

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF EASTERN TURKESTAN AND THE FORMATION
OF MODERN UYGHUR IDENTITY IN XINJIANG

by

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DISCLAIMER

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ABSTRACT

Lasting from 1933-1934, the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan (TIRET) was the culmination of various rebellions in Xinjiang, China. Founders of this republic, influenced by Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism used it to promote a Turkic-Muslim identity independent from Chinese and Soviet control and unique to the sedentary, oasis-dwellers of Xinjiang. The qualities of this political identity were formalized and given the label Uyghur in 1934. The significance of the TIRET, despite its troubled and short existence, was that its message transcended localized identities to create a Uyghur political consciousness. Though Uyghur identity has continued to shift and adapt since then, the TIRET remains the starting point from which Uyghurs today trace their present relationship and contention with the Chinese state.

This study examines the military and political actions surrounding the formation and dissolution of the TIRET in the early 1930s, the republic's ideological origins in Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism, and finally the social and political conditions in Xinjiang that facilitated the creation of Uyghur identity as a result of rebellions from 1931 to 1934. I argue that modern Uyghur identity emerged from the events surrounding the TIRET was a combination of a nascent Uyghur nationalism combined with interests of the Chinese Nationalist to create ethnic categories for the people of Xinjiang.

My purpose is to show that the formation of Uyghur identity in Xinjiang was a result of the same process that led to the creation of Turkic Muslim ethnic nationalities in the Soviet Union. In this respect, I will show how ideologies of Pan-Islam, Pan-Turkism and the reforms carried out through the Jadid movement supported identity formation and affected Central Asia including Xinjiang.

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INTRODUCTION – Conceptualizing Ethnic Identity

Currently, the Uyghurs make up the majority of the population in Xinjiang. With their own set of ethnic characteristics including language, culture, religion and territory, they Uyghurs are one of fifty-six ethnic nationalities in the Peoples' Republic of China. Unlike other ethnicities that live in Xinjiang such as Kyrgyz, Kazaks and Mongols who have a majority of their populations elsewhere, 99.8% of the Uyghurs live in Xinjiang. From this basis, Uyghur separatists today use issues of the Chinese government's oppression of their religion, language and culture to justify the right for their people to have an independent Eastern Turkestan.

Throughout the history of the People's Republic of China, Uyghur separatism has been related to the PRC's policies toward allowing ethnic minorities to practice religion and other elements of their culture. Since 1949, the PRC's policies towards developing regions, such as Xinjiang, that have a high percentage of minority populations have increasingly become interconnected with China's general economic and political ambitions. June Dreyer's *China's Forty Millions¹* and Colin Mackerras's *Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation²* are two studies that discuss how major events in PRC history have affected the Chinese government's treatment of culture among ethnic minorities. Particularly concerning the relationship of Uyghur identity and the Chinese state, Gardner Bovingdon's *Autonomy in Xinjiang³* traces Uyghur identity along a trajectory that faces increasingly hostile policies of the PRC government.

The purpose of the following discussion on the formation of Uyghur identity is to provide a starting point for when and how the Uyghur ethnicity became part of China. This study also suggests that treatment of the Uyghurs by the PRC has been shaped not

¹ June Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

² Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

³ Gardner Bovingdon, "Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent." (Washington: East West Center Policy Studies, 2004).

only by conditions during the Qing administration of the Xinjiang region from the mid-eighteenth century through the early twentieth century, but also by the definition of Turkic-Muslim nationalities in the Soviet Union during the 1920s which Chinese authorities mimicked during the 1930s through the 1950s. Therefore, it is the principal objective of this study to examine why rebellions in Xinjiang from 1931 to 1934 led to the formation of Uyghur identity thereafter.

The existing body of historical research concerning Xinjiang during the twentieth century has included analyses of political and economic competition of foreign powers that intersected in Xinjiang, primarily those of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and Japan. Arthur Hasiotis⁴ and Lars-Erik Nyman⁵ have both written, in detail, about Xinjiang as a contested territory among foreign powers. These studies, although thorough in their treatment of the interaction of foreign interests with one another, include little about the Chinese government in or people of Xinjiang as active contributors affecting the situation in Xinjiang. By examining social, religious and political conditions and reform movements among the Turkic-Muslim populations of Xinjiang leading up to the 1930s, the following will highlight Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism as focal points for both Muslim rebellions against the Chinese state and a phenomenon to which foreign powers reacted.

Of other works on Xinjiang political history, Andrew Forbes's *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia* and Laura Newby's "The Rise of Nationalism in Eastern Turkestan" both primarily give detailed accounts of various rebellions that took place in Xinjiang during China's Republican period and secondarily address Muslim social and political motivations behind those events. Though the scholarship of both of these works has been invaluable in this study by providing a chronology and dramatis personae, the following will make a more in-depth examination of these events with respect to how Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism influenced rebellions and supported the definition of ethnic nationalities in Xinjiang specifically during the early 1930s.

⁴ Arthur Christos Hasiotis, Jr., "A Study of Soviet Political, Economic, and Military Involvement in Sinkiang from 1928 to 1949.," Ph.D diss., New York University, 1982.

⁵ Lars-Erik Nyman, *Great Britain, Chinese, Russian and Japanese Interests in Sinkiang, 1918-1934*, (Sweden: Scandinavian University Books, 1977).

Masami Hamada's article "La Transmission Du Mouvement Nationaliste Au Turkestan Oriental (Xinjiang)" examines events and people in the development of Muslim nationalism in Xinjiang from the late Qing dynasty through the end of the 1920s. Hamada argues that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Muslim nationalism increased in opposition to increasing Chinese nationalism and programs to impress Chinese culture on the Muslims of Xinjiang.⁶ This study is a continuation of Hamada's work and discusses the early 1930s as a political application of nationalism in Xinjiang that led to the formation of ethnic identity.

More recently, there have been several social anthropological studies specifically concerning Uyghur identity with respect to separatism in the PRC that differ on the point indicated as the beginning of modern Uyghur identity. Dru Gladney's "Ethnogenesis of the Uighur" identifies Yakup Beg's establishment of an independent Kashgar Emirate during the late nineteenth century as the event that crystallized Uyghur resistance against the Chinese state. Geng Shimin dates the beginning of modern Uyghur identity in the late fifteenth century using the stabilization of Turkic ethnicity and Islamic religion as the point of origin for Uyghur ethnicity. Though Gladney's and Geng's statements point to steps that led to the formation of modern Uyghur identity, the following shows instead how Uyghur identity has its origins in the early 1930s when separatist leaders used their culture, history and religion to make political distinctions in rebellions against the Nationalist Chinese government.

My argument is that ethnic identity is both a cultural and political construction and that Uyghur identity came into its present form in name, content and meaning, as a result of rebellions that took place in Xinjiang from 1931-1934. During that time, individuals influenced by Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism took advantage of unstable conditions to create the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan (TIRET) based on their vision of creating an independent nation for the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Xinjiang, the majority of which soon after became known as Uyghurs. Furthermore, I will argue that the successful formation of Uyghur identity took place at this time because the

⁶ Masami Hamada, "La Transmission Du Mouvement Nationaliste Au Turkestan Oriental (Xinjiang)" [The Transmission of the Nationalist Movement to Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang)], *Central Asian Review*, 9, no. 1, 1980 : 29-48.

Chinese government, in reaction to the rebellions of the early 1930s, institutionalized Uyghur identity, thereby incorporating the Uyghurs as peoples of China.

In *Oasis Identities*, Justin Jon Rudelson explores the social, economic and political dynamics of current Uyghur identity in Xinjiang. He characterizes the relationship of the Uyghurs and the Chinese state as one fraught with tension and conflict related to issues concerning the rights of ethnic minorities in China and the problematic status of Xinjiang as an autonomous region. Furthermore, Rudelson argues that inter-oasis tensions among Uyghurs in different regions of Xinjiang create a challenge for Uyghur nationalists in creating a unified Uyghur identity throughout the province.⁷ The following will provide further explanation, using a historical case study, on the origin and nature of conflict between Uyghurs in Xinjiang who want to maintain their culture and identity and the Chinese state who needs to incorporate Xinjiang as a part of China.

In order to discuss formation of ethnic identity, there must first be a conceptual definition of ethnicity and its purpose. In "Ethnicity, Culture and the Past", Jack Eller argues that "Ethnicity is consciousness of difference and the subjective salience of that difference. It is also mobilization around difference – a camaraderie with or preference for socially similar others."⁸ What Eller implies in this statement is that ethnicity is, essentially, how a group interprets perceived differences and applies them for its own interests. Therefore, ongoing conflict, resistance against Chinese rule for the Uyghurs, is essential to the continued existence for an ethnic group.

The adversarial nature of Uyghur identity including its struggle to maintain its language, culture, and religion against policies of the Chinese state drives the need for Uyghurs to define themselves in opposition to the social, economic and political conditions dictated by the PRC government. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Fredrik Barth further claims that cultural boundaries are the means by which ethnic groups can exist among one another and that these boundaries are more intense and strengthened when in close proximity to an "other." Barth explains that ethnic groups within close

⁷ Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

⁸ Jack David Eller, "Ethnicity, Culture and the Past," in *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 9.

proximity of one another depend on those differences to maintain their own cultural boundaries. He lists three requirements for interdependence of ethnic groups: important, complementary cultural difference; differences obvious in ethnic group and highly stereotyped, stable understanding.⁹ The first chapter of this study will explore how Uyghur separatists in the early 1930s activated submerged attitudes among their people and capitalized on that moment of upheaval in Xinjiang to define themselves through the exclusion of various groups of “others.”

If ethnic identity is a constructed definition, there should also be a process by which elements of an ethnic identity combine to create a meaningful concept acceptable for political usage. For the Uyghurs, this process involved three steps. First, an ethnic group must define itself. According to Benedict Anderson, in his study of modern nationalism, awareness of membership in a nation derives from both emotional and cultural connections present among a group of people. Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community” that subscribes to a shared identity.¹⁰ Founders of the TIRET and subsequent Uyghur nationalists saw themselves as part of an “imagined community” that included their western neighbors in Soviet Central Asia. Furthermore, Anderson’s idea of “national imagination” is not a spontaneous phenomenon that naturally appears and takes on meaning. Instead, it must be actively cultivated and propagated through common language and public discourse.¹¹ Chapter Two will show how the developments of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism through the work of Jadids in Central Asia, starting in the late nineteenth century, spread to Xinjiang and provided the impetus and infrastructure of an “imagined community” among the Muslim Turks of Central Asia that formed the basis for the development of Uyghur identity to the present.

The second step in the process of identity formation is for the group to decide and realize its need to use ethnic characteristics to secure the survival and interests of its members. In Xinjiang, various ethnic groups realized their need to assert their ethnic identity to protect themselves from the increasingly oppressive regimes of Xinjiang

⁹ Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, (Boston: Little and Brown, 1969), 19.

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983), 6-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

governors. In his work concerning Muslim identity in China, Dru Gladney argues that the type of state and the role of its people within the political system is irrelevant, “whether the people have a significant role in governance is not at issue for ethnic identity. Rather, it is the notion that there are peoples requiring identification and representation that is crucial.”¹² In the case of the TIRET leaders, the ideals of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism in conjunction with a more cosmopolitan, secular education led Uyghur nationalists to perceive the condition of their people as unacceptable and in need of change. Thus, the impact of changes and reforms in Central Asia made it obvious to Uyghur leaders that their people had indeed suffered a long history of subjugation by the Chinese government. For Uyghur separatists, this condition was not only detrimental, but also unjust and intolerable.

The third and final step in forming ethnic identity, crucial for the perseverance of that identity, is establishing an agreement between the ethnic group and the state concerning the existence of that ethnic group. In Xinjiang, the mutual acceptance and usage of the term “Uyghur” as an official label established a channel by which Uyghur identity could continue to develop as a part of China. It is only from this point of mutual acknowledgement that the dialogical process of negotiating identity, described by Gladney below, can take place. On the precise nature of how ethnic groups and the state interact, Gladney defines a process of dialogue, which allows ethnic identities to adapt to changing circumstances. This fluidity allows ethnic identities to survive and maintain meaning for both sides though political, social, and economic conditions may change:

...cultural identity and ethnogenesis in the modern nation-state are a process of dialogical interaction between self-perceived notions of identity and sociopolitical contexts, often defined by the state...I suggest that the process is one of dialogue and interrelation, not dialectics, in that new identities do not always emerge antithetically to the old: new identities may surface, old ones may be reinvented, and all will be in constant dialogue with one another...However, ethnic identity and change are often a convoluted process of dynamic interaction with prior notions of identity and environment – a set in constant flux due to migration, power relations, and state policy.¹³

¹² Dru C. Gladney, "The Ethnogenesis of the Uighur," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 1 (1990): 5.

¹³ Dru C. Gladney, "Clashed Civilizations: Muslims and Chinese Identities in the PRC," in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey and the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 120-1.

Chapter Three will examine how Uyghur identity provided a term acceptable to both the majority of Turkic-Muslims in Xinjiang and the Chinese government. Therefore, the creation of Uyghur identity during the 1930s fulfilled the needs of the Uyghurs to assert an identity and the Han Chinese who previously did not have a standardized label for the peoples of Xinjiang.

Because I will argue that modern Uyghur identity emerged as a political identity after rebellions in the mid-1930s, I will start with an examination of ethnic and religious stereotypes in Xinjiang already present at the time. During the rebellions in Xinjiang from 1931 to 1934, stereotypes and other popular concepts about ethnicity were already prevalent and used as motivation during the fighting. This point is important because it is upon these existing stereotypes and informal distinctions that the Chinese government created its fourteen official ethnic categories for the people of Xinjiang in 1934.

Also during the rebellions, a new dimension of ethnic identity started to appear among the sedentary Turkic-Muslim in Xinjiang. This new political movement for an independent Eastern Turkestan embodied ideals of a separate republic with closer cultural and social ties to Soviet Central Asia rather than China. Therefore, I will discuss the social, religious and political impact of Pan-Islam, Turanianism and Pan-Turkism on the establishment of the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan.

The final part of my argument concerning the formation of modern Uyghur identity is to suggest that the events of the early 1930s led to the institutionalization of ethnicity in Xinjiang and a problematic relationship between Uyghurs and the Chinese government. Because of the cultural, historic and social elements embedded in Uyghur identity at its starting point, Uyghur nationalism and separatism have continuously been in conflict with the policies of the PRC government.

CHAPTER 1 - Perceiving Identity in Conflict, 1931-1934

Muslim rebellions (*huiluan*) are not an uncommon occurrence in Chinese history, nor are they unique to China's Northwest. In fact, Muslim resistance and revolt against Chinese rule occurred so frequently that Chinese historiography and popular sentiment accepted this kind of violent upheaval as innate social behavior of Muslims. These stereotypes are based on the Han belief that Muslims, because of their religion, sometimes referred to as "small religion" (*xiaojiao*) by the Han Chinese, are fanatic, violent and irrational. Therefore, the phenomenon of Muslim rebellions against Chinese rule had the tendency to be diagnosed as a problem with Muslim sensibilities and not an indication of the Chinese government's inability to achieve harmonious and prosperous social and political conditions. Using logic characteristic of Han chauvinism, Chinese officials reasoned that since Muslims lacked the virtues of Confucian teachings, their society was poor, backward and therefore unable to assimilate or at least participate in the Chinese empire. Muslims fell into the category of the uncivilized barbarian (*huawaizhimin*).

The solution was therefore to educate Muslims in the Han tradition so that they too might become part of the Chinese family. Thus, the Chinese government, throughout its history, used programs of Sinicization to address the shortcomings of Muslim societies so that they may be assimilated into Chinese culture. The intensity of Sinicization programs to diminish the causes of Muslim rebellions was directly proportional to the intensity of the perceived threat. The larger the rebellion, the stronger the reaction was to force Sinicization. Significant in this study were the events in and around Yakup Beg's successful independent khanate in southern Xinjiang from 1864-1877.¹⁴ Yakup Beg's Islamic government was a major event in terms of raising awareness among various oasis communities of a common Turkic-Muslim identity.

¹⁴ Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877*, (Stanford: Stanford U. Pr., 2004), 129.

Starting from the 1820s and continuing through the 1860s, the Qing government adapted its policy in Xinjiang to address the grievances causing Turkic-Muslim populations to rebel. Muslim populations especially in the south of Xinjiang revolted against their colonial overseers. In a moment of Muslim unity, both Turkic and non-Turkic,¹⁵ Muslims rebelled in the early 1860s against the Qing government. In 1864, incited by rumors that the Qing was planning to exterminate the Muslims of Gansu, Xinjiang again fell into a state of rebellion and chaos.¹⁶ This time, Qing forces could not subdue the rebellions and Yakup Beg, a native of Koqand, an oasis west of Xinjiang in the Ferghana Valley, succeeded in establishing an independent khanate in southern Xinjiang. However, Yakup Beg's independent government was far from a cooperation of Muslims in Xinjiang to develop an independent state. In fact, it was the disunity among various Muslim groups that allowed Yakup Beg to consolidate and monopolize political and military power in Xinjiang.

The causes for the rebellions that led to Yakup Beg's independent Kashgaria set an example of the potential of Muslim leaders to defeat the Chinese empire. That Yakup Beg was from what is now Kyrgyzstan also established a connection between Central Asia and Xinjiang. Later, for the Uyghurs and other Muslim groups that rebelled in the early 1930s, Yakup Beg's success set a strong precedent. First, it was a victory for the Turkic peoples who continued to seek independence from misrule by the Chinese government. Second, Yakup Beg's independent diplomacy with Russia, Great Britain, Turkey and Afghanistan made foreign powers and parts of the Muslim world aware of the plight of the Turkic-Muslim population in Eastern Turkestan, so that later in the 1930s, foreign powers were also aware of the possibilities of an independent republic in Xinjiang.

Perhaps as important in further motivating Turkic Muslim populations to rebel against Chinese rule was the reaction of the Manchu government after Yakup Beg's defeat by Zuo Zongtang in 1877. After reconquest, Zuo Zongtang enacted intense

¹⁵ Non-Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang are part of another ethnic group in China called *Hui* by the Chinese and Tungan, in Xinjiang. This group is Muslim, live throughout China and have acquired Han Chinese language, culture and customs.

¹⁶ Kim, 61.

Sinicization projects because he felt that Muslims rebelled because of their failure to grasp Confucian values and therefore encouraged assimilation of Muslims in Xinjiang into Chinese culture.¹⁷ Zuo tried to assimilate Muslims of Xinjiang by establishing schools that taught classical Chinese literature and promoted literacy in Chinese language. Zuo also set up a printing press for the production of textbooks in these new schools and hired teachers from China proper to run the classrooms. Zuo's vision of educating Muslims in the traditional Chinese method would allow more Muslims to enter civil service.¹⁸ In some respects, Zuo's policies succeeded, but the Muslims who entered civil service in Xinjiang were mostly Hui. The Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang remained outside the reach of Zuo's reforms.

In 1884, the Qing government decided to support Zuo's cultural Sinicization, and incorporated Xinjiang into China as a province, thereby replacing local Muslim leaders (*begs*) with Qing bureaucrats. As such, conditions and policies previously sensitive toward ethnic tensions in the region turned toward a more restrictive policy that suppressed the expression of non-Han traditions and cultures. It is in this context of the government's emphasis on Chinese culture over Islamic culture that Xinjiang entered the twentieth century.

With respect to causes for rebellion, the uprisings of the early 1930s had a proximate cause, resentment of autocratic provincial administrators, similar to those that ended in Yakup Beg's independent Kashgaria. People of Xinjiang against Chinese rule revolted against oppression by the provincial government. The appearance of this similarity had two effects. First, it encouraged rebels because it seemed to them that their actions had a strong positive example implicating prospects of success. Second, China as well as Russia and Great Britain, whose empires and diplomacy had been affected by Yakup Beg, treated the rebellions of the 1930s as if they could end with another independent Islamic government in Xinjiang. However, the ultimate cause of these rebellions included ambitions for Xinjiang to be an independent, modern, Islamic

¹⁷ Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13.

¹⁸ Lee Kuo-chi, "Social Change in China's Frontier Areas during the Ch'ing Dynasty," *Chinese Studies in History* 17, no. 3 (1984): 44.

republic. This idea developed among Uyghur intellectuals influenced by Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism.

The presence of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism also changed Xinjiang's relationship with its foreign neighbors. Considering the increased political and strategic stakes that evolved in the region by the 1930s, Muslim rebellions against the Chinese government evoked a reaction by the Soviet Union and Great Britain colored by their recent experiences with Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism within their own empires. Examining the influence of foreign powers with respect to the threat of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism also increases the number of interested parties to include Japan and Turkey. Thus, the presence of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideology, which were highly politicized by that time, made the rebellions in Xinjiang from 1931 to 1934 the beginning of a new epoch in Xinjiang's history.

