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Print and Power in the Communist Borderlands: The Rise of Uyghur National Culture

A dissertation presented

by

Joshua L. Freeman

to

The Committee on Inner Asian and Altaic Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
Inner Asian and Altaic Studies

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Dissertation Advisor: Mark C. Elliott Joshua L. Freeman

Print and Power in the Communist Borderlands: The Rise of Uyghur National Culture

Abstract

This dissertation demonstrates that socialist cultural policies, implemented in Chinese and Soviet Central Asia in the middle decades of the twentieth century, enabled Turkic Muslim intellectuals in the small Sino-Soviet frontier community of Ili to transform their local culture into the new Uyghur national culture. The transborder Uyghur community, divided for much of the century between history's two largest socialist states, provides a unique opportunity for mapping out a dynamic replicated in many areas of socialist Eurasia. Bringing Uyghur-language sources across multiple genres—archival documents, poetry, film, memoirs—into conversation with Chinese and Russian materials, this study explores how writers and intellectuals from Ili, a community long regarded by other Central Asians as a cultural periphery, mobilized socialist states' emphasis on native-language mass printing in order to radically redefine cultural capital in the newly demarcated Uyghur nation, and to set the course for this nation's relationship with China, another nation then in the process of redefinition.

Ili's rise was closely linked to its status as a transborder community, with Russian, socialist, and secular influences making earlier and deeper inroads in Ili than elsewhere in Xinjiang. As a result, when quasi-socialist, Soviet-aligned administrations were set up in Xinjiang in the 1930s and 1940s, Ili intellectuals held highly influential positions and often monopolized the new state-run Uyghur-language printing presses. By the time the Chinese

Communist Party assumed power in the province in 1949, the Ili network offered the party a unique talent pool of Uyghur intellectuals versed in socialist public culture and administration. Over the course of the 1950s, as they helped the party promote its ideology and policies in the Uyghur community, Ili intellectuals formed patronage networks with Han party bureaucrats and quickly came to dominate Xinjiang's state bureaucracy. Tapping the resources of nationalism and popular Islam, Ili writers and intellectuals embraced the socialist agenda of native-language print culture and universal state schooling in order to shape the nascent Uyghur mass culture in Ili's image. So effective were their efforts that even after the Ili network lost its preeminent bureaucratic status in subsequent decades, the culture and identity it had molded remained standard throughout the Uyghur nation. Through a detailed examination of the formation and persistence of this Ili-inflected Uyghur culture, this study argues that the emergence of mass print under conditions of socialism can enable marginalized groups to permanently rewrite national cultural hierarchies.

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While it is impossible to thank everyone who helped make this dissertation possible, it is easy to know where to start. My advisor, Mark Elliott, has been a source of guidance and support throughout my doctoral studies in more ways than I can count. His scholarly achievement is matched by an admirable dedication to students, and his broad interests and love of good conversation have always made spending time with him a pleasure. My other committee members have all been extraordinarily generous with their advice and support over the last several years, both with the dissertation and in myriad other ways. Karen Thornber offered incisive comments on every draft, and rightly encouraged me to further bring out the voices of the individuals I study. Rian Thum has been an indispensable interlocutor from conception to completion, and challenged me in numerous ways that greatly strengthened the dissertation. Bill Todd expertly guided me through existing scholarship on print culture, literary canon, and nation formation, and helped me think through what the Uyghur case might add to current knowledge.

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The deepest debt I have incurred in writing this dissertation is to the countless Uyghur individuals I came to know during my extended time in Xinjiang. I owe them as much on a personal level as I do on a scholarly level, and their influence, insight, and inspiration is reflected throughout this study. This dissertation could never have been written without them; I would not be who I am without them. For the reasons enumerated in the dissertation's coda, I cannot name them here, with the exception of the handful who managed to leave China ahead of the current crackdown. Many of my close friends and colleagues in Xinjiang have been swept up in the ongoing catastrophe. I think of them every day.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND NAMES

Given the turbulent history of linguistic reform in twentieth-century Xinjiang, transliteration is inevitably a thorny issue for any historical study dealing with the era. Throughout this dissertation, quotations and citations from texts printed after the 1950s script reform in Xinjiang are transliterated according to the Latin Script Uyghur (Uyghur Latin yéziqi) system developed at Xinjiang University in 2001-02, with the exception that I have used *kh* in place of *x* in order to maximize consistency between pre- and post-reform transliteration. In the decades preceding the 1950s reforms, Uyghur orthography in Xinjiang was in flux, and no single transliteration system could fit all variants used during this period. In cases where traditional Perso-Arabic orthography was maintained, I have used the Encyclopedia of Islam system; where words depart from that orthography, a compromise has been sought between the EOI system and Latin Script Uyghur. For the most part, I have omitted the EOI's diacritics from the body of the text and retained them in the footnotes. From the mid-'60s to the early '80s a Latin-based script known as yengi yezıq was used to varying degrees in Xinjiang publications; sources in this script are cited and quoted in the original. Chinese words and names are given using the Hanyu Pinyin system, with the exception of figures like Chiang Kai-shek whose names are already well known to Anglophone readers in non-pinyin transliteration. I have used the ALA-LC system for transliterating Cyrillic, whether Russian or Central Asian languages; following the example of other recent works of scholarship, I have mostly dispensed with the ALA-LC system's diacritics.

In the Uyghur twentieth century, names were as much in flux as orthography. To take one example, a well-known Uyghur poet who will show up repeatedly in these pages was known during his brief life as Lutpulla Mutellip, L. Mutellipov, and Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib—variants respectively reflecting popular speech, Slavic influence, and Perso-Arabic classicism. In an effort

to maintain both comprehensibility and accuracy, I have used a single spelling for each individual's name in the body of the text, while retaining variant spellings in the citations. Following standard Uyghur practice, I have referred to Uyghur individuals by their given names and patronyms (e.g., Lutpulla Mutellip) or simply by their given names (Lutpulla), with the exception of those Uyghurs who have adopted surnames (e.g., Qasimi, Zakirov). For the sake of clarity, I have transcribed Russian-style surnames in the body of the text with the typical -ev and -ov endings, while retaining the myriad Turkic variants (-éw, -ow, -of, -op, etc.) in the footnotes.

INTRODUCTION

In the early twentieth century, the word "Uyghur" was almost unknown, the forgotten name of an ancient kingdom. The communities we know today as Uyghurs instead called themselves Muslims, or locals, or by the names of the oasis towns in which they lived. By the 1940s, however, thousands were willing to fight and die for the Uyghur nation; and today, more than ten million people in China's Xinjiang region, as well as smaller communities in post-Soviet Central Asia, identify as Uyghurs, with a clear cultural identity and sense of heritage. This dissertation demonstrates that socialist policies, implemented in China's northwest borderlands long before the founding of the People's Republic, enabled the small Sino-Soviet frontier community of Ili to transform its local culture into the new Uyghur national culture. By reconstructing this process, this study provides a framework for understanding how print culture in twentieth-century socialist states enabled local writers to radically alter the distribution of cultural power on a national level, and shows that in China this precedent was set not in the heartland, but in the ethnic borderlands of the northwest.

IDENTITY AT THE EDGES OF EMPIRE

As with other large indigenous communities along China's frontiers—Mongols, Tibetans—the history of Uyghur nation building can only be understood by traversing national borders and drawing on multiple linguistic and historical traditions. In the case of the Uyghurs, this complex narrative is intertwined with the clash of multiple land-based empires in Central Eurasia. China's acquisition of a large Turkic Muslim population dates to the Qing dynasty's longstanding enmity with the Zunghar Khanate, a Mongol-led polity that ruled—among other territories—the region

now known as Xinjiang.[1] The final Qing defeat of the Zunghars in the mid-eighteenth century led to the Qing incorporation of Zungharia, centered around the Zunghar Basin and incorporating fertile grasslands like the Ili Valley. The Qing absorption of Zungharia was accompanied by tremendous violence against the defeated Zunghars, and much of the area was depopulated by the end of the conquest.

With the vanquishing of the Zunghars, the Qing also inherited the Turpan Basin to the east, centered around two cities, Turpan (Turfan) and Qumul (Hami), that had long been situated politically and economically between China and Central Asia. Several years later, almost as an afterthought, Qing armies marched south into the Tarim Basin, previously ruled by the Zunghars, and conquered the region known by locals as Altishahr, or the Six Cities. The name Altishahr did not refer to any particular six cities, but rather embraced a dense network of oasis towns and villages ringing the Taklamakan Desert. The Qing eventually dubbed the conquered Zunghar territories "Xinjiang" (Ch. 新疆), meaning "New Frontier," a designation encompassing the Zunghar, Turpan, and Tarim Basins.

It was in the irrigation-fed regions of Turpan and Qumul and in the galaxy of Tarim Basin oases that the Qing came into possession of a large, agricultural, Turkic-speaking Muslim population—the people we now know as Uyghurs. Yet this dissertation will demonstrate that modern Uyghur identity was shaped not in these traditional centers of Turkic Muslim settlement in Xinjiang, but rather in two cities to the north which until the early twentieth century were seen as utterly peripheral to Turkic Muslim culture in western China. The first was Ghulja, the political and commercial center of the Ili Valley, along the Qing border with the Russian empire; the second was Ürümchi, a Mongol settlement in the foothills of the Tianshan which after the

[1] The denouement of the Qing-Zunghar conflict is covered in detail in Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

conquest became a Qing garrison town.[2] The emergence of these two cities as centers of contemporary Uyghur culture was due to the confluence of three empires: the Zunghar, the Qing, and the Russian.

The Zunghars, while a steppe-based empire established on horseback, were intent on extracting agricultural resources from the rich grasslands of Zungharia, and relocated a growing number of farmers from Altishahr to the Ili Valley. These agriculturalists became known by the autonym *Taranchi*, a word of Turkic origin referring to tillers of the land. The Qing, having defeated the Zunghars, adopted their policy of moving groups of Turkic Muslim farmers from Altishahr to Ili, and by the end of the eighteenth population a sizable, coherent population of Turkic-speaking Taranchis had formed in the Ili Valley. With the passage of time, this group became increasingly distinct from the Muslims of Altishahr from whom they traced their origins; the Taranchis' language, legends, and institutions diverged due not only to geographic isolation but also to the deeper imprint of the Qing state in the Ili Valley as compared to Altishahr. The complex of Islamic institutions that stood at the center of both high culture and popular culture in Altishahr—madrassahs, shrines, manuscripts, charitable *waqf* endowments—was substantially thinner in the Ili region than in the south, a fact lost neither on Taranchis nor on Altishahris. A consensus reigned that Ili was not only a geographical periphery but a cultural one as well. High culture in Turkic Xinjiang was oriented toward the southwestern population centers of Kashgar and Yarkand, which in turn looked over the Pamirs and the Himalayas to centers of Islamic learning in Central and South Asia.

[2] A foundational text on Qing rule in Xinjiang is James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). State-society relations in late Qing and early Republican Xinjiang are explored on the basis of Chinese and Turkic-language documents in Eric Tanner Schluessel, "The Muslim Emperor of China: Everyday Politics in Colonial Xinjiang, 1877-1933," (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 2016).

A massive Muslim rebellion in 1864 drove Qing armies—as well as innumerable Han and Manchu civilians—from Xinjiang, and scrambled the politics of the region. While holy warriors led by Yaq'ub Beg established an Islamic state in Altishahr, Taranchis quickly came to be ruled by a local Sultan.[3] The Taranchi Sultanate did not long maintain its independence, however, once the Russian empire, then expanding rapidly in Central Asia, turned its gaze to the rich agricultural lands of the Ili Valley following the withdrawal of Qing armies. In 1871, after a brief campaign, the Taranchi Sultanate was swallowed by the Russian empire. With the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang in 1877, negotiations with Russia over the Ili Valley commenced, and concluded a few years later with the return of much of the land to the Qing. Yet most Taranchis in the Ili Valley chose to take up Russian citizenship following the handover, with thousands of Qing-subject Taranchis traveling over the new border to take up Russian subjecthood. By the late nineteenth century, then, Taranchis were a community divided, with tens of thousands living in compact settlements in the Semirech'e region of Russian Turkestan and the remainder under Qing rule in the eastern Ili Valley. While this trading and retrading of Taranchi lands and households was a sign of Taranchi political weakness in the nineteenth century, the Taranchis' transborder existence was one of the factors that would help confer on them tremendous power in the following century.

The other factor was the rise of socialism in Eurasia. Here, too, the earliest impacts for the Taranchis were negative. The civil war between the Red Army and tsarist loyalists took a heavy toll on the Taranchi community in Russian Turkestan, with Bolshevik troops massacring thousands of Taranchis on the suspicion that they were aiding remnants of the tsarist army. Between 1916 and 1918, as the Russian Civil War raged, tens of thousands of Taranchis fled

[3] The foremost work in English on the Muslim rebellion in Xinjiang and on Yaq'ub Beg's state is Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

over the border into Xinjiang, primarily into the Ili region, where they joined their Taranchi kin in what was now the Republic of China. From 1929-31, collectivization drives and anti-kulak campaigns in Soviet Central Asia triggered a further exodus of Taranchis from Semirech'e into Chinese Ili.[4] Yet between the Civil War and the Stalinist collectivization period, Chinese-origin Muslims in Soviet Turkestan—both Taranchis and Kashgaris, the latter consisting of merchants and labor migrants from Altishahr—came to be recognized by Soviet officialdom as Uyghurs. As David Brophy has demonstrated in his definitive study, the recognition of a Uyghur ethnic group by the Soviet Union was due to the activism of local Turkic intellectuals, working shrewdly within the policy framework established by the Soviet state vis-à-vis nationality.[5]

In keeping with the Stalinist definition of a nation as possessing "commonality of language, territory, economic life, and psychological character," early Uyghur elites in the USSR placed heavy emphasis on the articulation of a national language, expressed through a new national literature. As we will see, the codification of Uyghur literature was central to the creation of modern Uyghur identity and it will thus be treated at length throughout this dissertation. Nation-building Uyghur intellectuals in the USSR set the tone for this process in the 1920s, elaborating a national literature that drew on three main sources. Fragments of classical Central Asian manuscript literature provided the imprimatur of tradition, while oral folk literature fulfilled the socialist imperative to learn from the masses. At the same time, young writers developed a new socialist Uyghur poetry that drew on Russian and Tatar models, and quickly came to be seen as the vanguard of Uyghur culture in the USSR. Poets had always been held in high esteem by Central Asian peoples, and with the advent of Uyghur-language mass

[4] William Clark and Ablet Kamalov, "Uighur Migration Across Central Asian Frontiers," *Central Asian Survey* 23.2 (2004): 167-82.
[5] David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

printing, their cultural power was magnified. The aristocratic poetic patrons of old were replaced with bureaucratic patrons able to dispense access to the state's printing presses.[6] A reading public of unprecedented size awaited writers able and willing to meet the ideological requirements of the state, and to attract the patronage of key officials.

As the 1930s began, these momentous developments in print culture and communal identity were largely confined to the Soviet Uyghur community. For Xinjiang's Uyghur population, perhaps thirty times larger than the Soviet community, the Eurasian political earthquakes of the 1910s and 1920s had been felt only as tremors. The fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911-12 and its replacement by the Republic of China; the founding of the world's first socialist state on the rubble of the Russian empire; the rise of warlord rule in much of China and the fracturing of the Republic—all of these momentous developments impacted Xinjiang only indirectly. Throughout this period, former Qing official Yang Zengxin governed the province much as it had been governed in the final decades of the dynasty. Employing classical Qing methods of rule in the borderlands, Yang relied on close alliances with local non-Han elites and made every effort to insulate the province from socialist currents to the west and warlord storm clouds to the east. In this, he was largely successful: into the late 1920s, Xinjiang remained untouched by the factional fighting that scarred much of China, and Soviet hopes of revolution in China's far west remained unfulfilled. After Yang's assassination in 1928, his protégé Jin Shuren took power and implemented a modest program of state reform and security force expansion. Unlike Yang, Jin paid little heed to the delicate balance of intercommunal power-sharing in Xinjiang, and he quickly upset the local elites who had helped Yang govern the province's

[6] An excellent history of Uyghur-language printing in the USSR is Munir Erzin, *Uyghur Sovet metbuatining tarikhi* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1980).

Muslim majority.[7] A local rebellion in Qumul spread across the province in the early 1930s, as Turkic Muslims from the east to the southwest—backed by Hui Muslim troops from neighboring Gansu Province—battled and often defeated provincial forces. By 1933, the province seemed on the verge of dissolution, with Turkic Muslim rebels around Kashgar establishing a short-lived Republic of Eastern Turkestan and Hui troops closing in on Ürümchi, Xinjiang's capital.

Into the fray stepped Sheng Shicai, a charismatic young Japanese-trained officer and the commander of Jin Shuren's crack troops. Having staved off a rebel advance on Ürümchi, Sheng allied with provincial officials and Russian émigré soldiers to oust Jin from the governor's mansion and install himself as ruler of Xinjiang in April 1933. Yet even with his newfound post and the intense loyalty of the troops under his command, the forces at Sheng's disposal were woefully outmatched by the rebel battalions even then regrouping for another assault on the capital. With Republican Chinese armies weak, distant, and preoccupied, Sheng appealed for help to the only military force in the region strong enough to put Xinjiang's rebellion to rest: the Soviet Red Army. Stalin agreed to render military and financial assistance, but the Soviet bailout came at a cost: Sheng would be expected to remake Xinjiang along Stalinist lines, and consent to Soviet extraction of the province's rich mineral resources. With few options at his disposal, Sheng consented to the bargain, even going so far as to declare himself a Marxist. Along with top-down economic planning and a nascent police state, Soviet-style cultural and nationality policies were implemented in the province by 1935; their impact on local concepts of nationality and modernity was profound, and arguably set a precedent for nationality policy in China as a

[7] For a thorough institutional history of the Republican-era Xinjiang state, see Justin M. Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

whole. The following years ushered in a series of political and cultural changes that would ultimately transform the cultures and communal identities of the region's Muslim majority.[8]

It is the further development of these trends in Xinjiang over the subsequent half-century that is the central concern of this dissertation. In particular, the chapters that follow will demonstrate how socialist policies in Xinjiang enabled a small group of intellectuals and writers from the Ili Valley to build Uyghur culture and identity on their own terms. This process began in the mid-1930s with Sheng's new policies, deepened in the mid-1940s with the construction of another Soviet satellite state—the Eastern Turkestan Republic—in northern Xinjiang, and continued through the early Mao era. The efforts of these Ili literati met with such success that even after the mayhem of the Cultural Revolution and the effective end of socialist cultural policy in Xinjiang after the 1970s, Uyghur national culture and identity continued to develop along the lines laid out by the Ili group. This study will provide the first historical account of Ili's rise to dominance in Uyghur culture in Xinjiang. The emergence of Uyghur-language print culture under socialist administration, it will be demonstrated, permitted Ili to move from cultural periphery to cultural preeminence within a generation. It will further be argued below that the Uyghur case, while providing a unique comparative case study, was nonetheless not unique in its broad outlines; comparable phenomena can be identified in a number of other communities in twentieth-century socialist Eurasia. By reconstructing the rise of Ili, this dissertation offers a new framework for understanding the emergence of national identity under conditions of socialism.

[8] Based largely on Soviet archival sources, V. A. Barmin's two-part study remains the definitive exploration of Soviet political involvement in Republican-era Xinjiang. The first volume deals in detail with the creation of a Soviet-style administration in the province under Sheng Shicai. V. A. Barmin, *Sovetskii Soiuz i Sin'tszian: 1918-1941 gg. (regional'nyi faktor vo vneshnei politike Sovetskogo Soiuza* (Barnaul: Barnaul gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 1999).

