. In the course of this study, the following results were achieved. The historical facts that caused the 1916 rebellion in the Zhetysu district of Central Asia were presented. The research of contemporaries of the resettlement of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other peoples from repressions to the Chinese lands was revealed, as well as the detailed description of their location and the problems they faced at that time as a challenge. New insights into the national-liberation uprising of the oppressed population in the lands of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the Zhetysu district and the extent of its spread were uncovered by comparing the archival data with information from other sources. It was substantiated how Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Dungans, Uigurs and other natives of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan became refugees and were forced to emigrate to China during the uprising in Zhetysu. It is proved that the recognition forced relocation of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz people as a catastrophic episode in the historical destiny of these peoples will allow to give the problem of the national-liberation uprising in 1916 the status of a world-historical event.

KEYWORDS: World history. Emigration. Revolution. The collapse of the Empire. Historical facts. Nomadic people.

RESUMEN

La investigación tiene como objetivo destacar los datos de archivo sobre las desastrosas consecuencias que sufrieron los pueblos kazajo y kirguís durante su reubicación forzosa en China. El enfoque principal para el estudio de este problema es un método de investigación sistémico-estructural. En el transcurso de este estudio, se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados. Se presentaron los hechos históricos que provocaron la rebelión de 1916 en el distrito de Zhetysu, en Asia Central. Se reveló la investigación de los contemporáneos del reasentamiento de los kazajos, kirguisos y otros pueblos desde las represiones hasta las tierras chinas, así como la descripción detallada de su ubicación y los problemas a los que se enfrentaron en ese momento como un desafío. Se descubrieron nuevos datos sobre el levantamiento de liberación nacional de la población oprimida en las tierras de Kirguistán y Kazajistán en el distrito de Zhetysu y el alcance de su propagación, comparando los datos de los archivos con información de otras fuentes. Se corroboró cómo los kazajos, kirguisos, dungans, uigures y otros nativos de Kazajistán y Kirguistán se convirtieron en refugiados y se vieron obligados a emigrar a China durante el levantamiento en Zhetysu. Se ha demostrado que el reconocimiento del traslado forzoso de los kazajos y kirguisos como un episodio catastrófico en el destino histórico de estos pueblos permitirá otorgar al problema del levantamiento de liberación nacional de 1916 la categoría de acontecimiento histórico mundial.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Historia mundial. Emigración. Revolución. Colapso del Imperio. Hechos históricos. Pueblos nómadas.

The National Liberation Uprising of 1916 in the Zhetysu region marked a pivotal moment in the colonial history of Central Asia, revealing the systemic violence and forced displacement of indigenous populations, particularly Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. However, despite considerable factual attention to the episode, the historical implications of this forced emigration to China and its long-term socio-political consequences remain under-theorized. This study therefore seeks to examine the forced relocation of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees through the prism of colonial violence, demographic disruption, and national memory.

The central research problem addressed in this article concerns the extent to which the displacement associated with the 1916 uprising can be understood not only as a humanitarian crisis, but also as a formative moment in the articulation of national identity and collective memory. Prior studies, including those by Allworth *et al.* (2021), Tomohiko (2019), Cooley (2023), Morrison (2019), and Keating (2022a), have offered valuable insights into the causes and military dynamics of the revolt, but have insufficiently engaged with the theoretical tension between historiography and memory, or with the interpretive potential of archival data regarding refugee flows and their fates in exile.

Khalid (2021) states that the tendency towards global catastrophe brewing in the tsarist empire was accelerated by the war. Such political factors as strengthening of colonial expansion, land grabbing, excessive increase of taxes and fees, improper treatment of Kazakhs by the tsarist government, and general deterioration of the population, were the main reasons for the national liberation uprising of 1916, which spread in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Zafer (2020) insists that this uprising was precipitated by a decree of the Tsar of the Russian Empire to recruit men of the conscription age for military work (building fortifications and military logistics, building roads in the Maydan area). Oh (2021) points out that Zhetysu was one of the main hubs of the 1916 national liberation rebellion. 87 thousand workers from that region were ordered to the front lines. Just as the Kazakh people's discontent with colonial tyranny exploded over time, giving rise to various protest movements, this time it gave rise to a widespread popular uprising. However, the common people ignored the warnings of the national intelligence service and as a result suffered under the crushing weight of punitive detachment, and violence, and many were forced to flee to China.