During the first two decades of the Republican period (1911-1949), the provincial governors of Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin (1912-1928) and Jin Shuren (1928-1933), continued the precedent of autonomy inherited from their Qing predecessors. Unlike Yuan Dahua, the last Qing-appointed governor, his successors, Yang Zengxin, Jin Shuren and Sheng Shicai (1934-1944), all had their authority confirmed by the Chinese government after they had already established themselves as governor. That these three governors assumed their posts without direct appointment from the Nationalist central government shows the relative isolation of Xinjiang in the administration from the central government.

During this time, the autonomy of the Xinjiang governors remained intact and the Han Chinese ruling class maintained its status while accounting for only about six percent of the provincial population.¹⁹ Given these circumstances, Xinjiang's trajectory concerning almost all aspects of government depended on the resourcefulness, competence and authority of its governor. It is therefore important to understand the actions of Yang Zengxin and Jin Shuren as they affected the social, political and economic conditions which led to Muslim discontent and eventual rebellion against Chinese authority.

¹⁹ F. Gilbert Chan, "The Road to Power: Sheng Shih-Ts'ai's Early Years in Sinkiang, 1930-1934," *Journal of Oriental Studies [Hong Kong]* 7, no. 2 (1969): 230.

After assuming the post of governor in 1912, Yang Zengxin, already a high-ranking civil servant, ruled Xinjiang for almost two decades in an isolated state of relative peace and stability. A shrewd autocrat, Yang based his regime on creating a bureaucracy that would maximize his personal gain while isolating and marginalizing his enemies and potentially rebellious groups that threatened to usurp his power. He censored the press, used secret police to enforce his authority and imposed policies that channeled all political power and economic gains into his own hands. Yang monopolized trade and agricultural production and absorbed the proceeds. Economically, Yang's policies were "bleeding Xinjiang to death."²⁰ However, they were not particularly unfair to the Turkic-Muslim population. Realizing that the Turkic-Muslims of southern Xinjiang could challenge his authority, Yang tried to appease the local *begs* by redistributing some of the tax revenue so at least the leaders in southern cities could benefit from his corruption. As an additional measure to preserve his authority, Yang took personal responsibility for various offices in the government and delegated few positions of authority. According to Owen Lattimore, by 1927, all the magistrates of southern Xinjiang were related to Yang either directly or by marriage.²¹

However, it would be erroneous to equate the absence of rebellion to a sustainable peace. In fact, the skill and effort required of Yang to manage a regime such as he did lends credence to the observation that though he was an autocrat, at least he was a competent one. The same type of regime would prove to be volatile in the hands of a lesser governor. Unfortunately, Jin Shuren, Yang's successor as the governor of Xinjiang, lacked the political and administrative acumen needed to maintain order in Xinjiang. Jin tried to maintain the autocracy of his predecessor but was far less capable in preserving stability. A Han native of Gansu and witness to Muslim rebellions that devastated that area in the late nineteenth century, Jin was suspicious of all Muslims living in Xinjiang. Therefore, he enacted economic policies explicitly privileging non-Muslims at the expense of both Tungan and Turkic populations.

²⁰ Andrew D.W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang, 1911-1949*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 31.

²¹ Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia; Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), 53.

As a result, Turkic populations became increasingly incensed about measures against them, which they perceived to be driven by racial and religious bigotry. Particularly provocative for the Turkic-Muslims was Jin's policy that settled refugee communities from Gansu on already cultivated land and even gave provided a tax exemption for new settlers.²² Muslim communities dispossessed from their land therefore had to face a higher tax burden to support the increasing non-Muslim population. Furthermore, Jin doubled the land tax and monopolized private trade, which had previously been profitable for merchants trading with India and the Soviet Union. Jin also instituted a tax on the slaughter of animals and forbid travel on the Hajj.²³ In 1930, tensions that had been building up between the Turkic-Muslims and Jin's regime reached a breaking point. Aitchen Wu (Wu Aichen), an advisor sent by the Nationalist central Chinese government (KMT) to work for Jin arrived in Urumqi, observed that "The whole province was a powder mine of religious hatred awaiting only a chance to spark."²⁴

In March of 1930, the khan of Hami, Shah Maksud, whose lineage of hereditary rule extended nearly two hundred years, died of old age.²⁵ Less than a year later, the people of Hami rebelled against Jin's authority causing the "spark" described by Wu. At the time of the khan's death, seeing an opportunity to generate desperately needed revenue for the provincial government, one of Jin's advisors suggested that the Hami region should come under the direct rule of Jin's government in order to make tax collecting more efficient. Jin took this advice, but had no intention of ensuring fair treatment of the Turkic-Muslim villages in Hami. Jin's tax collectors sent to administer Hami were corrupt and insensitive toward the native populations. At the same time, Jin settled Han refugees of famine from Gansu on the land cultivated by Uyghurs of Hami. This policy forced native populations to move to uncultivated land without the usually accorded two-year tax exemption. Wu characterized Jin's policies as "sheer robbery only

²² Forbes, 46.

²³ Ibid., 40-2.

²⁴ Aitchen Wu, *Turkistan Tumult*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 55.

²⁵ Chan, "The Road to Power," 234.

thinly disguised as law.”²⁶ This arrangement further caused resentment for not only Jin, but also new Han immigrants.

However, the death of Hami Khan and the dissolution of hereditary rule in Hami, though symbolic meaning, did not immediately cause the people of Hami to rebel. However, once rebellions started, Jin’s poor management of the situation caused rebellion to spread to other towns surrounding Hami. Martin Norins wrote, “The old prince of Qomul [Hami] had been thoroughly hated by this own people, and his demise need not have created such an outbreak. Yet, once the revolt had been started it assumed devastating proportions.”²⁷ In fact, there was a period of a few months from the time Hami was redistricted and rezoned during which the people of Hami sent their grievances by telegram to Urumqi. The people of Hami never received a response and the reason why is unclear.²⁸

The final offense that led to revolt in Xinjiang occurred in early 1931 when, Cheng Mu, a Han tax collector in Hami, supposedly seduced a Uyghur girl and coerced her parents to consent to the marriage. This violation of Muslim tradition was too much for the people of Hami to tolerate. In April 1931, whether premeditated or not, riots broke out amid the wedding ceremony.²⁹ The result of this was the massacre of the Han Chinese troops in the area and capture of their weapons by the Hami rebels.

At this point, escalation of the situation still might have been prevented as similar uprisings had been pacified previously by Yang using diplomacy. However, Jin exercised force of arms instead of negotiation. Jin’s suppression of the Hami rebels was merciless. KMT reports sent back to the Nanjing central government stated that Jin’s use of force to resolve the Hami rebellion was unreasonably draconian and not in-line with the KMT’s policy.³⁰ Unfortunately for the people of Xinjiang, the chain reaction of increasing violence that resulted from the Hami rebellion lasted the next four years and included various factions trying to outdo one another in their unrestrained violence,

²⁶ Wu, 64.

²⁷ Martin Richard Norins, *Gateway to Asia: Sinkiang, Frontier of the Chinese Far West*, (New York: John Day, 1944), 41.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁹ Forbes, 48.

³⁰ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Copy—Telegram from Urumqi to Nanjing.

which Wu described at a level equivalent, in proportion, to Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union later in the mid-1930s.³¹ Therefore, an ethnic and religiously motivated uprising in Hami became the example for other rebellions to continue fighting along ethnic stereotypes.

The rebellions in Xinjiang from 1931-1934 are a complicated matter because of the dozens of rebel leaders claiming authority in addition to actual or suspected interventions by foreign powers. The following gives a general outline of the competing powers in Xinjiang to establish a timeline of the events. More importantly, however for the purposes of examining Uyghur identity, the following will also show how underlying ethnic divisions in the nature of this interconnected web of rebellions contributed to the eventual creation of ethnic identity in 1934 after Sheng Shicai consolidated his power in Xinjiang. This discussion will analyze: how fighting in the rebellions solidified perceptions and boundaries of ethnic differences in Xinjiang; how the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan was the application of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideologies present, but confined to Uyghur intellectuals; and the reaction of foreign powers to the threat of the TIRET both in how they supported and opposed the development of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism in Xinjiang.

After the initial success of the Hami uprising, Khoja Niaz and Yolbars, both advisors to the Hami khan, organized local Uyghur, Kazak and Kyrgyz forces to attack the main KMT force at Hami Old City.³² However, their attempt to force the city to surrender was fruitless in the short term. Realizing the weakness of their military forces, Yolbars, allegedly enroute to Nanjing in search of support, negotiated a deal with Ma Zhongying, a local Tungan warlord, to come to Xinjiang to support rebelling Muslims at Hami. Though Ma was already an experienced commander, with well-trained and disciplined troops, the combined Muslim forces still could not succeed in their siege of the old fortress. Bent on maintaining control of Hami by force, Jin Shuren then ordered Zhang Peiyuan, the Provincial Commander-in-Chief, from Ili to Hami to disperse the

³¹ Wu, 52.

³² Theicery Zarcone, "The Sufi Networks in Southern Xinjiang during the Republican Regime (1911-1949): An Overview," in *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early 18th to late 20th Centuries)*, (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 137.

attacking rebels. With a combined force of White Russian and Han Chinese soldiers, Zhang successfully relieved Hami Old City from its assailants.³³

Defeated, the forces of Khoja Niaz and Yolbars retreated into the mountains surrounding Hami. Ma Zhongying, having being shot through both legs, returned to Gansu where he press-ganged men to fill his ranks and also became commander of the 36th Division, the official title given to his Tungan army by Chiang Kai-shek.³⁴ At this time, Jin took actions to try to preserve his control over the situation. Suspicious of Zhang Peiyuan's loyalty to him,³⁵ Jin replaced Zhang as Provincial Commander-in-Chief with Sheng Shicai, a deputy of Zhang and a recent arrival in Xinjiang.³⁶ However, despite the illusion of momentary success of Jin's forces maintaining power, Ma Zhongying was not ready to give up his quest to conquer Xinjiang. While still in Gansu, he ordered one of his deputies, Ma Shimin, to organize a Muslim rebellion in Turfan.³⁷ The ensuing rebellions in Turfan followed the example of Hami and seemed to espouse loyalty to the cause of Khoja Niaz.³⁸ Ma Shimin was successful and soon Turfan was under the control of the Tungans.

To compound the severity of the situation for Jin Shuren, KMT garrisons in several towns on the south side of the Tarim Basin were also defeated by Muslim rebels. Only Ma Shaowu, the military commander at Kashgar, maintained his post. In the south, however, the nature of the rebellions was much more decentralized. Local leaders fought in a loose confederation against Ma Shaowu. Eventually, three brothers from Khotan, Muhammad Amin, Abdullah, and Nur Ahmad Bughra, styled themselves the three "Emirs of Khotan," and consolidated the loyalties of Uyghur, Kazak, Kyrgyz and Afghan leaders to fight against Ma Shaowu.³⁹ By 19 May 1933, forces of the Emirs successfully

³³ Forbes, 59-62

³⁴ Ibid., 106.

³⁵ In Chen's history of Xinjiang, Zhang had been privately stewing over the fact that Jin took the governorship after Yang's assassination in 1928. Zhang, who thought the post was rightfully his, still coveted the position. Jack Chen, *The Sinkiang Story*, (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 181.

³⁶ Forbes, 98.

³⁷ Ibid., 70.

³⁸ Sinmen Yasushi, "The Eastern Turkestan Republic (1933-34) in Historical Perspective," in *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 137.

³⁹ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism in Eastern Turkestan, 1930-1950". , 62.

took control of Kashgar Old City while the Tungans remained at Kashgar New City.⁴⁰ Upon this marginal success in Kashgar Old City, Sabit Damulla, an educated Uyghur who had become the political leader in the Khotani forces of the Emirs, proclaimed the formation of the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan on 12 November 1933 with himself as the Prime Minister and Khoja Niaz as the President.

In the meantime, Ma Shimin turned from Turfan to Urumqi in February 1933.⁴¹ There, Jin and his remaining forces retreated into the gates of the fortress which Ma Shimin and his army subsequently besieged. By then, Muslim forces were stronger than had been present at the siege of Hami and Jin was running out of supplies while his troops' morale proportionally diminished. On 12 April 1933, Jin's especially disgruntled White Russian troops staged a coup and forced Jin to resign and exit Xinjiang. Upon hearing the news of Jin's escape from Urumqi, Sheng Shicai declared that he and Liu Wenlong, previously the Minister of Education in Xinjiang, would be the acting military and civil authorities in the province.

Sheng, now reinforced by the North East Salvation Army from Manchuria, who had been interned by the Soviet Union in southern Siberia after their defeat by the Japanese, continued the fight against Ma Zhongying, who had returned to Xinjiang in May of 1933 and was now nominally allied with Zhang Peiyuan.⁴² For six months, Sheng and Ma fought with no decisive turn in the events. However, in January 1934, the political intrigues, which Sheng had been conducting with the Soviet Union, produced results. In January 1934, Soviet help for Sheng Shicai arrived in the form of tanks, planes, and other artillery plus manpower.⁴³ Soviet troops mixed with Sheng's White Russian ranks disguised as "Altai Volunteers" and included about two brigades. The Soviet Union furthermore sent "10,000 Sinkiang troops completely, from boots to Kuomintang insignia"⁴⁴ to help Sheng defeat Ma. Unable to hold his position in Urumqi, Ma decided to retreat southward toward Kashgar.

⁴⁰ Forbes, 82.

⁴¹ Ibid., 101.

⁴² Ibid., 111.

⁴³ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁴ Allen S. Whiting and Sheng Shicai, *Sinkiang: Pawn or Pivot?* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1958), 26-7.

Once in Kashgar, Ma's army easily dispersed the military forces and leadership of the recently formed TIRET in February of 1934. Within three months, Ma and his army took control of the rest of the Kashgar region. However, in June of that year, Ma Zhongying ordered his troops to retreat to Hami while he and a few of his close associates left Xinjiang for the Soviet Union,⁴⁵ thus leaving Sheng Shicai the de facto authority in Xinjiang.⁴⁶ Ironically, the independent TIRET, after its struggle for existence and recognition, fell to the army of Ma Zhongying who had come initially to Xinjiang at the behest of Niaz, the President of the TIRET.

By analyzing the causes of these rebellions, it is evident that there existed deep-seated resentment for the Jin's government throughout Xinjiang. Among Turkic-Muslim populations in the south, this resentment against Jin's government also included Tungans, who had been in positions of authority in the South. In addition to how these rebellions started, how they were prosecuted also reinforced ethnic differences for Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. From the segregation by ethnicity within various armies and patterns of mob violence, it is clear that ethnicity and religion were fundamental concepts in these rebellions. To solidify the idea that rebellion in Xinjiang was the result of ethnic and religious conflict, reports sent to Nanjing often gave a person's ethnicity before his name, for example, *HuiMa*[Zhongyingg] and *HanZhang*[Peiyuan].⁴⁷ Following tradition, Jin used the technique of solving a Muslim problem with Muslims and called upon remnants of Muslim divisions (*huibu*) held over from Yang's administration in the south, to put down rebellions in Hami.⁴⁸ These Muslim divisions proved to be of little effect for Jin's purposes since their loyalty to Jin was minimal and they were drawn to the side of the rebels because of their shared faith.

The rebellions included racially and ethnically motivated violence committed against soldiers and civilians alike. Throughout the conflict, all parties were guilty of atrocities against people perceived as the villainous "other." One example occurred after

⁴⁵ Forbes, 124.

⁴⁶ The reason why Ma left Xinjiang is uncertain and various sources speculate on his fate thereafter.

⁴⁷ AAH, Incoming Telegrams, #47492 from Moscow, April 27, 1933.

⁴⁸ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Copy – Telegram from Urumqi

Zhang Peiyuan's forces relieved the siege of Hami. Perhaps out of necessity, Zhang ordered the sack of the city. However, out of spite, he allowed only his Han Chinese soldiers to pillage and plunder. The results of these actions were "reprisals on such a scale that even those Uyghurs who had remained neutral felt bound to join the rebellion."⁴⁹ Similarly, Ma Zhongying gave the order, after his armies recaptured Kashgar, for his Tungan soldiers to take revenge on the towns of the southern Tarim basin for previous atrocities committed against them by Kyrgyz forces.⁵⁰

The Kizil Massacre was one infamous example of racially motivated violence during the rebellions. Perpetrated outside of Yarkand, Kyrgyz troops attacked a column of retreating Han and Tungan troops enroute from Khotan toward Urumqi and then turned their aggression on Han Chinese villagers also in the area.⁵¹ When questioned about the motivation behind such acts of violence, one Turkic rebel stated that he and his cohorts had massacred an entire Han village because "we didn't want any seeds left to spread that race."⁵² Sven Hedin described a similar account of events at the siege of Urumqi, "Uyghurs dashed upon Urumqi like wild beasts, slaughtering every Chinese they met on their way."⁵³ Therefore, at the most basic levels of observation, people throughout Xinjiang from uneducated and illiterate rural villager to highly educated bureaucrats in Urumqi and Nanjing, the rebellions in Xinjiang included racial and religious motivations.

The defeat of the TIRET by Ma Zhongying's Tungans highlights a deep conflict that existed between the Turkic-Muslims and the Tungans especially in the south of Xinjiang. Tungan-Turkic alliance based on Islamic faith was tenuous and present only in times of necessity rather than formed by the bonds of Muslim unity. How and why Ma Zhongying entered these rebellions shows the power of religion in producing romantic notions in the minds of rebels that at first created Tungan-Turki cooperation. In June of

⁴⁹ Forbes, 62.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 122-3.

⁵¹ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism..." 68.

⁵² Peter Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin's Dream of an Empire in Asia*, (New York: Norton, 1985), 222.

⁵³ Sven Anders Hedin and F. H. Lyon, *The Flight of "Big Horse"; the Trail of War in Central Asia*, (New York: E. P. Dutton and co., inc., 1936), 6.

1931 Yolbars, according to his own memoir written nearly forty years after the events, set out for Nanjing to solicit aid from the KMT government. However, while enroute in Gansu, he met Ma Zhongying and there the two negotiated a deal for the Tungan warlord to enter Xinjiang on the side of the Uyghurs in the anti-Jin rebellion.⁵⁴ Yolbars expressed his faith in Ma Zhongying's "young Muslim army" (*huijiao qingnian jun*)⁵⁵ and Ma's abilities as a commander, calling him the savior of the Muslim brotherhood.⁵⁶ In his account on the negotiations between himself and Ma, Ma convinced Yolbars that he was on the side of the Hami rebels and that he would fight to free them from the corrupt rule of Jin Shuren. Ma further promised that he could defeat Jin's forces within three months.⁵⁷

The entrance of Ma Zhongying on the side of the Hami rebels further encouraged Muslim unity among various Turkic-Muslim and Tungan insurgents. The initial zeal of religious war described by observers in terms of "uncontrolled fury" was similar to previous Muslim rebellions in Xinjiang in which Turkic and non-Turkic Muslims fought together. Partly because of the inadequacy of Chinese troops garrisoned in Hami, rebellion was successful for a short time. Reports written by Nationalist observers also noted that Ma Zhongying used the concept of self-determination to try to rouse Muslims into rebellion.⁵⁸ There was also Kazak support for the Muslim rebellions in Xinjiang who favored independence for an Islamic government in Xinjiang.⁵⁹ Therefore, the Muslims of Hami, obsessed with their hatred of Jin Shuren, temporarily shelved their differences in order to gain a powerful military ally in their revolt against Jin. That the first incursion by Ma into Xinjiang included Kazak, Uyghur and Tungan forces showed the possibility of a union between Tungans and Uyghurs.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 51.

⁵⁵ Yolbars quoted in Zhang Dajun, *Xinjiang Fengbao Qishinian [Xinjiang in Tumult for Seventy Years]*, (Taipei: Lanxi Publishers, 1980), 2751.

⁵⁶ Xinjiang Academy of Sociology, Department of History, ed. *Xinjiang Jianshi [Short History of Xinjiang]*, (Urumqi: Xinjiang People's Republic Publishing Society, 1997), 145.

⁵⁷ Yolbars quoted in Zhang, 2756-7.

⁵⁸ Archives, Academia Historica, Incoming Telegrams, #50904 from Moscow, June 17, 1933.

⁵⁹ AAH, Incoming Telegrams, #47401 from Tashkent April 24, 1933.