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is organized chronologically into five chapters and a coda. By utilizing archival records, periodicals, literary works, textbooks, interviews, and other sources, I have been able to demonstrate how Ili writers and their allies mobilized socialist policy and bureaucratic patronage to propagate a national culture on their own terms. While the focus of the dissertation is on the Uyghur community of Xinjiang, which then and now comprised more than 90% of the world's Uyghur population, what follows is very much a transborder history. From the first chapter through the Sino-Soviet split, the USSR is always in the picture, due to the Soviet government's sustained involvement in Xinjiang's affairs and the disproportionate cultural heft of the Soviet Uyghur community. The dissertation also spans another historiographical divide, that separating the internal, Turkic-language discourse of Xinjiang's Uyghur community from the Chinese-language discourse of predominantly Han officialdom. While the dissertation's central concern is the emergence of modern Uyghur culture and identity in Xinjiang, the exploration of this process has necessitated a careful consideration of the relationships between Han party officials and Uyghur writers and intellectuals, particularly those belonging to what I dub the Ili network. This dissertation therefore comprises an inquiry into Uyghur cultural history that draws not only on voluminous Uyghur materials but on an extensive Chinese and Russian source base as well; and a history of Xinjiang that consistently extends its gaze over the Soviet border.

Recent research has enhanced our understanding of Sheng Shicai's decade-long rule of Xiniang (1933-44), both in terms of his revolutionary policies and of the politics behind them. To date, however, published research on the subject has fallen primarily on one side or the other of the historiographic divide: institutional histories drawn from Chinese or Russian sources, and

works of social history and biography drawn from both oral and textual Uyghur sources.[9] To fully illuminate the Sheng era's vast implications for Xinjiang's Uyghur community, these various source bases must be brought into dialogue with each other, thereby making it possible to bridge the gap between a Chinese-speaking state and the Turkic-speaking communities it governed, and between Soviet Uyghur elites and the Chinese Uyghur society they helped transform. The dissertation's first chapter confronts this lacuna by examining how the new identity and culture developed by Soviet Uyghurs in the 1920s was imported, adapted, and popularized in Xinjiang in the 1930s among a far larger Uyghur population. Dependent on Soviet patronage, Sheng Shicai invited large numbers of Soviet advisors, technicians, and troops into Xinjiang from the mid-1930—including, crucially, a number of Uyghur Bolsheviks—in order to implement Soviet-style policies and infrastructure development across the province. This chapter maps out the Xinjiang government's efforts to implement those policies and offers the first integrated account of what they meant for Uyghur culture and society on the ground.

The chapter's first section focuses on the rise of Sheng Shicai and the nature of his administration in Ürümchi, with a focus on the Sheng administration's navigation of ethnic and religious questions. The second section explores the implementation of Sheng's policies in the south of the province through the career of Meshür Roziev, a Bolshevik agent and a central figure in Sheng's government. The final section reconstructs the rapid expansion of Uyghur-language print culture and literacy in Sheng-era Xinjiang. I have been able to connect these multiple layers between state and society—Sheng administration policy; implementation of that policy by agents of the Sheng government and the USSR; Uyghur cultural production within these policy frameworks—by drawing on a broad range of sources previously untapped by

[9] Much of the Uyghur historiography of Republican-era Xinjiang is drawn from the oral histories collected in the "historical materials" series (Uy. *tarikh matériyalliri*, Ch. *wenshi ziliao* 文史资料).

scholars, including numerous Sheng-era publications as well as materials from Kazakhstan's Soviet-era archives, most notably the voluminous unpublished memoirs of Meshür Roziev. The picture that emerges is of a rapidly developing official cultural apparatus operated by an alliance of state actors and native intellectuals, and of increasing inroads made by this apparatus into discourse and daily life in the province's Turkic Muslim communities. Printing presses imported from the USSR produced Uyghur newspapers and textbooks in mass quantity, and literacy classes were held in towns and pastures across the province. Public schools were opened at a rapid clip. Within the space of a decade, a large proportion of Xinjiang's settled Turkic-speaking Muslims—the people we now call Uyghurs—became literate in a new language presented as their own.

In fact, though, this new language, and the new literature and culture it bore, was based in large part on a specific model—namely, the one worked out by Ili writers and intellectuals. The dissertation's second chapter focuses on the rise of the Ili network, a cohort of literati and officials that began rounding into shape during the Sheng era and came fully into form in the second half of the 1940s. This chapter delves deeply into the brief but important historical episode of the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR), established in northwestern Xinjiang in 1944 following a Soviet-backed insurrection in the Ili region and surrounding areas.[10] For the remainder of the decade, the ETR governed a large community of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and others under Soviet tutelage. The republic imported many of the USSR's cultural policies, and in its brief existence cultivated a remarkable cohort of writers and intellectuals. This chapter analyzes in detail the catalyzing effect of the ETR on the literary and intellectual network grouped around

[10] The foremost English-language study of the Ili rebellion, based largely on Chinese- and English-language archival sources in the US, UK, and Taiwan, is Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944-1949* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990). The second volume of Barmin's study of Soviet influence in Xinjiang includes much detailed information on the ETR. V. A. Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg* (Barnaul: Barnaul gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 1999).

Ghulja, chief city of the Ili region, and incorporating many Uyghur intellectuals from elsewhere in the province. During the ETR period, this cohort made remarkable strides in further elaborating a Uyghur national culture on the Ili model. Meanwhile, in southern Xinjiang, the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang) established a right-wing regime which promoted its own favored literary factions. Turkic elites in the ETR and in Guomindang Xinjiang were very much in oppositional dialogue with each other as they developed alternative official cultures for Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims, and the chapter thus treats these two overlapping cultural spheres in tandem.

A particular focus of this chapter is the modern canon of secular Uyghur heroes promoted by various groups in Xinjiang during this period, and introduced widely to the populace through periodicals, textbooks, and other vehicles.[11] This new canon would quickly emerge as a central site for the negotiation of modern Uyghur identity, and indeed remains so today. As in many Central and Eastern European nationalisms, canonical literary figures and works have been central to codifying and sanctifying the Uyghur national language—and thereby the nation with which it is often seen as coterminous by its speakers.[12] The significance of these "founding" literary figures and their works, therefore, has been a prime site of contestation between groups seeking to define the Uyghur nation's character, interests, and fate. In this dissertation's exploration of the genesis of the modern Uyghur canon and identity, a recurring motif is the poet Lutpulla Mutellip (1922-45), a favorite son of Ili who was killed in 1945 during the insurrection that culminated in the formation of the ETR. After his demise, Lutpulla was picked up as a symbol for Ili intellectuals and left-leaning Uyghurs—two groups which substantially overlapped.

[11] The dissertation's analysis differs here from that of Rian Thum, who in his study of communal identity in the Tarim Basin dates the emergence of a national, partially secular canon of Uyghur heroes to the 1980s. *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), ch. 5.
[12] Cf. Andrew Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant After Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 12-26.

Ili writers like Zunun Qadiri and Elqem Ekhtem were friendly with Lutpulla during his life, and worked tirelessly to promote his reputation after his death. At the same time, the Guomindang administration based in Ürümchi and its pan-Turkist Uyghur allies presented Lutpulla as a Turkic—rather than a Uyghur—hero, and in some cases as a martyr for China. The battle for Lutpulla's reputation would in subsequent decades be joined by other ideological groupings, and will remain a central theme for the remainder of this dissertation.

While in the 1940s the Ili network was one of several prominent ideological and geographical groupings vying for cultural and political power in Chinese Turkestan, Chapter Three explores how the Ili group emerged as utterly dominant in the Uyghur cultural sphere in the 1950s. In late 1949 and 1950, the Eastern Turkestan Republic as well as the Chinese Nationalist administration in Xinjiang were swept away by the victorious Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While the arrival of the CCP meant the political extinction of the ETR, this development led paradoxically to a vast increase in ETR alumni's cultural power in the new reunited Xinjiang Province. Immediately after dismantling the ETR, the CCP successfully co-opted most of its intellectuals and officials, and in the following years leaned heavily on them in administering a province that largely remained terra incognita for the Chinese Communists. When the People's Liberation Army entered Xinjiang in late 1949, the CCP had little institutional knowledge of the province, no party structure on the ground, and not a single Uyghur member. The CCP had a pressing need for native spokespeople who could credibly explain party policy and ideology to Xinjiang's Uyghur community, which comprised three-quarters of Xinjiang's population and remained largely unfamiliar with Chinese language and customs and suspicious of Chinese rule. By this time, Ili was home to a substantial cohort of intellectuals with a decade or more of experience with socialist-style cultural policies under

Sheng Shicai and then the Eastern Turkestan Republic, and who had for half a decade run the ETR as a Soviet-style party-state. The CCP drew heavily on this talent pool, accepting large swathes of ETR officialdom into the party and the provincial government, and by the early 1950s Ili natives and ETR veterans dominated key posts in Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy.

This Ili network of literati and officials lost no time in propagating across Xinjiang the Uyghur culture, language, and identity worked out in Soviet Central Asia, Sheng-era Xinjiang, and—especially—the ETR. Before long, roads in the provincial capital were renamed for martyred ETR leaders; periodicals written in the Ili-based literary language were distributed across the provice; and Uyghur schools were provided with literature textbooks dominated by Ili writers, with Lutpulla Mutellip usually enjoying pride of place. Central to the rise of the Ili cohort in the Chinese party-state was a set of alliances with Han patrons in the Chinese Communist Party. This chapter will examine in detail the patronage network that proved most influential in the development of Mao-era Uyghur official culture: namely, the network centered around Liu Xiaowu, a Beijing-born party official who arrived in Xinjiang in 1949 and soon rose to leadership positions in the regional Propaganda Department and Writers' Federation. This chapter charts in detail the relationships between Han patrons like Liu and Uyghur writers like Téyipjan Éliev and Zunun Qadiri, as well as the fortunes of other Uyghur literary and intellectual factions that enjoyed less state support.

During the early years of Maoist Xinjiang, the alliance between the Ili cohort and the new party-state cultural bureaucracy successfully popularized an Ili-accented Uyghur official culture across Xinjiang; this culture would exhibit remarkable staying power in subsequent decades. This was not merely a case of party officials cynically using a minority elite to promote their own goals; rather, the alliance between the CCP and the Ili network is best understood as a

symbiosis, one in which Ili intellectuals often set the dominant narrative within frameworks determined by the party-state. By working within the civil bureaucracy of Maoist Xinjiang to shape and promote an Ili-based version of Uyghur culture, Ili writers dramatically enhanced the power and prestige of their own community, while at the same time codifying and popularizing a narrative of Uyghur history and identity that granted Ili a central role. This Ili-inflected narrative has since eclipsed other narratives promoted by the Chinese and Soviet states, and has fused with and in some cases revised the non-national forms of identity indigenous to the people of Chinese Turkestan.[13]

In the broad sweep of Uyghur history, all of this represented an astonishing reversal of cultural hierarchies. Through the end of the nineteenth century, cultural cachet among Xinjiang's Muslims had rested largely on Islamic learning, with Ili considered something of a backwater—including by its own residents—in comparison with the larger oases of southern Xinjiang, with their long traditions of Islamic education and Persianate literature. The southwestern oases of Kashgar and Yarkand reigned supreme in Xinjiang's Turkic Muslim high culture, not least because of their overwhelming numerical superiority: in recent centuries, the Kashgar and Yarkand regions have together contained one-third to one-half of the population we now call Uyghurs. From the early days of Taranchi settlement in northwestern Xinjiang in the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, the Turkic-speaking agriculturalists of the Ili Valley, and their less numerous brethren in Tarbaghatay, never comprised more than eight percent of Xinjiang's settled Turkic population. In the mid-twentieth century, when Ili's cultural power was

[13] The foremost study of pre-national communal identity among the people we now know as Uyghurs is Thum, *Sacred Routes*. Another important contribution on communal identity in pre-modern Altishahr is Laura J. Newby, "'Us and Them' in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Xinjiang," in Ildikó Bellér-Hann et al., eds., *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 15-30.

at its height, the valley's Uyghur community constituted as little as five percent of Xinjiang's Uyghur population.[14]

In the period covered by this study, however, Ili's weaknesses were transmuted into strengths. In the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, Russian and later Soviet influence found its firmest foothold in Xinjiang among Ili's Muslims, who were less enmeshed in preexisting traditions of Islamic learning and frequently had relatives just across the Russian border. Russian- and Tatar-medium schools educated the children of Ili's elite, and emigrant communities from Russian Turkestan formed in Ili's towns. These migrants quickly integrated into local society, but brought with them a great deal of cultural capital from the USSR. Ili was the primary contact zone for Russian and Soviet culture in Xinjiang, and by the 1930s had a small but growing population of locally born young people whose educational experience had a distinctly Soviet flavor. When socialist policies came to Xinjiang in the 1930s under Sheng Shicai, it was unsurprising that Ili would be consistently in the forefront of socialist construction, and that its intellectuals played key roles in state-sponsored cultural initiatives elsewhere in the province, perhaps most notably in the new publishing infrastructure in the provincial capital. The Eastern Turkestan Republic further deepened Ili elites' experience with socialist bureaucracy and cultural work, which in the 1950s made the Ili network an indispensable ally for the CCP in its first decade governing Xinjiang.

[14] 1766 population figures are listed in Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: minzu zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•民族志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di ershiqi juan: minzu zhi* 新疆通志第二十七卷：民族志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2005), 164-65. Population figures for 1949 and 1990 can be found in Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: renkou zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•人口志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di shisan juan: renkou zhi* 新疆通志第十三卷：人口志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2008), 269, and *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi*, 177. For 1953 statistics, see *Renkou zhi*, 283. 2000 statistics are in *Minzu zhi*, 166-67, and 2005 numbers are in *Renkou zhi*, 284.

The rapid expansion of print culture and public education in Xinjiang between the 1930s and the 1950s allowed the Ili network to shape Uyghur mass culture in its most impressionable stages—irreversibly so, I will argue. But this cultural dominance in the Uyghur community could not preserve the Ili network from the political convulsions that gripped all of China in the late 1950s and which persisted intermittently for two decades. Chapter Four will examine the fate of Xinjiang's Uyghur elite during this period of high socialism in China. The chapter's first section deals with the campaigns of the late 1950s, and particularly with the Anti-Rightist Campaign. While this campaign was prosecuted throughout China from 1957, it took special expression in Xinjiang, where it quickly evolved into a Campaign Against Local Nationalism and served as a pretext to remove many ETR veterans from their posts in the government and the army. The CCP had by then trained a large number of local cadres in Xinjiang from scratch, and had diminishing tolerance for officials with suspect pasts in a breakaway republic and independent bases of support, not to mention connections with a Soviet state increasingly at odds with China. Sharpening tensions between the two socialist superpowers, culminating by the end of the decade in the Sino-Soviet split, badly damaged the Ili network's standing with the CCP.

As Maoist radicalism continued to intensify, the Great Leap Forward was launched in order to rapidly industrialize China and revolutionize the agricultural sector. As elsewhere in China, the results in Xinjiang were disastrous, with famine in the countryside and severe material and personnel shortages in all sectors. Meanwhile, state pressure on minority cultures mounted, with a number of assimilationist policies adopted by the Xinjiang state. Increasing pressure on minorities in Xinjiang was closely linked to Sino-Soviet tensions, and the Soviet Union, for decades a deeply felt presence in northern Xinjiang, seemed to many residents of Ili and Tarbaghatay a more appealing model of multi-national communism. In the early 1960s, perhaps

sixty thousand residents of northern Xinjiang, primarily Uyghurs and Kazakhs, voted with their feet, fleeing the deteriorating economic and political climate of Xinjiang for the USSR. This group included a sizable number of prominent Uyghur and Kazakh intellectuals associated with the Ili group, a fact which in the eyes of the Chinese state brought further suspicion upon remaining members of the Ili network. The Ili faction's representation in official cultural posts continued to decline through the first half of the 1960s, with some prominent Ili intellectuals in and out of detention and labor reform.

Yet the canon, culture, and literary language the Ili network had codified continued to take root throughout Xinjiang during the 1960s. Having played a defining role in the founding years of Uyghur-language printing, Ili writers' imprint on Uyghur culture and identity proved indelible. Again, Lutpulla Mutellip's posthumous reputation provides a useful case study for the development of Uyghur official culture in this period. Comparing Lutpulla Mutellip to national writers and poets in other traditions as well as to figures in the pre-national canon of Chinese Turkestan,[15] I argue that once an individual is enshrined in the canon of a nation or language, that figure's cultural staying power quickly transcends the interests of any sub-national group. Other groups will seek to appropriate the canonical figure's legacy, thereby burnishing it further.[16] And so Lutpulla's star continued to burn brightly through the early and mid-1960s, and Uyghur culture in Xinjiang continued to develop along the lines primarily laid down by Ili intellectuals and cadres. Even as their bureaucratic dominance declined, Ili intellectuals' cultural influence endured undiminished.

[15] A noteworthy example of the former is Nathaniel Hawthorne's reputation, sensitively treated by Jane Tompkins in *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction: 1790-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3-37. A penetrating study of the latter is Thum, *Sacred Routes*.
[16] A detailed study of one such canonical figure's legacy is John Rodden, *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

The Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang is treated in detail in the chapter's second section. In summer and fall 1966, as waves of revolutionary fervor and chaos radiated outward from Beijing and Shanghai, Xinjiang cultural officials like Liu Xiaowu were denounced and stripped of their positions, and often tortured and imprisoned. When Liu fell, the Uyghur writers he had patronized fell with him, and the works they had helped canonize—including the poetry of Lutpulla Mutellip—were blacklisted and burned. Uyghur intellectuals and writers suffered grievously during the Cultural Revolution, with some losing their lives. The Cultural Revolutionaries, having denounced nearly all literary figures and cultural heroes, attempted to fill the void with a new roster of Uyghur heroes, real and imagined. Chief among these figures was Qadir Hézim, a soldier who performed endless feats of derring-do and selflessness while still finding time for intensive study of Mao's works, and who was martyred while saving a child from a flood. The final section of Chapter Four considers these now-obscure Uyghur personages who were lionized during the Cultural Revolution, and questions why these individuals, whose stories were modeled on the CCP martyr Lei Feng, showed so little cultural staying power after the end of Maoism's most radical decade.

The fifth and final chapter examines Uyghur culture during China's reform era, with the chapter's first section providing the first sustained account in English of Uyghur print culture, literature, and ideology in the 1980s. Over the course of the 1980s, China's economy and press were substantially liberalized, and denounced writers and intellectuals exonerated. As the civic nationalism of the Mao era was left behind, the CCP's effort to win Uyghur hearts and minds via propaganda was largely abandoned; it was hoped instead that improving economic conditions would keep China's minority peoples happily in the fold. The void left by the abandonment of socialist ideology was quickly filled by that other ideological motor of the twentieth century:

nationalism. Han nationalism received tacit state support, and Uyghur nationalism—often reacting to its Han counterpart—developed more subtly in Xinjiang's newly liberalized print media. The Mao-era Uyghur elite largely reemerged during the 1980s, while new ideological groups such as modernist poets also began making their voices heard. In Xinjiang's proliferating periodicals, literary debates between these competing groups served as proxy wars over Uyghur identity and culture. Considering these groups' debates over Uyghur tradition and authenticity, I argue that the Cultural Revolution and the broader cultural destruction and production of the Mao era created a foreshortening effect in Uyghur cultural history, whereby many cultural elaborations—the poetic styles of the mid-twentieth century, for example—were in the reform era perceived as possessing greater historical depth than in fact they did.

The chapter's second section retraces the ways in which Xinjiang's resurgent Uyghur literati, now largely freed from state propaganda duties, worked successfully to reimagine the socialist heroes of the 1950s and 1960s—chief among them Lutpulla Mutellip—as Uyghur national heroes. On the basis of oral and published sources, the section demonstrates the survival of the mid-century Uyghur canon during the Cultural Revolution, in samizdat form as well as orally. Once canon is created, even book burning and denunciations may not suffice to overturn it. The section then examines a number of cultural productions devoted to the 1980s reimagination of Lutpulla Mutellip, notably including the historical novel. No Uyghur-language novels had been published in Xinjiang before the reform era, but the novel emerged in the 1980s as Uyghur literature's preeminent nation-building literary form, a phenomenon I contextualize in terms of global trends connecting literary genre and nationalism.[17] A key text in this section is Aqsu writer Abdulla Talip's 1982 *Whirlpool Wave*, a sprawling fictionalized account of Lutpulla

[17] Cf. Sarah E. L. Bowskill, *Gender, Nation and the Formation of the Twentieth-Century Mexican Literary Canon* (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2011).