Hojer (2020) states that the uprising, which swept all of Kazakhstan in 1916, turned into a national liberation movement, focused mainly on the hard military-colonial and large-

scale Russification policy of the tsar. The main goal of the uprising was to achieve national and political independence, as the First World War had plunged the national economy into crisis and the overwhelming majority of the population into poverty. It should be stressed that all social groups of the Kazakh people were among the insurgents. The main driving force of the national liberation movement was the working peasants of the Kazakh auls and partially participated representatives of the nascent national working class and craftsmen. During the Soviet period, documents on the historiography of Central Asia were not published. Controversial and difficult periods of the liberation movement were overlooked or were of concern from an ideological point of view. The anti-colonial movement received the most attention after Kazakhstan and other states seceded from the Soviet Union (Shykhov, 2022). For the first time, the national liberation uprising of 1916 began to be regarded as a historical event on a world scale, when Kazakhstan gained its independence.

Based on all the above information, the research aims to study the national liberation movement as a vivid reflection of the crisis of the imperial colonial system. This rebellion is of great importance in world history and requires new approaches in the study of the origins and peculiarities of the development of the rebellion in Central Asia. To achieve this aim, the study sets out the following research tasks:

1. To analyse the historical and political preconditions of the 1916 national liberation uprising in the Zhetysu region of Central Asia, with an emphasis on colonial policies and socioeconomic triggers.
2. To reconstruct, on the basis of archival documents and historical testimonies, the forced displacement of Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations to China, including routes, stages, and demographic consequences.
3. To assess the long-term historical implications of the 1916 refugee crisis for the development of national identity, statehood, and collective memory in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Materials and Methods

To investigate the forced migration and historical marginalization of Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations during the 1916 uprising, this study employs a triangulated methodological approach. The research combines a system-structural method, a historical-genetic method, and the actualisation approach, each enabling the interpretation of archival materials within a coherent theoretical framework. In particular, the system-structural method facilitates an analysis of the interaction between imperial military

repression and nomadic social structures, while the historical-genetic method traces the origins and transformations of migration waves from 1916 to 1922. The method of actualisation was used to interpret archival sources in the context of contemporary national historiography.

Primary data were obtained from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, file 50; 51). These sources include government telegrams, administrative correspondence, and refugee counts recorded by Kazakh and Kyrgyz officials in Chinese territories. Documentary evidence was cross-referenced with published collections of archival materials (e.g., “Revolts of 1916 in Kazakhstan, documents and materials”), as well as with secondary historiographical literature in American, British, Russian, Kazakh, and Chinese.

The system-structural method was used to study the interrelation of all elements of the historical event of 1916 in the Central Asian region. Using this method, archival data from the documents of the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) were examined and analysed, thanks to which it was possible to obtain answers to questions that provoke debate in scientific historical research: why the uprising occurred in an urban environment, how it spread to Zhizak and the areas inhabited by nomads; why the worst bloodshed took place at Piszpek; what consequences and lessons were learned from the 1916 uprising, or whether it was provocative; what causes provoked the final trigger of the uprising (war inflation, high taxes). This method analysed the numbers of Kazakhs and representatives of other nationalities arriving in China. Answers to these and other questions, together with existing research, allowed to rethink the 1916 national liberation rebellion, which engulfed virtually all of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, as one of the clearest manifestations of the national crisis exacerbated in the country by the war.