Third party descriptions about Xinjiang during this time also exemplify entrenched ethnic stereotypes. Mildred Cable, a missionary with the China Inland Mission, analyzed the rebellions as Islamic holy war describing the Tungan-Turki alliance, “having gone thus far, the revolt had to run its course, led by the excitable, turbulent, bloodthirsty Uyghurs and backed by the wealthy, astute, calculating Tungsans. These two classes of men were in every respect different, but linked in the brotherhood of Islam, they sand all their differences and determined to wipe out in blood an insult which had been offered to their common creed.”⁶⁰ This account continues to show racial biases that portray the Uyghurs as unrestrained and fanatical, “lusty, riotous, war-like Turkis.”⁶¹ In the opinion of a missionary traveling through northwest China, “The Uyghur and Tungan could not work together to maintain any Sinkiang republic over-night, and neither of them could stand alone apart from strong outside financial and military backing. Without the rise of a Tamerlane who shall appeal to the baser human instincts, there will be no pan-Islam in Central Asia.”⁶² Peter Fleming, a travel writer who traveled to Xinjiang in 1934, had a similarly biased view about Tungan and Uyghur cooperation under Ma Shimin at the siege of Urumqi, “Tungsans, who fight as wantonly as weasels and whose Uyghur allies were crusading for their civil rights and their religion.”⁶³ This observation indicates some perceptions that further separate Uyghurs and Tungsans based on their motivations for fighting.

However, as fighting continued, native Turkic populations saw that their condition and the prospects for the future were not improving despite the success of Tungan troops in eroding the power of Jin’s government. Aitchen Wu noticed that “The Moslems who had rebelled against Chinese rule were now forced to admit that never in the worst periods of repression had their former ruler done them such injuries as they now suffered at the hands of those who claimed to be their deliverers.”⁶⁴ Soon after the

⁶⁰ Mildred Cable and Francesca French, *The Gobi Desert*, (New York: The Macmillan company, 1944), 221-2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁶² H. D. Hayward, "Perplexing Sinkiang," *Moslem World* 25, no. 2 (1935), 192-3.

⁶³ Peter Fleming, *News from Tartary*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 251.

⁶⁴ Wu, 245.

siege of Hami, initial cooperation of Tungan and Uyghur forces started to diminish. The alliance between Niaz and Ma was also short-lived. Several events led to Niaz's increasing wariness of Ma's intentions and possible outcomes of their alliance. First, Uyghur soldiers resented the fact that they made up most of the front line while Tungs remained to the rear and did not participate in the siege of Kitai where Uyghur forces sustained heavy casualties.⁶⁵ Second, Niaz was also afraid that Ma would take over dictatorship in Xinjiang as soon as he had enough power. Considering his reputation and speculating on the reasons Ma came to Xinjiang in the first place, this assumption was probably correct.

The story of two Tungan leaders who changed their allegiances during the rebellions shows Tungan fear of the Han as well as a reciprocal Tungan suspicion of their Turkic allies. In the autumn 1932 Ma Fuming, previously a KMT commander in Turfan, changed sides to support the anti-Jin forces of Ma Shimin. Wu suggested that Ma Fumin made the decision to fight with Ma Shimin because rumors coming into Turfan from refugees fleeing Hami included those of the atrocities committed by Zhang Peiyuan's Han Chinese army against the Muslims of Hami.⁶⁶ The case of Ma Zhancang also illustrates the power of forming alliances among homogenous groups. In 1932, Ma Zhancang, loyal to Ma Shimin and therefore Ma Zhongying, came to power in Pichen east of Turfan and captured Kucha by February of 1933. At this point he allied himself with Timur, a popular Uyghur leader, and the two joined forces and moved west toward Aksu and had that city by the end of the month.⁶⁷ However, as fighting continued and Timur's Uyghur and Kyrgyz forces continued to decimate Tungan villages, Ma Zhancang decided that it was in his best interest to separate himself from Timur. Therefore, upon arriving in Kashgar New City, which he was supposed to attack, Ma Zhancang instead surrendered to Ma Shaowu, a fellow Tungan. According to British Consul-General Nicholas Fitzmaurice, for Ma Zhancang, it was "better to surrender to the Tungs than to be slaughtered by the Kirghiz."⁶⁸ These two examples, highlight how the Tungs

⁶⁵ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism...", 56-7.

⁶⁶ Wu, 71.

⁶⁷ Forbes, 73.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 80-1.

were rejected as allies by all other ethnicities in Xinjiang because of the brutality they inflicted during their campaigns.

Further emphasizing the unity of Turkic groups against both Han and Tungan forces, rebelling Turkic groups treated fellow Turkic villages with respect and restraint where none was given to Han or Tungan villages. Niaz, for example, in a gesture of Turkic mutual respect, sent a letter to Khotan apologizing for harsh treatment by Osman Ali, a Kyrgyz leader loyal to him, in the disarmament of the Khotani forces and promised leaders at Khotan that he ordered Osman to return the captured weapons.⁶⁹ However, under certain circumstances, Uyghur-Tungan cooperation still took place. Propaganda and incentives along with the fear of racial violence motivated people to make decisions they thought best for survival. For example, Uyghurs joined Ma Zhancang's army in Kashgar because of the promise of monetary reward compounded with rumors that Ma Zhongying's combined Tungan-Han forces were coming toward Kashgar.⁷⁰ Therefore, Uyghurs living around Kashgar enlisted in Ma Zhancang's army out of fear that they would be massacred by Ma Zhongying's forces if they remained in their towns and villages.

Turkic leaders were not alone in their distrust of Ma Zhongying as the rebellions continued. Because of Ma's reputation for brutality, Han Chinese and White Russian leaders were also unwilling to ally with Ma Zhongying. Upon hearing reports that predicted Ma Zhongying was going to return to Xinjiang, the British Consul reported that, "Their [Ma Zhongying and his Tungan forces] arrival is feared by many as the story of ruthless killing that preceded them. Turks are nervous, White Russians are nervous."⁷¹ There were also rumors that Zhang Peiyuan rejected a full alliance with Ma because his Han Chinese soldiers refused to fight alongside Ma's Tungan and Turkic people because they feared retaliation for the atrocities they had previously committed against Muslim villagers.⁷² Ma had earned himself recognition as the "autocrat of Eastern Xinjiang"

⁶⁹ Sinkiang Internal Situation, no 104-C, 12 Oct 1933.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ SIS, no. 242 April 1934.

⁷² Chen Huishen and Chen Chao, *Minguo Xinjiang Shi [Republican Era Xinjiang History]*, (Urumqi: Xinjiang Peoples' Republic Publishing Society, 1999), 183.

which entailed the hatred of Muslim and Han Chinese.⁷³ Therefore, by late 1933, Ma and his Tungans had alienated every possible ally they could of had in Xinjiang.

Slogans and rhetoric used during these rebellions also bolstered a Turkic-Muslim resistance to Han and Tungan invaders. Rebels in the Khotan, Kashgar and Aksu region showed a distinct struggle not only against Chinese (non-Muslim) rule, but also against Tungan (non-Turkic) power. In the south, Turkic peoples had long viewed Tungans as extensions of Chinese rule since Hui Muslims traditionally held delegated positions of authority in the South. Turkic-Muslims rebels used the slogans such as, “Protect religion; kill the Han, destroy the Hui” (*baohu zongjiao, sha Han mie Hui*) or similarly “Extinguish the Han and the Hui” (“*mie han yu hui*”) to “create an Islamic country” (“*jianli yisilan guo*”).⁷⁴ Particularly for rebels in the south, the element of religious war was much more sustained and included matching rhetoric with slogans such as “die and be a martyr, live and be a hero” and “if we die in battle, we are martyrs, if we are in good fortune, we will be the conquerors.”⁷⁵ Motivated by their economic grievances in conjunction with a call for an Islamic government, gold miners of Kara Kash made a similar statement directed at Jin’s officials, “Foolish infidels like you are not fit to rule... You infidels think that, because you have rifles, guns...and money, you can depend on them; but we depend on God in whose hands are our lives.”⁷⁶

The most obvious indicator of the underlying religious and cultural currents driving these rebellions was the eventual formation of the TIRET. In part, the cultural and religious tensions were the results of Muslim reformers who affected Uyghur intellectuals especially around the Kashgar region. Islamic schools that taught a broader curriculum to include some secular subjects first appeared in Kashgar in 1885. These schools hired teachers from abroad and sent students to Istanbul, Kazan and St. Petersburg and reached Turfan by 1913. These schools “rejected traditional canonical

⁷³ Norins, 44.

⁷⁴ Ning An, *Xinjiang Neimu [Xinjiang Inside Report]*, (Chongqing: Asia Books, 1945), 48.

⁷⁵ Sheng Li, "Xinjiang Lishi Shang De Duanming Fenlie Zhengquan [A Short-Lived Splitist Political Power in the History of Xinjiang]," *China Borderland History and Geography Studies* 12, no. 2 (2002): 46.

⁷⁶ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism," 240-1.

learning in favor of personal and national strengthening through modern education.⁷⁷

The fact that the TIRET leadership was largely made up of Muslim intellectuals who had acquired their education and political consciousness from abroad was evidence of a new cultural and political movement in Xinjiang.

For these Turkic-Muslim intellectuals in Xinjiang, objectives for reform were two-fold. They wanted to increase their position in the Chinese system by increasing literacy and economic development. They were also part of the trend coming from the Middle East and Central Asia with Muslim reforms to elevate their conditions as their cousins in Central Asia had. Uyghurs returning from study abroad and going on the Hajj started Jadid schools in Xinjiang. When rebellions started in Hami in 1931, this group saw an opportunity to make their social and religious reforms a political reality. The cultural connection with Central Asia was also a key social factor among the general population that allowed these ideas to come into Xinjiang. Leaders of the Eastern Turkestan Republic had been part of the Jadid reform of schools in Xinjiang throughout the 1910s and 1920s, in towns in and surrounding Kashgar, Khotan and Turfan.⁷⁸

The formation of the TIRET took place in an incremental process that began in Khotan in 1931 as a society of Muslim intellectuals and gradually became more militarily and politically powerful until it was able to proclaim its status as an independent government in Kashgar, complete with constitution, a President and cabinet of ministers. In 1932, Amin Bughra, the oldest of the Khotan Emirs, a student and teacher of Jadid schools, formed the Committee for National Revolution (CNR) in Khotan with his two younger brothers, Abdullah and Nur Ahmad.⁷⁹ Later, the three Emirs invited Sabit Damulla, an educated Uyghur, to join and lead their organization in Khotan. Sabit was also notable as a choice to start a new republic because he was the only Uyghur at the time who had graduated from the Russian University of Law and Government, the highest degree-granting institution in Xinjiang at that time.⁸⁰ Sabit was also a teacher at

⁷⁷ James Millward and Nabijan Tursun, "Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 73.

⁷⁸ Yasushi, 154.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸⁰ Bao'erhan, 277.

the Kara Kash New Islamic School and therefore a supporter of Muslim education reform. In addition to his status as a religious authority, Sabit had recently returned from the Hajj in 1933 and was heavily influenced by Islamic reform movements during his journey through India, Egypt and Turkey.⁸¹ Thus, the Emirs believed Sabit “brought political information and experience” to the CNR, which had been gaining popularity and included over 300 members by 1933.

Realistically, however, if the plans of the Sabit and the Emirs were going to have their desired effect, their base would have to move from Khotan to Kashgar, historically the center of Islamic culture and education in Xinjiang. As such, Kashgar had also been a major city in Xinjiang on the maps of Pan-Turkists and Pan-Islamists. To move their fledgling government from Khotan to Kashgar required two steps. The first was to take control Kashgar from the Tungans. Therefore, Sabit Damulla and the two younger Emirs led various rebel groups from around the Khotan and Kashgar areas to “rid the people of Eastern Turkestan of the oppression which they had to endure, and to set a revolutionary movement a foot.”⁸² Amin Bughra, who remained in Khotan announced, “The people were brought to ruin and cannot escape from the oppression. The oppression is becoming stronger day by day. We must mount horse for *gazat* in the way of Allah.”⁸³ Thus, under a banner of jihad, the Khotani government of the Emirs earned the support of local rebel leaders whose ranks filled with Uyghur and Kyrgyz soldiers alike as they traveled toward Kashgar.

In order to maintain the fruits of their military conquest, the Khotanis further needed help from the social and political organizations in Kashgar that supported ideals similar to those of the Committee for National Revolution (CNR). The largest and most influential of these groups was the Young Kashgar Party, an alliance of merchants and intellectuals supportive of western modernization.⁸⁴ To increase their political position, Sabit also invited Khoja Niaz, the most well-known Uyghur at the time because of his leadership in the Hami uprising, to be the President for the new republic. Though Niaz

⁸¹ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism...", 71.

⁸² Bughra quoted in Yasushi , 141.

⁸³ Yasushi quoting Halil Qidir's *Concise History of the Qyrghyz of Qaqqli*, Ibid.144.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 148.

agreed to this offer, he remained only a figurehead while Sabit Damulla continued to lead the establishment of the TIRET.

Once in Kashgar, the CNR started its transition into the TIRET. On 15 August 1933, Sabit arranged the Administrative Office of the Khotan government in Kashgar. A month later, the Eastern Turkestan Independence Association met for the first time in Kashgar and finally on 12 November, Sabit, in a public forum, proclaimed the formation of the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan. Addressing the “Eastern Turkestan Muslims,” Sabit’s speech included Pan-Turkic statements such as, “Turkestan is the homeland of Turkic people.” Just as important as his message to the people of Kashgar was Sabit’s method of delivery since this was the first time political activity took the form of a mass, public announcement.⁸⁵

In addition to proclaiming itself, any new government needs the recognition of other state actors in order to survive as a state. Even before Sabit was ready to announce the formation of an independent Eastern Turkestan, he had already tried to solicit the recognition and help of potential Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic allies. In September of 1933, the separatist government at Kashgar sent delegations to Afghanistan for aid and offered Turkish émigrés citizenship in their republic if they could help in gaining recognition with the Turkish government in return.⁸⁶ There were also allegations from TASS that reported that after the establishment of the Kashgar government, Sabit Damulla invited “Turkish emigrants in India and Japan, with their anti-Kemalist organizations, to organize his military forces.”⁸⁷ These attempts yielded little concrete support for Sabit’s independent government.

Undeterred, Sabit and the government of the Emirs pushed forth with their proclamation of the TIRET. In his declaration of independence, Sabit played on the emotions of his constituents and emphasized the need to break free from both Han and Tungan control:

The Tungans, more than the Han, are the enemy of our people. Today our people are already free from the oppression of the Han, but still continue under Tungan

⁸⁵ Ibid., 149 -52.

⁸⁶ Wu, 247.

⁸⁷ Archives, Academica Sinica Institute of Modern History, Xinjiang File, TASS News Service January, 24, 1934.

subjugation. We must still fear the Han, but cannot not fear the Tungans also. The reason we must be careful to guard against the Tungans, we must intensely oppose, cannot afford to be polite. Since the Tungans have compelled us, we must be this way. Yellow Han people have not the slightest thing to do with Eastern Turkestan. Black Tungans also do not have this connection. Eastern Turkestan belongs to the people of Eastern Turkestan. There is no need for foreigners to come be our fathers and mothers...From now on we do not need to use foreigners language, or their names, their customs, habits, attitudes, written language, etc. We must also overthrow and drive foreigners from our boundaries forever. The colors yellow and black are foul. They have dirtied our land for too long. So now it is absolutely necessary to clean out this filth. Take down the yellow and black barbarians! Long live Eastern Turkestan!⁸⁸

A declaration of the establishment of the TIRET from Niaz to the Nanjing central government used a slightly more formal approach to solicit the approval of the Nationalist government. In his description of the decisions of the Congress of the Eastern Turkestan Republic, Niaz emphasized that the people of Eastern Turkestan were exercising their right to self-determination, a policy at least written in the constitution of the Republic of China. Niaz stated five principles of the newly formed republic:

1. All of Xinjiang is part of the Eastern Turkestan Republic, and that all that do not belong should go back to where they came from.
2. The government and economics will be conducted by the Uyghurs (*chanzu*).
3. All the oppressed people now living in Eastern Turkestan will have freedom to pursue education, commerce, and to build a new nation.
4. The president of the republic, Khoja Niaz, will build a government dedicated to the happiness of the people.
5. The Republic, with its various departments, will strive to catch up with other modernizing societies.⁸⁹

The TIRET, in an effort to assert political sovereignty, put forth its own paper and copper currency, wrote a constitution and began implementing a new tax code. Its message to the masses was also in line with Pan-Turkic literature emanating from Central Asia. *Eastern Turkestan Life (Sahri Turkestan Hayati)* was a newspaper published three times a week and bore the slogan “United in Language, Thought and Deed,” the same as *Tercumen*, the most widely circulated Pan-Turkic newspaper in Central Asia at the time started by Ismail Gasprinsky. Another piece of evidence implicating the founders’

⁸⁸ Zhang, *Xinjiang Fengbao Qishinian* [Xinjiang in Tumult for Seventy Years], 3393-4.

⁸⁹ AASIMH, Xinjiang File. Copy – Telegram from Khoja Niaz to the Nanjing Central Government received March 13, 1934.

intentions on making their movement a part of the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic movements by which they were influenced was the language they chose to print *Eastern Turkestan Life*. It was not in Uyghur, but Chagatay Turkish which theoretically could be read by a wider audience including their Central Asian neighbors, but perhaps more importantly, the people of Turkey.⁹⁰

After convincing themselves that the TIRET was a functional republic, Sabit and Niaz set out to make the independent government of Eastern Turkestan legitimate in the diplomatic world by obtaining recognition from other states. It is in this effort that Khoja Niaz made his contribution to the survival of the TIRET. Niaz's petition to the British government included a detailed description of the oppression perpetrated against the people of Eastern Turkestan by the Chinese which resulted in the destitute condition of the people of Xinjiang. To add a sense of urgency and pertinence for his British audience, Niaz also highlighted the presence of Bolshevism and Communism in Xinjiang. Clearly, Niaz tailored this message to meet the point most important to the British government at the time because it related to the only reason which would compel the British to intervene in Xinjiang on the behalf of the TIRET – Soviet encroachment into India.

However, almost immediately after the declaration of the Eastern Turkestan Republic, the schisms and differences already present among the leaders of the TIRET started to break apart the solidarity of its leaders. Conflict on what to name their republic is one example where factions competed for power. On one hand, more radical members such as Sabit and the Emirs had more extreme ideals for the TIRET. They wanted an Islamic state governed by the *Shariah* independent from China. However, Niaz, the President of the republic, favored a more realistic resolution that would include compromising with Sheng Shicai as well as the Soviet Union. In a Turkish language newspaper, the republic called itself the “Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan.” However, in Niaz's correspondence to Nanjing, he used a more Chinese friendly term, “the country of Eastern Turkestan.” Coins minted under the republic also represented a dichotomy of opinions. The front of one coin had the name “Uyghurstan” in Uyghur

⁹⁰ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism...", 78.

Arabic script, but also included the flag of the KMT and the denomination of the coin written in Chinese.⁹¹ Despite an extreme position evident in the rhetoric of the TIRET, Sabit was still willing to make some compromises as the TIRET's situation continued to deteriorate. Showing his priorities, Sabit offered a truce to the Tungans instead of seeing the republic fall into the hands of the USSR with whom Niaz had already been negotiating.⁹²

Perhaps the most detrimental aspect of this fractionalization to the further existence of the TIRET was the loss, or failure to ever solidify, Niaz's undivided support. Previously, Niaz had kept some form of cohesion among Eastern Turkestan revolutionaries. However, as his dealings with enemy factions increased, his leadership position in the movement also decreased.⁹³ Examining Niaz's activities throughout the rebellions, his relationship with the TIRET was superficial, at best, and insincere at worst. After a failed attempt to defend Aksu from the Tungans in 1933, Niaz and Sabit divided their forces and parted company. Niaz and Sabit further split on grounds that Niaz had independently negotiated the dissolution of the TIRET with the Soviet Union in exchange for military assistance against Ma Zhongying.⁹⁴ At this point of imminent defeat, Niaz started negotiations with Sheng Shicai and accepted a position under Sheng's government as the Vice-Governor of Xinjiang.⁹⁵ When questioned by a Soviet official about his behavior, Niaz responded to allegations of disloyalty to the republic, of which he was the president, by saying, "the Eastern Turkestan Republic is not my creation, but that of Sabit Damulla." At this point the response of the Soviet agent was that Niaz should hand over the republic over to Sheng in order to show his allegiance to the Soviet Union, which Niaz subsequently did.⁹⁶ Further evidence of Niaz's lack of support for the Khotanis appear in British reports that stated Niaz had negotiated with

⁹¹ Chen and Chen, *Minguo Xinjiang Shi* [Republican Era Xinjiang History], 283.

⁹² Newby, *The Rise of Nationalism...*, 83.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁴ Forbes, 121.

⁹⁵ Newby, *The Rise of Nationalism...*, 89.

