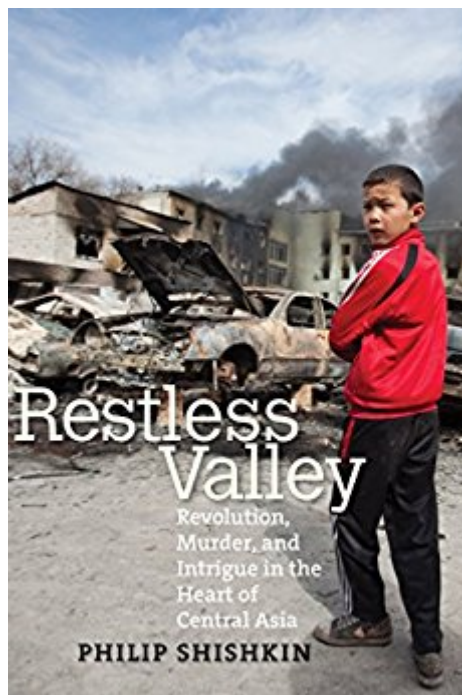




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Restless Valley: Revolution, Murder, And Intrigue In The Heart Of Central Asia



Synopsis

It sounds like the stuff of a fiction thriller: two revolutions, a massacre of unarmed civilians, a civil war, a drug-smuggling highway, brazen corruption schemes, contract hits, and larger-than-life characters who may be villains . . . or heroes . . . or possibly both. Yet this book is not a work of fiction. It is instead a gripping, firsthand account of Central Asia's unfolding history from 2005 to the present. Philip Shishkin, a prize-winning journalist with extensive on-the-ground experience in the tumultuous region above Afghanistan's northern border, focuses mainly on Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Both nations have struggled with the enormous challenges of post-Soviet independent statehood; both became entangled in America's Afghan campaign when U.S. military bases were established within their borders. At the same time, the region was developing into a key smuggling hub for Afghanistan's booming heroin trade. Through the eyes of local participants—the powerful and the powerless—Shishkin reconstructs how Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have ricocheted between extreme repression and democratic strivings, how alliances with the United States and Russia have brought mixed blessings, and how Stalin's legacy of ethnic gerrymandering incites conflict even now.

Book Information

File Size: 4160 KB

Print Length: 329 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press (May 21, 2013)

Publication Date: April 24, 2013

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00CIBS9CK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #202,983 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #30

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Customer Reviews

As a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Kyrgyzstan during the 2010 Revolution, I can tell Peter Shishkin knows his stuff about Central Asia. I'm only ~70% through the book but it has provided a great deal of insight and information that I would have never known without reading, even though I learned Kyrgyz during my time there. A great work on Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia.

I began reading this book with some trepidation, as so much of the scarce writing on Central Asia is badly written and/or distorted (by ignorance, by political or cultural biases, by academese, etc), but it's genuinely good. Having lived in Kyrgyzstan during and immediately after some of the events described in the book, it was a joy to read such a well-crafted narrative that doesn't twist the complicated reality of the place to achieve that narrative. A riveting book that finally gives me a book to recommend without reservations to people who want to understand Central Asia better.

It is good that Shishkin wrote this book and added a quality volume to the remarkably small number of recent books about Central Asia. I really did enjoy the book; my one criticism is that his language becomes exhausting rather quickly--too many colloquialisms and cheap phrases. If the reader can move past this (or accept it, as I did) he/she will experience a fantastic history of the past 8 or so years in Kyrgyzstan. And what characters you will meet! 3/5 stars from me. I would be willing to pick up another book by Shishkin.

...though at times it is hard to believe! A very interesting read on history of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors, with a few clear portraits of man in all his depravity. Worth the read.

Fabulous investigation of Central Asia's modern, political history takes us there into the inner sanctums of power and control after the breakup of the USSR. The author documents sources and makes good effort to be objective. The Fergana Valley and its surrounding countries laying claim to it, come alive in Shishkin's report. Well done. Very exciting. Very authentic.

Interesting, thought provoking and the KZ human rights gentleman prisoned for the murder of a KZ policeman is right now (24/ 01/2017) having his case retired and a verdict is expected on 27/01/2017. Just to have this case reviewed is absolutely amazing!

If it was not for Philip Shishkin's language skills and cultural background, Restless Valley perhaps

would not be as genuine and forthright, informative and multifaceted. As other reviewers noted, there are limited publications covering Central Asia. So when I learned about the upcoming release of *Restless Valley*, I signed up to get a copy as soon as it was available on . While I had not known Philip Shishkin personally prior to reading this book, reading *Restless Valley* felt as if Philip was an old friend telling anecdotes and stories about people that we know in common. Covering political intrigues, corrupt schemes at the top level, and revolutions mostly in Kyrgyzstan, the author does take the reader on a political travelogue to Uzbekistan, as well as to neighboring Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and briefly to Kazakhstan. He invites the reader to join his private conversations with top government officials and human rights activists, with law enforcement officials and outlaws, with journalists and ordinary people. The transitions from one chapter to another in the book are smooth, usually through an intriguing story that connects at-first-sight irrelevant stories to each other. When it comes to ethnic conflicts, it's hard to be both truthful and unbiased. Philip Shishkin does manage that fine line in his analysis of the ethnic conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. In every chapter, he gives two sides of the story leaving the reader with food for thought. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Central Asia.

Excellent book about the recent history of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (for only one chapter). Having visited this part of the world earlier this year I thought this book is a must read for anyone who wants to visit KG!

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