Mutellip's life. Printed in vast quantity and widely read throughout Xinjiang, this novel helped set the tone for subsequent Uyghur biographical novels, a genre that proved significant in reform-era Uyghur culture. In historical fiction, Ili writers made their mark once more, with Zordun Sabir's three-volume novel *Motherland*, chronicling the Ili rebellion and the creation of the ETR, becoming perhaps the single most influential work of Uyghur fiction to date.

The chapter's third section offers an intervention in contemporary Chinese historiography by tracing genealogies in Uyghur literary genres across the postwar era. Following scholars who have encouraged China historians to bridge the 1949 divide, I suggest that what I call the 1978 divide has similarly obscured important continuities in Chinese history—particularly cultural history—between the Mao era and the reform era. The section illustrates this contention by focusing on the development of historical and biographical fiction in Uyghur, which in the reform era proved perhaps the most dynamic genre of Uyghur prose fiction while also playing a considerable role in Uyghur communal self-definition. By unearthing the little-acknowledged roots of this genre in Republican-era and Mao-era Xinjiang as well as in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Turkestan Republic, the section highlights cultural continuities across political regimes that defined themselves as clean breaks with the past. The section shows how CCP rhetoric about the reform era as a new beginning for China was enthusiastically echoed among Uyghur intellectuals in Xinjiang and ultimately adopted in historiography both in China and abroad—thereby obscuring some of the cultural continuities this section identifies. By deemphasizing 1978 as a dividing point in Chinese history, I argue, the historiography of modern China will be better equipped to identify a range of continuities in Chinese culture and society between the Mao era and the decades since. Exploring these continuities will be particularly

relevant in understanding today's China, where the reform era is evidently giving way to a new political dispensation that clearly owes much to the Mao era.

The final section of the chapter brings the narrative and the argument up to recent years, and demonstrates that the Ili group's deep impression on Uyghur culture has persisted despite Ili intellectuals' declining representation in the cultural elite. Lutpulla Mutellip's reputation is once more emblematic. Over the last several decades, Lutpulla has increasingly emerged as an ur-Uyghur national symbol, rather than a literary figure or a symbol of Ili. By the 1990s, Lutpulla's literary achievements were of diminishing relevance, as Uyghur poetry moved in other directions. His socialist ideals, too, were largely inaccessible to a generation reared in the entrepreneurial and consumerist environment of reform-era China. But as the legend of Lutpulla became increasingly unmoored from the historical personage of Lutpulla Mutellip, the legend's symbolic power only increased. The less content inherent in the symbol, the wider its potential use. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Internet significantly democratized Uyghur literary culture, for so long dominated by the state-controlled press: Uyghur canon in the first sixteen years of the new century was increasingly determined by reader preference rather than state diktat. Nonetheless, this section closes out the main text of the dissertation by demonstrating that the canon created by the Ili network showed remarkable persistence even into the digital age, a fact which demonstrates early print culture's power to permanently shape cultural norms.

The dissertation's coda covers the unprecedented campaign of repression carried out in Xinjiang by the Chinese party-state from early 2017 to the present. Having played a major role in the development of Uyghur identity since the founding of the People's Republic, the party-state has in the last two years reversed course and embarked upon a radical effort to dismantle Uyghur identity and Islamic practice in Xinjiang. The most dramatic expression of this campaign has

been the long-term detention of a large and growing fraction of Xinjiang's Muslim population—likely over a million people—in internment camps, a mass incarceration that has touched every Uyghur household. Many elements of the party-state's ongoing campaign in Xinjiang are clearly designed to root out Uyghur culture and identity: the incarceration of nearly all major Uyghur intellectuals, writers, and cultural figures; the burning of Uyghur-language books; the removal of Uyghur script from businesses and public institutions. Even in its attempted erasure of Uyghur communal identity, the party-state seems to recognize implicitly the central role of language, print, and public culture in forming and sustaining identity. In this coda, I outline what is currently known about the situation on the basis of my recent fieldwork as well as available journalistic and scholarly sources, and consider the campaign's implications for Uyghur culture.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The role of literature and print culture in nation formation has long been acknowledged by prevailing theories of national identity. Dominant models of nationalism, however, have been built largely on case studies of long-established nation-states and the colonies of European empires. Perhaps the most influential model was provided by Benedict Anderson, who emphasized the crucial role played by print capitalism in the emergence of nationalism in Western nations and their colonies.[18] These models have limited explanatory power, however, for the numerous minority national movements that emerged from the twentieth-century socialist experiment. The modern emergence of these minority nations—some of which have since become majority nations in post-socialist nation-states—is inseparable from socialist cultural, educational, and nationality policy. The profit motive as such was irrelevant in the context of

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

socialist nation building in Eurasia; instead, ideological imperatives of mass literacy and national development placed tremendous cultural power in the hands of national elites who successfully navigated the terrain of bureaucratic patronage and ideological purity.

This dissertation argues that a new framework is needed to explain the ways in which print culture under conditions of socialism can provide unprecedented culture-shaping power to writers and intellectuals from previously marginal groups. Socialist states' emphasis on rapidly achieving mass literacy, and on promoting native-language literatures as a means toward modernization and propaganda, conferred tremendous power and prestige on the small groups of minority writers who wrote the textbooks and edited the newspapers. And these writers and intellectuals, regardless of their patrons' intentions, were not mere creatures of the state. The party line was in general strictly enforced in other spheres of minority life; yet given linguistic barriers and the nature of the creative process, direct control of minority literatures was often beyond the reach of states dominated by monolingual officials from majority nationalities. More than any other field of endeavor, native-language literatures proved to be crucibles for the autonomous definition of national identity among minority groups in socialist states. This dissertation draws therefore not only on cultural history, but on literary studies as well.

The Uyghur community, split in the twentieth century between history's two largest socialist states as well as a short-lived breakaway republic, provides a prime opportunity for studying these phenomena. Conversely, by exploring the implications of socialist print culture in newly codified languages, this dissertation offers important new insights for the burgeoning field of Uyghur history. This study represents the first cultural history of China's Uyghur community to span the Republican, Maoist, and reform eras—the half-century from the mid-1930s to the mid-1980s during which modern Uyghur identity took root in Xinjiang. In reconstructing this

history, the present study builds on an increasingly sophisticated literature on pre-modern forms of identity in the Tarim Basin (southern Xinjiang),[19] as well as on the history of Uyghur identity and community in the early Soviet Union.[20] This dissertation demonstrates how the materials of pre-modern community in Xinjiang were transmuted into Uyghur national identity, and how the Uyghur national framework negotiated in early Soviet Central Asia was reimagined and popularized on a far larger scale in Xinjiang.

The implications for the historiography of modern China are also considerable. Socialist nationality policy in Xinjiang, developed from the mid-1930s, provided a precedent for Chinese Communist nationality policy after the 1949 foundation of the People's Republic, with existing national categories in Xinjiang adopted wholesale by the PRC in the early 1950s.[21] Reconstructing the development of nationality policy in Xinjiang promises insight into the origins of the PRC's approach to the nationality question, a line of inquiry I hope to further develop in future research. In addition, this dissertation's integration of cultural history across the Republican, Mao, and reform eras suggests a fruitful point of departure for research on other aspects of Chinese cultural history. By bridging the historiographical divides of both 1949 and 1978, it has been possible in these pages to follow continuities of official culture and minority elite politics across the broad expanse of twentieth-century Xinjiang history. While the particulars of this history differ in many ways from those of China's other regions, it is my hope

[19] Newby, "Us and Them"; Thum, *Sacred Routes*; Schluessel, "The Muslim Emperor of China."
[20] Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*; Sean Raymond Roberts, *Uyghur neighborhoods and nationalisms in the former Sino-Soviet Borderland: An Historical Ethnography of a Stateless Nation on the Margins of Modernity* (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2003).
[21] The origins of nationality policy in the PRC remain more obscure than in the USSR, whose archives have been much more accessible to scholars. Still, a number of recent works have advanced our understanding of CCP nationality policy in the founding years of Communism in China. Notable examples include Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), and Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 79-80; 134. The precedent set by Xinjiang's nationality policies, however, remains largely unexplored in the literature on PRC *minzu* (nationality/ethnicity) policy.

that this dissertation will form part of a trend toward taking Mao-era cultural production seriously as a precedent for the developments of the reform era.

The dissertation speaks also to questions of socialist nation building that transcend the borders of a single community or state. While my focus will be on the Uyghur community, frequent comparisons will be drawn with other minority groups in the USSR and China. Since the opening of Soviet archives in the late 1980s and 1990s, scholarship on the policy side of nation building in the USSR has advanced considerably. Terry Martin's work in particular has broken new ground in exploring the connections between communist ideology, geopolitical realities, and Soviet nationality policy.[22] Most other Western scholarship on minority nation building in socialist states has likewise focused on state ideologies and the formation of policy. A scholarly lacuna remains, however, around the process by which state-recognized ethnic categories were made into living nations in the minds and lives of the individuals these new categories encompassed. This dissertation explores nation formation in socialist states as the result of two interconnected processes: state planners and minority intellectuals' negotiation of ideological and policy frameworks for newly-defined nations; and minority-language writers and intellectuals' creation of national cultures and identities within and around these frameworks.

Therefore, while I build on insights into Soviet mass culture by scholars like Jeffrey Brooks, my work speaks more closely to Ali Iğmen's study of "culture clubs" in Soviet Kyrgyzstan.[23] Iğmen explains how Kyrgyz cadres running the clubs, working with Kyrgyz artists, writers, and performers, were able to preserve much of what they considered traditional Kyrgyz culture by melding it with Soviet content. This was arguably what Soviet authorities wanted;

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[22] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
[23] Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Ali Iğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

these Kyrgyz cadres, by convincingly combining "national form and socialist content," managed to make key elements of Soviet ideology part of the mental furniture of many Kyrgyz. My own work, however, questions the binary of Central Asian culture and modern socialist ideology. The codification and spread of Uyghur culture, I argue, cannot be separated from the systems of education and print media created by twentieth-century socialist states. By examining the Uyghur case in detail, this dissertation offers insight into these broader theoretical concerns as well as into the rise of minority mass cultures in the specific context of Chinese socialism. The perspective and methodology of cultural history has allowed me to work around the inaccessible archives in Chinese minority regions, and to shed light on the evolution of minority national identities in modern China. This process can only be understood by reconstructing the complex interplay between minority intellectuals and Communist Party bureaucrats—and in the case of the Uyghur nation, by considering in depth the key role of literature.

This study draws historical parallels and theoretical inspiration from existing scholarship on literary canon, a field that has benefited from increased academic attention in the last few decades. Jane Tompkins's important study of nineteenth-century American fiction deals with a number of themes relevant to this dissertation, including the role of personal networks, local loyalties, and ideology in the formation of a canon, as well as the remarkable ease with which canonical figures and works can be invested with radically varying meanings by different groups and generations.[24] Tompkins's work deals little with the role of the state in canon formation—appropriately enough, as the state played only a minor role in the nineteenth-century American processes that are the focus of her study. Edward Mack's research on the formation of the modern Japanese canon fills this gap somewhat by examining the frequent cooperation between

[24] Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction: 1790-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

government and private enterprise in the creation of "modern literary classics."[25] To date, though, little has been written on literary canon formation in societies where publishing is monopolized by the state. This is due perhaps to an assumption that authoritarian states simply dictate the form and content of literary canon, resulting in prose and poetry representing little more than the will of the rulers. Yet this analysis ignores the irreducible autonomy of literary creation—that space which authors inhabit between the demands of the Party or the market on the one hand, and the reception of individual readers on the other. My work explores this autonomous space, and the ways in which writers and editors have worked within the framework of socialist cultural and nationality policy to fashion their nations by fashioning national literatures.

Previous studies of official culture, and particularly of literary canon formation, have focused primarily on nation states and their respective titular nationalities. Yet such nations are the exception rather than the rule. Of the world's many vibrant official cultures and literary canons, most belong to groups lacking nation states of their own; and for nations without nation states, the generation of official culture involves a different set of factors and processes. Two recent works in Uyghur studies have contributed to closing this scholarly gap by exploring the creation of Uyghur classical music, an important element of Uyghur national pride and identity.[26] Rachel Harris's and Nathan Light's studies, focusing primarily on the Chinese Uyghur community, each considers the special nexus of culture and identity for a people whose expressions of communal identity are heavily restricted by the state which governs them. By reconstructing the codification of the *muqam*, the genre at the core of Uyghur classical music, Harris and Light help illuminate the emergence of a unified sense of Uyghur cultural belonging.

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[25] Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

[26] Rachel Harris, *The Making of a Musical Canon in Chinese Central Asia: The Uyghur Twelve Muqam* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008); Nathan Light, *Intimate Heritage: Creating Uyghur Muqam Song in Xinjiang* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008).

The present study analyzes Uyghur history and culture in the other direction, emphasizing the various groups and communities subsumed under the Uyghur category. In doing so, this dissertation challenges the field of Uyghur studies to more closely examine the struggles and alliances flowing beneath the surface of the national identity.

An important element of these intracommunal divergences is rooted in the deeply felt geographies of local identity in Xinjiang, an aspect of communal belonging treated in detail in Justin Rudelson's 1998 study.[27] However, while Rudelson made pioneering use of anthropological fieldwork to complicate official narratives of identity in China, in some cases his argument reaches beyond what the evidence will support. In contrast to Rudelson's contention, most indications suggest that oasis identities have not formed an impediment to the spread and intensification of Uyghur identity in Xinjiang, a process that was well underway by the time Rudelson's fieldwork began. Factors in the spread of Uyghur identity include improved transportation systems, the spread of mass media, Uyghur language standardization, and—perhaps most significantly—an enhanced sense of solidarity stimulated by state policies favoring Xinjiang's rapidly growing Han population. Moreover, a shared sense of identity among the people now known as Uyghurs is not simply a recent product of these factors, or of Soviet and Chinese nation-building policies. Much new light has been shed on the pre-modern roots of modern Uyghur identity by scholarship demonstrating the existence of an inter-oasis identity in Chinese Turkestan well before the twentieth century. While Rudelson persuasively identified the importance of local identities in Xinjiang's Uyghur community, the twentieth century made local identity in Xinjiang not into a centrifugal force but rather into a powerful centripetal pull: the

[27] Justin Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

adoption of an Ili-centric identity by Turkic-speaking Muslims in villages and cities across Chinese Turkestan.

SOURCES

In order to reconstruct the transnational emergence of Uyghur official culture, this dissertation delves deeply into source materials on both sides of the former Sino-Soviet border. As this is the first study of the Ili faction's rise to cultural dominance, a substantial amount of groundwork has been necessary. The dissertation therefore combines extensive analysis of primary sources in Uyghur, Chinese, and Russian with careful consideration of the existing secondary literature on nation formation, socialist mass culture, and literary canon. As much as possible, I have endeavored to introduce a comparative element into the study, not least because the phenomenon I have called print communism merits study elsewhere in the socialist world as well. My sources range from periodical literature to unpublished manuscripts to interviews to archives; assembling these has been the work of a decade, and has involved work in libraries and archives from Ürümchi to Almaty, from Beijing to Tokyo, and from Cambridge to Palo Alto.

Studies of official culture sometimes refrain from extensive use of archival materials; official culture, after all, is precisely those works that make it into print and stay in print. The published record is amply available in libraries and digital repositories; and with finding aids both print and digital, much of the historical record is at researchers' fingertips. None of this is true of Uyghur official culture. The processes of Uyghur canon formation are inseparable from the cultural bureaucracies of three twentieth-century socialist states—the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Turkestan Republic—and state archives therefore offer a potential gold mine of sources on the closed-door negotiation of literary canon. While the

archival access situation in Xinjiang remains a difficulty for researchers, recent archival collections published in China provide an important source for my work, as do online archival repositories recently opened to researchers. While Chinese-language documents predominate among these materials, they nonetheless shed much light on the bureaucratic and political frameworks underlying the development of Uyghur official culture in Xinjiang. Turkic-language documents are present as well in somewhat smaller volume, both in published and online collections. While limited in scale and subject matter, these archival offerings nonetheless contribute substantially to the available record on the emergence of Uyghur official culture in Xinjiang.

In contrast to northwest China, the state of archival access in Kazakhstan is excellent. The Soviet Uyghur community was largely concentrated in the Kazakh SSR, and by the postwar period Kazakhstan had also become the center of gravity for Uyghur intellectual life in Soviet Central Asia. (In the 1920s and 1930s, Uzbekistan was also a hub of Uyghur intellectual and literary activity.) The archival record for Soviet Uyghur official culture is thus particularly rich in Kazakhstan, and notably in the former capital, Almaty, home to the country's largest Uyghur community as well as many of Kazakhstan's major archives and libraries. The largest collections of archival documents relevant to this study are held in the Central State Archive in Almaty; these include memoirs, manuscript versions of works both published and unpublished, and extensive correspondence between Uyghur writers and party officials. Other collections in the Central State Archive deal with the Uyghur Section of the Kazakhstan Writers' Union, cultural exchanges with China, and related topics. Down the street at the Presidential Archive, personnel files going back to the early Soviet period make it possible to trace the careers of key figures in the development of Soviet Uyghur official culture.

The Soviet archives are crucial sources not only on the development of Uyghur identity and culture in the USSR, but also on the export and rearticulation of this identity across the border in Xinjiang. Ideas, texts, and people moved in large numbers across the Soviet-Xinjiang border from the 1920s through the early 1960s, sometimes at state direction and at other times in defiance of state policy. Soviet agents poured into Xinjiang and the Eastern Turkestan Republic in the 1930s and 1940s; Chinese-citizen Uyghurs traveled to the USSR in the 1930s and 1950s for education and cultural collaboration; tens of thousands of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Hui left China for the USSR in the early 1960s. Each of these groups left traces in the Soviet archives, from official documents to unpublished memoirs. These archival deposits have enabled me to shed new light on these transborder flows of people, print products, and ideas, and to reconstruct the negotiation of Uyghur official culture between three states: the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the Eastern Turkestan Republic.

For the rest of the story, I have relied on several types of sources. The most significant source base has been the extensive corpus of Uyghur newspapers, journals, and books published in Xinjiang from the mid-1930s to the present. Libraries in Xinjiang carry only a small fraction of relevant materials from before the Cultural Revolution, and finding aids are nonexistent for that period. Fortunately, my years in Xinjiang and my extensive connections there have allowed me to accumulate a substantial digital collection of Republican-era and Mao-era publications from Xinjiang in both Uyghur and Chinese, including periodicals, textbooks, literary works, and more. Many items which cannot be found in Xinjiang itself I have been able to locate in Beijing, Germany, Japan, the US, and especially Kazakhstan. Libraries in Almaty, notably the National Library and the Academy of Sciences Library, have proven a particularly important resource; not only for Soviet and post-Soviet publications, but also for the many Uyghur books and periodicals

printed in China that are now hard to find there due to the destruction of the Cultural Revolution and the current pressures of censorship. Private collections in Almaty have been a key source as well; some of these are in the possession of writers and their descendants, while others are held by local antiquarians.

Over the last century, groups of native-language writers have worked out modern Uyghur culture and identity, a process mediated by the officials—Han, Russian, and Uyghur—of three states' cultural bureaucracies. The backdrop for this process was Sino-Soviet cooperation and enmity, which contributed to a rich and troubled cross-border cultural negotiation. Bringing sources from both sides of the border into conversation with each other has enabled this dissertation to offer new insights into the interconnections, parallels, and contrasts between nation building in history's two largest socialist states, as well as a short-lived quasi-socialist state—the Eastern Turkestan Republic—positioned between them. Rarely does history offer so natural a comparative study of the interactions between intellectuals and the state. For this and other reasons, the twentieth-century history of Uyghur official culture, as we will see below, has much to tell us about the connection between print and nation formation in a socialist context.

1. PRINT AND REVOLUTION IN XINJIANG, 1932-1944

This chapter represents the first in-depth integration of the political and cultural history of Xinjiang during a watershed period: the administration of Sheng Shicai (盛世才, 1897-1970), who ruled Xinjiang from 1933 through 1942. Increasingly detailed political histories of this era, in both Chinese and English, have so far largely presented a state's-eye view of Uyghur history and culture, one which overlooks many of the momentous developments occurring in Xinjiang's Uyghur community in these years. This lacuna is due in large part to linguistic bifurcation: official sources on Sheng's Xinjiang are nearly all written in Chinese or Russian, while a systematic archive of Republican-era Uyghur-language sources has not been forthcoming. In assembling the source base for the below account, I have pieced together as much as possible of the Uyghur-language record from personal collections in China and Kazakhstan; library and archival holdings in Germany, Sweden, the United States, and Japan; and the recollections of a small number of historical witnesses. Most of these sources have not previously been used in historical scholarship, and in a number of cases they significantly complicate current understandings about Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking oasis-dwellers in the first period during which they were widely exposed to the concept of a Uyghur nation.