⁹⁶ Zhang, 3403-4.

the USSR for weapons, but intended for them to be used only by his Uyghur forces and not the Kyrgyz from Khotan.⁹⁷

Solidarity of the movement also suffered because of the ongoing military assaults on Kashgar Old City, which TIRET forces could not repel. The TIRET's pleas for foreign support and recognition also produced little effect. By June 1934, the separatist government in Kashgar effectively dissolved amid factional fighting and the Tungan assault on the city.⁹⁸ A message from Yarkand to the British Consul stated that the government of the Emirs were forced to join Khoja Niaz, but since Niaz had colluded with Soviet Union and negotiated the dissolution of the TIRET, "they [the Emirs] therefore to avoid further bloodshed would prefer to make terms with Tungan if this was possible."⁹⁹

One reason the TIRET was not successful in gaining recognition, at least as implied in British reports, was that because the TIRET looked everywhere and anywhere for help, which made the TIRET's goals seem ambiguous and more importantly made the objectives of the TIRET unclear.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the foreign powers had a considerably larger calculation to complete in order to decide if supporting the TIRET would incite some kind of retaliatory action from a competing power. Not surprisingly, the TIRET received no official recognition. Considering the state of global politics of the interwar years, the likelihood for a foreign power to intervene in Xinjiang was minimal because such an action would have magnified repercussions for international diplomacy.

The appearance of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism in Xinjiang made these rebellions different, in that they used ethnic and religious differences to instigate conflict. People therefore became more aware of their own race, religion and ultimately ethnicity distinct from other groups. This awareness of ethnic differences and their usage as a means to incite conflict was the problem in Xinjiang which led to the formalization of ethnic identity in Xinjiang in 1934. However, outside appraisals of Pan-Turkism differed. In his account of his tour to Xinjiang, Aitchen Wu, although he does not use the terms Pan-

⁹⁷ SIS, no 106-C, 19 Oct 1933.

⁹⁸ Newby, *The Rise of Nationalism...*, 83.

⁹⁹ SIS, no. 39. April 19, 1934.

¹⁰⁰ SIS, no. 108-C, 26 Oct 1933.

Islam and Pan-Turkism specifically, describes the motivation behind the rebellions he observed. “With the stories of Ghengis Khan and Timur to inspire them there are always soldiers of fortune ready to start Islamic revolts.”¹⁰¹ An American newspaper in China called the rebellions part of a “Great Mohammedan National Movement”¹⁰² Another report gave little credence to the goals of the TIRET, stating that the three mullahs of Khotan “shed an intolerable amount of blood to their pennyworth of Pan-Islamic achievement.”¹⁰³ To others, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islam posed a political and social threat to the existing equilibrium.

Parroting Soviet sentiment about Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism, Sheng made this comment about the rebellion in southern Xinjiang: “the influence and spread of Pan-Islamic ideas among the Moslem population underlined that pan-Islam as a trend did not have boundaries and that it easily could spread into the Soviet Central Asian Republics.”¹⁰⁴ Sheng’s aversion to Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism had been a policy of his two predecessors. Both Yang and Jin had tried to suppress Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic influences as well as other outside influences during their respective tenures, but people and propaganda still permeated the Soviet-Xinjiang border.¹⁰⁵ It seemed, rightly so, that the Soviet Union was still suspicious that Pan-Islam remained a threat to the stability of the Central Asian region.

Indeed, the strategic position both in time and place of these rebellions elicited reactions by foreign powers that played a significant role in these rebellions. Intensified action on the part of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and Japan was also due to an awareness of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism in Xinjiang connected to previous experience with similar movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Foreign interest and conflict in Xinjiang historically included territorial and economic competition between Britain and Russia during the Great Game. These

¹⁰¹ Wu, 36.

¹⁰² China Weekly Review, “The Triangle of Entanglement in Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan), March 18, 1933.

¹⁰³ Fleming, 252.

¹⁰⁴ Newby, “The Rise of Nationalism,” 92.

¹⁰⁵ Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 56.

suspicious continued through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and tensions increased because of the added number of players and the inclusion of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism into the realm of Xinjiang politics. The following will characterize the role of foreign powers in Xinjiang as they reacted to Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism.

Generally, the USSR's behavior in Xinjiang revolved around two issues. First, the USSR wanted Xinjiang to remain under the stable control of the Chinese government, which meant it did not want an unpredictable, independent republic opposed to relations with the Soviet Union to become popular. Soviet leaders further feared that a successful Islamic republic in Xinjiang would incite similar disturbances to arise among neighboring populations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The latter of these concerns was the result of the Basmachi Rebellions which took place from 1918-1931 and included several rebellions throughout Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

At their core, Basmachi rebels fought for a right to self-determination, but more immediately for independence from the Bolshevik government in Tashkent. What sensationalized these events was the participation of Enver Pasha, the exiled former Minister of Defense of the Ottoman Empire, as a noted leader of rebellions. With his charisma, experience and potential capabilities, Lenin initially recruited Enver to fight against the Basmachis. However, Enver supposedly had a change of heart and decided to fight on the side of the rebels in the name of spreading Pan-Turkism upon his arrival in Turkestan. Giving himself the title "Commander-in-Chief of all the Armies of Islam, Son-in-law of the Caliph and representative of the Prophet,"¹⁰⁶ Enver led his "Army of Islam" against the Red Army. Enver further proclaimed his Pan-Turkism by stating his connection with the Turks of Central Asia in their struggle against the Russians, "This is also part of my fatherland. The blood which flows in the veins of these people is the same as that is in mine. This is no Russian land, but a purely Turkic one."¹⁰⁷

Despite unlikely chances of success and eventual dissolution of the Basmachi rebellions, nationalistic leaders representing Turkestan (at that point, not yet formed into

¹⁰⁶ Glenda Fraser, "Enver Pasha's Bid for Turkestan 1920-1922," *Canadian Journal of History [Canada]* 23, no. 2 (1988): 53.

¹⁰⁷ Enver quoted in *Ibid.*, 62.

the Soviet Central Asian Republics) capitalized on this opportunity to spread pan-Turkic propaganda in an effort promote Muslim unity throughout Central Asia. Vali Kajum-Khan, Chairman of the National Turkestanian Union Committee, described the Basmachi rebellions, “All tribes without exception took part in this movement for liberation...the mass rising of the indomitable will of the people to regain their lost liberty.”¹⁰⁸ With respect to the place and time of the Basmachi rebellions, any resemblance of Pan-Islam or Pan-Turkism in Central Asia would draw the attention of the Soviet Union.

With the experience of the Basmachi rebellions ended as recently as 1931, Soviet officials were keenly tuned to the possibility that Pan-Turkism still ran beneath the surface of its Central Asian republics and Outer Mongolia.¹⁰⁹ To compound this stance against possible Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic intrigues, the similarities between Ma Zhongying and Enver Pasha were too apparent to overlook. A TASS report dated 17 July 1933, increased the threat of Ma Zhongying’s forces by linking Pan-Islam in Xinjiang with expanding Japanese imperialism: “it is well known that the rebellion has been staged under the slogan of Mohammedan unification for struggle against the Chinese and that the Islamic circles inspiring the movement have their center in Tokyo. These circles it is stated publish a paper which is distributed among the Dungans.”¹¹⁰ Reports sent from the Chinese ambassador to Moscow, Yan Huiqing at the time, repeatedly also warned of the threat posed by Ma Zhongying and his supposed quest to build an Islamic empire in Xinjiang.¹¹¹ Yan reported that Japanese officers were among Ma Zhongying’s advisors who had been trying to foment a “Pan-Islamic Empire” (*dahuijiao diguo*) which was part of the Japanese plan for Pan-Asianism (*dayazhou zhuyi*).¹¹² The reality of whether Ma was as ardent a Pan-Islamist as Soviet sources accuse him to be is debatable.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Warren Hostler, *Turkism and the Soviets; the Turks of the World and their Political Objectives*, (London; New York: G. Allen & Unwin; F.A. Praeger, 1957), 127.

¹⁰⁹ AASIMH, Xinjiang File, “Britain and Japan In and Out of Western China”, Pravda Vostoka. Translated into Chinese.

¹¹⁰ AASIMH, Xinjiang File.

¹¹¹ AASIMH, Xinjiang File, Telegram from Ambassador Yan Huiqing, Moscow to the Nanjing Central government received, December 10, 1933.

¹¹² AASIMH, Xinjiang File, Telegram from Moscow to Nanjing, January 21, 1933.

Nonetheless, a more concrete concern of Soviet interest was the whereabouts of Basmachi rebels who fled the Soviet Union. Ma Shaowu's autocracy which included the areas of Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan, had been isolated from the Soviet Union and by 1928 had become a haven for anti-communist sentiment. Refugees who fled to this area of Eastern Turkestan, most notably Yusuf Jan and Janib Beg, later participated in rebellions in Xinjiang.¹¹³

During the 1930s, the USSR reacted to the potential of Muslim rebellion in a way that showed their sensitivity to the issue of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic inspired agitations. However, this did not prevent Soviet officials from soliciting deals from Sheng, Ma and Niaz, all of whom sought Soviet support. British reports suspected that the USSR used the promise of support to cause conflict among Uyghur leaders and therefore weaken their drive against the Chinese government.¹¹⁴ The Soviet Union also continually pressured the President and Minister of Defense of the TIRET to relinquish their goals for independence.¹¹⁵ As previously discussed, both of these measures succeeded in driving Niaz and Sabit apart in their cooperation to create an independent Eastern Turkestan.

Inverse to the rise of Soviet influence in Xinjiang, by the early 1930s Great Britain's position in Xinjiang continued to decline. Diplomatically, Britain trailed the Soviet Union in the number of consulates it maintained in Xinjiang. Though Britain established its only consulate at Kashgar in 1890, it was not recognized by the Chinese government until 1908.¹¹⁶ The Soviet Union, however, had established consulates by treaty throughout Xinjiang's major cities. Despite a lesser presence, the British government still had a vested interest to protect India from suspected Soviet encroachment that could possibly come through Xinjiang. Also being in a compromised position of not having a consulate in Urumqi gave the British even more motive to support a strong anti-Soviet government in Xinjiang. Therefore, the British ideally

¹¹³ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism...", 69.

¹¹⁴ SIS, no 108-C, 16 Oct 1933.

¹¹⁵ Ghulamuddin Pahta, "Soviet-Chinese Collaboration in Eastern Turkestan: The Case of the 1933 Uprising," *Journal (Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs) [Great Britain]* 11, no. 2 (1990): 246.

¹¹⁶ Max Everest-Phillips, "British Consuls in Kashgar," *Asian Affairs [Great Britain]* 22, no. 1 (1991): 20.

wanted the Chinese to strengthen their borders against Soviet aggression; however, at the time, the central Chinese government had little capability to do so and its authority to dictate such actions by the governors of Xinjiang were minimal.

The danger therefore for the British was that amidst the deteriorating economic conditions, the Muslim populations might turn to the Soviet Union as their only resort for restoring order and prosperity.¹¹⁷ From this position, the British policy in Xinjiang was generally reactionary and in self-defense against the possibility of Soviet and Japanese threats. Thus, to maintain the desired status quo, Britain was interested in supporting changes in Xinjiang that were ideologically and economically opposed the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. The logical choice for British in the events of the early 1930s in Xinjiang was the secessionist, anti-Soviet party that formed the TIRET.

This support for Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism to try to establish a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and India would have been unlikely for Britain, which previously acted against the spread of these two ideologies. However, at this point, the British reasoned that since Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism already existed in Xinjiang, at least they could be used as a weapon for and not against them. The danger of the Soviet Union using Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism to spread Communist propaganda into Xinjiang was an unacceptable outcome to the British. Great Britain also did not want open confrontation with the USSR in Xinjiang, but also could not stand by while Soviet dominance continued to increase. Therefore, as Soviet support for Sheng increased, so did British weapons appear with greater frequency in the hands of Muslim rebels.¹¹⁸ The British also tried other ways of wooing Muslim support away from the Soviet Union, including allowing Hajj pilgrims to travel through India.¹¹⁹ As a result, at least according to allegations of Chinese and Soviet sources, the TIRET was implicated as a creature of British imperialism.

Japan's interest in supporting rebellions apparently driven by Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism was part of greater ambitions for a Pan-Asian ideology. However, like the Soviets and British, the Japanese did not want to make their support for Ma Zhongying

¹¹⁷ Hopkirk , 99.

¹¹⁸ Norins, 114.

¹¹⁹ Everest-Phillips, 23.

overt since they were uncertain about Ma's intentions and possible outcome of events in Xinjiang. However, Japan did take actions to win the hearts and minds of Muslims in Xinjiang as a means of increasing its sphere of influence. Japan had been working since the beginning of the twentieth century to promote itself as a protector of Islam and, in some respects, a qualified candidate for the position in the Far East. There was already an admiration among Asian Muslims for Japan after its defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. That event had significant meaning since an Asian power, which had acquired western technology, defeated a traditional Western power. For Pan-Islamic idealists, this example of the rise of an Asian power strengthened the idea that Islam, something traditionally opposed to the West, could have the same success.¹²⁰ Therefore, Japan, to Muslims, seemed to be one step ahead of them in the process to modernize and challenge Western powers.

Seeing an opportunity to use this momentum to advance its own dreams of imperialism, Japan encouraged Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic propaganda, which Selcuk Esenbel links to previous connections with the Ottoman Empire and Sultan Abdulhamid II. Placing itself at one end of the "Altaic Crescent" that linguistically unites Japan with the Central Eurasia from Manchuria to Hungary, Japanese propaganda urged a union of this region against communism.¹²¹ For the first few decades of the twentieth century, Japan also became an émigré haven for Muslim intellectuals fleeing Turkey and Russia. Émigrés from Russia during World War I and the 1917 revolutions set up cultural centers in Tokyo in 1928 and a Turko-Tatar society in Kobe in 1934.¹²² Under the auspices of the Japanese government, these émigrés regrouped and continued their political and intellectual activism. In this respect, by 1920, Japan had become the most outspoken supporter of Pan-Islam in Asia. Japan wanted to create allies with disaffected Muslim populations of the Tsar's colonies in the Caucasus and Turkestan. Moreover, secret organizations in Japan including the Black Dragons, a group particularly focused on Japanese activities in China, also sent agents throughout Germany, Japan, Great Britain,

¹²⁰ Selcuk Esenbel, "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (2004): 1146.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1155.

¹²² Ram Rahul, *Modern Central Asia*, (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979), 35.

the Soviet Union and Turkey to promote Pan-Islam among Muslims.¹²³ However, the closest approximation of Japan's support for Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideas come from their greater goal of building a Pan-Asian empire. They saw Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism as instruments to help unite a numerous and marginalized group in Asia, which occupied a tenuous position in the periphery of other states.

Through the 1930s, Japan continued its cooperation with Turkey to form a "citadel against communism" by supporting Ma Zhongying's forces in Xinjiang.¹²⁴ So, like the British, the Japanese supported Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic solidarity to create a defense against the ever ominous Soviet Union. In this plot, the Turko-Japanese collaboration even went as far as choosing an exiled Ottoman prince to be the leader of and Eastern Turkestan Republic upon the success of Ma Zhongying in taking Xinjiang.¹²⁵ Japan also saw an opportunity to use Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic support to gain anti-Soviet allies in Xinjiang. For these purposes, the Japanese supported Ma Zhongying's forces instead of Niaz or Sabit because Ma was in the most powerful position and therefore had the highest likelihood of success. Commenting on Japan's strategy in Xinjiang, Masumoto Kitada, Japanese Minister in Kabul, stated that Japan's purpose was, "to make an ideological drive into Sinkiang. For this, armed invasion is unnecessary. Such an ideological drive might disturb the situation in Soviet Turkestan, the weak point of Soviet Russia."¹²⁶ Nonetheless, Japan did not outwardly thwart the actions of the TIRET, but proved themselves supportive of the exiled leaders of the TIRET after their defeat in the winter of 1934. For the most part Japan's involvement was an abortive ideological ambition, which was abandoned by 1937.

Of all the outside support that appeared for various factions in the Xinjiang rebellions, that of the KMT had the least impact on the eventual outcome. Even Chiang Kai-shek's appointment of Ma Zhongying as a divisional commander in the KMT army was only a temporary pledge of support for Ma when he seemed to be the dominant and most capable power among the Xinjiang rebels. Later reports show that Chiang's support

¹²³ Sun Chengyi, 100.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 160.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 161

¹²⁶ Whiting, 36.

for Ma turned to suspicion because Chiang suspected Ma might try to establish an independent Muslim state which would either directly or indirectly invite foreign powers into Xinjiang.¹²⁷ According to Owen Lattimore, “Kumintang policy in this frontier region can best be described as one of fitful opportunism in the face of chronic emergency.”¹²⁸ In some respects, this is true. However, this type of assessment should not diminish the need to understand KMT policy. Though the KMT government from Nanjing could exercise little power in Xinjiang, the Nationalist government absolutely needed to maintain territorial possession of Xinjiang and at least superficial authority over the provincial governor. More important for the KMT was to pacify the situation in Xinjiang as quickly as possible or face the possibility of losing the province to foreign powers.

There was also extra urgency to resolve the issue of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism because it could lead to similar uprisings in Tibet and Qinghai.¹²⁹ Therefore, the KMT central government sent two envoys for pacification to Xinjiang, but no one, including Sheng, trusted Nanjing’s intentions. The Nanjing government tried many venues to try to improve conditions and steer Xinjiang toward peace, but none produced the desired results. In a precarious position subservient to the actions of Sheng Shicai, after the summer of 1933, the KMT was willing to accept a less than ideal resolution of the rebellions in Xinjiang for the sake of stability. Precisely how these conditions led to the institutionalization of ethnic identity in Xinjiang will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Aside from the Soviet Union, Great Britain and Japan, who took an active interest in the rebellions in Xinjiang, the implication of Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic currents in the rebellion reached Turkey, which had its own experiences with those ideologies and shared some previous connections with Xinjiang. Though there was a historical precedent for the hopes of the TIRET that Turkey would support them as they had supported Yakup Beg’s government, circumstances had changed and the emotional link that existed between Turks and the Uyghurs was not enough to overcome the risks for Turkey if it entered in open conflict with the Soviet Union, Japan and Great Britain.

¹²⁷ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Copy—Telegram from Lin in Nanjing to Urumqi.

¹²⁸ Lattimore, 52

¹²⁹ AASIMH, Xinjiang File, report received by Nanjing Central Government, January 15, 1933.

However, this did not prevent intrepid individuals from lending their expertise to help the Turkic-Muslim separatists in Xinjiang. Two Turks, Mustapha Ali and Mohammed Nadhim Bey were advisors to Khoja Niaz. They visited schools, advised the military and suggested a national flag instead of the use of many local flags.¹³⁰ Niaz heeded their advice and created the flag of Eastern Turkestan which took the design of the Turkish flag but used a white star and crescent on a blue background. This flag is still used today to represent Eastern Turkestan.

Turkey, therefore played a symbolic role in the TIRET movement such that it served as the Turkic homeland in the minds of Pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic revolutionaries in Xinjiang. The reaction of the Turkish press also seemed optimistic announcing, “the rebels had fought as ‘true Turks’ for the freedom and the foundation of a ‘modern State which will advance along the road to perfection.’”¹³¹ However, initial support ended after this reaction to the TIRET’s New Year’s resolution sent to Turkey in 1934. Unfortunately for the Eastern Turkestan Republic, Turkey had no interest in supporting an independent Turkic state in Xinjiang and had since 1924 been without the caliph and turned to a secular, Turkish nationalism under the leadership of Ataturk.

Therefore, given the dominance of the Soviet Union and the subservient role of other powers to Soviet actions, it is not surprising that the TIRET did not receive official recognition from either Great Britain or Turkey. The fact that Sheng received Soviet assistance and Ma supposedly had Japan supporting him, combined with the fact that the TIRET had failed in its attempts to acquire foreign support of any kind, further entrenched the idea among TIRET leaders that their struggle was one against foreign imperialism.

¹³⁰ SIS, no 107-C 9 Nov 1933.

¹³¹ Lars-Erik Nyman, *Great Britain, Chinese, Russian and Japanese Interests in Sinkiang, 1918-1934*, (Sweden: Scandinavian University Books, 1977), 115.

CHAPTER 2 - Elements of Uyghur Identity

The previous chapter discussed the ethnic and religious differences that defined rebellions in Xinjiang from 1931-1934, and how the TIRET embodied aspirations for an independent Eastern Turkestan for the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Xinjiang based on Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism. The following examines the development of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism throughout Central Asia from the late eighteenth into the early twentieth century to show how those ideologies provided the motivation for and definition of Uyghur identity.

To make this argument, there should first be a definition of Central Asia's position in the Muslim world and then Xinjiang's position in Central Asia. John Voll argues that Central Asia should not be relegated to the periphery of the Muslim world because of its geographic and cultural distance from the Arab-centered world of Islam. Instead the Muslim world, despite various cultural differences, has long been interconnected throughout history. Furthermore, Voll indicates that common experience of the Muslim world under colonialism during the eighteenth through twentieth centuries strengthened its sense of a unified Muslim nation (*ummah*).¹³² Considering the role of Central Asia in Muslim reform and modernization movements, both as a source as well as a target audience, this historic entity of the Islamic *ummah* grew stronger to bring Central Asia and the Middle East together. In this respect, the Muslim reforms that took place in Central Asia had previous movements in the Middle East as a model and example.