The historical-genetic method, in its turn, was used to establish the origin, trace the formation and analyse the consequences of the national liberation uprising of 1916. The whole transformation process of the formation of Kazakh statehood has been analysed according to the principle of historicism, as there is continuity between the epochs. Each epoch was evaluated according to its historical peculiarities and possibilities for the revival of cultural values. At this stage, the origins of all phenomena in the past were studied, in particular the problem of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees who had had to move to China, as the root cause of the current demographic problems in Kazakhstan. Thus, from the variety of archival data about the peculiarities of the national liberation uprising in 1916, the cause-and-effect links of various historical events in the process of the historical formation

of the Kazakh nationhood were highlighted. The results of the historical factual analysis were interpreted using the actualisation method, without which no further in-depth analysis of historical events is possible. This method was applied to present coherently the chain of events that took place during the national uprising in 1916.

Results

The National Liberation Uprising of 1916 in Zhetysu Province was a pivotal event in the colonial history of Central Asia, which led to the forced displacement of Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations. According to archival records, the uprising was met with violent suppression by the Tsarist regime, leading to widespread unrest. Many individuals fled the violence, seeking refuge across the border in China.

A study by Khalid (2021) states that the people were unhappy with the violence of the colonial administration. The unrest that began in July was followed by an armed uprising which spread to the whole of the Kazakh steppe in August. The fiercest fighting took place in the areas of the towns of Zhetysu. The tsarist government sent 24 swords, 8750 bayonets, 16 cannons and 47 machine guns to suppress the uprising. General A.N. Kuropatkin, who was acting governor, in his telegram to M.A. Folbaum listed the forces sent to suppress Kazakh and Kyrgyz resistance in Semirechye and concluded by pointing out that Chernyaev, Romanovsky, Kaufman and Skobelev had conquered the Syr Darya and Fergana regions with smaller forces. Among the collection papers stored in the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, files 50; 51). When examining these materials, many new details emerge. The historical facts about the resettlement of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees to China were supported by numerical indicators, which were hitherto absent in historical scholarship.

Archive documents on refugees who fled to China contain the following information: to the chairman of the Committee for Refugees of the Karakyrghyzstan (Kyrgyz Republic) province. Copy: "to the Head of the Central Asian Bureau Comrade Zelensky. Refugee committee representative V. Soltonoev. Statement No. 2. I arrived in Kuldja on December 14, 1925. The purpose of this visit was to ascertain the number of refugees and to familiarise myself with their general situation. The Chinese government has strict control over everything here. The Bolshevik administration forces, the Akhlachkan, were instructed to monitor the movement of the refugees, not to allow them to leave for Russia

under any circumstances and to ensure that they remain loyal to the country of China” (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51).

The data that has been obtained from this message tells about the number and condition of refugees in Ili territory. The situation of some refugees is satisfactory, they can afford to immigrate deep into China, the rest belong to the following 3 categories: those impoverished by debts or other obligations; those who have connections with local traders; and third, those who have other obligations to large landowners. Some are sold to the Chinese as hired labourers in exchange for food, their buyers being Dungans, Chinese, Khachkars and locals. The situation of the 1st and 2nd of the three named categories is not easy and if they are not freed by the Tsarist Empire, they will remain in China for life. Already among them, some young people have adopted Chinese citizenship or become globalists (Khalid, 2021).

Among the information collected from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, file 50; 51) were data on Ili district, Shiho Manas-Urimja county. There are 600 refugees in the first category, including 300 children. Most of them came from Karakol and Pishpek districts, the number of the second category is 500 families – these families are not included in the ranks of Kashkar and Ushturpan. 1 thousand Kyrgyz families were sold into slavery, most of them women and children. For Uigurs, the Iliysk district, Shikho Manas-Urimja district is a second home, as they often interact with Uigurs living in districts of Almaty oblast. There are no destitute people among them, they are in very close contact with Uighurs in China and have shelters. A total of 50 thousand tezi (Chinese currency) was spent to buy impoverished and indebted refugees, and 60 thousand women and children were quickly sold for 2200 Nikolayev chervonets (Russian currency) (Zafer, 2020).