The first section of the chapter recounts Sheng Shicai's formation of a Soviet-backed, quasi-socialist administration in Xinjiang in the 1930s, with a particular focus on the Sheng administration's cultural and nationality policies. This will set the stage for exploring how the Uyghur culture worked out in the USSR in the 1920s was imported to Xinjiang and successfully popularized there between the mid-1930s and the early 1940s. The chapter's second section, via a detailed account of Bolshevik secret agent Meshür Roziev's career in Xinjiang during the

1930s, will examine how the projection of personal power enabled Sheng and his Soviet patrons to implement socialist policies in a province where state presence remained thin at the local level. By extending the state's reach into daily life throughout the province, they laid the groundwork for the emergence of mass culture in Xinjiang. It is the articulation and promulgation of this mass culture that is the focus of the chapter's final section, which reconstructs the emergence of mass native-language printing in Xinjiang in the 1930s and 1940s, with a particular focus on the circulation of both print matter and intellectuals. The section demonstrates that mass printing in Uyghur arose from a confluence of local initiative and state policy, setting the stage for a communal identity negotiated between Uyghur intellectuals and state officials.

The emergence of mass print in Uyghur was closely linked to the Ili region's rise to cultural hegemony in the new Uyghur nation. Writers and editors moved between newspaper offices and publishing houses with some regularity; Ili, where Turkic-language periodicals had a longer history than elsewhere in the province, supplied a disproportionate number of these personnel to other newspapers, and particularly to the leading publishing houses in the provincial capital. This circulation of writers and texts helped knit the province's settled Muslim communities together around a common Uyghur identity and culture—one which drew disproportionately on Ili. More generally, the province-wide circulation of newspapers in a language identified as Uyghur, based on the vernacular of Xinjiang's Turkic agriculturalists, was one of the prime forces reifying the Uyghur national category officially adopted by the Ürümchi government in 1935. These periodicals helped lend tangibility and popular resonance to a category that had initially been articulated by a relatively small group of intellectuals and officials. The language and concepts used in the newspapers, increasingly standardized over the course of the 1940s, brought the construct of linguists and literati into the everyday.

Prologue: newspaper politics in Ili and Ürümchi, 1910-1932

In 1910, the reformist currents precipitating the Xinhai Revolution reached Xinjiang's Ili region, in the far northwest corner of the Qing Empire. As the empire stumbled and ultimately collapsed, and the shape of its successor state remained uncertain, reform-minded soldiers and officials in Ili experimented with a form of mass communication previously unknown in the region: the newspaper. In 1910, the Chinese-language *Ili Vernacular News* (*Yili baihua bao* 伊犁白話報) began publication, with a sister paper called *Ili Prefecture News* (*Ile wilāyitining giziti*) printed by mimeograph in handwritten Turkic. (Some sources also mention Manchu and Mongol editions.) Both papers were obliged to close in late 1911 amidst the headwinds of Xinhai, but a successor paper known as *New Gazette* (*Xin bao* 新報) began printing in early 1912. The following year, as Xinjiang's new governor Yang Zengxin (楊增新, 1864-1928) outmaneuvered Ili's rebellious officers and brought the region back under provincial control, *New Bulletin* was shuttered as well, and newspaper publishing in Ili ceased for the time being.[1]

Not long after suppressing newspaper publishing in Ili, Yang established his own newspaper in Ürümchi. Printed only in Chinese, and published every few days on a somewhat irregular basis, *Xinjiang Bulletin* (*Xinjiang gongbao* 新疆公報) concerned itself mostly with state proclamations and bureaucratic affairs, and seems not to have made a deep impression beyond the province's thin stratum of Chinese-speaking officialdom. In 1928, after Governor Yang was assassinated under mysterious circumstances, he was succeeded by his protégé Jin Shuren (金樹仁, 1883-1941). In comparison to the deeply conservative Yang, Jin was something

[1] A detailed account of the early Ili newspapers as well as the first provincial newspapers is Wei Changhong 魏长洪 and Ai Ling 艾玲, "Jiefang qian Xinjiang baoxue shi zong shu," *Xiyu yanjiu* 4 (2005): 79–111. For more on the Turkic-language *Ili Prefecture News*, see Tursun Zérdin, "Ilida gézitning barliqqa kélishi we u bésip ötken musape," *Ili deryasi* 2 (1995): 86–96; M. I. Erzin, "'Ili wilayiti géziti' heqqide," *Kitab munbiri* 3 (2012): 29-31, 50.

of a reformer, and within a year he had replaced Yang's modest state bulletin with two new Chinese-language periodicals: a thick monthly devoted to official announcements (*Xinjiang sheng zhengfu gongbao* 新疆省政府公報) and a newspaper called the *Tianshan Daily* (*Tianshan ribao* 天山日報). The *Daily* published national and international news, mostly reprinted from other papers and typically rather stale by press time, as well as more up-to-date provincial news from its own sources. Poetry and other literary works appeared on the back page. The newspaper was published six days a week, and paid subscriptions were available by mail.

Despite its limitations, the stated mission of the *Tianshan Daily* was to "enlighten the people," and the paper was Xinjiang's first provincial-level periodical intended for a popular audience. Yet although the Daily's founding documents mention an edition of the paper to be printed in the "Turban" (*Chan* 纏) language—i.e., the language of the province's Turkic Muslim agriculturalists, then known in official parlance as *Chanmin* 纏民 or *Chantou* 纏頭, meaning "turban-wearers"—no Turkic-language issues of the newspaper have come to light.[2] For its first few years, then, the *Daily* seems to have been printed only in Chinese, a language spoken at the time by perhaps five to ten percent of Xinjiang's population, and read by even less. For the Ürümchi-based state to communicate directly with the province's Turkic majority, Turkic-language mass printing and mass education would be needed. Both would come to Xinjiang with startling rapidity in the mid-1930s.[3]

[2] Wei and Ai, "Jiefang qian," 82-83.

[3] Some secondary sources mention a Uyghur-language (or proto-Uyghur) newspaper called *Ang* (Consciousness), said to have been established in Kashgar in 1918. If this paper was printed, however, it left few traces. *Yengi ḥayāt*, a newspaper published in Kashgar in the 1930s, averred that "in previous years, having fallen behind the whole world in all respects, our Xinjiang (Eastern Turkistan)… had in this 20th-century culture utterly lacked newspaper publishing." Given that the head editor of *Yengi ḥayāt* was the same Qutluq Haji Shewqi usually mentioned as the publisher of *Ang*, this would seem to call the existence of the earlier newspaper into question. "Shingjāng meṭbu'āti," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 13 May 1935: 2. Qutluq Haji Shewqi is mentioned as the publisher of *Ang* in Liu Bin 刘宾 and Iminjan Ehmidi Utuq, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 278–79.

SHENG'S REVOLUTION AND THE SOVIET-XINJIANG NEXUS

Yang Zengxin had governed Xinjiang from 1912 to 1928 largely by maintaining the administrative structures and policies of the late Qing. He likewise did his best to keep the ideological clock stopped at 1912: while Uyghur nation building was well under way across the Soviet border in the 1920s, Yang worked to prevent the infiltration of nationalist or socialist ideas into Xinjiang, though he was unable to plug the leaks entirely.[4] His successor Jin Shuren, while hardly a radical, instituted a number of new policies that departed from Yang's status quo and upset the delicate post-Qing balance of power in the province. In 1930, Jin moved to abolish the local Muslim monarchy in the eastern Xinjiang oasis of Qumul (Hami), and made efforts to redistribute land in the oasis to Han settlers from Gansu.[5] These actions finally lit the powder keg of long-standing Muslim grievances over Chinese rule in the province, and inspired a rebellion in Qumul that spread quickly across southern Xinjiang. One oasis after another slipped from the Ürümchi government's grasp, until in 1933 the capital itself was threatened by rebel troops.[6]

With inner China split between warring factions and increasingly menaced by an expansionist Japanese Empire, no help for Jin's beleaguered regime was forthcoming from Beijing. As rebel armies closed in on Ürümchi, Governor Jin turned in desperation to Sheng Shicai, a young Japanese-trained officer whom Jin had plucked from obscurity to train his elite troops but had long resisted sending into battle. Jin had feared that Sheng, with his talent,

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[4] Yang Zengxin's conservative policies, and the rationale behind them, are detailed in Justin Jacobs, "Empire Besieged: The Preservation of Chinese Rule in Xinjiang, 1884-1971" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2011), 79-239. On the headroads that Soviet influence and modernizing ideas nonetheless managed to make in Xinjiang during Yang's tenure, see David John Brophy, "Tending to Unite? The Origins of Uyghur Nationalism," Ph.D. Diss. (Harvard University, 2011), 328-53.

[5] On the hereditary Muslim nobility of Qing Xinjiang, see David Brophy, "The Kings of Xinjiang: Muslim Elites and the Qing Empire," *Etudes orientales* 25 (2008): 69-90.

[6] Chinese sources referred to Xinjiang's capital as Dihua 迪化 through 1954; the city has subsequently been known in Chinese as Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐, a transcription of "Ürümchi." Most Xinjiang Turkic sources both before and after 1954 have referred to the city as Ürümchi, though Arabic transliterations of "Dihua" cropped up occasionally through the mid-twentieth century. For the sake of simplicity, this dissertation adopts the preferred Uyghur spelling "Ürümchi" in the body of the text.

charisma, and intensely loyal troops, could prove a dangerous political rival. The governor had been right to worry: in April 1933, having successfully staved off a Hui army headed for Ürümchi, Sheng turned his sights on the capital. Jin, having lost the confidence of Xinjiang's civil and military officials, was removed from office by a coup and replaced by Sheng. For the next decade, Sheng Shicai would be the central political actor in the province.[7]

The province Sheng took control of, while never a rich one, had been devastated by the revolts of the previous few years. From Hami and Turpan in the east to Kashgar in the southwest, crops and villages had been laid waste by a succession of rebel and government armies. The primitive road system was in disrepair, and electrification had barely gotten off the ground. To remain in power where Jin had failed, Sheng knew he would need far greater military and economic resources, and some new ideas as well. With the Republican Chinese government weak, distant, and preoccupied by Japanese aggression and communist insurgents, the Soviet Union, which shared a lengthy border with Xinjiang, was the only viable sponsor. Soon after seizing the reins of power from Jin Shuren, Sheng struck a fateful bargain with the USSR. The Soviets would rescue Sheng's besieged government in Ürümchi if he would cooperate with them in remaking the province along Soviet lines and allow the USSR access to Xinjiang's extensive mineral resources. With the Ürümchi government's military position deteriorating by the day, Sheng had little choice but to accept the terms of Stalin's bailout.

In late 1933 and early 1934, Soviet planes strafed rebel positions around Ürümchi, and continued Soviet support allowed Sheng's forces to regain control of northern and central Xinjiang. The densely populated southern rim of the province, however, remained for a time beyond the provincial government's reach. With Ürümchi in turmoil, Turkic Muslim

[7] Jacobs, "Empire Besieged," 248-82; James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 188-99.

revolutionaries in the southwestern Kashgar region took advantage of the breakdown in provincial authority and in November 1933 declared the establishment of a Republic of Eastern Turkestan (Sharqiy Tūrkistān Jumhuriyiti, hereafter RET).[8] Khoja Niyaz Haji, a former minister of the King of Qumul and a leader of the rebellion, was named president in absentia. The enthusiasm of the men who appointed him was soon dampened, though, when Khoja Niyaz, likely due to Soviet suasion, threw in his lot with Sheng's government and helped deliver some of the RET leadership into the hands of the Soviets. In return, Sheng appointed Khoja Niyaz Vice Chairman of the province.[9]

This was a triumph for Sheng in several respects: not only had the breakaway RET been neutralized, but Sheng's erstwhile opponent, Khoja Niyaz Haji, was now on his team. Of equal importance, Sheng's government had made a major move toward indigenization, if primarily a cosmetic one: for the first time since the Qing conquest of Xinjiang in the eighteenth century, a Muslim now held one of the highest government offices in the region, albeit one whose power was highly circumscribed. The Soviet Union was thus promoting indigenization in Xinjiang just as it grew increasingly hesitant about comparable policies at home.[10] Soviet leaders seem to have judged this a necessary stratagem for gaining the support of Xinjiang's Muslim majority, and also as a step toward a modern national consciousness on the part of Xinjiang's Muslim population—an unavoidable stage in the journey to socialism.

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[8] The republic established in Kashgar in 1933 was known by several different names, even in the republic's own documents. The most common of these was Sharqiy Tūrkistān Jumhuriyiti, which I have chosen here to translate as "Republic of Eastern Turkestan" (RET) in order to distinguish it from the second Sharqiy Tūrkistān Jumhuriyiti (Eastern Turkestan Republic, or ETR), established a decade later in northern Xinjiang.

[9] Yasushi Shinmen, "The Eastern Turkistan Republic (1933-1934) in Historical Perspective," in *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*, ed. S. Dudoignon and H. Komatsu, 133–64 (London: Kegan Paul, 2001); Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 192-201.

[10] On the complex fate of Soviet indigenization policies in the 1930s, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 344-93.

An even more significant compromise, for the USSR and for Sheng, was the decision to permit the surviving Republic of Eastern Turkestan leadership, led by former rebel leader Mahmud Muhiti, to retain important civil and military positions in Kashgar.[11] Beginning in 1934, the city and its environs were governed in an uneasy coalition between the provincial government and a local Uyghur faction loyal to Muhiti, now acknowledged by the Ürümchi government as commander of the Kashgar garrison. After the demise of the Republic of Eastern Turkestan, Commander Muhiti and his troops had set up shop in the city, where Muhiti's prestige was considerable. Sheng, unsurprisingly, saw Muhiti's quasi-state as a threat to his own authority in Kashgar, but Muhiti's sizable garrison placed a military solution beyond Sheng's reach for the time being. In the ensuing stalemate, city government was divided between Muhiti loyalists and Sheng appointees, while the city's cultural and intellectual life was dominated by Muhiti allies among the literati. The Khotan region, meanwhile, chafed under the rapacious control of Hui warlords led by Ma Hushan.

By the mid-1930s, Soviet advisors were pouring into the province, where they helped Sheng and his associates lay the foundations of a Stalinist state, complete with secret police and Soviet-style official culture. Working in concert with these Soviet advisors as well as local intellectuals and activists across the province, Sheng's government instituted a program of native-language education, mass culture and popular mobilization that would permanently reshape life in Xinjiang. While it was the provincial government in Ürümchi that officially adopted these policies, the limited reach of the Xinjiang state meant that much of this ambitious program would at first be entrusted to local governments and community organizations.

[11] On the complexities of Mahmud Muhiti's tenure in and eventual flight from Kashgar, see Andrew D. W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A political history of Republican Sinkiang 1911–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 137–44.

In Kashgar, Mahmud Muhiti's faction—veterans and fellow travelers of the Republic of Eastern Turkestan—ran much of the district's educational infrastructure for the first few years of Sheng's rule.[12] Meanwhile, in Ili, prominent local intellectuals set up an Education Bureau, which they called the Ma'ārif Siksiyisi in an apt fusion of Persianate and Russophone borrowings.[13] The Bureau, and the Pedagogical College (Ma'ārif ilmiy kollégiyisi) established alongside it, recruited and trained hundreds of teachers for the Ili region, composed and distributed guidelines and curricula for schools, and helped construct facilities for new educational institutions throughout the Ili district. In nearby Chöchek, local notables established a Society for the Promotion of Education (Nashr-i ma'ārif jem'iyeti) without state permission in summer 1933, a few months after Sheng Shicai took power.[14] The Society collected funds from the community, and in short order began training teachers, opening schools, and printing textbooks on presses imported from the USSR. In the first years of the Sheng administration, it was often local initiatives like these that interpreted and implemented provincial policy. At the local level, then, the most immediate effect of Sheng's revolution was to empower these factions—often a mix of Islamic reformists, socialists, and others—at the expense of more conservative local forces. Only in 1937, when Sheng consolidated his regime amidst extensive bloodshed, were these local movements brought under the full and direct rule of the Ürümchi state.

[12] Kashgar's school system in this period was run by the Uyghur Enlightenment Association, in which the Muhiti faction was highly influential. "Qeshqerning yéqinqi we hazirqi zaman ma'aripi tarikhi," in *Yéngisheher ma'aripchilar tarikhi*, http://www.akademiye.org/ug/?p=215 (accessed 26 Jan. 2019).
[13] Nesirdin Nasiri and Edhem Abdumijit, "April özgirishidin kéyinki Ili ma'aripi heqqide," *Ili deryasi* 6 (2000): 90-95.
[14] The Society for the Promotion of Education declared in its allied newspaper, *Our Voice*, that "As Jin Shuren had left no legacy other than division, this Society did not wait for help from the government, and instead requested charity from the community and took up its mission with a great sense of purpose." "Nashr-i ma'ārif jem'iyetining ḥisābi," *Bizning tāwush*, 20 Dec. 1935: 2.

The Xinjiang state under Sheng made strenuous efforts to persuade the province's non-Han peoples that their government had made a clean break with the repressive and discriminatory policies of the past. From early on, Sheng's administration adopted an anti-colonial discourse against its Republican and Qing predecessors that echoed Soviet rhetoric against the vanquished Russian empire. "Before [Sheng's] April Revolution, it was impossible to write or speak of imperialism and the nationalities problem in Xinjiang. It would never have been permitted under the old dictators' dark policies of strangling cultural development, keeping the people in darkness, and thereby serving their own interests."[15] Sheng's was not the only Han-led administration in 1930s China to draw on Soviet anti-imperialist rhetorical models in pursuing the support of non-Han populations. Uradyn Bulag has written of the Chinese Communist Party's "good Han, bad Han" rhetoric in the 1930s, when the Long March saw the Red Army pass through many areas in which non-Han peoples constituted a majority.[16] In Xinjiang, Sheng's Chinese Nationalist successors in the 1940s and Chinese Communist successors in the 1950s would adopt a similar rhetorical posture, with each ruling group insisting that it was finally putting an end to the dark days of Han chauvinism and state oppression.[17]

As the Sheng administration worked to reorder relations between the Xinjiang state and the communities it governed, the provincial state formed alliances with groups of intellectuals within these communities who sought new forms of communal self-definition. By the mid-1930s, nationalist, Islamic reformist, and pan-Turkist ideas had been filtering into Xinjiang for two decades from the Ottoman and Russian empires, and important segments of Xinjiang's native

[15] 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi (ed. Ayub Manṣuri), *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng Uyghur Gézéti Meṭbu'esi, 1936), 3.
[16] Uradyn E. Bulag, "Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China," in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. Thomas Mullaney, et al., 92-109 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). See also Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 79-80; 134.
[17] The Nationalist updated the list of predatory predecessors to include Sheng's regime; the Communists, of course, expanded it to include the Nationalists.

intelligentsia were receptive to the Soviet-style nationality policies adopted by Sheng's government. In the 1920s, the small Xinjiang émigré community in Soviet Central Asia had received state recognition as the Uyghur ethnic group; in 1935, this category was officially applied in Xinjiang as well, with some modifications. (Notably, the settled Turkic-speaking Muslims of the Ili region were demarcated separately as Taranchis.)[18] Xinjiang's Muslims were reimagined as members of modern nations, by the Stalinist definition of the term: distinct communities unified by territory, language, culture, and economic life—but not necessarily by religion. This reconfiguring of identity was intended to accomplish the twin goals of shepherding Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims toward socialism, while at the same time deflecting their identities from any super-national religious community or broader Turkic world. Acknowledging separate nationhood for Uyghurs in Xinjiang was Ürümchi and Moscow's best bet for convincing the bulk of Xinjiang's population that their interests could be accommodated within a multi-ethnic, secular state.