Usage of the term "Central Asia" in this study includes those areas that became Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in the USSR, and Xinjiang in China. Culturally, with the exception of the Tajiks, who are speak an Indo-Iranian language and are Shiite Muslims, the majority of people in Central Asia acknowledge a common ancestry of a Turko-Mongol origin, are Sunni Muslims, and

¹³² Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Islamic World," 63.

speak Turkic languages. These similar characteristics form the boundaries of a cultural “imagined community” called Turkestan among the Turkic-Muslims of Central Asia.

The experience of “Western Turkestan” and “Eastern Turkestan” under the colonial rule of the Russian and Chinese empires, respectively, further defined the Turkic-Muslim “imagined community” by imposing similar economic and political characteristics. Conquest of Eastern Turkestan by the Manchus in the mid-eighteenth century and Western Turkestan by the Russians in the late nineteenth century led to the internal colonization of Central Asia within Russia and China. As a result, an influx of non-Turkic colonists and colonial administrators led to competition and conflict between newcomers and the indigenous peoples of Turkestan. The imperial governments of Russia and China also implemented heavy-handed Russification and Sinicization programs in their colonies to assimilate their respective empires. Both Chinese and Russian governments further employed economic policies to exploit their Central Asian borderlands for agricultural production (primarily cotton and grain) and extraction of mineral resources.

It is within this Turkic-Muslim “imagined community” of Turkestan that identity formation took place in the 1920s in the Soviet Union and in the 1930s in China. The institutionalization of these identities was the resolution of the struggle of an awakened Turkic-Muslim identity influenced by Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism to bring about social reform and a call for the Turkic-Muslims to have a better status as citizens of a nation-state. This politicization of social reform in Central Asia therefore had a causal effect in the formation of the official definitions of ethnic and national identity in Central Asia for Kazaks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tajiks and Uyghurs.

To understand the development of Pan-Islam into Pan-Turkism that led to the formation of Turkic-Muslim identities in Central Asia, it is important to discuss the characteristics of Islam in Central Asia since it facilitated the spread of social and religious reform. One prominent characteristic of Islam in Central Asia is the Sufi networks that acted as the social and political connections between otherwise unlinked communities. Categorically, Sufism is a type of Islamic mysticism in which spiritual leaders perform rituals and ceremonies designed to guide people to a higher awareness of God’s relationship with individuals. Most of Central Asia adopted Sunni Islam during

the fourteenth and fifteenth century through the work of Sufi missionaries from the Middle East. Widespread conversion to Sunni Islam via Sufism, according to Micallet and Svanberg, provided a unique social structure made up of local religious and social leaders who would later use their local authority to provide organization for popular resistance to Russian or Chinese rule starting in the late eighteenth century.¹³³ A number of Sufi networks such as the Yasavi and Naqshibandi were particularly active and popular throughout Central Asia.

The doctrinal approach of Sufism also helped set the stage for it to spread liberal reforms. Even at early stages of Islam in Central Asia, Sufis proclaimed themselves to be part of a movement to support the oppressed masses against the corrupt, but powerful Muslim clerics (*ulama*) of the time. Because of Sufism's origins in reform, Central Asia was already less conservative and further from the orthodoxy than Muslim cultures in the Middle East. From the late nineteenth century, widespread Sufi networks supported and facilitated attempts at modernization. Also due to the detached nature of Sufism, and power of Muslim religious scholars (*mullah*), Sufi orders were more open to popular political sentiments because it was in their own interest to advocate social reform through political action to maintain public support.¹³⁴ Therefore, well-established Sufi networks with their consolidated religious, social and political authority, acted as the arteries used by Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism to spread throughout Central Asia.

This Turkic-Muslim "imagined community" had many parts. Ideologically, Pan-Islam established the vision of an ideal Muslim society. It included a call for all Muslims to renew and revive not only their faith, but also their awareness of secular trends in learning and politics. Pan-Turkism added a sense of shared territory and common ancestry. Finally, the actions and reforms of the Jadids in Central Asia that spread Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism emphasized bonds of common language and culture.

Pan-Islam, in its highest rhetorical form, suggested the unification of all Muslim nations to produce a political and cultural force to surpass that of European powers. As an ideology, Pan-Islam included a vast range of reforms and supported the agendas of many people. However, the most important element of Pan-Islam was that it was

¹³³ Micallet and Svanberg, 153.

¹³⁴ Ben-Adam Justin, "China," in *Islam Outside the Muslim World* (London: Curzon, 1999), 199.

positivistic and progressive. It urged that strengthening and mobilization of Islamic society was possible and prescribed practical steps to reform education, morality, and political behavior to create a stronger, unified society.

Its most influential messenger, al-Afghani, deserves credit for making the idea vastly popular throughout the Muslim world. Starting around 1883, al-Afghani built upon existing, but isolated, reform ideas and applied his consolidated ideas about Pan-Islam to Muslim grievances. Al-Afghani based his reasoning on Quranic thought, and derived practical solutions to address discontent in Muslim communities.¹³⁵ The original goal of Pan-Islamism, in al-Afghani's mind, was the unification of the Muslim world (at least spiritually), the modernization of education, economics and politics to strengthen Muslim societies from within, and ultimately breaking free from Western domination. Jacob Landau describes the importance of al-Afghani's political views in that "its recurrent theme was the mobilization of Muslims (and especially their leaders and intellectuals), simultaneously against European aggression and corrupt tyrannical rule at home."¹³⁶

Al-Afghani's diagnosis of why the world of Islam had declined revolved around four interconnected issues. First, Muslims, living under imperialistic rule for so long had lost their political consciousness. Second, Muslims had become indifferent to the economic disparity between Europe and the Muslim world. Third, Muslims had neglected learning and education. Fourth, that there was a general weakening of the Muslim moral fiber with the decline of Muslim clerics.¹³⁷ The solution al-Afghani proposed to reverse these conditions, in line with Muslim tradition, was to affect change from within in order to combat foreign oppression. A part of this approach was the recognition that Muslim rulers and clerics had become inept and corrupt in their roles as political, intellectual and spiritual leaders. Muslim societies therefore found themselves

¹³⁵ Nikki R. Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism," *Journal of Modern History* 41, no. 1 (1969): 18

¹³⁶ Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*, (New York: Oxford U. Pr., 1990), 14.

¹³⁷ Ahmed Abdulla, "Syed Jamaluddin Afghani's Ideas Blaze the Trail," *Pakistan Horizon [Pakistan]* 34, no. 2 (1981): 39

in a subservient position dominated by European colonialism because their own social and political mechanisms were not functioning effectively or efficiently.

To counteract these shortcomings, al-Afghani urged Muslims to take an active role to do the will of God instead of passively having the will of God impressed upon them.¹³⁸ Therefore, Pan-Islamic rhetoric focused on the need for the masses to understand the message of the Quran instead of just receiving it and memorizing it in rote. Al-Afghani rejected blind imitation (*taliq*) and encouraged a deeper, analytical understanding of religious texts. He also urged Muslims to root their education in reason and rationality and the acceptance of western science.¹³⁹

Al-Afghani also saw communication, the exchange of ideas and interaction of enlightened Muslims, as crucial to the self-strengthening of Muslim society. He suggested using mosques as nodes to propagate Muslim unity, establishing centers throughout Muslim nations to maintain interstate contact and forming of a central body in Mecca as a hub of learning and communication, and emphasized the Hajj as a shared spiritual experience among Muslims and an opportunity for ideas to permeate the vast geography of the Muslim world.

However, proponents of Islamic reform and modernization faced strong resistance from the conservative *mullah* and *ulama*, sometimes affiliated with the conservative political party of the Kadimists, who considered ideas of modernization, and in some respects Westernization, as unholy pollutants that would corrupt the Muslim faith. To counteract these fears that modernization would be detrimental to the fabric of Islamic morals, al-Afghani and others like him reassured critics that there was inherently nothing in Islam forbidding modernization but that Islamic society had stagnated because of a failure to understand the Quranic doctrine completely and use it to its full potential. Quoting al-Afghani, "Muslim peoples grew weak because the truth of Islam was corrupted by successive waves of Falsity...Muslims are weak because they are not really

¹³⁸ Aishah Mohamed, "A Critique of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani's Reformist Ideas and their Importance in the Development of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century," *Islamic Quarterly [Great Britain]* 45, no. 1 (2001): 56.

¹³⁹ Mortimer, "Faith and Power : The Politics of Islam," 52

Muslim.”¹⁴⁰ This way, Islamic reformers stated their case as a win-win situation where Muslims would increase their faith for the purpose of breaking away from the tyranny of European imperialism. Al-Afghani also emphasized that renewal and reform were part of the Islamic tradition and had a precedent in Muslim history.¹⁴¹ Thus, al-Afghani’s tempered his radicalism with traditional elements, therefore allowing his message to reach even the conservative segment of traditionalist *mullah*.

Part of why Pan-Islamism became such a powerful sentiment among the public was the way in which its advocates spread their propaganda. Traveling throughout the Middle East from Afghanistan to Cairo and also India, al-Afghani was well-known for his public speaking. Part of this success was that he adapted his speeches to the people receiving them and matched his ideologies as closely as possible with indigenous conditions and delivered his message in a manner comprehensible to a largely illiterate population.¹⁴²

Even though the al-Afghani’s rhetoric was lofty, the evidence he used to support his ideas was obvious and apparent at a fundamental level. The effects of Western imperialism were the most blatant evidence that reform from within Muslim society was not only necessary, but also a matter of dire urgency. Since defeating imperialism was an objective, and measurable, al-Afghani’s appraisal of the situation facing the Islamic world became popular. The defeat of Turkey in the Russo-Turkish War in 1878 supported al-Afghani’s urging that conditions for Muslims would only continue to degrade if they remained under colonial rule. Al-Afghani also used an emotionally based argument that Islamic unity was possible based on Muslim religious superiority, history of greatness and environmental advantages over the West.¹⁴³ Pan-Islam, as popularized by al-Afghani, “was an important phase in preparing minds and spirits for the local nationalism whose appeals are often so similar to his.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, Pan-Islam, because of its

¹⁴⁰ Javaid Saeed, *Islam and Modernization: A Comparative Analysis of Pakistan, Egypt, and Turkey*, (New York: Praeger, 1994), 47.

¹⁴¹ Ziaullah Khan, "Sayyid Jamal Al-Din Afghani's Reflections on Western Imperialism: An Analysis," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture [Pakistan]* 10, no. 2 (1989): 64.

¹⁴² Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism," 22.

¹⁴³ Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*, 17.

¹⁴⁴ Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism," 27

popularity, remained a useful set of ideas for later reformers to take and blend into their own agendas. Therefore, though Pan-Islam did not lead to a unified nationalism throughout the *ummah*, it provided the foundation for several nationalistic movements to start throughout the Muslim world along state boundaries.

The next element of the “Turkestanian imagined community” was a definition of its boundaries and the history of its people. The ideology of Turanianism brought exactly that to the Turks of Central Asia. Related to Pan-Turkism, Turanianism is based on the unification of all the peoples living in a crescent-shaped land mass called Turan which extends from Hungary, around the Caucasus and Central Asia, through Mongolia and ends in western China, on the basis of uniting a community of common descent.¹⁴⁵

Ziya Gokalp, an influential Turanianist closed his famous poem “Red Apple” with these lines, “The country of the Turks is not Turkey or yet Turkestan. Their country is a vast and eternal land, Turan.”¹⁴⁶ Generally, the concepts of a people and place called Turan was a hyperbolic expression of nationalism on a smaller scale. The ideological foundation for Turanianism focused on the geographic area of the steppe empires that had co-existed with China, Rome and India. Despite a different approach, the problems Turanianists described that faced the Turks were similar to the ideology of Pan-Islam in that they described stagnation and a need to revive the glorified past of their previous civilization.

In Central Asia, the adaptation of Pan-Islam and Turanianism resulted in the creation of Pan-Turkism through the reform movement of the Jadids. Practically, appearance of Pan-Turkism in Central Asia was not unlikely since ninety percent of the Muslims were Turks and ninety percent of the Turks were Muslims.¹⁴⁷ Pan-Turkism was also a powerful tool because it could include the lineage of Turkic empires of the Central Asian steppe, which extend into pre-Islamic empires dating back more than two millennia, into the collective history of Central Asia. Pan-Turkism also solved a problem characteristic of steppe tribes who had difficulty rooting their individual genealogies in one place for more than a few generations. But collectively, as “the Turks,” a more

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 63-4.

¹⁴⁶ Gokalp quoted in Lewis, 351.

¹⁴⁷ Hostler, 106.

generic term, the peoples of these tribes could claim that they were deeply rooted in Central Asia as members of the Turkic race.

Ideologically, Pan-Turkism was suited to address the grievances of Muslim Turks in Central Asia. Practically, Jadidism provided emphasis on language and culture and provided the infrastructure, through its schools and propaganda, for ideas of Muslim reform, Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism to spread. The origin of Jadidism started at roughly the same time in the Crimea as Pan-Islam was becoming popular in the Middle East. Jadidism was a social reform movement aimed at the development of the Tatar population of southern Russia through the modernization and compartmentalization of Islamic culture. Part of its aims was to secularize Islamic culture so that it was part of a more robust and diverse Muslim society. The founder of Jadidism in Central Asia, Ismail Gasprinsky (1851-1914), was a highly educated man who thought of himself as an enlightened individual. Educated in Odessa, Moscow, Paris and Istanbul, Gasprinsky was well aware of the rising currents of European nationalism, and more recently, the Pan-Islamic ideology of al-Afghani.

During his time in Istanbul, Gasprinsky was one of al-Afghani's students and afterwards made the connection that the down-trodden condition of the Muslims in his homeland was similar to those targeted for reform by al-Afghani. Gasprinsky also found common ground with the Young Ottoman/Young Turk movement based on shared visions of cultural revitalization and secular nationalism.¹⁴⁸ The significance of Gasprinsky's contribution to the later creation of Turkic-Muslim identity in Central Asia was that his worked to remedy conditions separating and alienating Muslims in the Russian empire. The results were increased levels in education and awareness of a Turkic-Muslim identity. Empowered by Jadid reforms, Muslim Turks in Russia participated in their own political organizations when the opportunity arose after the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. This kind of participation and ability to conduct politics independent from previous colonial rulers were the objects of modernization for Turkic reformers in Central Asia.

¹⁴⁸ Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East*, (London: Zed, 2001), 177.

In Gasprinsky's vision of reforms, what he would put into practice as Jadidism in Russia included elements of Pan-Islam, which was a foundation to bolster support for his cultural reforms. At the core of these ideologies was the issue of how Muslim society should handle modernization, a process which Western countries had already begun. Gasprinsky developed the following points in his plan for revitalizing Muslim culture: critical and analytical assessment of history emphasizing progress; using Islam as a cultural force that people take part in shaping; modernizing curricula in schools to include math, science and Western languages in addition to religious schooling; rights for women; and developing industry so Muslims could become economically independent from the West.¹⁴⁹

Of these five points, Gasprinsky pursued reform in education with the most fervor. The name given to this movement, Jadidism, comes from the Arabic "*usul al-jadid*" meaning "new method," which described the new phonetic system Gasprinsky organized to teach students to read and write. Gasprinsky's concern with education went beyond the method of teaching, to include training for teachers, and most importantly, the opening of traditional discourse to critical analysis that challenged complacency. By subjecting traditional Islamic thought to outside criticisms, Gasprinsky believed that Muslims could strengthen their core beliefs with developments of Western political, cultural and economic progress.¹⁵⁰

At its beginning, Jadidism in the Crimea was a cultural and social reform and looked to Russia as a supporter of a renewed Muslim society. Aiming at cultural unification, Gasprinsky envisioned that Pan-Turkism would "become the uniting force of the Central Asian intelligentsia, who were beginning to strive for cultural and social reforms."¹⁵¹ At its beginning, these reforms were aimed at better relations between Muslims in the Russian empire and were pro-Russian.¹⁵² In "First Steps Toward Civilizing the Russian Muslims," published in 1901, Gasprinsky wrote concerning the

¹⁴⁹ Edward Lazzerini, "Beyond Renewal: The Jadid Response to Pressure for Change in the Modern Age," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expression of Identity and Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 161-4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁵¹ Jung and Piccoli, "Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East, 177.

¹⁵² Hostler, "Turkism and the Soviets; the Turks of the World and their Political Objectives," 126.

lack of education, “In short, whatever may have been the circumstances of the civilized world four hundred years ago, we Muslims find ourselves today in exactly the same circumstances; that is we are four hundred years behind.”¹⁵³ According to Gasprinsky, the betterment of Muslim society had to come from an increased understanding of both religious and secular subjects. He wrote, “it was necessary to complete the teaching of religion well and in a short time, and then find a way to provide [the students] with the skills, languages and information needed for today’s world.”¹⁵⁴ To his credit, Gasprinsky was responsible for starting a movement that subsequently saw the creation of thousands of new-method schools and the broadening of education opportunities. Gasprinsky started the first “new method” school in 1883. By 1917, there were 5,000 such schools throughout the Crimea and Central Asia.

Gasprinsky particularly emphasized the proactive nature of reform: “everything in life develops and improves from year to year; nothing remains the same. The future therefore is calculable, and man need not expect only that which fate would provide.”¹⁵⁵ Muslims needed to help themselves reach better places in society and within Russia. The issue of education reform was also successful because Jadid goals worked in conjunction with Tsarist programs to bring education to populations in its newly acquired southern borderlands. Russian native-schools therefore joined with Jadid schools in their goal of spreading education and literacy to the Muslims of Central Asia and the Crimea. Therefore, Jadidism enjoyed the support of the state through the end of the nineteenth century.

Gasprinsky’s other major contribution to the development of identity in Central Asia was his attempt to create and propagate a unified Turkic language. For Gasprinsky, creation of a standardized, written Turkic language, used in a vernacular, was not only a tool for public education, but also crucial if the Muslims of Central Asia were going to advance their cultural status within the Russian empire. Moreover, Gasprinsky saw the

¹⁵³ Edward J. Lazzerini, "Jadidism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A View from within," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe Et Sovietique [France]* 16, no. 2 (1975): 252.

¹⁵⁴ Lazzerini, "Beyond Renewal: The Jadid Response to Pressure for Change in the Modern Age," 255.

¹⁵⁵ Lazzerini quoting Gasprinsky, in *Ibid.*, 164.

possibility of building unity among Central Asian peoples by showing language similarity as empirical proof of common ancestry among the Turks.¹⁵⁶

Gasprinsky's bilingual Pan-Turkic newspaper, *Tercuman/Perevodchik* meaning "Interpreter," is perhaps the clearest example of Gasprinsky's goal of not only encouraging learning among Muslims, but also mutual understanding between Russians and Muslims. *Tercuman* was successful in its circulation. It had over 5,000 subscribers in the 1880s and over 6,000 by 1900.¹⁵⁷ The newspaper was written in a simplified Turkish, which Gasprinsky purged of Farsi and Persian loanwords, along side a Russian translation. In his first editorial statement for the paper, Gasprinsky wrote, "[The newspaper] will serve so far as possible to bring sober, useful information to Muslims about [Russian] culture and, conversely, acquaint the Russian with [Muslim] life, views and needs."¹⁵⁸ Literally, Gasprinsky's newspaper tried to bring mutual cultural understanding.

Gasprinsky also took active measures to spread the reforms of Jadidism. He made several trips into Turkestan and Bukhara starting in 1893 to start Jadid-style schools. Politically, he looked to the help of the Emir of Bukhara who at that point was not only the leader of an independent Muslim protectorate, but also supportive of liberal modernizations.¹⁵⁹ In Central Asia, Jadids used six instruments to promote their reforms: new-method education, historiography, literature, press and publishing, religion and theater. These tools were a mixture of venues designed to reach not only educated Muslims such as themselves, but more importantly the majority of people in Central Asia who were still illiterate. Jadids also introduced new forms of expression into Central Asia including prose, fiction and drama written in a vernacular form of the existing literary language. Through these types of activities, Jadidism's effect of stirring reform and introducing new ideas permeated all levels of Central Asian society.

¹⁵⁶ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study of Irredentism*, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1981), 179.

¹⁵⁷ Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, 10.

¹⁵⁸ Gasprinsky quoted in Edward J. Lazzarini, "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii's *Perevodchik/Tercuman*: A Clarion of Modernism," in *Central Asian Monuments* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992).

¹⁵⁹ Edward Lazzarini, "From Bakhshisarai to Bukhara in 1893: Ismail Bey Gasprinskii's Journey to Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* 3, no. 4 (1985): 77-9.

After Gasprinsky's trip to Central Asia, Jadidism in Central Asia developed its own characteristics tailored for its local audiences focused more on the issues concerning Central Asia, which at this time was still fighting the central government as well as the provincial government in Tashkent. Following Gasprinsky's example of using mass media, Jadids in Central Asia had twenty-three publications in circulation by the beginning of the twentieth century. These publications addressed public, not political, issues, including: purifying religious practices, revolutionizing religion and the perfecting of social institutions. As a source of news, Jadid writers also took the liberty of spinning current events with Jadid interpretations.¹⁶⁰ These newspapers and journals circulated into Central Asia and served as a venue for the spread of not only ideas, but also discussion about conditions and the future of modernization and enlightenment.