The next information about refugees that could be extracted from archival documents was a message to the chairman of the Kyrgyz Revolutionary Committee. Copy: “To Comrade Zelensky, head of the Central Asian Bureau. If you pay attention to the information contained therein, B. Soltonoev said that in addition to my statement of February 15, refugees in China should be considered: the majority of refugees are in Aksu and Kashkar provinces in China. There are reportedly 1 thousand families, 1 thousand individual women and children in slavery. Some of them had to slaughter all their livestock due to unfavourable living conditions and join the Chinese settlements. Another part of the Kazakhs fled to the Tekes area, where their property was looted by Kalmyk nomadic raiders. According to eyewitness accounts of the events of the time, isolated attacks were

carried out by Chinese and local bandits. Women and children (especially adolescent girls) were sold into slavery or forcibly married off to the Chinese, women worked in the fields and herded cattle. Several women, unable to endure this humiliation, committed suicide. The Chinese used Kyrgyz and Kazakh refugee girls in night houses. They were found in Shanghai, Jianjin, Hankou and other cities" (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, Series-1, File-51).

The author of this message asks for all available measures to free Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees from China who have lost their homeland. The current situation is detrimental to the emotional state of families forced to flee the revolution. To bring them back to their native lands, 5 thousand chervonets (Russian currency) is needed, and additional funds to improve their well-being and help them to set up their households. To carry out such work, 110 thousand Lei Tesi (Chinese currency) and 2200 Nikolayev chervonets are needed. Kyrgyz and Kazakh refugee commissioners were sent to assist the refugees, determine their numbers and organise their resettlement back to their native lands. These people were appointed by a commission in Kulja. The number of refugees is as follows: Karakerei from Lepsi – (in Shihu Manas-Urimji) from 250 to 300 families. Of those who passed from Kapal to the beginning of Tursyn – 150 families (in Kulja-Buratal). The clan Baitore of Zharkent Suans – from 300 to 400 families. 195 families from Karakol (at the Bozadyr deposit) – Tekes, Kunes, Suydui, Kulya, Chimbandze and Urimzhi. Eight families worked among the Kalmyks. Women and children from the Karakol and Pishpek districts were the most trafficked. This information was provided by a Kyrgyz intellectual, B. Soltonoev, appointed commissioner on February 16, 1925, in Alma-Ata. According to the author of the message, Soviet Russia is their only remaining source of hope. They believe that the Soviets will free them from oppression after all. Therefore, the government needs to help the unfortunate refugees. This message further suggested transporting the refugees back from Aksu and Kashkar districts by ferrying them across the Bedel Pass. This message was written in Bishkek on 25 March 1925 (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51).

When Orynbor Cossack and punitive detachments arrived in Zhetysu in August 1916, almost all Kazakhs fled. The mass flight was from the Kyrgyz districts of Naryn and Karakol. The entire Kyrgyz population along the Issyk-Kul lake shore, as well as the population in 5 volosts, fled to the Arabshan and Naryn districts. Pishpek district was completely abandoned by the residents of Sarybagysh, as well as parts of Tynayev and Shamsha. In addition, some refugees from the Almaty region of Kazakhstan moved there,

including those from Zharkent, Kapal and Lepsi. Then there was a second period of refugee migration between 1917 and 1918, during which well-to-do Tatars, Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Dungans, who feared the terror of the first Red Army, fled to Western China because of requisitions and confiscations. In the third phase, the Kazakhs and Taranchis left the lands of the Almaty region after the actions of Muravyov's army in Shelek. Number of refugees fleeing from Zhetysu to China in 1916-1920: in 1916 there were 10 thousand families in Iliysu county in Xinjiang province (an estimated 100100 people) (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51). During the revolutionary period, the following number of refugees were registered in this district:

- Tatars – 7 families (50 people);
- Taranci – 285 families (1500 people);
- Kazakhs – 1000 families (7000 people);
- Dungans – 94 families (486 people);