Needless to say, Xinjiang's Muslim agriculturalists would not come to see themselves as Uyghurs simply because the state declared them to be. In 1937, two years after the Ürümchi government officially recognized the Uyghur ethnicity, the Turpan Prefecture branch of the Xinjiang People's Anti-Imperialist League (Uy. *Shing Jāng jahān'girlerge qārshi khalq birlik uyushmāsi*, Ch. *Xinjiang minzhong fandi lianhehui* 新疆民眾反帝聯合會), the Sheng administration's primary organ of popular mobilization, compiled a register of League members from several villages.[19] Even within this quasi-state organization, in an area not far from the provincial capital, the ethnicity (*millet*) of each member was listed as "Islām." Home village, profession, age, and father's name were recorded as well—but the word "Uyghur" appears

[18] David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), passim; the status of Taranchis in Xinjiang is addressed in 254-60.
[19] Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Archive, M16.021.YJ.6025.

nowhere amongst the demographic data. As we will see below, it would take a generation of state schooling, and the large-scale introduction of native-language print culture in Xinjiang, to make Turpanis and Kashgaris into Uyghurs. Meanwhile, Sheng—and his Soviet patrons—had little choice but to come to an accommodation with religion, which remained inseparable from communal identity in the province.

While Soviet-style nationality policies in Xinjiang defined the province's communities in carefully non-religious terms, the Sheng administration was decidedly open to accommodating religious institutions when necessary and co-opting them when possible. "Xinjiang today is a thoroughly feudal society," Sheng acknowledged in a major policy statement, "and religious belief is deeply felt and necessary for the people of this society."[20] In a typical speech to the province's Mongol Assembly, Sheng emphasized that the Six Great Policies at the core of his ostensible governing philosophy did not in any way conflict with religious belief.[21] The administration's Soviet patrons, while themselves in a decidedly anti-clerical mood by the mid-1930s, seem to have recognized that some accomodation with religion would be necessary in constructing a viable Stalinist state in Xinjiang with limited resources. Soviet agents working in the province were not above quoting the Qur'an in support of state policy, or implying that Sheng's administration enjoyed divine approval. In a typical encomium, an influential Soviet agent and his local coauthor declared that "every day, every hour, one can hear from the mouths of the people statements like, 'The Governor was sent to us by God, the Governor is a man like a jewel, long live the Governor.'"[22] Such feelings were mutual; in a laudatory preface to a volume by 'Abd al-Ghofur Damolla, a prominent Muslim cleric friendly to the regime, Governor Sheng

[20] Shing Shi Sey, *Hökümet āldidiki muhim weẓifiler*, tr. Ḥ. Ḥakimi (Ürümchi: Xinjiang wenhua shudian, 1939).
[21] Sheng Shicai 盛世才, "Zai Menggule daibiao dahui shang zhi duban de jianghua 在蒙古勒代表大會上之督辦的講話," *Fandi zhanxian* 2.2 (1937): 1-26.
[22] E.g., 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi, *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*, 44-45. Bolshevik agent Manṣur Effendi, alias Meshür Roziev, will be discussed in greater detail below.

and Vice Governor Khoja Niyaz Haji declared that "this beloved righteous man was not satisfied merely with emphasizing that religion and the holy Qur'an in no way conflicted with our government, which was founded on righteousness and equality, or with its policies. He insisted that our government's just policies were in fact spoken of and commanded in the holy Qur'an and the hadith."[23]

The object of their praise, ʻAbd al-Ghafur Damolla, head of the Kashgar People's Assembly and popularly known as "the Peach Mullah" after his hometown of Shaptulluq (Peach Orchard), was typical of the Islamic leaders whose cooperation and public affirmation were crucial to the establishment of Sheng's administration. The Peach Mullah sang the praises of the new government's policy in speeches and in print, and in 1935 was awarded a silver medal by the Central People's Assembly in Ürümchi.[24] ʻAbd al-Ghafur Damolla's support for Sheng's government briefly lent his career tremendous momentum, including the publication of his works by Ürümchi's new printing presses—some of the first works by an Islamic cleric printed in Xinjiang, where manuscript literature had long dominated.[25] ʻAbd al-Ghofur Damolla's support for the Ürümchi regime led to substantial conflict with the semi-autonomous Uyghur faction that held sway in Kashgar under Mahmud Muhiti, and in May 1936 ʻAbd al-Ghofur Damolla was felled by an assassin.[26] After Muhiti's 1937 revolt and subsequent flight to India, the Ürümchi

[23] ʿAbd al-Ghafur Dāmollā, *Dāmollā ʻAbd al-Ghafur ibn ʻAbd Allāh al-Kāshgheri ning eṣiri dur* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng Uyghur gézit khānesi, 1936), 1-5.
[24] "Muḥterem ʻAbd al-Ghafur Ḥājimghe nishān (midāl)," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 14 Nov. 1935: 4.
[25] ʿAbd al-Ghafur Dāmollā, *Dāmollā ʻAbd al-Ghafur ibn ʻAbd Allāh al-Kāshgheri ning eṣiri dur*; another work, *Rehber-i ittifāq*, was printed in 1937 by the Central Xinjiang Uyghur Press and distributed by the Uyghur Enlightenment Association. ʻAbd al-Karim ʻEysa Ẓāde, "Muhim bir eṣer merḥum ʻAbd al-Ghafur Ḥāji Dāmollām Khāṭiresi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 22 March 1937: 4.
[26] "Kāshgherde dehshetlik bir fājiʻe," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 14 May 1936: 1. This event was echoed nearly eighty years later by the assassination of Imam Jüme Tahir, head of the Kashgar Islamic Association, who was widely perceived by the local Uyghur population as a Communist Party loyalist. Barbara Demick, "Uighur imam who supported Chinese Communist Party is stabbed to death," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2014, https://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-imam-killed-20140730-story.html (accessed 19 Dec. 2018).

government explicitly—and likely correctly—blamed him for ‘Abd al-Ghafur Dāmollā’s murder.[27]

Despite the hazards of cooperation with the Ürümchi government, some Islamic clerics continued to work with the Sheng administration. Their efforts had a significant impact, as the emergence of print culture and mass primary education permitted the state to begin shifting the lines of religious authority in the province. Basic Islamic instruction had previously been a purely local affair, to be continued for a select few with higher studies in Kashgar or Yarkand. By the mid-1930s, however, the provincial government’s “central religious scholars” (*merkiziy ‘olimālār*) in Ürümchi were working with the Xinjiang Education Bureau to codify an orthodox Islamic practice for propagation in the province’s rapidly expanding primary school system. The lines of religious authority stretched back to Ürümchi but curved through Ili, where the Yunusov Press published massive quantities of the Education Bureau’s elementary Islamic studies textbooks for distribution in the province’s Uyghur-language schools.[28]

The Sheng regime’s accommodation with non-state sources of authority in the province was in many ways a continuation of provincial precedent. Previous rulers of Xinjiang, during the Republican era and before that in the Qing, had relied on cooperation with a patchwork system of hereditary and religious elites throughout the province, primarily Muslim and Mongol. When Sheng’s immediate predecessor, Jin Shuren, had moved toward rationalizing governance in the province through direct rule, he had alienated these local elites and sparked the rebellion which ultimately unseated him and brought Sheng to power. Sheng, a far shrewder politician than Jin,

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[27] “Fulu: gao quansheng gezu gejie minzhong shu 附錄：告全省各族各界民眾書,” *Fandi zhanxian* 2.2 (1937): 51-57; Polat Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi* (Altay nashriyāti, 1948), 106. For more on ‘Abd al-Ghafur Dāmollā, see Muhemmet Imin Qurbani, “Tündiki paji’e,” in *Tarikh bétini waraqlighanda*, ed. Gheyret Eysa, 57-73 (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2001).

[28] Olkelik ma‘ārif niẓārati qārāmāghidiki kitāb teyyārlāsh hey‘iti, *Ikinchi oqush yili uchun: din derslik: birinchi juz‘* (Ghulja: Yunusof nāmidiki maṭba‘a shirkiti, 1937). This particular textbook, published in a print run of 50,000, was intended for second grade students, and was approved by the Ürümchi government’s “central scholars.”

quickly reached a modus vivendi with various Mongol and Muslim elite groups once he had achieved power.[29] While the Chinese state remained weak in Xinjiang, similar accommodations with local elites—and with Islam—would remain necessary. Comparable arrangements were instituted by the Chinese Nationalist Party leaders who governed Xinjiang in the second half of the 1940s, and by the Chinese Communist Party in its first years of rule in the province.

In other, important ways, however, Sheng's governing style represented a radical break from Chinese precedent in the province. Perhaps most notably, in the mid-1930s, the golden age of Sheng's indigenization policies, a large proportion of officials in southern Xinjiang had participated (often alongside Khoja Niyaz Haji) in the Uyghur-led revolutionary movements of the early 1930s. In addition to radically altering the ideological complexion of Xinjiang's civil service, this shift in personnel also represented the substantial indigenization of local government in predominantly Uyghur southern Xinjiang. In this sense, Sheng had indeed effected a revolution, complete with an extensive changing of the guard. The vice mayor of Qarasheher (Qarashahr) was typical. Raised in a poor family, he had worked hard in school, joined the Qumul rebels as they approached Qarasheher, and been injured in battle. His struggles were ultimately recognized by the Sheng administration, which in the mid-1930s was looking for individuals of non-elite background with revolutionary credentials.[30]

By early 1936, the Sheng administration's spokesmen could boast that in contrast to the chauvinistic Han-dominated state of the past, 80% to 90% of the magistrates and civil servants in southern Xinjiang were now Uyghur—an exaggeration, most likely, but one which referenced a real and significant social change.[31] Indigenization of the civil service, particularly in the cultural and educational spheres, was not merely a top-down, cosmetic policy. When Mahmut Muhiti,

[29] For a detailed political history of the Jin and Sheng administrations, see Jacobs, "Empire Besieged," ch. 5-7.
[30] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 96-97.
[31] 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi, *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*, 41-42.

commander of the Kashgar garrison, petitioned the Ürümchi government in early 1936 to increase Uyghur representation among chief editors at the province's *Xinjiang Gazette* branches, Sheng adopted a significant compromise: each *Gazette* branch would choose a deputy chief editor from among the majority ethnicity in its area.[32] Power-sharing of this sort was characteristic of the early years of the Sheng administration.

Sheng's promotion of native cadres, and his government's general rhetorical support for the indigenization of the bureaucracy, had long-term implications for Xinjiang. By fostering even the appearance of self-rule by Xinjiang's native peoples, Sheng helped raise expectations for communal autonomy in the province—expectations which subsequent governments in Xinjiang would find it necessary to accommodate.[33] Indeed, the aspirations of self-rule encouraged by Sheng's anti-imperialist rhetoric created problems for Sheng himself. In a 1936 book on the "nationality problem" in Xinjiang, two high-ranking members of Sheng's government asked rhetorically whether Governor Sheng was "a leader of all the people, or just the Han?" Aside from "rumor-mongers," wrote the authors, all the province's people regarded Sheng as their heroic leader. "For those rumor-mongers, the Governor's sin is simply being a member of the Han ethnicity."[34] Apparently, such rumor-mongers were numerous enough to merit denunciation in official organs.

In 1937, after several years of balancing coalitions and building state institutions, Governor Sheng felt secure enough to abandon his cooperation with traditional Muslim and Mongol elites and with semi-autonomous military rulers in Kashgar and Khotan. For some time

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[32] "Shengfu kai di yisanwu ci lihui; caizhengting dang'an gu; *Xinjiang ribao* she jiawei Weizu fenshezhang; diandeng gongsi diji jiang yong ge mi li ken guandi 省府開第一三五次例會　財政廳添設擋案股 新疆日報社加委維族分社長 電燈公司地基將用格米里肯官地," *Xinjiang ribao*, 1 Feb. 1936: 3.

[33] As we will see below, insufficient indigenization of the civil service caused serious problems for the Chinese Nationalist administration in Xinjiang in 1947.

[34] 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi, *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*, 43.

Sheng had placed increasing pressure on Commander Mahmud Muhiti, whose division continued to hold sway in Kashgar. Sheng insisted that some of Muhiti's lieutenants receive training in the USSR and that others take up positions in Ürümchi, and sent one emissary after another to berate Muhiti for his uncooperativeness. When Sheng finally summoned Commander Muhiti himself to an ominous meeting in Ürümchi, the commander and some of his remaining lieutenants prudently fled the province. The disintegration of Muhiti's coalition in Kashgar touched off a new uprising in southwestern Xinjiang, providing Governor Sheng with a pretext to stamp out remaining vestiges of local autonomy in the south of the province. Once more, Sheng invited Soviet divisions into the province, their guns aimed this time at the rebellious Uyghur and Hui armies in Kashgar and Khotan.

As Soviet warplanes entered Xinjiang and bombed rebel targets across the south, Mahmud Muhiti and his top commanders trekked over the Himalayas into India, whence Muhiti ultimately made his way to Japan. Ma Hushan and his Hui troops, while able to hold their own against Sheng's forces, were no match for Stalin's armies. Ma and his lieutenants abandoned their base in early September, and like Muhiti crossed the Himalayas into Kashmir. The remaining Hui commanders surrendered one by one. Xinjiang's state newspapers crowed that "our heroic soldiers" (actually Soviet troops, tanks, and planes) were recapturing the towns of southeastern Xinjiang from the Hui commanders.[35] Having wrested military control of the south from the Muhitis and the Mas, one of Sheng's first priorities was establishing provincial control over the region's educational and print infrastructure. The dust had barely settled in Kashgar when the Sheng administration set up an Education Bureau in the district, to be helmed by Sabit Ibrahim, a seasoned official sent from Ürümchi.[36] The Kashgar government began transferring

[35] "Qāshqādin 2nchi tiligrām," *Kündilik Ili Shingjāng giziti* 7 Oct. 1937: 1.
[36] "Qeshqerning yéqinqi we hazirqi zaman ma'arip tarikhi."

some local schools to its own control, while others remained under the aegis of a newly compliant Kashgar Uyghur Enlightenment Association.

Months later, now free of worries about armed and autonomous Muslims in the south, Sheng was able to turn his sights on his own capital city, and to take advantage of the purging frenzy then gripping the Soviet Union. Sheng's purge included widespread detentions and executions of Soviet personnel, perhaps in hopes of reducing Soviet influence in the province; yet the USSR acquiesced in the campaign, even sending officials to assist in the prosecutions.[37] Sheng had been a compliant client of the USSR, and he was speaking their language as he offered a pretext for his purge: a massive conspiracy by Japanese imperialists, Trotskyites, and Uzbek nationalists to overthrow the Xinjiang government, ruin Sino-Soviet relations, and aid the Japanese invasion of China.[38] The bloodshed began at the top, with Sheng's own vice governor, Khoja Niyaz Haji, but the arrests soon touched every corner of the province. By the end of the year, hundreds of civil servants and private citizens had been taken into custody. Local elites were purged as well, including many of the clerical and hereditary elites with whom Sheng had reached an accommodation in order to solidify his hold on power. Like Stalin, Sheng saw these actors with independent power bases as an inherent threat, and had little use for them once his administration had been firmly established.

Indigenization in Xinjiang crested, then, in 1936-37, and Sheng's purge marked the beginning of its reversal—much like the trajectory of indigenization in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s, but compressed into a few years. By early 1938, large swathes of Xinjiang's civil service were imprisoned or dead, and Sheng looked further afield to replace them. A significant infusion of new personnel was provided by an unexpected source: the Chinese Red Army base in

[37] Zhou, *Xinjiang shi nian*, 80-81.
[38] Zhou Dongjiao 周東郊, *Xinjiang shi nian* 新疆十年 (unpublished mss., 1948), 80-81.

Yan'an, which was happy to supply Sheng with a bevy of talented operatives, including Mao Zemin, Mao Zedong's younger brother. Sheng turned also to friends and relatives from inner China, as well as Han intellectuals attracted by his left-wing policies, including such nationally known writers as Mao Dun and Du Zhongyuan.[39] Many of these appointments were made at the expense of non-Han officials whose careers had flourished in the early years of Sheng's rule.[40] In the early 1940s, non-Han units in the provincial army were disbanded.[41] By 1942, less than a decade after Sheng's government had introduced its "ethnic equality" policies with great fanfare, indigenization in Xinjiang had been effectively reversed—except in the key areas of print culture and education, where non-Han figures continued to largely manage their own affairs. This pattern, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, would be repeated in the decades to come.

The Sheng era proved a watershed for modern Uyghur identity and culture. In 1933, when Sheng came to power, only a handful of Xinjiang's Muslim oasis-dwellers would have described themselves as Uyghurs; over the following decade, as we will see below, Uyghur identity became a more familiar concept in the province. This development was enabled in part by a profound shift in technologies of writing and practices of reading. Before the 1930s, literacy in Muslim Xinjiang was limited to a minority, and centered primarily around a manuscript canon transmitted by individuals and unconnected to the state. By the end of Sheng's rule in 1944, a generation of schoolchildren—and some adults—had been educated in the modern Uyghur print idiom in which the state spoke to its Uyghur citizens. The periodicals and books produced by the

[39] On Mao Dun's brief but significant time in Xinjiang, see *Mao Dun zai Xinjiang* 矛盾在新疆 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1986). Du Zhongyuan spent several years in the province, where he served as rector of Xinjiang Institute in Ürümchi and penned a sympathetic book-length profile of Sheng Shicai in 1938. All this did not suffice to prevent Sheng from having him executed in 1943.

[40] Jacobs, "Empire Besieged," 338, observes that by 1942, "no Turkic or Mongol official occupied any position of substance" in Xinjiang.

[41] Wu Qina 吳啟訥 (Wu Zhe), "Xinjiang: minzu rentong, guoji jingzheng yu Zhongguo geming, 1944-1962 新疆：民族認同、國際競爭與中國革命，1944—1962" (Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan University, 2006), 123, outlines the creation and dissolution of non-Han military units under Sheng Shicai.

state's Ürümchi-based printing presses were accessible to an ever wider swathe of Xinjiang society; as we will see in subsequent chapters, control of these presses would to a great extent determine the shape of Uyghur culture and identity in the years to come. The new print infrastructure did not merely alter the distribution and presentation of information; the content of Uyghur print culture represented an equally sharp break with the past. Whereas the manuscript canon centered around sacred texts and the literature of the broader Islamic world, the profusion of print matter in the Sheng era bore with it socialist ideology, secular national identities, and a focus on developments in China. Cultural capital in Xinjiang was being redefined, in ways which would only come to full fruition in the years to come.

The remaining sections of this chapter will detail the ways in which these profound transformations took place. Government diktat, especially in a state as weak as Sheng's, is not sufficient to realign communal identities, instill new ideologies, or alter the cultural touchstones of a people. For Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking Muslims, all of this required the concerted effort of intellectuals and activists as well as the spread of native-language print culture; both of these factors, as we will see, were intimately intertwined with the Soviet Union and its Uyghur community. While existing scholarship has made clear the political and economic impact of Soviet involvement in Xinjiang during the Sheng period, the profound cultural implications of Sheng's alliance with the Soviets have remained largely outside the scope of historiography.[42] The following section ties together these various strands—activist intellectuals; Uyghur print culture; Soviet involvement in Xinjiang—by recounting in detail the consequential but little-

[42] On the economic aspects of Soviet involvement in Xinjiang, see Judd C. Kinzley, *Natural Resources and the New Frontier: Constructing China's Modern Borderlands* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); on the political ramifications of the Sheng-Soviet alliance, see Justin M. Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

known 1930s career of Meshür Roziev, the USSR's foremost secret agent in Republican Xinjiang.

The Curious Career of Mister Mansur

As we have seen above in the case of Turpan villagers, a government's adoption of new national categories for its citizens is not in itself sufficient to alter identity at the ground level. Likewise, the spread of socialist and nation building ideas among intellectuals does not guarantee their proliferation among other strata of a community. The movement of ideas is a powerful historical force, but ideas do not move on their own; rather, they are transmitted by individuals and by the information technology at their disposal. Before the rise of print culture, the spread of ideas depended on lateral, personal communication and handwritten manuscripts, and thus on the initiative, talent, and charisma of numerous individuals: bards, copyists, evangelists, and physically mobile agents of the state. Advances in communications technology, from the printing press to the television, expanded the possibilities for vertical communication; a single speaker or writer, with the use of modern media, can reach a theoretically unlimited number of people via the printed word or the electromagnetic spectrum.