These discussions later gravitated toward politics and started to engage in forming an identity among the educated elites of the Central Asian oases. The importance of these publishing ventures was that they "combined the influence of print culture and official culture and reinforced the awareness among educated Sarts, the sedentary, urban populations of what is now Uzbekistan, of a shared ethnic identity tangibly experienced in daily publication through a common shared language."¹⁶¹ Therefore, the Jadid focus on language, education and political activism played an important role in the later development of ethnic identity in Central Asia by spreading political and cultural versions of Pan-Islam and Turanianism as Pan-Turkism.

With regard to fomenting a concept of identity in Central Asia, the effect of language reform and increased publications in Turkic languages was influential in its effect on developing ethnic identity in Central Asia. In Central Asia, Jadids worked to form a standardized Sart, which later became Uzbek, language.¹⁶² The Jadids also used the term Turkestan in their publications and other displays to cultivate a broader sense of identity that supported Turkic-Muslim interests in political events at the time. Usage of

¹⁶⁰ Allworth, 153.

¹⁶¹ Daniel R. Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 75.

¹⁶² Brower, 71.

terminology such as “us Turkestanians” also helped to promote community building.¹⁶³ Later the newspaper *Great Turkestan* expanded the meaning of Turkestan to include parts of Kazakhstan and Xinjiang and defined itself more by culture and race instead of territory.¹⁶⁴ In this respect, Jadids devoted a portion of their efforts to create national identity among the urban populations.

Using “Turk” and “Uzbek” instead of “Sart,” Jadid rhetoric through newspaper or public oratory focused on building an “imagined community” based on national consciousness of shared identity. Through ideas of modernization and religious reform, the Jadids started to imagine themselves in a global context, “as citizens of a modern, interconnected world, of a community of Muslims within it and of a community of Turks that overlapped with the community of the world’s Muslims.”¹⁶⁵ Khalid credits the rhetoric of Pan-Islamism as a key component that allowed this framework to solidify.

Gasprinsky’s ideas behind Jadidism were also significant because they presented an alternative way of thinking for Muslims that reinforced the potential of Islamic society and the ability for progress. The result of these changes was that by the 1910s, students educated in Jadid-reformed *madrasa* started to form a Muslim intellectual class of *mu’allims*, or as Gasprinsky called them “young mullahs,”¹⁶⁶ which means teacher but lacks the quality of official religious training. Though they did not have traditional religious training, these young “teachers” started gaining popularity within their communities and challenged the established *ulama* for local leadership. Gaining popularity and support mosques, schools and other Muslim institutions started receiving more patronage from the state and private contributors to build larger facilities for public learning and gathering. Jadidism also connected with the merchant middle class on the

¹⁶³ Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present, a Cultural History*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute, 1990), 121.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁶⁵ Adeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, (Berkeley: U. of California Pr., 1999), 187.

¹⁶⁶ Gasprinsky, “First steps” in Lazzarini, “Jadidism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A View from Within,” 253

grounds of promoting progress in society since this group was also more moderate than the mullah and were willing to use their resources to support Jadid reforms.¹⁶⁷

When placed in the hands of the urban bourgeoisie, Jadidism mixed with other forms of nationalism and became a “political phenomenon with cultural reform as a major weapon.”¹⁶⁸ Politicization of Jadid ideas also came as a result of competition with the *ulama* that traditionally held the political power. By placing themselves culturally and socially in support of reform, Jadids put themselves in a formidable position to challenge the *ulama*'s political power. The political actions of some Jadids will be discussed later.

At this point, we have established that the Turkic-Muslim “imagined community” gained its definitions and boundaries through Pan-Islam, Turanianism and Pan-Turkism and became motivated to assert Turkic-Muslim cultural and political identity through the Jadid movement. The next chapter will examine how this new type of ethnic awareness among Muslims Turks arrived at the ethnic label “Uyghur” in Xinjiang in the mid-1930s.

¹⁶⁷ Allworth, " 142

¹⁶⁸ Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 56.

CHAPTER 3 - Forging Uyghur Identity

The previous has shown the development of Pan-Islam and Turanianism into Pan-Turkism and how those movements defined cultural and social boundaries necessary for the formation of Turkic-Muslim identities in Central Asia. This chapter will first illustrate characteristics of the Uyghurs that made them especially attuned to the developments of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism. Then, it will show how the creation of Uyghur identity was the confluence of Turkic-Muslim identity among Uyghurs and the need of the Chinese central government to adopt a term to label the peoples of Xinjiang that was mutually agreeable to both groups.

In his study of the formation of the Central Asian Republics in the Soviet Union, Arne Haugen speculates that Muslim nationalism included elements of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism was more prominent among the sedentary populations because they were mostly formed around the school and the mosque and social interaction at those fixed locations.¹⁶⁹ The sedentary oasis dwellers that took the label Uyghur had already become the dominant population in Xinjiang at that time.

Not only was this group the most numerous among the peoples of Xinjiang, but because they were more involved with agriculture and more of them were merchants or traders, they were generally wealthier and therefore had more money for education and could afford to send their children to study abroad in the “new schools.”¹⁷⁰ Therefore, even before rebellions started in 1933, the Tarim oasis populations were already in a position of higher economic status and political leadership. From a socio-economic point of view, the oasis dwellers of Xinjiang were similar to the Jadids in the Soviet Union. Also, the Uyghurs, more than any other group in Xinjiang, belonged to Sufi brotherhoods, which also linked them to trends developing to their west.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁷⁰ Newby, "The Rise of Nationalism..." 28.

¹⁷¹ He Ping, "Shilun Xinjiang Diqu Yisilanjiao De Minzu Tese [On the National Characteristics of Islam in Xinjiang]," *Journal of Xinjiang University (Social Science Edition)* 31, no. 4 (2003): 79

The Hajj was also important in connecting the Muslims of the world. This was not only because it brought Muslims from around the world together in the same location, but the pilgrims were also united in the purpose and participation in religious ritual. Particularly during the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the pilgrimage to Mecca became a process in which people exchanged ideas and then brought new perceptions and ideas back to their homelands. Considering the amount of wealth needed to go on the Hajj as well as the physical hardship of frequent political obstacles facing the Muslims of Central Asia, those that did go on the Hajj returned home with new knowledge and accordingly a higher status. The prestige of Hajjis naturally made more Uyghurs part of the upper echelon among Muslims in Xinjiang, and therefore in a position of respect and leadership. Both Sabit Damulla and Khoja Niaz were Hajjis.

Common usage of language also facilitated communication among intellectuals. The spoken Turkic languages of most of Central Asia including Kazak, Uzbek, Uyghur, Kyrgyz and Turkmen are descendants of Chagatay Turkic and are to some degree mutually comprehensible.¹⁷² Written in Arabic script, the literary traditions of these Turkic languages were related to Arabic and Persian and easily shared. Because of the role of the Islamic primary and secondary schools (*mekteb* and *madrasa*) as the major places for education, universal usage of the Arabic script as well as a focus on classical Persian and Arabic texts, promoted unity among the educated and wealthier members of Central Asian society and strengthened the spiritual and social connections between Central Asia and the Middle East. This common literary language, though accessible to a smaller percentage of the Central Asian population, was still important in connecting the educated circles in society where Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism would later develop and spread outward to the masses.¹⁷³

In his assessment of the nature of Sufi networks in southern Xinjiang, Zarccone describes how Sufis such as the Emirs of Khotan, in southern Xinjiang, were significantly drawn by attempts to create Muslim states by their western neighbors in the Ferghana

¹⁷² Hendrik Boeschoten and Marc Vandamme, "Chagatay" in *The Turkic Languages*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 146.

¹⁷³ Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians Under Russian Rule : A Study in Culture Change*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 189-90.

valley and likewise became adamant about asserting the *Shariah* in their own oases.¹⁷⁴ Zarcone uses the Khotan Emirate and Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan as evidence to show that Sufism had taken on political agendas by providing the structure and formation for political change to take place.¹⁷⁵ Sufi leaders in Xinjiang such as Amin Bughra wanted to make the *Shariah* the only law of the oases because they felt it was part of the native culture and therefore more suitable for use in civic matters than the government imposed by an alien culture. In reaction to this new, political leadership, provincial authorities in Urumqi imprisoned many Sufi leaders because of how powerful they were at attracting not only inter-oasis support, but also empathy from their Sufi brothers in the Ferghana valley.

Because of these conditions, the Uyghur intellectuals of Xinjiang saw themselves clearly as members of the “imagined community” created in Central Asia defined by Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism. Therefore, faced with an increasingly oppressive Han Chinese regime along with the degradation of traditional local leaders, the ideologies of Pan-Islam and pan-Turkism found fertile soil among the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Xinjiang.

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Muslim intellectuals returning to Xinjiang from travel and study abroad realized that the condition of Muslims in Xinjiang was far behind those of the rest of the Muslim world. Marshall Broomhall described one Menla-abdul Kalim who was as he described, a “Chinese Turk” educated in Egypt and Turkey, who upon returning from the Hajj was convinced that the *madrasa* and *mektebs* of his homeland needed new methods of education. He advocated inviting teachers from Istanbul and India and obtaining a printing press from India to publish a newspaper in a vernacular to encourage learning and literacy.¹⁷⁶

Many others followed in the footsteps of Kalim and brought similar impressions back from their travels. Sufis who gone on the Hajj or had been students abroad had been exposed to the concept of participatory government and wanted to establish representative rule, a practice they saw as modern, in their homeland once they

¹⁷⁴ Zarcone, 120.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 128.

¹⁷⁶ Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China; a Neglected Problem*, (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966), 266-8.

returned.¹⁷⁷ Several Jadid-style schools appeared in Xinjiang started either by those returning from abroad or others coming into Xinjiang. In 1908, for example, Tatar Jadids started a school for girls that taught in Turkic language in Ghulja.

However, Jadid activities were not limited to schools. In 1913, a group of Hajjis from Kashgar attended a meeting of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) in Istanbul and asked that the Ottoman government establish a presence in Kashgar. As a result, Ahmed Kemal left Istanbul in February of 1914, traveling via Odessa and Tashkent to reach Artush in March of that year. It was his intention to start a school in Kashgar. However, failing to solicit enough financial support in Kashgar, he started a school in Artush under the patronage of Husayn Bey. This school accepted students who had already completed a *madrassa* education, were proficient in Arabic and Persian and taught them a Jadid- style curriculum.¹⁷⁸ Masud Sabri, who later commanded Muslim forces at Kashgar, also started similar schools in 1921 and 1927.¹⁷⁹

Burhan Shahidi, later the President of the Ili based Eastern Turkestan Republic from 1944-1949 and subsequently the first governor of Xinjiang under the PRC, was educated in a “new method” madrasa in Kazan and returned to Xinjiang in 1912.¹⁸⁰ Upon returning to Xinjiang, Shahidi continued to support the spread of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism which he had learned while abroad. Shahidi circulated Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic propaganda he received via mail from Central Asia, one of these publications was Gasprinsky’s *Tercumen*. In addition to spreading propaganda, Shahidi also started his own journal called *Turan*. This publication in conjunction with Kemal’s *Yengi Hayat* (*New Life*) were outlets for Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic expression among young Jadids in Xinjiang.¹⁸¹

However, resistance and opposition to the “new schools” and their instigators was strong from both conservative traditionalists from within the Muslim community as well as from Yang Zengxin. At this point, the traditional Kadimists saw themselves pitted

¹⁷⁷ Zarcone, 130.

¹⁷⁸ Hamada, 34-6.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 40-1.

against not only Muslim Jadids, but also Bolsheviks and Chinese Nationalists (whom they called Chinese Jadids).¹⁸² Reaction to the Islamic reform and modernization was similar in the political sphere. Yang cracked down the Kashgar schools and imprisoned Ahmed Kemal, an act that enraged a large group of Muslims. Deciding to soften his reaction, Yang agreed to free Kemal on the condition that the Kashgar schools would be turned over to his control.¹⁸³ Despite Yang's attempts to subdue and sequester the activities of Muslim reformers, after 1920, Jadid, Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic activities continued secretly. Yunus Beg, for example, who later led Uyghur and Kyrgyz soldiers in rebellions supporting the Republic of Eastern Turkestan, participated in the continued underground publication of *Yengi Hayat*.¹⁸⁴

In addition to cross-boundary cultural similarities, specific conditions within Xinjiang amplified the effect of Pan-Islam and Pan-Turkism and made these ideologies particularly applicable for the Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. Basically, the creation of Uyghur identity in Xinjiang as a result of the rebellions surrounding the Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan as influenced by Pan-Turkism succeeded with the support of efforts of the KMT government to define its policy concerning ethnic nationality throughout China. Common tropes of modernization and anti-imperialism combined with self-determination for ethnic nationalities espoused by the Nationalist government encouraged the seeds of Turkic-Muslim identity that had come to Xinjiang through Central Asia to flourish in Xinjiang as part of China. The following explains why both the Uyghurs and the KMT government needed to reach an agreement on Uyghur identity and how that agreement resulted in a favorable change for both parties.

For Turkic Muslim peoples living in Xinjiang, discontent and desire for independence caused by oppression from the Chinese government came from two different forms of maltreatment by the Chinese. One was the unfavorable political and economic position Turkic populations occupied under Manchu and Han rule. The other was the subjugation of Islam in the hierarchy of Han Chinese culture. Therefore, for the Han Chinese and the Turkic-Muslims, there was mutual rejection of one another's

¹⁸² Ibid., 38.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 39.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 41.

appraisal of the other. At a basic level, mainstream Chinese culture has perceived Islam as inferior to Confucian virtues, so Muslims were similarly perceived to be inferior.¹⁸⁵ However, Muslims in China see themselves in an exact opposite position of being more virtuous and superior to non-Muslims, thus creating a roadblock to any kind of progress that may lead to harmonious coexistence between the Han Chinese and Muslims.

But this hindrance was not necessarily insurmountable. In fact, Muslims in China who lived in Ham communities, spoke Mandarin and participated in mainstream Han customs have become normalized members of Chinese society and were given the label *Hui*. However, the acceptance of the *Hui* into Chinese culture has been a long process starting in China during the ninth century where Arab, Muslim traders entered China's Northwest and Southwest.¹⁸⁶ So, by the twentieth century, Muslims were already represented in Chinese culture by the *Hui*. However, though the majority of people in Xinjiang were Muslims, cultural and linguistic differences still hindered the acceptance of Turkic peoples into Han culture.

Therefore, Turkic-Muslims in Xinjiang, ideologically, did not share a reconciliatory view of the Chinese with their Hui co-religionists, and neither were the Han Chinese able to interact with Turkic Muslims based on an understanding of Muslim cultures learned through interaction with the Hui. However, the intensity of the rebellions in Xinjiang and the amount of resources and attention the KMT officials spent on maintaining their control in Xinjiang during the early 1930s was a formative experience that resulted in the appearance of Turkic-Muslim identities separate from the Hui.

The problem of Turkic and Chinese estrangement and animosity has its roots in several factors including the Qing settlement of Xinjiang starting in the mid-eighteenth century and centuries of poor policy management by the Qing and then Republican

¹⁸⁵ Richard C. DeAngelis, "Muslims and Chinese Political Culture," *Muslim World* 87, no. 2 (1997): 157.

¹⁸⁶ For detailed studies on the history of how the *Hui* have become acclimated into Chinese culture and how this group of Muslims maintains their religious identity, see Dru Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in China's Northwest*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997) and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: a Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

governments of China. After 1759, Xinjiang was an internal colony of the Manchu Empire. Due to the geographic distance of Xinjiang from Beijing, Qing administrators in Xinjiang were necessarily granted high degrees of autonomy to govern the region. The vast area of Xinjiang also posed a logistical challenge to the Qing bureaucracy. When the Qing first conquered Xinjiang, it had about 25,000 troops to manage the native population of over 600,000 people spread over two million square kilometers.¹⁸⁷

In light of their manpower and financial shortages, the Qing adopted a policy of “flexibility and non-intervention” throughout its newly acquired borderlands.¹⁸⁸ The overriding objective for all of their borderland policy, which became especially problematic in Xinjiang, was to make the region economically independent and eventually have it contribute to the economy of inner China. Therefore, the Qing government gave their administrators in Xinjiang leeway to improvise policies and mandates even if they were not completely within the letter of the law. Autonomy, therefore, became a characteristic of the governing style that would have a significant impact on later rulers until 1949.

It was also part of Manchu policy to use ethnicity as a social division in Xinjiang in order to maintain their own superiority as the ruling class of China.¹⁸⁹ This was the resultant combination of several factors. First, as foreign people who were in a minority ruling over a Chinese majority, ethnicity and status as a Manchu necessarily became an indication of political power. Second, with the expansion of the Qing Empire outward in all directions, the Manchus required more personnel to fill the positions of the expanded bureaucracy. Therefore, it took advantage of the political structure already in place in Xinjiang to increase the power of their officials.

Realizing that economic gains increased directly with social stability, the Qing government also incorporated the local *begs* as part of the central bureaucracy.¹⁹⁰ By

¹⁸⁷ James Millward and Peter Perdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 57.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁸⁹ James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864*, (Stanford: Stanford U. Pr., 1998), 206.

¹⁹⁰ Laura Newby, “Beggars of Xinjiang: Between Two Worlds,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61, no. 2 (1998): 278-297.

empowering native leaders, Manchu rulers effectively expanded their power without having to expand their numerical presence in Xinjiang. The Manchus therefore modified and absorbed the begs into their governmental rank system. This change eroded the traditional meaning of the word beg as a religious leader and in favor of a secular title in a stratified, vertical bureaucracy. The Qing also realized that the position of the begs could be a positive tool for extending its authority. By co-opting the begs of Xinjiang, The Manchus could use the expertise and authority of existing local leaders to facilitate bureaucracy and economic development to a larger extent within Central Asia.

Though Qing policy in Xinjiang struggled to make the region economically self-sufficient, Xinjiang had nonetheless become a non-negotiable part of the Qing empire by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Great Game between Russia and Great Britain especially made Xinjiang a crucial place the Qing government needed to spend resources to maintain the integrity of the empire. One method the Qing used to try to solidify their claim to Xinjiang was to increase the Chinese population in the province. State-sponsored migration from elsewhere in China increased the population of Xinjiang with a destabilizing effect. This influx of population into Xinjiang displaced native populations especially in and around Ili, Urumqi and Hami. Those forced off their land by new settlers moved southward and into conflict with the existing oasis populations.

But the Qing government did make a conscious effort to control the settlement of Xinjiang by peoples from inner China. Early in the colonization process, the Qing paid particularly close attention to the relocation of exiles to Xinjiang. Generally the Qing avoided settling newcomers south of the Tarim Basin, not only because it was the most difficult to reach logistically, but because the oases cities south of the Tianshan had a higher concentration of Turkic-Muslim populations whereas areas north of the Tianshan had a relatively more sparse population. There was also fear that settling Muslim convicts, or entire Muslim communities among their Turkic co-religionists would encourage continued bad behavior.¹⁹¹ However, this kind of meticulous planning started to break down as Xinjiang's population increased and the state of events for the Qing became more difficult. By the nineteenth century, Qing administration in Xinjiang

¹⁹¹ Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820*, (New Haven: Yale U. Pr., 1991), 68-9.

started decaying at a rapid pace. In addition to Yakup Beg's rebellion, the Qing government was weakening at its core while foreign imperialism became stronger.

The existence of these problems took a new dimensions after the Chinese Republican revolution in 1911. Immediately after the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Muslims from Gansu, mostly of the Naqshibandi Sufi order, entered Xinjiang to promote the idea of "Muslim brotherhood." These Gansu Sufis also started "new-method" Muslim schools in Xinjiang and encouraged a revival of Islamic religious practices.¹⁹² Muslims, both Turkic and non-Turkic, were also part of the uprisings that took place in Xinjiang immediately after the revolution. They were part of the Independence Party as well as the Society of Brothers and Elders in Ili and Urumqi.¹⁹³ Rebellions also took place in Hami in 1907 and 1912, but were resolved by the diplomatic maneuvering by Yang. At the same time, Turkey sent emissaries to Xinjiang to gain support of an Islamic government in China. Not without reason, Yang viewed Pan-Islam as a threat not only to his authority, but as a tool of foreign powers to infiltrate Xinjiang. His suspicions grew when he heard rumors, in 1924, that the Soviet Union had announced that they would permit Xinjiang émigrés already in Kazakhstan to form their own Islamic government.¹⁹⁴

Therefore, Yang tried to play the role of the enlightened despot. Yang had a vision of maintaining control of Muslims in Xinjiang which he did little to achieve. According to Owen Lattimore, Yang expressed his views on the Muslims of Xinjiang and how the Han Chinese could effectively rule them:

Only by a Republican federation can racial antagonism be gradually dissolved. Most important of all is to realize political and administrative reform. The land of the Moslems should not be regarded as 'fish or meat' – an object of exploitation. It must be demonstrated that the indirect rule of the Chinese is superior to the autonomy of the Moslems. Otherwise it would be difficult to avoid internal conflicts and to ward off aggression from without.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² *Zhongguo Xinjiang Diqu Yisilan Jiao Shi [History of Islam in Xinjiang]*, (Urumqi: Xinjiang People's Republic Publishing Society, 2000), 193.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 203-5.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 256-7.