2800 families (20000 people) returned to Kazakhstan in 1921, 1167 families (12000 people) in 1922, 670 families (6000 people) in 1923. The return of refugees from China in 1917 began in the spring. The 1920 return was very slow. Most fled in 1921-1922, this occurred during the land and water reform, and most refugees returned. However, 2300 households had not yet arrived 850 Kazakh families and 1450 Kyrgyz families. Each of them needs 261.88 soms (the monetary unit of Kyrgyzstan) benefits (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51). The 1068 households living in Kashkar, Ushturpan District of China, do not include any of these three types of refugees. Soltonoev reported that 1 thousand women and children along with 100 families were sold into slavery. Most visitors to Kashkar and Ushturpan came from the Kyrgyz districts of Pishpek and Karakol. In total there were 1068 refugee families in the Chinese district of Ile; in Ushturpan, Kashkar, 1 thousand families of whom 1 thousand were slaves and children. The information was provided by B. Soltonoev, a Kyrgyz state official, on June 1, 1925 (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-50). Since many questions about the historical fate of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees have been only partially studied or misinterpreted, this study has analysed in detail the escalation of racial and social discrimination in 1916 that led to demographic problems in contemporary Kazakhstan. Following the repression of military units and the destruction wrought by the Tsarist army in 1916, the local population panicked and were forced to flee to China in the hope of finding safety, but were met with brutality and abuse by the local population there.

Given this refugee situation in China, the Xinjiang government has established a principle to resolve the problem: return all civilians and fleeing rebels back to their homeland. In the immediate aftermath of the suppression of the uprising, the process of refugee return was difficult. The Russian consular authorities, in cooperation with the Chinese army, tried to find, arrest and punish the leaders of the mutiny, who had fled together with the civilians to China. However, a dispute arose between the Chinese government and the leaders of the overseas narcotics agencies over the evacuation of the refugees and the Xinjiang government refused to get involved in the matter, lest it find itself in an international diplomatic scandal. The return of refugees therefore took many years, many were able to return to their homeland after the fall of Tsarist rule, and some Central Asians even started a Kazakh diaspora in China (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51).

In conclusion, the archival data presented offers new perspectives on the historical fate of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees during the National Liberation Uprising of 1916. The results not only shed light on the immediate impact of the uprising but also highlight its long-term demographic, social, and political consequences. By analyzing previously unused archival sources, this study deepens our understanding of the trauma experienced by these communities and highlights the lasting legacy of the repressive policies of the tsarist empire. The study opens avenues for further research on historical memory and the formation of national identity in postcolonial Central Asia, particularly regarding the role of forced migration in shaping contemporary narratives of national history.

Discussion

Keating (2022b), exploring the 1916 uprising, noted that workers in Turkestan had risen because of 50 years of colonial exploitation by the Tsarist administration of Russia. Indeed, the many defeats at the front and the loss of western territories during 1915 and 1916 demanded new human and material resources, which prompted the decision to issue the Decree on Requisition. Pianciola (2020), contributing to the research of Keating (2022b), concludes that the Royal Proclamation of 25 June was one of the root causes of the 1916 uprising. Without discussing the matter in the State Duma, and without consulting the governors-general or governors, the proclamation was created carelessly, without specifying its exact contents. The proclamation to increase work on the expansion of defences and combat communications in the army area in the field led to the



dissemination of provocative information about danger. The disorganised command and mobilisation process allowed the local leaders and administration to be manipulated, causing the uprising to spread among the population.

In confirmation of the above, from the data of the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, file 50; 51), it is known that in October 1916, with the participation of Generals Kuropatkin, and Folbaum, the tsarist administration decided to “evacuate the Kyrgyz” to occupy some 2,510,360 dessiatinas of fertile land in the Pishpek, Przhhevalsk and Zharkent districts. This state of affairs doomed the inhabitants of the Kazakh steppes to starvation in winter. The Albanian tribe revolted in Zharkent district and considered it necessary to take from the Kazakhs all lands in the valley of the rivers Tekes and Shalkode, Karkaraly pasture, and part of the Shu valley (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51). In turn, from the beginning of August, the insurgent units started active operations. They set fire to post stations, damaged the telegraph and seized private military equipment. Major clashes with the Tsarist executioners took place in the Yeni tract (5 August), near Samsa station (7 August), in the Kastek district, near Issyk-Kul and other towns. Tokmak was besieged (mid-August).