In the mid-1930s, Turkic Muslim society in Xinjiang remained predominantly conservative and resistant to the intrusions of the modern state. The primary means of written communication among Turkic-speakers was the manuscript, a medium which largely operated beyond the Xinjiang government's gaze. To strengthen state control and transform society along socialist lines, the Sheng administration would need to make simultaneous use of personal persuasion and mass communication. These two conduits of influence are neatly encapsulated in the career of Meshür Roziev, a Soviet Uyghur official and writer who was active on both sides of

the Sino-Soviet border in the mid-twentieth century. Roziev, who operated in Xinjiang under a number of pseudonyms, was one of the most influential figures in bringing high-volume publishing and mass education to Xinjiang in the 1930s. These developments enabled the provincial government to promote its policies directly to the masses: schools produced a literate populace, which could then consume government publications directly, without the mediation of a highly educated elite.

But in order to prepare the ground for modern mass education and media consumption, Meshür Roziev had first to participate in a much more traditional projection of state power; namely, the physical movement of the state's representatives through its territory. In addition to detailing Roziev's involvement in policy and print culture in Xinjiang, this section retraces a forgotten but highly consequential journey Meshür Roziev and several other officials took through southern Xinjiang in 1936, as official representatives of Sheng Shicai's Ürümchi-based government. The personal authority of individual agents like Meshür Roziev played a key role in enabling Xinjiang's government to create the kind of mass society which would obviate the need for such personal authority. In a sense, Meshür Roziev and his cohort of Xinjiang civil servants worked themselves out of a job. Sheng Shicai, at least, seems to have thought so; this section concludes with Sheng's decimation of Xinjiang's civil service in the long winter of 1937-38, and Roziev's subsequent recall to the Soviet Union.

Beginnings

Meshür Roziev was born in 1902 to a family of farmers in Qaraquduq village in the Almaty district of Russian Turkestan, now Kazakhstan. His forebears belonged to the Taranchi community that had come under Russian rule a generation before Roziev's birth; in his youth

and adolescence, cross-border ties and memories were still fresh. At the age of seven or eight, Roziev's father, hoping that his son would become a mullah, enrolled him in the religious school attached to the local mosque. Meshür was a quick learner, and before long was able to read Turkic-language publications. His impoverished family was unable to keep him in school for long, though, and Meshür was soon working as a farmhand for a more affluent family in the village.[43] Roziev's family suffered greatly during the Atu ("Shooting") events of 1918, when a Red Army detachment ravaged Taranchi villages near the Sino-Soviet border due to suspicions that Uyghurs were aiding White troops that had crossed into China.[44] This incident seems not to have affected Roziev's receptiveness to Bolshevism, and soon after the success of the revolution he became involved with various civic causes and with organizing work on behalf of the new Soviet state.

The local authorities were impressed with Roziev's activism, and when the first new-style school (*yéngi mektep*) was opened in nearby Chélek, Roziev was one of the first students selected to attend. After a couple years' study in Chélek and Almaty, Roziev began working as a teacher and school principal while continuing his involvement in civic affairs, an activist impulse that would soon come to define his career.[45] Roziev's humble background would have qualified him for the class-based affirmative action policies which vaulted millions of peasants and workers into the ranks of the Soviet civil service; he would also have benefited from Soviet indigenization (*korenizatsiia*) policies that favored the promotion of cadres from the titular ethnic group of each Soviet territorial unit.[46] With the support of the Bolshevik leadership in his region,

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[43] M. Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida: küresh tarikhidin yadname* (Almaty: self-published, 2007), 3; Kommunar Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 1 (2004): 47-54.
[44] Kommunar Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi." For more on the Atu incident, see Sean Raymond Roberts, *Uyghur neighborhoods and nationalisms in the former Sino-Soviet Borderland: An Historical Ethnography of a Stateless Nation on the Margins of Modernity* (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2003), 148-51.
[45] TsGARK 450/1/415; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 3; Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi."
[46] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, passim. Roziev describes the circumstances surrounding the local

Roziev became a candidate party member, and was sent to a special party secretary training course in Tashkent. Upon his return, Roziev served for a time as secretary of the Chélek executive committee before resuming his career as a school principal, which he balanced with his continuing party and community work. In 1929, the Almaty District Party Committee sent Roziev for further studies in Tashkent, this time at a branch of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. After completing his degree, Roziev continued on as a master's student in history and eventually took on administrative positions.[47] Roziev's historical studies would later position him to make major interventions in Uyghur historiography.

In the first half of the 1930s, as Meshür Roziev's career in Soviet academia and politics flourished, geopolitical tectonics unexpectedly brought this future-oriented technocrat into a deep, lifelong engagement with the world of his fathers: Xinjiang. Beginning in 1930, as Meshür Roziev and other Soviet Uyghurs looked on with a mixture of apprehension and hope, rebellion threatened and then toppled Jin Shuren's government in Ürümchi, and the emergence of Sheng Shicai's new Soviet-backed administration seemed to hold the potential for a new era.[48] "It was early 1935," wrote Roziev a half century later. "The opportunity we'd been anxiously waiting for had arrived. The sacred hope of our hearts had been laid upon us as a historical obligation. We prepared for a journey."[49]

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implementation of these policies in his memoir, with illuminating details regarding the struggle within the Uyghur community for preferred slots in schools and offices. Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 63-67.

[47] APRK 141/1/6553; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 3; Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi"; Conversation with Roziev's daughter Ghunchem (Gulya) Rozieva and son-in-law Hesen Iliemov, 25 July 2013, Almaty.

[48] Brophy, *Tending to Unite*, 358 notes that the rebellions in Xinjiang were a prime topic of conversation among Soviet Uyghurs in the early 1930s.

[49] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 11.

Mansur Effendi

In the mid-1930s, the Soviet government sent a number of high-level operatives to Xinjiang, mostly Uyghur and Han members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Their broad remit was to assist Sheng Shicai in establishing a Soviet-style administration, while at the same time keeping a close eye on the local officials who made up the majority of Sheng's government. Meshür Roziev was one of the first such operatives sent to the province. He crossed the border into Chöchek in May 1935 with his wife, Ayshem, and quickly set off for Ürümchi, where he was immediately received by Sheng Shicai (who had now acquired the title Duban, a term roughly equivalent to "Governor General").[50] Within days of his arrival, Roziev, now operating under the nom de guerre "Mansur Effendi" (Mister Mansur), began working to mold Soviet policies to local conditions.

Roziev quickly assumed a number of important posts in Xinjiang's government, including Vice Chair of the People's Anti-Imperialist League, Sheng's primary organ of state control, as well as Vice Chair of the Uyghur Enlightenment Association (Uy. *Uyghur medeniy āqārtish uyushmāsi*, Ch. *Weiwu'er wenhua cujinhui* 維吾爾文化促進會).[51] The latter organization, a theoretically autonomous arm of the Xinjiang government, was dedicated to creating, codifying, and promulgating a Uyghur national culture, and to bringing Uyghurs in line with socialist notions of culture and modernity. When portfolios were distributed within the organization's leadership, Roziev maneuvered to assume responsibility for propaganda and publishing. He also volunteered to draw up the Association's program and manual, which was then printed in 10,000 copies and distributed throughout the province. With propaganda and publishing firmly in his bailiwick, Roziev became a founding editor of the Enlightenment

[50] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 11-33.
[51] Liu Zishyaw [刘志霄] (tr. Ablet Nurdun, Ekhmet Ruzi, and Ekhmetjan Mömin), *Uyghurlar tarikhi*, part 2, vol. 2, (Ürümchi: Shinjang xelq neshriyati, 2003), 1279, 1426; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 41-54.

Association's new Uyghur-language newspaper *New Xinjiang*, later the *Xinjiang Gazette*, a highly influential periodical that will be discussed in detail in this chapter's final section. Roziev served as head editor for much of the newspaper's first two years of publication, played a major role in setting editorial policy, and published extensively in its pages, though his sundry responsibilities and frequent travel sometimes prevented him from overseeing day-to-day operations.[52]

Also significant was Roziev's posting as special advisor to Khoja Niyaz Haji, former President in absentia of the short-lived Republic of Eastern Turkestan and from 1934 Vice Chair of the Xinjiang Provincial Government. Roziev's responsibilities as Khoja Niyaz's advisor included tutoring the unlettered Vice Chairman in "politics"; he taught similar courses for other Uyghur officials in the capital.[53] Roziev whipped Khoja Niyaz's office into shape, spending hours each day on the Vice Chairman's unattended piles of letters, complaints, and documents. Roziev found working for Khoja Niyaz most distasteful, and was constantly frustrated by his nominal boss's "stubbornness and ignorance," not to mention a host of personal failings that outraged Roziev's Bolshevik morals.[54] Khoja Niyaz's allegiance to Soviet socialism was in fact entirely opportunistic, wrote Roziev; the Vice Chairman was deeply suspicious of Communism, and used his post primarily for personal enrichment and aggrandizement. Khoja Niyaz exploited his exalted government position to trade agricultural goods for Soviet industrial merchandise, which he then resold at substantial profit. Even while leading an avowedly socialist administration, the Vice Chairman exploited the workers at his cotton factory in Turpan. Roziev

[52] When Zunun Qadiri brought one of his poems to the Ürümchi offices of the *Xinjiang Gazette* in 1936, he found himself unable to publish it; chief editor Mansur Effendi, whose signature he needed, was nowhere to be found. Zunun Qadir, *Zunun Qadir eserliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1992), 623–24.
[53] Shérip Khushtar, *Shinjang yéqinqi zaman tarikhidiki meshhur shekhsler* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2000), 190; Khéwir Tomur, "Khoja Niyaz Haji toghrisida eslime," in *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 12 (1983): 29-30.
[54] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 40-41. Sizing up one of Khoja Niyaz Haji's lieutenants, Roziev comments that Yaqup Senmujang "performs no service for the people aside from infecting unfortunate women with syphilis." Ibid., 55.

also provided lurid details of Khoja Niyaz's private life, which featured a roster of four wives plus a complement of mistresses, and described the Vice Chairman's penchant for beating accused criminals to a bloody pulp.[55]

While serving as Khoja Niyaz Haji's counselor and minder, the indefatigable Roziev simultaneously pursued a prolific career as a writer and publicist. In February 1936, just before leaving on a lengthy tour of southern Xinjiang, Roziev collaborated with 'Abdullah Damolla Muhammad Haji (1898-1940), his immediate superior at the Uyghur Enlightenment Association, on a pamphlet entitled *Imperialism and the Nationality Problem in Xinjiang*.[56] The pamphlet was printed by the *Xinjiang Gazette* press in a run of 5,000, substantial for the time. Promoting a Soviet-style nationality policy, Roziev and 'Abdullah Damolla's booklet, which they describe in their introduction as the first political work to appear in Uyghur, was only one of many publications the industrious Roziev authored and coauthored during his time in Xinjiang. Roziev did not confine his activities to bureaucratic maneuvering and the printed word, however; he was very much a man of action, and as such most useful in the administration's efforts to extend its authority southward.

The Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team

As outlined in this chapter's first section, the Sheng administration relied in its first years on local governments and civic activists to implement its policies—a continuation, in many ways, of

[55] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 19-24, 54, 59-62, 73-74.
[56] The pamphlet was *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*, cited above. On Roziev and 'Abdulla Damolla's positions at the Enlightenment Association, see Lyu Zishyaw, *Uyghurlar tarikhi*, part 2, 1426. Roziev recalled developing an immediate rapport with 'Abdullah Damolla when they met, soon after Roziev's arrival in Ürümchi. Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 37. Born in Toqsun, 'Abdullah received a thorough religious education, and in the early 1930s became involved in the revolutionary movements sweeping the province. Having been a close aide to Khoja Niyaz Haji, 'Abdullah was called to Ürümchi early in the Sheng regime to serve in various administrative posts, including as head of the Enlightenment Association. In 1940, 'Abdullah was killed in one of Sheng's prisons alongside Khoja Niyaz Haji. Shérip Khushtar, *Meshhur shekhsler*: 202-03.

the alliances with local elites that had characterized the Xinjiang state since the Qing conquest. This was particularly true in southern Xinjiang, where Uyghurs formed an overwhelming majority in most districts and military leaders Mahmud Muhiti and Ma Hushan maintained autonomous fiefdoms in large swathes of territory. If the Sheng administration and its Soviet patrons hoped to construct any semblance of a Stalinist state in Xinjiang, government would need to be centralized and regularized at all levels, and mass popular mobilization would have to become part of daily life. But with transportation and communication networks in southern Xinjiang still underdeveloped and scarred by the rebellions of the early 1930s, the projection of Ürümchi's power into the south would require the personal engagement of Sheng's lieutenants.

In February 1936, at one of the regular meetings of the Xinjiang government's top officials, Finance Department chief Hu Shoukang (胡壽康) proposed that a high-powered team of provincial representatives be sent to southern Xinjiang in order to inspect and improve educational affairs, financial matters, and the implementation of people's assemblies.[57] To help lead the group, he nominated Mansur Effendi (i.e., Meshür Roziev); Ibrahim Effendi, director of the Ürümchi Finance Bureau; Zheng Yijun (鄭義鈞), head of the Department of Popular Affairs (Ch. *Minzhongbu* 民眾部, Uy. *Milletler ārā mejlis komiteti*);[58] and several other high-ranking officials. Hu's proposal was approved; days later, Governor Sheng called the members of the new Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team (*Nanjiang shicha tuan* 南疆視察團) into his office.

Sheng emphasized to the Team members that explicating the administration's policies to the masses was of the utmost importance, and discussed with them the activist approach they

[57] Lei 雷, "Shengfu kai di yisiyi ci lihui; zucheng Nanjiang jiaocaimin shichatuan; si yier chouweihui fuweiyuanzhang yi Cui Guozheng jiechong 省府開第一四一次例會 組織南疆教財民視察團 四一二籌委會副委員長以崔果政接充," *Xinjiang ribao*, 22 Feb. 1936: 3. On the people's assemblies (*minzhong lianhehui* 民眾聯合會), a widespread—if often toothless—institution in Sheng's Xinjiang, see Ondřej Klimeš, *Struggle by the Pen: The Uyghur Discourse of Nation and National Interest* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 163-80.

[58] The department's Uyghur name can also be translated "Committee on Inter-Ethnic Affairs."

should take to any hindrances encountered in the implementation of government policy. Taking their leave of the governor, the Team prepared to hit the road.[59] In addition to the officials Hu had initially proposed, the Team incorporated several other members, including Memetniyaz Lenjang (Ch. *lianzhang* 連長), whom Meshür Roziev described in his memoirs as an acolyte of Khoja Niyaz Haji. The composition of the Team was balanced between Han and Uyghurs, a mix which seems to have been effective in dealing with local officialdom in the south. Hu Shoukang, the Team's leader, was a graduate of Ürümchi's Russian-Language Institute of Law and Politics and communicated with Roziev in Russian.[60] Including guards, accountants, helpers, and clerks, the Inspection Team totaled eighteen people.[61]

The Inspection Team's tour began in mid-February, and proved eye-opening for Roziev, Hu, and Zheng, none of whom had visited southern Xinjiang before. In the first village they arrived in, Roziev was repelled by the servile treatment the Team received from the local village head (Uy. *shangiyu*, more commonly *shangyu*, from Chinese *xiangyue* 鄉約),[62] but pleased when a young man standing nearby disapprovingly interjected that the custom of bowing and scraping to elders and clergy had unfortunately been preserved in the village to the present day. Roziev was further gratified to learn that this man, a local teacher whom he describes as dressed in the "new" style, had studied in Ürümchi and attended his lectures. Fashion emerges as a concern throughout Roziev's account of his trip: dressing in "new" (i.e., European) style is a symbol of upright, modern thinking, as is decorating one's home in line with Western norms.[63]

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[59] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 82-83.
[60] Chen Huisheng 陈慧生, "Yang Zengxin yu Xinjiang Ewen fazheng zhuanmen xuexiao de chuangli 杨增新与新疆俄文法政专门学校的创立," *Xiyu yanjiu* 4 (2002): 54; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 85, 198.
[61] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 82-83, 91.
[62] The *xiangyue* 鄉約 village head system, originally instituted in Xinjiang by the Qing, lasted until administrative reforms were implemented in the early 1940s. Huang Jianhua 黄建华, "Minguo shiqi Weiwu'erzu jujuqu de xiangcun zhengquan 民国时期维吾尔族聚居区的乡村政权," *Kashi shifan xueyuan xuebao* 20.1 (1999): 45-49.
[63] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 85-87, 88-92, 100-02. It was common for reformist Uyghur elites in 1930s Xinjiang to

All was not well, though, in the south, and Roziev and the other members of the Inspection Team soon became aware that implementation of the new government's policies in the region's far-flung oasis towns was uneven at best. A pattern soon emerged in the Inspection Team's work. Entering a county, the Team would organize groups to investigate several of the county's towns and villages, before holding a series of meetings at which resolutions were passed on how better to implement the administration's policies. There seems to have been fairly little variation in these resolutions, presumably because the provincial government's policies had not been fully implemented in most of southern Xinjiang. After ensuring that local officials and citizens were well appraised of the Inspection Team's authority—emanating straight from the office of Governor Sheng—Roziev typically upbraided one or more local officials for failing to implement Ürümchi's directives, and would threaten to examine the officials' progress on his return trip, a mere two or three months down the road. The Inspection Team's primary complaints typically concerned the exploitation of poor peasants by rich farmers and landowners, as well as the failure by local officials to develop the array of cultural establishments the government had called for: new-style schools, Enlightenment Association branches, clubs, ensembles, and more.[64]

In his lengthy account of the Inspection Team's southern tour, Roziev does not broach the question of whether impoverished towns and villages had sufficient resources to implement Sheng's ambitious modernization program. Neither does Roziev ponder whether the limited power of local officials could realistically extend to substantial redistribution of wealth. Roziev's modus operandi during the tour seems to have consisted primarily of browbeating local leaders

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assume Western-style dress as a marker of modernity. Roberts, *Uyghur Neighborhoods*, 184-85. Cf. Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[64] The Inspection Team's visit to Korla, described in Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 123-54, was typical, and set the pattern for their subsequent investigations.

into marshaling resources and manpower by any means necessary in order to implement state policy. In so doing, Roziev was reproducing the ideological tension found in Soviet planning during this period: five-year plans, in theory an attempt to rationalize and regularize economic and industrial development, were in fact implemented via exhortation toward Stakhanovite productivity levels entirely unmoored from realistic expectations. Governor Sheng, hoping to accomplish the regularization of his state and the modernization of his fiefdom as quickly as possible, was thus resorting to the decidedly irregular method of government by threat.