¹⁹⁵ Lattimore quoting Yang, 55-6.

Despite the pretense of magnanimity, this appraisal of the possibilities for the Muslims of Xinjiang to voluntarily submit to any Chinese superstructure was fundamentally flawed. Yang did not try to win over Muslim sentiment in a productive or sustainable way. Instead, he divvied some of this earnings with some local begs in exchange for the maintenance of peace and order. In Hami, for example, the same family had been ruling that oasis for nearly two centuries before its authority was dismantled by Jin Shuren.

After the coup of 12 April 1933, Nanjing sent auditors to investigate the circumstances in Xinjiang.¹⁹⁶ In a report sent by a Nationalist government agent, the author describes that the source of the Muslim rebellions was a reaction to the poor conditions suffered by the people due to degraded relations with inner China as well as deterioration of foreign trade. This report also cites the popular support for a coup to overthrow Jin. Aside from the poor economic conditions causing rebellion, this report also cited the resentment of Muslims against Chinese rule as a result of the suppression of the education system in Xinjiang.¹⁹⁷

In recognition of the situation in Xinjiang, Wang Jingwei, Chairman of the KMT Executive Yuan, accepted Sheng Shicai's position as military and civil authority in Xinjiang. He told Sheng to bring foreign and military affairs under KMT control and to solve the ethnicity problem.¹⁹⁸ For the Nationalist government, plans for developing Xinjiang were part of nation-building and keeping China territorially intact. The goal was to create a Chinese nationality (*zhonghua minzu*) that would unify all the people of China.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, Sheng decided that defining ethnicities was the first step to keep the people in China and therefore their land in China.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Copy – Telegram from Nanjing to Urumqi.

¹⁹⁷ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Telegram from Urumqi, April 14, 1933.

¹⁹⁸ Gao Sulan, "Sheng Shicai Ru Xinjiang Zuzhen Jingwei, 1928-1934 [Sheng Shicai's Entrance Into Xinjiang Government and Military, 1928-1934]," *Journal, Academia Historica* 22 (1997): 135-154., 148.

¹⁹⁹ Li Huan, *Xinjiang Yanjiu [Xinjiang Study]*, (Taipei: Sichuan Document Research Society, 1977), 71-2.

²⁰⁰ AAH, Received Telegrams, #48980 from Urumqi May 22, 1933.

However, how to define the mosaic of ethnicities present in Xinjiang was Sheng's challenge. By the end of the 15th century, after the "Turkification" and "Islamicization" settled in most of Central Asia, the demographic that would later become the Uyghurs started developing localized identities. These "oasis identities" were the result of the geography of the Xinjiang region where deserts and mountains dictate patterns of human settlement. Jon Rudelson describes, in a social anthropological analysis, that the Xinjiang region actually contains "many Xinjiangs."²⁰¹ Rudelson names four such distinctions based on social, economic and political characteristics (see Figure 3.1).

The northwest region, bordering Mongolia and Kazakhstan not only has a higher percentage of Mongol, Kazak and Russians populations, but traditionally has closer ties with the Soviet Union via trade on the Ili River. The major cities, Ghulja and Urumqi, are the two largest cities in the Xinjiang province. The eastern region, centered on Hami is the entry point of the Gansu pass entering Xinjiang from China proper. This region, because of its proximity to inner China, has a stronger connection with the Hui and Han Chinese cultures. These two regions have been the areas historically most inhabited by Han Chinese and Tungan immigrants.

Comparatively, southern Xinjiang is more isolated from China and Russia by the Tianshan, Kunlun and Pamir mountain ranges and the Taklamakan desert. This region, also referred to as Eastern Turkestan compared to the northern region sometimes called Zungaria, maintained strong local government among the Turkic-Muslim peoples of the region who were more strongly connected to their cultural, religious and ethnic brethren of Central Asia. Farming in the south is also more difficult since arable land is more scarce compared to regions in the north. Because of the difficulty in traversing from Ili south through the Taklamakan Desert and Tianshan, the connection between Ili and Kashgar, the largest city in the south of Xinjiang, was relatively little prior to the advent of highways and railroads that now connect the two.

Rudelson further divides the southern region of Xinjiang into two parts. First is an area connected by the cities of Kashgar, Aksu, Kucha and Korla. Because of the geographic proximity, these oases have historically shared a stronger tie with Muslim

²⁰¹ Justin Jon Rudelson, "Bones in the Sand: The Struggle to Create Uighur Nationalist Ideologies in Xinjiang, China" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1992), 32.

culture and social movements emanating from Central Asia. Further south, cities including Khotan, Keriya and Yangi Hissar, though they are still relatively isolated from outside influence compared to other regions in Xinjiang, have had more interaction, through trade, with British India.

L.A. Chvyr, using a different approach based on observation of clothing and customs, finds similar results. Chvyr defines three regions of different types of identity in Xinjiang: West, Northeast and Southeast (see Figure 3.2). Similar to Rudelson's conclusions, Chvyr indicates that the western region of Xinjiang has strong connections with Central Asia. In the Northeast, including Hami and Turfan, self-identification is much more specific. In contrast, the Southeast, a region least infused with outside populations have the strongest ties to locality. Under either scenario, conditions of Uyghur identity in Xinjiang were varied and not discretely defined in a pan-oasis respect.

Therefore, observers writing about Xinjiang used ethnic labels of their choosing. Some English language sources refer to the Uyghurs as Turkis, although this is sometimes a generic term including Kazaks and Kyrgyz. The British Consul-General in Kashgar was fairly consistent by 1933 in its use of Turki and Kyrgyz to distinguish the sedentary and nomadic peoples of Xinjiang. Other less official documentation, including personal memoirs, use the term Turki to cover all Turkic peoples, in conjunction with Tungan meaning Chinese Muslims. Missionaries in China often used "Mohammedan" in general to mean all Muslims, but then "Chinese Mohammedan" to mean the Hui and "Turkic Mohammedans" to mean Uyghur.²⁰² Eric Teichman makes a similar comparison in his travel account by talking specifically about "[Muslims] of a Turkish race" which he divided into the Kazaks, Kyrgyz and Uyghur which he equates for readers to "Sart" and "Chantou."²⁰³

Chinese sources are even more varied and inconsistent in their use of language. KMT correspondence of the time shows that the government was using the *minzu* (a term used to mean nationality) concept, in conjunction with the previously popular *chantou*

²⁰² Cable and French, 303.

²⁰³ Eric Teichman, *Journey to Turkistan*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, limited, 1937) , 16.

meaning “turban-headed” or simply *chanbu* meaning “turban.”²⁰⁴ Calling the Uyghurs the *chanzu* start to appear in reports produced after the establishment of the Eastern Turkestan Republic, most likely influenced by Niaz’s usage of the term.²⁰⁵

Some indicators of public knowledge from inner China show that the existence of many ethnicities in Xinjiang was a fairly unknown. A Chinese Communist agent who arrived in Xinjiang in the summer of 1934 was shocked to find out from his guide that there were indeed fourteen nationalities in Xinjiang. He had previously only known that the people of Xinjiang wore white turbans and were therefore called *chantou*, meaning turban-headed, and now realized that the *chantou* were actually the Uyghurs.²⁰⁶ Russian sources of the period are the only place where the term “Uyghur” appears.²⁰⁷ Considering that the term was first revived in Tashkent by Xinjiang émigrés to the Soviet Union in 1921, this would be the most logical place for “Uyghur” to appear in popular or official contexts.

For themselves, Uyghurs referred to themselves based on their oases of origin such as *Kashgarlik* and *Khotanlik* (literally, *from Kashgar*, *from Khotan*). Peter Fleming made this ambiguous appraisal, “they refer to themselves merely as ‘Moslems’; they seem to have the minimum of racial consciousness and although they form something like eighty percent of the population of Sinkiang. They are very easily ruled.”²⁰⁸ Because they divided themselves into identities based on locality, it was difficult for the oasis dwellers of Xinjiang to be or seem united as the people Eastern Turkestan. Therefore, there was a crisis for Turkic-Muslim identity because of attempts by the Chinese government to submerge qualities of Uyghur identity through Sinicization programs and furthermore, no way for the Uyghurs to negotiate their own identity with

²⁰⁴ Instances where *chanbu* appear are in official correspondence, and usually in the form of *chanbufei* meaning “turban bandits.” AASIMH, Xinjiang File. Telegram received by the Nanjing Central government, March 13, 1934.

²⁰⁵ AASIMH, Xinjiang File. Copy – Telegram from Khoja Niaz to the Nanjing Central Government received March 13, 1934. In a previous telegram, AAH, Received Telegrams, #47429 from Kashmir, April 26, 1933, the word *chanmin* was crossed out and replaced with *chanzu*.

²⁰⁶ Wen Fang, *Feng Xue Tianshan [Wind and Snow Over Tianshan]*, (Shenyang: Liaoning People's Republic Publishing Society, 1986), 14.

²⁰⁷ *Izvestiya*, 17 March 1934, “Conflict of Imperialist Plans in Xinjiang.”

²⁰⁸ Fleming, 198-9

the state. Nationalism was a direct part of the formation of the Chinese Republic. Hamada's study argues that the rise of nationalism in Xinjiang among Uyghurs and an increase in Muslim nationalism was a direct response to increasing Chinese nationalism trying to subdue Uyghur identity.²⁰⁹

The concept of ethnic divisions already existed in China during the Manchu Dynasty, but became a more salient issue in Chinese politics after the Republican Revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911. The word *minzu* in Chinese, which roughly translates into nationality or ethnic group, entered into Chinese vocabulary in the early twentieth century from the Japanese *minzoku* via Sun Yat-sen.²¹⁰ At that time, Sun equated the Han nationality with the Chinese people thereby defining the Chinese nation-state as a country of the Han and leaving other nationalities in a marginalized position.²¹¹

Essentially, this was an exercise of power. John Fitzgerald describes this process, "They [the Han] would decide, after all what the authentic Chinese were really like and equally importantly, who would qualify to be counted among them."²¹² This concept is most frequently defined in Sun's principle of nationalism (*minzu*), the first of his *Three Principles of the People*. In his speeches, Sun theorized that China was, or could be made into, a nation-state in the purest form. He envisioned that China was and had been "a single state developing from a single race." To reach this ideal, Sun advocated assimilation through integration stating, "We must satisfy the demands of all races and unite them in a single cultural and political whole."²¹³ The purpose of nationalism in Sun's program was to facilitate "harmony of races within the boundaries of China."²¹⁴ In this sense, Sun's definition of race was a group with characteristics that are learned, acquired, or somehow conditioned to supersede all other forms of identity. Using this

²⁰⁹ Hamada, 33.

²¹⁰ Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China : Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects*, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), 14.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

²¹² John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution*, (Stanford: Stanford U. Pr., 1996), 107.

²¹³ Sun quoted in June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 16.

²¹⁴ Sun Yat-sen, *Fundamentals of National Reconstruction*, (Taipei, Taiwan: Chinese Cultural Service, 1953), 266. , 78.

definition made it logical and theoretically possible to create a Chinese identity throughout the Republic of China by “teaching” the Han nationality to non-Han nationalities.

Sun also named five nationalities in China as Chinese (*Han*), Manchu (*Man*), Mongol (*Meng*), Muslim (*Hui*) and Tibetan (*Zang*). He continued to assert that non-Chinese races were “reactionary and religious elements” who were controlled by foreign powers because “these races have not sufficient strength for self defense but they might unite with the Chinese to form a single state...we shall establish a united Chinese Republic in order that all the peoples: Manchu, Mongols, Tibetans, Tartars and Chinese – should constitute a single powerful nation.”²¹⁵ Therefore, it seems a group given the label “zu” had the status needed to take part in Sun’s promise that “all component racial groups in the Republic of China shall enjoy equal rights.”²¹⁶

However, “China’s Modern Revolution” in 1911 had a delayed effect in Xinjiang for two reasons. The first was Yang Zengxin’s autocratic rule in the Qing style that kept Xinjiang isolated from the changes taking place in China. The second was a conservative group of Muslim *ulama* who wanted to maintain their position at the top of a political and religious hierarchy instead of ceding that power to a democracy.²¹⁷ In 1928, a KMT official in Xinjiang made this observation, “although the flag of the KMT government flies over the capital, the ideology [of the KMT] has not yet reached the people.”²¹⁸

Rhetorically, the KMT’s policy on nationality fluctuated over time. Partially because of the newness of the idea of nationality, definitions of terms such as “race,” “ethnicity” and “nationality” were vague and inconsistent. Both Sun and later Chiang Kai-shek knew the power and necessity of using nationality in their rhetoric to build a new republic, but were not sure where they wanted to channel that their policy concerning nationality. After 1927, Chiang, taking Sun’s ideas of a unified Chinese

²¹⁵ Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary; a Programme of National Reconstruction for China*, (Taipei: China Cultural Service, 1953), 180.

²¹⁶ Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People*, trans. By Frank W. Price, (Taipei, Taiwan: China Pub. Co., 1943), 6.

²¹⁷ Xincheng Li, *Yang Zengxin Zai Xinjiang [Yang Zengxin in Xinjiang]*, (Taipei: Academia Historica, 1993), 23.

²¹⁸ Chen Ziji quoted in Zhang, 2705.

people, adapted his own vision of a singular Chinese race stating, "...that there are five peoples designated in China...is not due to differences of race or blood but due to religion and geographical environment."²¹⁹ However, attempts by the KMT to put an ideological framework on their nation-building policies with five nationalities: *Han, Man, Meng, Hui, and Zang*, made no distinction to separate Turkic Muslims from the *Hui*.

This agenda of the Nationalists to maintain control of Xinjiang gained an element of urgency into the 1920s with the success of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War and creation of the Soviet Union. With the Russian revolutions of 1917 and Lenin's seizure of power, propaganda designed to foment class struggle affected the Uyghurs living the Soviet Union as well as in Xinjiang. In this respect, Yang was (with adequate reason) wary of developments in Russia during its 1917 revolution, and subsequent civil war as well as Islamic nationalism that was stirring populations in the south. Yang's suspicion of Russian encroachment only multiplied when Uyghurs returning from studying abroad brought the Jadid movement advocating revival of Islam through modernization of education back to Xinjiang.

Paranoid that new, western-style schools, located mostly in the Kashgar region, would empower the already separatist Turkic Muslims of the Tarim Basin, Yang closed schools, censored publications and deported a large number of Kazaks and Kyrgyz who had fled to Xinjiang when the Tsarist government tried to draft them into the army during World War I.²²⁰ Once in Xinjiang, these already politically charged groups had agitated local populations around Ili, which included Russians, Kazaks and Kyrgyz who had previously come into Xinjiang, to rebel against rule by Yang's Han Chinese government.²²¹

However, considering Yang's pattern of behavior, this action was not unwarranted. Primarily concerned about personal gain, Yang was suspicious if not outright fearful of outside influence entering Xinjiang. Furthermore, from 1917 through the early 1920s, Bolshevik party organizations spread Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic propaganda into Xinjiang in hopes of incorporating the disenfranchised Turkic-Muslim

²¹⁹ Chiang quoted in Dreyer, 17.

²²⁰ Forbes, 17.

²²¹ Li Xincheng, 55.

peoples of Xinjiang into their international worker's rebellion.²²² Sources written under the auspices of the PRC cite that after the Russian revolution, anti-imperialist sentiment as well as an increased awareness of ethnicity and equality of nationalities increased among the Muslims of Xinjiang because of Bolshevik propaganda.²²³

The Bolsheviks were also interested in supporting the self-determination of Turkestan in their quest to expel the remnants of Tsarist colonial government in Central Asia which included support of the British. In the minds of Soviet leaders, Turkestan was to be a model Soviet republic, 'a flower garden wherein the bees of the neighboring lands of the Orient should take nourishment.'²²⁴ Furthermore, the Soviets envisioned that Turkestan could function as a "nucleus of a vast Communist Republic of Turkic Peoples."²²⁵ In this respect, the Bolsheviks were hoping to spread their worldwide workers' revolution to the rest of the Turkic Muslim world though its influence emanating from Turkestan.

KMT observers reporting on the conditions in Xinjiang in the early 1930s bemoaned the totalitarianism of Yang and Jin. Therefore, when Liu Wenlong and Sheng Shicai professed their commitment to developing the Revolution of the Three Principles, the central government were confident that confirming Liu and Sheng as the new leaders of Xinjiang would usher an era of progress previously absent there.²²⁶ In fact, at the time of the rebellions, KMT officials were already speaking of the fifth nationality (the Uyghurs) of Xinjiang as the *chanzu*.²²⁷ Liu and Sheng also won over the support and trust of the Nanjing government when they reported that the nationalities were rising up against imperialism and wanted modernization in Xinjiang.²²⁸ By July of 1934, the KMT was willing to grant religious, economic and political self-determination of the peoples of Xinjiang by accepting Sheng's authority in the province if it meant ending the rebellions.

²²² Ibid., 202.

²²³ Bai, 153.

²²⁴ "The Turkestan Commission, 1919-20," *Central Asian Review* 12, no. 1 (1964): 6.

²²⁵ Ibid., 8.

²²⁶ AAH, Xinjiang Muslim Dispute, Telegram from Urumqi, April 14, 1933.

²²⁷ AAH, Incoming Telegrams, #48021 from Moscow, May 6, 1933.

²²⁸ AAH, Incoming Telegrams, #48979 from Urumqi May 22, 1933.

Sheng Shicai's solution for Xinjiang's nationality problem was part of his initial promises to the people. For once, the "tragedy" of ethnic revolutions in Xinjiang, which were usually ended in defeat by overbearing warlords,²²⁹ was averted and instead ended in the recognition of nationalities because of Sheng. Along with the other categories of nationalities, the Uyghurs attained all the characteristics they wanted described with their ethnic label while excluding others which were made parts of different groups. However, categorization of nationalities in Xinjiang by Sheng in the Soviet style was also a tool to keep the Turkic peoples of Xinjiang divided while strengthening the power of the Han minority. If Sheng had applied the same criteria in categorizing the Han population in Xinjiang, there would have been multiple divisions that came out of the "Han" label.

Soon after Sheng took power, he announced that there were fourteen ethnicities in Xinjiang: Han, Manchu, Mongol, Moslem [(Hui)], Uyghur, Kazakh, Tajik, Taranchi, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Sibo, Solon and Russian.²³⁰ In a resolution in the aftermath of the April 12th coup, Sheng wrote referring to his categorization of ethnicities, "The fourteen fresh flowers blossomed in the Taklamakan Desert...advancing the people of China."²³¹ Gilbert Chan's opinion is that Sheng had no choice but to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union and appease minority groups in order to stay in power,²³² and that this policy showed how Sheng viewed the existence of "weak races"²³³ in Xinjiang, and illustrated an act of opportunism to gain power at a time when his position was weak. At the start, Sheng's actions appeased the discontent in Xinjiang and showed the Soviet Union his loyalty to their system. In reality, Sheng was wary to trust that the peoples of Xinjiang would follow his rule peacefully and later purged political dissidents from Xinjiang.

Along with the assignment of nationalities in Xinjiang immediately after Sheng took control of the province, status as a nationality was stated to equate to political representation in province-wide congresses. Representation gave nationalities not only a

²²⁹ An, 47.

²³⁰ Lattimore, 110.

²³¹ Bai, 221.

²³² Chan, "Regionalism and Central Power," 137.

²³³ F. Gilbert Chan, "Sheng Shih-Ts'ai's Reform Programs in Sinkiang: Idealism Or Opportunism?" *Journal of Modern History* 2 (1983): 367.

title, but thus a voice in the government to bring grievances through official channels. This resulting political unity also reinforced a sense of identity because, at least theoretically, the Uyghurs could perceive themselves as part of a larger whole.

Considering the devastating effects the rebellions had taken on the people and government of Xinjiang, this was an opportune time to make drastic changes to the politics and social organization. Essentially, “The whole structure of the government had been crushed and now slowly rebuilt. There were no reprisals and the Moslems were given considerable voice in local administration.”²³⁴ Immediately following the April 12 coup d’etat that ejected Jin Shuren from his position as governor, Sheng, as the dominant personality in Xinjiang, convened a meeting of all ethnic groups from throughout the province to decide the characteristics of the new government. On 14 June 1933, according to Shahidi, who was present at this convention, the “most important task at present, was to strengthen the unity of the peoples.”²³⁵ Sabit Damulla also attended and represented his Khotanlik government’s idea that Islam should be the mandated religion in all of Xinjiang. Considering the fact that not all participants at the meeting were Muslim, Sabit portrayed himself as a radical and received little support.²³⁶ The resolution of these meetings was Sheng’s Eight Point Proclamation.