As a confirmation of how Kazakh people fought for their freedom and independence during the national uprising of 1916, a study by Peterson (2019) states that although more and more punitive detachments arrived in Zhetysu, the rebels did not surrender and after dividing into groups, each took a defensive position. In the future, they united in the area of Lake Balkhash and formed new forces there. In September 1916 the considerable part of the insurgents, oppressed from all sides by punitive detachments, with severe fights was compelled to recede to Western China. Here again, the rebels were attacked by gangs, this time organised by the Royal Consul and the local Chinese authorities. Deprived of their cattle, yurts and other possessions, the refugees sought food, shelter, and work and lived in poverty. It was only after the October Revolution that the Soviet government created conditions for them to return home and engage in peaceful labour.

On 10 August 1916, in a telegram to the head of the Pishpek District of Kyrgyzstan, Lieutenant Colonel F.G. Rymkeevich, sent by the military governor of Zhetysu district M.A. Folbaum with information about the conflict between the punitive units and the insurgents at Samsy station. It is described that in the Kyrgyz country, the parishes of Ateki, Sarybagysh, Tynayev, and Dzhanyshhev had mobbed the mountains and withdrawn from subordination. On orders given to the bailiff, the tsarist army plundered villages, burned

bread, and committed murder and armed attacks. More than 100 Kyrgyz were killed in the firefight. The bailiff was ordered to rebuild the telegraph, the Kyrgyz attacked every day, and the station was shelled. There are only 30 soldiers left in the command, asking to send another battalion of 2 hundred and 2 machine guns to help in the final suppression of the uprising (Allworth *et al.*, 2021). One can conclude that the tsarist government did not immediately succeed in suppressing the rebels' resistance. This defeat on the battlefield demonstrated the backwardness of the Tsarist army in socio-economic and technical terms. The unsighted policy of imperial Russia did not take into account that the Kazakh people would become desperate to defend their lands.

Analyzing the research presented in this study, it should be noted that the national liberation uprising of 1916 was defeated (Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK). F.-938, series-1, file-51). In October 1916 the Zhetysu uprising was brutally suppressed by the punitive army of the tsarist Russian government. Due to heavy losses and general failures, the punitive units shot not only those who had taken part in the national liberation uprising but also civilians. These included Kazakh and Kyrgyz villages. However, this did not incline the male population to join the Red Army, many of them fled to the Ilei region of China, as the Zhetysu and Ilei regions represent a single plain and the distance between them is close. This area was open to Russian punitive troops who pursued the fleeing people and shelled them to China. According to the report sent by the commander of the Chinese Defence Army in Ilei, Yang Fichian, dated October 21, 1916: In the early morning, more than 500 Russian soldiers opened fire at the place where the commander in Narynkol was standing with two machine guns. People's punitive units lined up the men in dozens of rows and executed them (Proń, 2021).

The Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, file 51) reveal that, due to the consequences of the Russian Empire's colonial policy, Kyrgyz rebels travelled to China mainly via three routes. The first was Torugart and Kelte-bek, which passed through the Ak-Sai valley in the At-Bashinsky district of Naryn; the second was south of Przhevalsky, Bedel; and the third was to Kulja, Tekes via Karkara. Additionally, the article by Svoboda (2021) on refugees reveals the division of the entire emigration process into the following categories: 1) refugees in 1916 (Kazakhs and Kyrgyz); 2) refugees 1918-1919, when Uigurs, Dungans, some Kyrgyz and refugees of military units left, but during their retreat crossed the Chinese border and were detained there. According to the military governor of Zhetysu A.I. Alekseeva, in January 1917, 150 thousand Kazakhs migrated to China (Svoboda, 2021). Thus, it can be noted that the lack

of communication and coordinated actions among themselves are the main reasons for the defeat of the uprising. Spontaneous and local disturbances and poor arming among the Kazakh population only contributed to the suppression of the national liberation uprising by the tsarist authorities.