On his southern tour, Meshür Roziev hewed closely to the Sheng administration's policy of cooperation with elements of Xinjiang's religious elites, both Buddhist and Islamic. Roziev, while himself an atheist,[65] took a decidedly pragmatic attitude toward the persistence of religious education in southern Xinjiang. In towns like Qarasheher and Aqsu, the Inspection Team found, public school curricula included Islamic instruction alongside secular (*penniy*) courses. In a village near Korla, Roziev met a young schoolteacher of a secular bent who often quarreled with the mullah who taught Islamic courses at his school. Roziev counseled the schoolteacher that this was "an urgent and sensitive problem. Quarreling with [the mullah]… is actually dangerous. This may all gradually resolve as the people's level of culture, education, and consciousness rises. For now, we must be diplomatic with the clergy. They are currently using religion and the Qur'an to explain the just policies of the state. We, on the other hand, explain them scientifically. As long as they tell the people that the government and its new policies are correct, we're satisfied… Almost the whole population subscribes to religious superstition."[66]

As the Inspection Team made its way across the province's southern expanse, Roziev encountered many hereditary and religious leaders—and the Bolshevik sometimes found much

[65] Conversation with Ghunchem Rozieva and Hesen Iliemov, 25 July 2013, Almaty.
[66] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 142-43, 195.

to admire in them. The Mongol leader and Buddhist incarnation Manhan Wang (滿汗王, also Manchukezhabu 滿楚克札布) charmed Roziev with his European dress, cosmopolitan education, and support for government policy.[67] When the Inspection Team, visiting Sheyitkaliq Cemetery in Uchturpan (Ush Turfan), observed a man reciting from the Qur'an, Roziev explained to his uncomprehending Han comrades that the man was honoring Uyghur martyrs fallen during a 1765 uprising against (Qing) colonialists.[68] In Ürümchi, Roziev enjoyed good relations with the liberal cleric 'Abdullah Damolla Muhammad Haji, his immediate superior at the Uyghur Enlightenment Association and his coauthor on *Imperialism and the Nationality Question in Xinjiang*.[69] Roziev's accommodating approach to religion in Xinjiang reflected not only Sheng's official policy, but also a consistent Soviet posture toward Xinjiang, one which in the 1940s would find expression in the Islamic contour of the Soviet-backed Eastern Turkestan Republic. Roziev's pragmatism, though, was predicated on the assumption that increasing education levels would proceed hand in hand with the gradual disappearance of religion. Soon after his arrival in the province, Roziev was appalled by the squalid living conditions of a Mongol herder at whose home he spent the night. Pondering, "Why are they so backward?", he answered his own question: "One of the biggest reasons is obvious, of course. That is—religion, Lamaism."[70]

In April, the Inspection Team arrived in Kashgar, where the Team's leaders were scheduled to speak at a ceremony marking the third anniversary of Sheng's April Revolution.[71]

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[67] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 100-02. For more on Manhan Wang, see "Manchukezhabu 滿楚克札布," in *Xibei minzu cidian* 西北民族词典, ed. Liu Weixin 刘维新 et al. (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1998), 433.
[68] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 197-98. The cemetery Roziev refers to was likely the shrine better known as Yette qizlirim; see Rahile Dawut, *Uyghur mazarliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2001), 179-80.
[69] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 35-37.
[70] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 14-15.
[71] Roziev's detailed account of the ceremony was printed in a series of articles in the local newspaper. The festivities included military exercises, student athletics and poetry readings, and the distribution of thousands of leaflets. Manṣur Effendi, "Kāshghar khāṭiresi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 27 April 1936: 2-3; 30 April 1936: 1-2; 7 May 1936: 2; 14 May 1936: 1-2.

With their arrival in the city, Roziev and his colleagues on the Team represented a projection of Ürümchi's power into the heart of Turkic autonomy in the south. Kashgar, former seat of the short-lived Republic of Eastern Turkestan, was even in 1936 a city where local Turkic officials continued to exercise some degree of independence from Ürümchi. The Team did what it could, though, to win hearts and minds for the Ürümchi government. Hu Shoukang, head of the provincial Finance Bureau as well as of the Inspection Team, announced the elimination of taxes for the Kashgar Bazaar.[72] Meshür Roziev (as Mansur Effendi) gave a rousing speech in support of the government, as did Hu Shoukang and Zheng Yijun. Comparing Fascist Italy's ongoing depredations in Ethiopia to the sufferings of Xinjiang's people before the April Revolution, Roziev forcefully declared that much had already been achieved. And still greater glory lay ahead: "the thing which will propel us into the ranks of the civilized nations," declared Roziev, "is the cooperation of the fourteen ethnicities…"[73] (The Sheng administration recognized fourteen official ethnicities in Xinjiang.) Three days later, as the Inspection Team was fêted at a Kashgar Club reception, Hu Shoukang spoke on behalf of the Team about the successes achieved over the previous three years by the new government's policies and the hard work of many.[74]

Traveling back to Ürümchi via the same route, revisiting towns along the way to check the implementation of their directives, the Inspection Team arrived back in the capital in June. Soon after, Hu Shoukang gave a lengthy interview to the *Xinjiang Gazette* about the state of southern Xinjiang's economy.[75] As for Roziev, inequality in land tenure was a central concern

[72] "Shichatuan zai Ka 視察團在喀," *Xinjiang ribao*, 12 May 1936: 2.
[73] "Manṣur Effendining nuṭuqi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 16 April 1936: 2.
[74] Lang [Daoheng] 郎[道衡], "Kashi ge jiguan huanyan shichatuan ji ge xian daibiao, ben yue shijiu ri ni zhengshi kaishi gongzuo, yi zhou hou jiang fu shache shicha 喀什各機關歡宴視察團及各縣代表，本月十九日擬正式開始工作，一週後將赴莎車視察," *Xinjiang ribao*, 27 April 1936: 2.
[75] Tian 天, "Nanjiang shichatuan Hu weiyuanzhang zuo tan zhengli caizheng wenti, Nanjiang caizheng zi qingli tianfu ru shou, qingzhang dimu pingjun minzhong fudan wei qingli zhi yuanze 南疆視察團胡委員長昨談整理財政問題，南疆財政自清理天賦入手，清丈地畝平均民眾負担為清理之原則," *Xinjiang ribao*, 9 June 1936: 2.

for Hu. He spoke at length in the interview about the highly unequal distribution of land among farmers in the south; the rich were getting richer, argued Hu, while the poor got poorer. An accurate survey of land holdings was a prerequisite for a more activist policy on the part of the state. Speaking in his capacity as head of the Finance Ministry, Hu focused on the necessity for systemic change, rather than on the failings of local officials that were such a concern for Roziev. A few days later, Zheng Yijun, who had helped lead the Inspection Team, gave his own interview to the *Gazette*, stressing that inter-ethnic relations were excellent and that the people were most satisfied with the actions of the new government in Ürümchi. "All are able to understand and implement the government's ethnicity policy," he beamed.[76]

Just weeks after returning to Ürümchi, Meshür Roziev published yet another pamphlet on Xinjiang's nationality question, this one authored independently and entitled simply *The Nationality Problem in Xinjiang*.[77] The text had first been serialized in the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette*, and the pamphlet—like the one Roziev had published several months before with 'Abdullah Damolla Muhammad Haji—was printed by the *Gazette* press. The centralized mass media system that produced these publications was designed to circumvent the stratum of local elites who had previously been unavoidable intermediaries between Xinjiang's government and its people. For the state to penetrate more deeply into society, it would have to speak to its citizens directly; but this would first require a populace ready to consume the output of Ürümchi's printing presses.

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[76] Zheng Yijun, "Ge zu ganqing ji wei rongqia, minzhong dui zhengfu ju you shenqie zhi renshi, jianshe shiye yi you jinzhan yong kexue fangfa lingdao 各族感情極為融洽，民眾對政府俱有深切之認識，建設事業已有進展需用科學方法領導," *Xinjiang ribao*, 13 June 1936: 2.

[77] Manṣur Effendi, *Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi* (Ürümchi, Shing Jāng Uyghur gizit khānesi, 1936). This second pamphlet was based on a speech Roziev had given at the Xinjiang People's Anti-Imperialist League in February of that year. "Fandi zonghui di ba ci ganshihui jueding chengli Wenhua shudian, dangchang ji muji liujiujiu wan gu; Mansuer fubuzhang baogao minzu wenti 反帝總會第八次幹事會決定成立文化書店當場即募集六九九萬股滿素爾副部長報告民族問題," *Xinjiang ribao*, 17 Feb. 1936: 3.

Altering relations between state and society and popularizing new forms of communal identity would require new infrastructure at the local level: native-language schools, state-run literacy classes, local assemblies. Even while the Sheng administration sought to establish a rationalized state, the administration found—as have other socialist governments—that creating the necessary infrastructure on a compressed schedule meant the piecemeal, localized deployment of the kind of personal authority embodied by the Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team. Hard-charging officials like Roziev, sanctified by the personal endorsement of Sheng Shicai, were essential for a provincial government whose reach remained limited. It is unsurprising that the inspection team would emerge as a favored tool of state building for Governor Sheng, who sent more such teams into southern Xinjiang in subsequent years.[78] Even so, Sheng had no intention of becoming overly reliant on any one lieutenant. For Meshür Roziev as for many others, 1937 would prove a perilous year.

Roziev outlives his usefulness

After mid-1936, traces of Meshür Roziev become scarcer in the Xinjiang historical record; the apparatus of Sheng's regime was by then largely in place, and the governor could rely less on Soviet counselors and agents. But Roziev was still in good standing in February 1937, when employees of the *Xinjiang Gazette* each contributed two days' worth of salary to the war effort against Japan. As Vice Editor of the *Gazette* and Editor of the *Gazette*'s Uyghur edition, Roziev (as Mansur) was listed second, with a sizable contribution of 5,000 *liang*.[79] Later that year,

[78] A Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team with 170-some members that left Dihua in December 1939 is described in Ke 珂, "Huansong Nanjiang shicha weiyuanhui 歡送南疆視察委員會," *Fandi zhanxian* 3.3 (1939): 15; Wen 文, "Nanjiang shicha weiyuanhui gongzuo de shengli 南疆視察委員會工作的勝利," *Fandi zhanxian* 3.6 (1940): 9.
[79] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu dang'anju 新疆维吾尔自治区档案局, Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan bianjiang shidi yanjiu zhongxin 中国社会科学院边疆史地研究中心, and *Xinjiang tongshi* bianzhuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通史》

though, everything changed. Following the arrest of Khoja Niyaz Haji, his ostensible superior, Roziev knew he was in trouble. Governor Sheng stopped inviting him to meetings. With time running out, Roziev visited Khoja Niyaz Haji's rooms and attempted to remove any incriminating documents from his safe, only to realize that Governor Sheng's men had been there before him.[80] For Roziev, there was no outrunning the state apparatus he himself had helped build, and he soon found himself in prison.

Despite some conciliatory words from Governor Sheng in his New Year's message, the purges picked up again in February 1938, and by the next winter thousands more had entered Sheng's dungeons. Finance Department head Hu Shoukang, Roziev's former boss on the Inspection Team, was arrested. Likewise Roziev's former Inspection Team colleague Zheng Yijun, prefect of Khotan and, like Roziev and a number of other detainees, a member of the Soviet Communist Party. Ürümchi's prison system expanded rapidly as Sheng rid himself of personnel with independent power bases, and particularly of those with Soviet connections. There was at least one man, though, whom the Soviets wanted back unharmed: Meshür Roziev. He was released, after much Soviet lobbying, following half a year in confinement—though not without some difficulty, since Roziev had officially accepted Chinese citizenship for his assignment.[81] Roziev had proven invaluable in promoting Soviet policy and ideology in Xinjiang, and back in the USSR he resumed his successful career in Soviet Central Asia's state bureaucracy. But Xinjiang had not seen the last of Roziev.

编撰委员会, *Kangri zhanzheng shiqi Xinjiang ge minzu minzhong kangri mujuan dang'an shiliao* 抗日战争时期新疆各民族民众抗日募捐档案史料 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2008), 5-7.

[80] Khéwir Tomur, "Khoja Niyaz Haji," 32; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 316-17.

[81] Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi"; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 51-52.



Figure 1: Meshür Roziev with wife Ayshe Rozieva, Moscow, Aug. 1938.
Photo courtesy of Ghunchem Rozieva and Hasan Iliemov.

THE DAWN OF UYGHUR MASS MEDIA IN XINJIANG

While the Sheng administration represented a watershed in Xinjiang history, its policies built in a number of ways on prior developments in the province. In the months and years before Sheng came to power, the ideological and geopolitical trends which shaped his administration had already found expression in small but significant ways among Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims. Perhaps most notably, in the first half of the 1930s, a number of independent experiments in native-language publishing had been carried out in Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking communities. In Ili, Chöchek (Tarbaghatai), Kashgar, and Aqsu, newspapers printed in the local vernacular quickly found purchase among an expanding literate population. Despite the success of these publishing initiatives, they were soon overtaken by political events. In the mid-1930s, as Sheng

tightened his control over the province and implemented Soviet-style cultural policies, the Xinjiang state gradually absorbed all four independent newspapers, integrating them into a growing network of state-controlled print media. Over the next decade, this state publishing system produced a steadily increasing volume of periodicals and books in Uyghur, a language and national category that the provincial government, following Soviet policy, officially recognized in 1935. This was no gradual evolution from manuscript culture to mass printing, as charted by historians of print culture in the West. Soviet ideology and precedent, which the Sheng administration largely adopted, called for bringing Uyghur print culture to full maturity as quickly as possible, in order to put Uyghurs on the fast track to socialist modernity.[82]

This section details the rise and fall of Xinjiang's independent Turkic-language press in the early and mid-1930s, followed by an analysis of the state-run Uyghur press over the subsequent decade. In addition to tracing the development of Uyghur-language publishing in Republican-era Xinjiang, the section draws on a plethora of sources to shed light on the reception of Uyghur newspapers in the 1930s and 1940s, and on the reading practices through which the newspapers were encountered. The section argues that Uyghur publications in late Republican Xinjiang were indeed widely consumed, at least in many parts of the province, and that their influence on local culture and self-perception was substantial. Indeed, the emergence of modern Uyghur identity can hardly be understood outside the context of an expanding native-language print culture in the mid-twentieth century. This section, by reconstructing the early days of Uyghur-language mass printing in Xinjiang, will lay the groundwork for subsequent chapters' investigation of the relationship between print culture and identity in the heart of socialist Eurasia.

[82] What follows will be an account of Uyghur-language print culture in Xinjiang during the Sheng era. Comparable developments took place on a somewhat smaller scale in Xinjiang's Kazakh and Mongol print culture during the same period, and deserve separate treatment elsewhere.

Local experiments in print autonomy, 1932-36

The early 1930s saw a revival of newspaper publishing in Ili, where the province's first Turkic-language papers had been printed two decades before. Although details remain somewhat sketchy, sources concur that *Ili River Newspaper* (*Ili deryasi giziti*) was up and running in Ghulja, Ili's largest city, by 1932, after earlier efforts to publish the paper had been less successful. The eminent dramaturge Zunun Qadiri, who grew up in Ili and published his first work in *Ili River Newspaper*, recalled that the paper would be passed around with great interest in its early years, with lines forming outside the newspaper office on printing days.[83] The early establishment and popularity of *Ili River Newspaper* were closely linked to Ili's position as the primary entry point for Russian and subsequently Soviet influence in the province. This was true not only because Ili's publishers imported much of their printing equipment from the USSR. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Soviet influence was a major factor in the expansion of primary education in Ili's Muslim community, education which sometimes bore a distinctly Russian or Tatar flavor and often incorporated a degree of socialist content. Ili's new schools, like those in Kashgar, helped generate a stronger demand for printed reading material; and as in Kashgar, publishing and education were deeply intertwined, with the same presses printing both newspapers and textbooks.

In July 1933, several months before Turkic Muslim rebels in the Kashgar region established the short-lived Republic of Eastern Turkestan, a group of intellectuals associated with the republic founded a longer-lasting institution: Kashgar's first newspaper. Published under various mastheads—*Eastern Turkistan Life* (*Sharqiy Turkistān ḥayāti*), *Free Turkistan* (*Erkin Turkistān*), and eventually *New Life* (*Yengi ḥayāt*), the newspaper was printed weekly at

[83] Tursun Zérdin, "Ilida gézitning barliqqa kélishi"; Mehemmet Tokhsunup and Zunun Tahir, "1950-yilidin burun Ilida chiqqan gézitler toghrisida," in *Ili tarikh matériyalliri (1-5)*, ed. Siyasiy Kéngesh Ili Qazaq aptonom oblastliq komitétining tarikh matériyallar komitéti, 528–39 (Ghulja: Ili Jinshing soda cheklik mes'uliyät shirkiti, 2009).

first and began appearing twice a week in its second year.[84] Despite chronic difficulties in enforcing timely payment of subscription fees, the paper's print run rose from just under a thousand in late 1934 to more than two thousand by summer 1936. The growth of *New Life* coincided with the expansion of Kashgar's Turkic-language school system, and interest in the newspaper seems to have been substantial in Kashgar and beyond. By fall 1935, *New Life*'s masthead noted that a postal fee would be charged to subscribers in other cities.[85]

Not long after Kashgar's newspaper was established, *Our Voice* (*Bizning tāwush*) began publication in Chöchek, a border town in northwestern Xinjiang where Soviet influence was as substantial as in neighboring Ili. The masthead of *Our Voice* listed the newspaper's founding date as 21 May 1934, though some sources suggest a predecessor to the paper may have begun publishing earlier.[86] The four-page weekly was published each Friday, with print runs fluctuating between 400 and 600. The newspaper was originally handwritten and mimeographed, but its print quality and range of content improved markedly in late 1935 after *Our Voice* imported a printing press and radio from the USSR.[87] Within a few months of the newspaper's founding, the masthead began to list separate prices for subscribers in other towns, suggesting a significant readership beyond Chöchek.[88] Like some other parts of northwestern Xinjiang, Chöchek had large Uyghur and Kazakh populations as well as a sprinkling of Tatars, and *Our Voice* was

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[84] For more on the newspaper's background, see Eden Naby, "Political and Cultural Forces Among the Uighurs: The Struggle for Change—1930s," *The American Asian Review* 5.2 (1987): 98–111.

[85] *Yengi ḥayāt*, 7 Nov. 1935. Copies were clearly circulating in northern Xinjiang; articles from *New Life* were reprinted in the Chöchek paper *Our Voice* (see below) in the mid-1930s, and letters from correspondents across the province appeared regularly in *New Life*'s pages. Print runs were sometimes listed in *New Life*'s masthead.

[86] Éli Turaq writes that the paper was founded 1925 in Chöchek, and several years later forced to close by the Jin Shuren administration. "Uyghur Gézitchilik Tarixidin Omumiy Katalog," *Shinjang Kütüpxanichiliqi* 4 (1994): 34.

[87] "Tacheng wen Wei bao gaiyong qianyin; wei xiaoxi lingtong she shouyinji 塔城文維報改用鉛印 爲消息靈通設收音機," *Xinjiang ribao*, 3 Dec. 1935: 3.