The first point of Sheng’s Eight Point Proclamation was the “equality of nationalities.” In his definition of ethnicity, Sheng used territory, language, economics, customs, habits and culture to define a group. Showing his Marxist leanings, he also attributed the reason for ethnic tension and violence, in essence, the root cause of all of Xinjiang’s problems, to the unequal distribution of wealth under a capitalist economy that brought suffering to the ethnic minorities of Xinjiang.²³⁷ Though Sheng would later change his views and behavior towards supporting proportional representation and promoting equality in Xinjiang, at least for a short period immediately after rebellions subsided in 1934, his policy recognizing nationalities appeased both the Uyghurs, who

²³⁴ Wu, 253.

²³⁵ Bao'erhan, 197-8.

²³⁶ Ibid., 198.

²³⁷ Sheng’s Eight Point Proclamation, point no. 1 quoted in Zhang, 4375-6.

had been rebelling for the recognition of ethnic identity, and the Nationalist government, who lacked a label with which to absorb the people of Xinjiang into China.

The term “Uyghur” was also revived in the early 1930s by a young nationalist poet named Abdukhaliq. During his youth, Abdukhaliq studied Persian and Arabic in religious schools and learned Russian and Mandarin in addition to his native Uyghur language. In 1916 and 1923, Abdukhaliq traveled to Russian Central Asia where he met with Russian Turkologists and learned that the Uyghurs had not always been called “turban-headed” (“*chantou*”) as Abdukhaliq had known since his lifetime. At that point, he chose “Uyghur” as his pen name and started writing and reciting poetry upon his return to Xinjiang.²³⁸ His work urged people around him to “awaken” to the unacceptable state of oppression and take action to make change. In a poem entitled “Awaken” written in 1932, Abdukhaliq wrote a call for action among the Uyghurs of Xinjiang to realize their bleak fate if Han Chinese rule continued to dominate Xinjiang as it had. Until his death in 1934, Abdukhaliq continued to write poetry espousing the urgency of the Uyghurs to participate in rebellions and cast off the yoke of Chinese imperialism.

As mentioned previously, “Uyghur” was first used in 1921 by peoples of Xinjiang who had emigrated to the Soviet Union.²³⁹ A Soviet agent in Xinjiang, Garegin Apresoff, may also have suggested the usage of the term. This is another source that influenced the usage of the term “Uyghur” in Xinjiang. Therefore, Sheng’s decision to use “Uyghur” came from a combination of the work of people such as Abdukhaliq who used the term as a rallying point for rebellion and nascent nationalism while Sheng used it as a means of showing his loyalty to the Soviet Union.

²³⁸ Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road*, 149

²³⁹ Chen, 100.

CONCLUSION – Institutionalizing Uyghur Identity

As previously stated, the process of forming ethnic identity is open to the ambitions of its actors. The preceding three chapters have shown how rebellions in the 1930s clearly demonstrated a need for Uyghur identity in Xinjiang , the ideological origins of that identity, and how the political climate at the time facilitated an official designation of nationalities. These steps which led to the labeling of the majority of the people in Xinjiang Uyghur has given the term meaning so that the identity enclosed within that label continues to the present. After these events culminated in the adoption of the term Uyghur as an ethnic label for the sedentary, Turkic-Muslim people of Xinjiang, the PRC has been institutionalizing particularly conflictual elements of Uyghur identity . The first step of this institutionalization, choosing “Uyghur” had immediate and prolonged effects on placing Uyghurs and the Chinese state in an adversarial relationship.

Despite the recency of the term Uyghur used in Xinjiang, the historical memory of the term is important because it establishes Xinjiang as the ancestral homeland of the Uyghurs even though the Turkic, Muslim Uyghurs of Xinjiang today have little in common with the Buddhist Uyghur Empire located in Mongolia from which they take their name. The term Uyghur also suited the Chinese understanding of the peoples of its northwest borderland. Though what is now Xinjiang was incorporated into the realm of the Chinese government with the Qing conquest of the region in 1759, the area had previously been part of Chinese history and folklore documented since the Han Dynasty, which ended in 220 A.D. Since that time, interactions between the steppe nomads and the sedentary Chinese civilization have had a significant impact on how the Chinese government has perceived its northwestern boundary. Generally, Xinjiang falls within the Chinese conceptual realm “outside the wall” and within the “barbarian lands.” This perceptual construct is an engrained part of Chinese historiography and cultural labeling which continued to influence the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty.

Xinjiang, as part of the “barbarian” realm, thus had a relationship with China characterized by tribute and warfare. Therefore, in the Han Chinese perspective, the Uyghurs entered Chinese society as an outsider group. Colin Mackerras describes the relationship between the Uyghur Empire and the Tang Chinese, “They [the Chinese] were prepared to use their north-western neighbors for their own purposes, when occasion demanded, and to extend diplomatic friendship towards them, but essentially, feared and distrusted the Uighurs as foreign barbarians.”²⁴⁰ Though the Han population has increased exponentially in Xinjiang since 1949 to the point where presently the percentage of Han is almost the same as that of the Uyghurs, Xinjiang and its people still occupy this relegated and highly stereotyped bias in the view of the PRC government.

For the Uyghurs, calling themselves by the term “Uyghur” connected their present culture and society in Xinjiang to a long history of independent empires dating back to the eighth century, thus allowing Uyghurs to create cultural continuity to past glory, independence, a history of defiance against the Chinese government, and connection with the Turkic people of Central Asia. Originally situated in western Mongolia, the people of the Uyghur empire practiced shamanism and Buddhism. After their defeat by the Kyrgyz and retreat from Mongolia, parts of the Uyghur Empire settled in the southeastern region of Xinjiang around Turfan and named their new home Uyghurstan. To maintain their distinction from the Indo-European, Islamic peoples already living in the southern oases of the Tarim Basin, the Uyghurs overtly rejected Islam while accepting other religions such as Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity.²⁴¹ However, with increased economic contact and intermarriage with other communities while the political power of Uyghurstan decreased, the Uyghurs became indistinguishable from the indigenous populations and the term Uyghur lost its meaning and usage by the twelfth century. In fact, the term Uyghur used to signify a Turkic and Muslim population did not appear until the twentieth century. Revival of the term in this different context, originated from the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. However since the Uyghurs were not included as a

²⁴⁰ Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the Tang Dynastic Histories: A Study in Sino-Uighur Relations, 744-840*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 14.

²⁴¹ Millward and Perdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," 40.

separate ethnicity in the Soviet Union, the term still did not receive much usage and recognition until 1934 when Sheng Shicai used the term.

The great advantage for Uyghur separatists in choosing to be the legacy of the Uyghur Empire was that of drawing a long history. Erkin Alptekin, son of Isa Alptekin, a major leader in the Eastern Turkestan independence movement in Xinjiang in 1944 and afterwards, traces the lineage of the Uyghurs that live in Xinjiang today back to the pre-Islamic nomadic steppe empires starting from 210 B.C. Alptekin follows Uyghur history linearly forward through time and attributes the Huns, Mongols, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane as part of the Uyghur lineage. The importance of this history is that it entrenches separatism deep in the foundation of Uyghur identity. Alptekin cites that during the 855 years of Turkic empires, the Chinese government only succeeded once in ruling the region of Eastern Turkestan for 157 years and that for the rest of the time, Eastern Turkestan remained a free and independent country.” Alptekin further delineates the limits of Qing rule from 1759 to 1826, which included forty-two rebellions of the Uyghur against the Manchu government.²⁴²

Considering the arrangement of characteristics in Uyghur identity, the Turkic element of Uyghur identity precedes religious affiliation with Islam and tends to be a more distinguishing feature among the presence of non-Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. Asserting a primary identity as being Turkic also better serves the purposes of Uyghurs who increasingly agitate for an independent Eastern Turkestan. Although Muslim identity is still a crucial part of the Uyghur identity, this element is not emphasized as much by some Uyghurs because the PRC after September 11, 2001 has equated Muslim activism, especially in Xinjiang, with Islamic fundamentalism linked to terrorism.

However, there were still some areas where local peoples preferred to refer to themselves as “Turk” or “Turki” in reference to homeland instead of the label “Uyghur.”²⁴³ This group opposed the high level of definition used by Sheng because they felt that the Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Taranchi, Uzbeks, Tajiks were all tribes

²⁴² Alptekin, “Chinese Policy in Xinjiang” and “The Uygurs.”

²⁴³ Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944-1949*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 265. 31.

within a Turkic nation.²⁴⁴ However, by the mid-1930s, the power behind the meaning of the word Turk as a generality had already passed since those who would have associated themselves with a Central Asian Turkic family, Kazaks, Uzbeks, Turkmens, etc., already had different labels with which each had developed a stronger nationalistic affinity.

The production of Xinjiang histories has also supported the continuance of Uyghur identity from its origins in the 1930s. If the narrative history of a people has as much, or more, impact on the formation of a nation's identity than the historical events themselves, then examining various historical accounts of Xinjiang in the 1930s shows how Uyghur identity has developed in historical definitions and now has become an accepted part of Chinese historiography. In histories written before 1949, Chinese authors used a variety of labels for the Uyghurs. Most of these were adjectives added to the established *hui* label used to describe Muslims and included *chanhui*, versus the usage of *hanhui* to mean Tungan.

Histories of the Republican era also show inconsistencies in their usage of the *minzu* nationality concept. Sometimes terms such as *min* or *ren* meaning people are used when today those would have a specifically defined *zu*. For example, within the same chapter, the terms *huiren*, *huimin*, *chanren* are all used to indicate Uyghur. In contrast, in reference to Han Chinese, the term *hanzu*, an unambiguous ethnic label, is more consistent.²⁴⁵ This example is an indication of how the concept and definition of ethnic identity was developing in China at the time starting from the Han, the one that needed defining the most, and moving outward.

Studies about Uyghurs or history of Xinjiang written in China under the PRC government are clear to state that “splitism,” with its negative connotation, in Xinjiang started with the Eastern Turkestan Republics of 1933 and 1944, which were not only led, but started by the Uyghurs.²⁴⁶ Histories later produced under the watchful eye of censors in the People's Republic of China clearly use the term Uyghur to label the antagonists of the 1930s rebellions in Xinjiang. Some histories written in Taiwan after 1949 lack this

²⁴⁴ Lattimore, 112.

²⁴⁵ Hong Lichun, *Xinjiang Shidi Dagang [Xinjiang History and Geography]*, (Shanghai: Zhengzhong, 1947).

²⁴⁶ Bai, 196 and Wang Wenxin, "Xinjiang Duli Wenti De Tantaoyao [Investigation of the Independence Problem in Xinjiang]," *Zhongshan University Bulletin* 25 (2004): 68

consistency, probably because the Nationalist Republic of China included Uyghur in the definition of Hui. Despite differences in terminology, both Taiwan and mainland histories concerning the Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan use it as a starting point for the problem of separatism in Xinjiang from that point to the present. By blaming Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islam as tools of imperialism for the uprisings in Xinjiang and the establishment of the TIRET, the PRC can implicate foreign powers for the problems of “splitism” in Xinjiang. However, mere acknowledgement of the TIRET has given one more example of how aspirations for cultural, social and political independence had once existed in Eastern Turkestan.

In 1955, the renaming of Xinjiang as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region also reinforced the nationalistic and separatist argument that Uyghurs should have control of their own land. Essentially, “The Chinese Government’s classification effectively drew a map within which the Uighurs already saw themselves living.”²⁴⁷ Concerning the identity of an ethnic minority with separatist tendencies, consolidation and uniform usage of the ethnonym Uyghur has strengthened the identity and unity of the people it defines. The renaming of Xinjiang as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955 was a political move by the Chinese government that further legitimized Uyghur identity by acknowledging Xinjiang as the homeland of the Uyghurs. Therefore, associating the Uyghur people with the territory of Xinjiang gave the concept of Uyghur separatism a more nationalistic character.

In *Modern Uzbeks*, Edward Allworth makes the following observation about the creation of ethnic identity in a nation-state in Soviet Central Asia:

The intimate synchronic connection between name and group must be vital, for although an ethnic group in peaceful times changes almost completely every few generations, the persistent denomination of such an ethnic group holds its power, even though the makeup of the aggregation actually bearing the name differs from the original group. The viability of the group names overlaps the outgoing and incoming membership, embracing the gradual alteration in the population with its potent symbolism.²⁴⁸

What Allworth suggests is that ethnic identities are always developing and changing because of various human factors that affect any population that lives among changing

²⁴⁷ Justin, "China," 192.

²⁴⁸ Allworth, 233.

social, political and economic conditions, and that these changes are usually gradual enough that they are reinforced by its people along the way so that the legitimacy of the ethnic label remains even though the definition of the group is in constant motion.

However, despite the apparent victory of the Uyghurs and the Chinese state with the restructuring of Xinjiang as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, this action, in reality, accomplished little to grant autonomy and political power to the Uyghurs. Instead, the concurrent subdivision of more populated regions into twenty-seven *minzu* autonomous prefectures in Xinjiang has diminished the power of the Uyghurs to use their advantage as the numerical majority in a political standpoint.²⁴⁹ Therefore, Uyghur grievances concerning oppression of their culture and religion remain unaddressed by the PRC government which has outlawed separatism and curtailed the practice of Islam in Xinjiang while at the same time encouraging use of Mandarin and subsidizing Han migration to the province. The resulting situation is that Uyghur separatism continues to gain strength with the PRC's increasingly severe policies while the PRC maintains a course in dealing with Xinjiang strikingly similar to their Qing predecessors.

To recap, the adoption of Uyghur identity in Xinjiang was the result of rebellions that took place from 1931 to 1934 and included, most importantly for the assertion of Turkic-Muslim uniqueness, the existence of the Turkic-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan. At this starting point, the idea of Uyghur included independence as a major component. Such an extreme position made compromise difficult and success unlikely, but separatism is still embedded in Uyghur identity because of its association with the Uyghur Empire of the ninth century. But for Uyghur identity to survive, it also had to be able to change and interact with its surrounding political conditions. The Eastern Turkestan Republic of 1944-1949 was the first step in the process of adaptation. Dropping the Turkic and Islamic emphasis of its predecessor, the ETR effectively governed an autonomous Three Districts region in Ili for four years until it was "liberated" into PRC control with the rest of Xinjiang. During that time, the ETR government tried to portray itself as a secular, pro-Soviet, multi-ethnic and anti-KMT

²⁴⁹ Bovingdon, "Xinjiang Autonomy", 13.

establishment. Either purposefully or not, this set of characteristics fit well with the CCP vision for Xinjiang at that time.

As China continued to develop Xinjiang, more Han populations entered the province and built schools, roads and communication lines etc. The effect of these changes was the increasing acclimation of Uyghurs and Han Chinese. Therefore, the need and urgency for most of the Uyghurs is now less than it was in the 1930s. However, this does not mean that the Uyghurs do not feel strongly about their ethnic identity, nor does it mean that separatism has been erased from Uyghur identity. There are still a variety of separatist groups in Xinjiang, and taking the events of the 1930s as a starting point they use the fact that Eastern Turkestan is still under the control of the Chinese and a litany of evidence citing oppression of Uyghur people, in economics, politics and religion to make an even stronger case for independence.

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Appendix A - Xinjiang and Surrounding Areas



Appendix B - Petition of Khoja Niaz to the British Government

From Khoja Niaz Haji, to H. B. M's Consul general, Kashgar.

A petition from Khoja Niaz Haji the President, Islamic Republic and the oppressed subjects of Eastern Turkestan, with the hope that it may be translated into English and sent to London to His Majesty the King Emperor and the British Parliament -- and further with a request for a reply.

History proves the fact that for more than a thousand years the yoke of this country was on the shoulders of Muslim Kings. It is now fifty-eight years since the Chinese Government treacherously took away our Independence, and with cruelty brought us under their subjugation. During the fifty-eight years of most oppressive tyrannical rule, the proud atrocious Chinese by showering incessant hardships and cruelties reduced us to our present pitiable state. The proud Chinese officials looked down at us with disdain. Our creed and religion were contemptible objects to their sight. The Chinese deprived us of citizenship rights. They Chinese did not acquaint us with the sciences, art, industry, and trade. The Chinese went as far that they closed the only one press which we brought for our religious books to be printed.

On account of the mismanagement by the Chinese, eighty per cent of the population were out of employment. They tyranny of the Chinese, kept us uncultured, uncivilized and brought evil days on us, which is well known to the world. The oppressed Muslims of the Eastern Turkestan bore with patience all the tyrannies and cruelties of the Chinese up to the present time and did not create any fuss nor did they complain to any foreign power.

Not satisfied with the infliction of all the miseries mentioned above, they intended to take away our daughters. The Chinese sold our trade to the Bolsheviks. From all sides Bolshevik agents began to pour in. They started Communist propaganda. We heard about the tragic fate of the Muslims of Western Turkestan (Qafkas, Dagestan, Qare, Tatarstan). The Bolsheviks slaughtered a large number of Muslims in Eastern Turkestan, the remaining were turned into atheists by dint of force and cruelty, thus was the religion of Islam trampled. We fearing the fatal infection of Bolshevism, and secondly unable to bear any longer the tyranny of the Chinese, rose and fought without arms against the Chinese.

The All Merciful Lord placed the crown of victory on our heads and we came into possession of numerous arms from the conquered Chinese. The Chinese becoming helpless in avenging themselves on us gave vent to their anger on the Muslims of Turfan-Pichan, by slaughtering and burning their houses. The Muslims of other places becoming aware of this barbaric deed of the Chinese raised the banner of revolt from Altai to Khotan. The Chinese of Urumchi desired peace and the resignation of Jang-Jushi [Jin Shuren], but the latter possessed no other idea except fighting -- in the end he was defeated and fled. After this the Chinese sent their representatives from Urumchi for peace negotiations. We after drafting the terms such that all powers were vested in our own-selves, provisionally accepted peace. The terms of peace were so drafted that from one

hundred kilometers from Urumchi on this side, the whole of Eastern Turkestan was wholly and solely under our rule, and this peace pact was certified by the Chinese of Urumchi.

The Chinese army at Urumchi are in principle followers of Bolsheviks. It might be known to your honour, that when the Bolsheviks came into existence, there was a certain Russian general Dotoff Annekoff (Czar party) who fought against the Bolsheviks but was defeated and he took shelter in Urumchi. and was then handed over to the Bolsheviks. It is not in the laws of any government to hand over a man who has sought asylum. The Chinese being now unable to fight any more with us, the Bolsheviks have entered the war arena. The Bolshevik Red Shirts are excellently armed and are allowed to pass Ili and Chochak. An these soldiers have begun playing havoc with the Muslims. The Bolsheviks have supplied the Chinese with armored cars and other arms. For this reason the Chinese have captured and burnt fourteen towns. After our peace the Bolsheviks remained silent for the time being. Just now in Moscow some thousands of Chinese soldiers are intending to leave for Eastern Turkestan. The Muslims of Chochak have petitioned to me for help, saying that unless the Chinese are not totally turned out of the country the spirit of Communism will soon be spread throughout Sinkiang.

Therefore we look and expect for help from the British Government to save us from the terrible and infectious wave of Communism. Moreover we pray for arms from your government and in return the British Government can receive the products of this country, i.e. silk, wool and skins. The British Government may become our guide, and we request the Government may spread education among our masses. For trade treaty with British Consul-General, I am sending as my "vakils" Abdur Rahim Akhum, Karim Zada Akhun Bayoff and Azam Jan Haji.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ SIS, dated September 1933.

Appendix C - “Awaken” by Abdukhaliq (“Uyghur”)

Edited by Abursul Omar, translated by Jon Rudelson²⁵¹

1. Awaken! (*Oyghan*)

Hey, Uyghur, it is time to awaken
You haven't any possessions,
You have nothing to fear.
If you don't' rescue yourselves
From this death,
Your situation will become very grave.
Stand up! I say,
Raise you head and wipe your eyes!
Cut the heads off your enemies,
Let the blood flow!
If you don't open your eyes and look around you,
You'll die pitifully, helplessly.
Your body appears lifeless,
And yet you don't worry about dying.
I call out to you but you do not react,
It seems as though you want to die unconsciously.
Open your eyes wide and look about you.
You must contemplate the future,
Think about it a long time.
If this opportunity should fall from your grasp,
The future will bode much hardship, much hardship.
My heart breaks for you my Uyghur people,
My brothers in arms, relatives, my family.
I worry for your lives,
So I am calling you to awaken.
Have you not heard me yet?
What has happened to you?
There will be a day when you will regret,
And on that day you will understand,
Just what I have been telling you.
“Damn!” you will say when you realize
That you missed your only chance,
And on that day you will know that I, Uyghur, was right.

²⁵¹ Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*, 148.