After analysing data from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) (F.-938, series-1, file 50; 51), which were first presented in this article, detailed information was found on Kyrgyz refugees located in Boratal, Tarbagatai (Shaueshek district) of Jetysu district and partially in Shikho-Manas district. In the upper part of the Boratal valley, there are refugees from Kapal rayon in 1918: while initially there were 200 yurts, after the uprising only 100 yurts remained. About 40 yurts migrated to Uigur auls in the Kulja rayon (Noda, 2019). And as stated in this study, the migration of Central Asian peoples was carried out in three stages: in 1916, 1917-1918, and 1921-1922.

The number of natives of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan who fled from repressive military units and went to China was 3 thousand. They crossed the Russian-Chinese border in the Kuldjin and Kashkar districts. These were the areas which were easiest to cross on foot with cattle and children. The centres for Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees were Taichen in the north of the Xinjiang border, Ile in the west and Kashkar and Aksu districts in the south. The cost of crossing the border into China was, for example, 9 horses, 10 thousand soms or 12 silver for 9 people (Le Corre, 2019). Overall, this study has been able to conclude that the destruction wrought by the Tsarist army and settlers, inflicted great damage on the people of Zhetysu. 94 Kazakh and Kyrgyz villages were destroyed: 5373 houses were burnt, 1905 people were killed, 684 were wounded and 1105 were taken prisoner. On 9 September one of the leaders of the uprising, Bekbolat Ashekeyev, was hanged. A quarter of the local population of the Zhetysu district, about 300 thousand men were expelled to the Chinese lands. According to calculations by Xavier and Ohayon (2020), the population from 47 thousand 759 decreased to 40 thousand 250 people living in 44 volosts of Almaty, Zharkent, Pishpek, Przhewalski and districts of Zhetysu district, exceeding China by territory. The conclusion is obvious – such mass extermination of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz is considered genocide, which was committed by the Tsarist Empire against the Central Asian population, the consequences of which have to be dealt with in modern society.

Studying the historical fate of the Chinese Kazakhs, it was possible to give quantitative figures of the Kazakh migrants who fled the uprising of 1916. In 1917, according to the government of Xinjiang, out of 3000 thousand refugees who fled from the

Aksu, Kashkar, Ushturpan, Ile, and Tarbagatai regions of Xinjiang, 250 thousand were Kazakhs (Pianciola & Zharassov, 2020). Having comprehensively considered this issue, the following conclusion can be drawn, the Chinese government had a strict foreign policy concerning the national liberation uprising in Zhetysu and the Kazakhs who have gone to Xinjiang. Receiving reports from the Frontier Army, the Xinjiang government monitored the events of the Zhetysu uprising and facilitated the full return of the Kazakhs who had left for Xinjiang. The Chinese leaders' efforts aimed to establish diplomatic relations that would be aimed at maintaining peace within their own country without exacerbating the international situation.

Conclusions

The National Liberation Uprising of 1916 should be considered a subject of scientific study, as this issue is crucial for the formation of modern Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries. During the uprising, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Dungans, Uighurs and other Kazakh-Kyrgyz peoples were forcibly displaced and resettled in the Zhetysu region. Such forced relocation was a historical shock to the Central Asian countries and affected the development of statehood in the region. Therefore, scholars from all over the world should encourage the organisation of joint grant research projects. As there are still many historical sites to study this issue.

Thus, in this study, it seems possible to conclude that during the national liberation uprising in 1916, over 300 thousand refugees fled to China, of whom over 100 thousand left the Zhetysu region. As a result, one can see that the majority of those who fled to China were natives of Zhetysu. Details obtained by examining archival data indicate that the Soviet government was asked to resettle 2300 Kazakh families from the territory of China. To do so, they needed to allocate a food allowance for each settler route and persuade the refugees to take advantage of their assistance. However, some settlers were wary of accepting help from the Soviet government.

The study also indicates that there were three stages of migration of Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees, during which 300 thousand people were evicted, including 250 thousand Kazakhs. The prospect of further research could be to investigate the historical fate of the Tarbagatai and Altai refugees who migrated to China. There is still quite new information in Chinese and Kazakh archives to shed light on the historical fate of the Kazakh diaspora abroad.

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