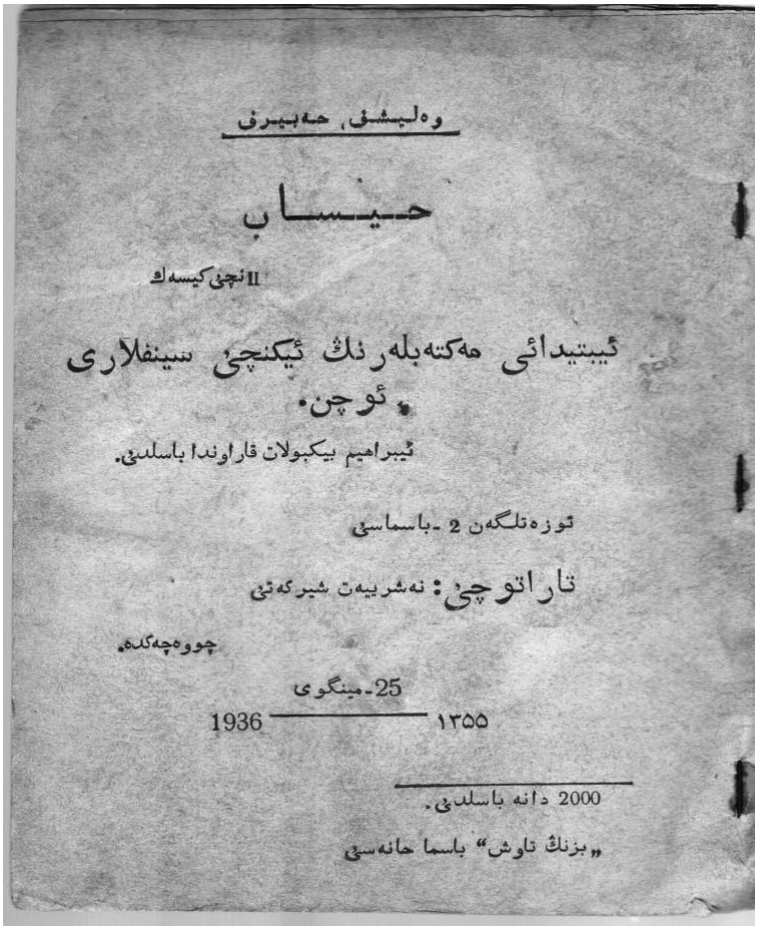
[88] Indeed, the paper was read as far away as Nanjing, where translations from *Our Voice* were occasionally published in the Guomindang-affiliated *Chini Turkistān āwāzi*; e.g., Women de sheng 我們的聲, "Sa'erte ne, Weiwu'er ne? 薩爾特呢，維吾爾呢？" tr. Aisha 艾莎, *Chini Turkistān āwāzi* 1.6 (1934): 29-30.

printed in a compromise between Uyghur and neighboring Turkic languages, with occasional articles printed in (and specified as) Kazakh.[89]

The creation of *Our Voice* was closely connected to the Society for the Promotion of Education (Nashr-i ma'ārif jem'iyeti). As mentioned above, the Society was founded in Chöchek on local initiative—and without government permission—in summer 1933, a few months after Sheng Shicai took power. In fall of that year the Society, having collected money from education-minded locals, opened a teacher training class in Chöchek and ordered printing presses from the USSR. New schools opened quickly in Chöchek with help from the Society, and by the end of 1935 were serving over a thousand pupils.[90] Textbooks for the new schools were printed on the *Our Voice* press, and lesson plans were serialized in the newspaper.[91] Chöchek's Society for the Promotion of Knowledge doubtless drew inspiration from similar associations in Russian (and later Soviet) Central Asia, where Muslim reformers had spent decades working to build an education system that drew on Western knowledge and methods while retaining local control and some degree of Islamic content. As in Chöchek, these associations often relied in large part on private contributions for their funding, and tended to combine educational and publishing initiatives.[92] Reformists in Russian and Soviet Central Asia regarded newspapers as a key

[89] For more on Chöchek's inter-Turkic lingua franca, see Tahir Tashbayef, "Chöchek ortaq tili toghrisida," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 2 (2001): 57–62.
[90] "Nashr-i ma'ārif jem'iyetining ḥisābi," *Bizning tāwush*, 20 Dec. 1935: 2.
[91] An example from one of these serialized lesson plans is Chüwechek 'Nashr-i ma'ārif,' "Ibtidā'iy ikkinchi sinif üchün," *Bizning tāwush*, 25 Oct. 1935: 2. Textbooks for sale are advertised in "I'lānlār," *Bizning tāwush*, 3 May 1935: 4. See facing image for the cover of one of the textbooks printed by *Our Voice*.
[92] The very name of the Chöchek society directly recalled one of the organizations set up in early Soviet Turkistan, the Nashri Maorif. Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 148–49. See also Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 117–27. The title *Our Voice*, too, was anticipated by a short-lived Tatar-language newspaper published in 1917 by the All-Russian Muslim Military Council. Midkhat Karimovich Mukhariamov, *Oktiabr' i natsional'nyi vopros v Tatarii: Oktiabr' 1917 – Iiul' 1918* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1958), 74-81. Tatar books and periodicals from the Russian empire had circulated to a significant degree in northern Xinjiang in the 1910s and 1920s as the area's Tatar population grew. Mirkasïm A. Usmanov, "Tatar Settlers in Western China (Second Half of the 19th Century to the First Half of the 20th Century)," in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries, Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and*

element of their modernizing efforts, and their enthusiastic rhetoric on the social role of newspapers was frequently echoed by their counterparts in Xinjiang.[93] This was part of a broader rhetorical resemblance between Xinjiang's Muslim reformers and their counterparts to the east and west. The metaphor of an "awakening" people, for example, was as perennially popular in Xinjiang as it was in Russian Central Asia and inner China.[94]


وەلىيشق، مەبىرق

حىساب

II نچى كىسەك

ئىبتىدائى مەكتەبلەرنىڭ ئىكنچى سىنىفلارى ئوچن.

ئىبراھىم بىكبولات قاراوندا باسلدى.

توزەتلگەن 2 - باسماسى

تاراتوچى: نەشرىيەت شىركەتى

چووچچەكدە.

25-مىنگوى

1936 ——— ١٣٥٥

2000 دانە باسلدى.

«يزنك تاوش» باسما حانەسى

Figure 2: 2nd-grade arithmetic textbook printed on Our Voice *press in 2000 copies, 1936.*

Inter-Ethnic Relations, ed. Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, and Allen J. Frank (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), 256.

[93] E.g., "Ijtimā'iy ishlerimiz ḥeqinde," *Bizning tāwush*, 3 Jan. 1936: 1. Similar rhetoric appeared frequently in all of Xinjiang's contemporary newspapers.

[94] Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 124; John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). Abdukhaliq Uyghur's poem "Awaken," written during the high tide of local educational reformism in Republican Xinjiang, remains popular in Uyghur communities to this day. See Abdukhaliq Uyghur, *Achil* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2008), 23–24.

In late 1935, *Our Voice* reported that "another comrade" had set up shop to the south, where the Aqsu County Education Office's publishing section had established the *Aqsu News* (*Aqsu uchuri*) in October of that year.[95] *Aqsu News* was initially published in a weekly run of fifteen copies, each handwritten on two single-sided pages and intended for wall display—a format then popular in the USSR, and in subsequent years in Xinjiang as well.[96] Within a year, the newspaper had acquired a small printing press, and was flourishing under editor Ermiya Effendi, better known today as the poet Nim Shéhit (also Nimshéhit, 1906-72).[97] While no surviving issues of this newspaper have yet come to light, *Our Voice* reported that *Aqsu News* included articles on scholarship and literature, religion and society, history and current events, while *New Life* declared that it was "apparent from reading [*Aqsu News*] that the work of education and learning is progressing vigorously in Aqsu."[98]

In the first half of the 1930s, then, independent local efforts had established Uyghur-language (or quasi-Uyghur) newspapers in at least four of Xinjiang's cities, from Chöchek in the north to Kashgar in the south. Of the four newspapers, it is significant that two were founded in border areas of northwestern Xinjiang—Ili and Chöchek—where Soviet influence was markedly stronger than in the rest of the province; this was so despite the fact that Ili and Chöchek's Turkic communities were far smaller than those of southern population centers like Kashgar and Aqsu. As we will see in much greater detail in subsequent chapters, the early spread of Soviet-style ideas and Turkic-language print culture in northern Xinjiang would emerge as a major cultural advantage for the north in subsequent decades.

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[95] Bizning tāwush, "Yene bir yoldāsh," *Bizning tāwush*, 13 Dec. 1935: 2.
[96] On wall newspapers in the USSR, see Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 237–9.
[97] Yengi ḥayāt, "Aqsudā yengi bir refiq," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 1 Nov. 1936: 2.
[98] Bizning tāwush, "Yene bir yoldāsh"; Yengi ḥayāt, "Aqsudā yengi bir refiq." For recollections of *Aqsu News* from several individuals involved with the paper in the mid-1930s, see Ismayil Esqiri, ed., "Azadliqtin ilgiri Shinjangning her qaysi jaylirida neshir qilin'ghan gézit-jurnallar toghrisida eslimiler," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 32 (1992): 147–81.

The second half of the 1930s would see an explosion of Turkic-language publishing in Xinjiang, as the provincial government began to involve itself directly in Turkic—and particularly Uyghur—mass culture. While a small number of Uyghur writers and intellectuals attained vast cultural power and cachet during this rapid state-directed expansion of print culture in Xinjiang, the government's new interest in mass printing would soon undermine independent outlets like the four described above.

The Xinjiang Gazette *and the Ili network*

Soviet doctrine held that mass literacy and native-tongue education were prerequisites for a pre-national people's evolution into a modern nation; and once a populace was literate, the Stalinist state saw print as an ideal medium for propaganda and social control.[99] Once Sheng Shicai had committed to governing Xinjiang as a Stalinist satrapy, Soviet advisors like Meshür Roziev worked assiduously to promote publishing in Uyghur and other local languages. Following the USSR's established model, they set up shop in the provincial capital and began building outward.

One of the central institutions of Sheng's Xinjiang was an extensive network of Enlightenment Associations, province-wide cultural organizations organized on the basis of ethnicity and deeply involved in education and publishing.[100] Among the first acts of the Uyghur Enlightenment Association was the establishment of a Uyghur-language newspaper in Ürümchi, intended to serve as the Association's official print organ. A number of Uyghur and Tatar intellectuals from Xinjiang and the USSR—including Meshür Roziev—were placed in charge of the newspaper, which printed its first issue on 25 January 1935 under the masthead *New Life*

[99] For a detailed study of Stalinism as reflected in Russian-language newspaper publishing, see Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[100] On the Uyghur Enlightenment Association, see Zuo Hongwei, *Xinjiang Weiwu'er wenhua cujinhui yanjiu* (M.A. thesis, Xinjiang daxue, 2005).

(*Yéngi ḥayāt*)—the very name under which Kashgar's newspaper was then appearing.[101] Even the paper's soaring print run—from 100 to 2,000 copies an issue within its first year—does not suffice to give an impression of its reach and impact, since copies were often read aloud or summarized for the benefit of those unable to read or afford them.[102] The newspaper, as we will see in more detail below, played a tremendous role in the spread of print culture among Xinjiang's Uyghur population, helping at the same time to create a Uyghur mass culture infused with ideas of nation, socialism, and teleological development. And the very fact of the *Gazette*'s rapid circulation helped foster a sense of Uyghurs as a distinct nation: for the first time, Uyghurs throughout the province were reading (or having read to them) the same news, from the same source, within days of each other.[103] The newspaper, and the numerous other publications which were printed on its press, also played a key role in determining the orthography of the modern Uyghur language in Xinjiang.

The newspaper tried on several names, including *New Xinjiang* (*Yéngi Shinjang*) and *Xinjiang Uyghur Gazette* (*Shinjang Uyghur géziti*), before settling finally on *Xinjiang Gazette* (*Shing Jāng géziti*).[104] The paper was initially published weekly, in mimeographed print runs that soon reached a few hundred copies an issue.[105] Within months, new machinery and personnel arrived from Ili and Chöchek, where Uyghur-language publishing had deeper roots; later, more

[101] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 41–64; Muhemmed Rozi, "'Shinjang géziti'ning tereqqiyat tarikhidin qisqiche eslime," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 23 (1987): 350–77.
[102] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: baoye zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志第七十八卷・报业志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di qishiba juan: Baoye zhi* 新疆通志第七十八卷：报业志 (Ürümchi: Xinjang renmin chubanshe, 2009), 55-59; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 51-58; interview with Mirsultan Osmanov, July 2014.
[103] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism: Revised Edition* (London: Verso, 2006), 22-36.
[104] For simplicity's sake, I will refer to the newspaper in the body of the text simply as the *Xinjiang Gazette*, regardless of its official name at a given point in time.
[105] In his memoir, Roziev gives higher figures for the circulation of the early *Xinjiang Gazette* than those in most contemporary and subsequent accounts. Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 56–58; cf. "Ijtima'iy ishlirimiz heqqide," *Bizning tāwush*, 3 Jan 1936: 1; Yengi ḥayāt idāresi, "Gizite oqughuchilirimizghe!" *Yengi ḥayāt*, 22 Feb. 1937: 4; Rozi, "Qisqiche eslime."

equipment and experts were brought in from the Soviet Union, where Uyghur newspapers had been printed since the 1920s.[106] The print quality and circulation of the *Xinjiang Gazette* continued to increase rapidly, and before long the paper began appearing twice a week. Contemporary sources place the *Gazette*'s semiweekly print run at 2,300 or 4,300 in 1937; 4,200 in 1938; and around 10,000 in 1940.[107] Local branches of the *Gazette*, discussed in detail below, reached thousands more. All this helped spread the new linguistic and cultural standards adopted by the *Gazette*, including a modified Arabic orthography officially adopted in Xinjiang in 1937 and based on the Latin Uyghur script used in the USSR.[108] The *Gazette*'s inexorably increasing circulation and dissemination of new standards was impressive; but who made all of this possible?

From its earliest days, the *Xinjiang Gazette* enjoyed an impressive influx of talent, including some of the province's best-known literati and most experienced editors, as well as some of the first Uyghur students to return to Xinjiang from study in the USSR.[109] These early employees of the provincial *Gazette* were disproportionately drawn from Ili, by then the deepest bench of Turkic-language publishing talent in Xinjiang. The early expansion of Uyghur-language schooling in Ili, due in large part to the Muslim community's extensive links with Soviet Turkestan, had helped create a deep bench of talent for the *Gazette*—and cultural institutions in Sheng's Xinjiang generally—to draw on by the late 1930s. This younger generation was well versed in the political and cultural idiom of Sheng-era Xinjiang, as well as the more vernacular form of written Uyghur that was increasingly standard in the province's publications. Writers

[106] Munir Erzin, *Uyghur Sovet metbuatining tarikhi* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1980).
[107] The 2,300 figure for 1937 is from *Baoye zhi*, 293; the 4,300 figure for 1937 is from Zhou Dongjiao, a journalist who worked at the paper in the 1930s: *Xinjiang shi nian*, 51–52. The 1938 statistic is from Chen Jiying 陈纪滢, *Xinjiang niaokan* 新疆鳥瞰 (Chongqing: Jian Zhong Chubanshe, 1943), 106. The source for the 1940 statistic is Bai Shan 白山, "Yi nian lai yinshua shiye de fazhan 一年來印刷事業的發展," *Fandi zhanxian* 5.4 (1941): 40-43.
[108] Cuiyi Wei, "An Historical Survey of Modern Uyghur Writing Since the 1950s in Xinjiang, China," *Central Asiatic Journal* 37/3-4 (1993): 259. Following Soviet Uyghur precedent, the new orthography indicated short vowels and eschewed where possible Arabic letters representing sounds not found in Uyghur.
[109] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 51–85; Rozi, "Qisqiche eslime."

and editors like Merup Se'idi, Ayub Mansuri, and Khélil Sattari, each of whom had begun their career at *Ili River Newspaper*, would help shape the language, style, and content of the provincial *Xinjiang Gazette*. While they provided the *Gazette* with necessary expertise, the provincial newspaper enabled them to spread their Ili-inflected understanding of modern Uyghur culture throughout Xinjiang, both in the newspaper and in the numerous books and textbooks printed on its press.

The parallels, divergences, and intersections of these men's careers illustrate the ways in which the transborder position of the Ili community helped empower Ili in twentieth-century Uyghur culture. Se'idi, Mansuri, and Sattari were born in Russian Ili in the waning days of tsarist rule, where they began their education in local schools. As young men, each of them crossed the border to Chinese Ili—Mansuri and Se'idi in 1918, when the Uyghur community of Russian Ili found itself caught between Red and White armies, and Sattari in 1930, when life in Soviet Central Asia became increasingly precarious admist successive Stalinist campaigns. Se'idi, Mansuri, and Sattari all began careers in Ghulja, Ili's urban center, and in the early 1930s began working at the new *Ili River Newspaper*. All three were poets, and their work drew on the simplified meters and the themes—socialism, industrialization, anti-imperialism, women's rights—then popular in Soviet Turkestan. In the mid-1930s, the three were summoned to Ürümchi to work at the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette*, then dominated by Meshür Roziev, who had grown up not far from them in Russian Turkestan and shared close ties of community and ideology.[110]

In addition to serving as vice editor of the *Gazette*, Merup Se'idi mentored young Uyghur intellectuals in Ürümchi, many of them originally from Ili. These notably included Lutpulla Mutellip and Dawut Turekhmetov, who became prominent poets in the 1940s; the former had

[110] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 384-85, 378-79, 406.

known Se'idi in Ghulja.[111] Ayub Mansuri held a number of posts at the *Gazette*, culminating in his appointment as head editor of the newspaper. He also served as editor for a number of books published on the *Gazette* press, including influential volumes like Meshür Roziev's coauthored 1936 treatise *Imperialism and the Nationality Question in Xinjiang*.[112] Meanwhile, in addition to his work as an early practitioner of prose fiction in Xinjiang, he continued to develop his craft as a poet.[113] Mansuri is credited with playing a key role in popularizing the simplified "finger meter" (*barmaq wezin*) for Uyghur poetry, which soon began to displace the elaborate Persianate poetic genres perceived by socialist nation builders as neither authentically popular not authentically Uyghur. Khélil Sattari likewise combined his work at the *Xinjiang Gazette* with a considerable poetic output.[114] From their perches at the *Gazette*, Se'idi, Mansuri, and Sattari helped familiarize Xinjiang's readers with a written Uyghur idiom based in large part on the Ili dialect, and published innumerable poems on anti-imperialism, women's rights, and other themes that were pioneered in Xinjiang literature by Ili poets.

From the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s, the *Xinjiang Gazette* was also one of the province's more significant book publishers—taking its branch presses into account, perhaps the most significant. In 1940 alone, the *Gazette*'s press printed well over half a million books in Chinese, Uyghur, Kazakh, and Russian.[115] Propaganda imperatives guided some of this printing, with Uyghur translations of Governor Sheng's speeches and writings printed voluminously as books and pamphlets by the *Gazette* print shop, often after having been serialized in the *Gazette* and its branch papers.[116] As noted above, the *Gazette* also serialized Meshür Roziev's

[111] Hakim Jappar, "Meripet yultuzi—Merup Se'idi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 34 (1993): 225-26.
[112] 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi, *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*.
[113] Iminjan Ekhmidi, *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhidiki namayendiler* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1996), 355-57.
[114] Tursun Zéridin, ed., "Sha'ir Khélil Sattari shé'irliri," *Ili deryasi* 2 (1988): 79-83.
[115] Bai, "Yi nian lai," 42.
[116] E.g., Shing Shi Sey, *Urumchide otkuzulgen 2nchi yilliq "7nchi Iyul" khāṭire yighinidā dāhimiz Duben*

pseudonymous publications and reprinted them in booklet form. Other Sheng loyalists like ‘Abd al-Ghafur Damolla also enjoyed extensive access to the presses. Sheng’s state was not intent merely on printing books; it was committed to ensuring their wide distribution. At one of its first meetings, the ruling People’s Anti-Imperialist League resolved to establish a state-run bookstore (known as the Wenhua shudian 文化書店, or “Culture Bookstore”), which would remain a key outlet for book distribution in Xinjiang for the remainder of the Republican era.[117]

Political and theological tracts were far from the only focus of book publishing. Many, perhaps most, of the books published by the *Xinjiang Gazette* were textbooks for use in the province’s schools.[118] As the printing capacities of the press improved, the first Xinjiang Provincial Women’s Assembly, led by Sheng’s wife Qiu Yufang (邱毓芳), published their proceedings in hard-bound *Gazette* volumes in 1942.[119] Almost from the time of its founding, then, the *Gazette* played a key role in book publishing and news distribution, and was poised to remold Uyghur mass culture and deeply influence public opinion. Clearly, this was an institution no autocrat could afford to do without.

Centralization and control

In 1936, Sheng’s administration removed the *Xinjiang Uyghur Gazette* (as it was then known) from the purview of the Uyghur Enlightenment Association and merged it with the Chinese-

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Jānāblirining sozligen nuṭuqi (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng olkuluk gezit khāne meṭbe’esi, 1939); Shing Shi Sey, *Hökümet āldidiki muhim weẓifiler*. (The latter book was distributed by Xinjiang wenhua shudian, but printed on the *Xinjiang Gazette* press.)

[117] “Fandi zonghui di ba ci ganshihui jueding chengli Wenhua shudian, dangchang ji muji liujiujiu wan gu; Mansuer fubuzhang baogao minzu wenti 反帝總會第八次幹事會决定成立文化書店當場即募集六九九萬股滿素爾副部長報告民族問題,” *Xinjiang ribao*, 17 Feb. 1936: 3.

[118] This primary school reader was typical: Shing Jāng medeniy ālāqe uyushmisi, *Oqush kitābi: 3- kitāb: bāshlān’ghuch mektepler uchun* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng gezit metbe’esi, 1940).

[119] Qurultāy teshwiqāt bölümi, *Shing Jāng olkuluk birinchi nobetlik khotun-qiz wekileler qurultayining khātire defteri* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng gizit idāresi, 1942).

language *Xinjiang Gazette* (formerly the *Tianshan Daily*), under the direct control of the governor's office and the provincial government.[120] This was one in a series of steps the Sheng regime took to monopolize control of publishing in Xinjiang.[121] Unlike the preceding Yang and Jin administrations, Sheng's government would prove very much a patron of Uyghur-language publishing, in keeping with the nation building doctrine of Sheng's Soviet patrons. Given his appreciation for the power of the press, however, Sheng was little inclined to permit local actors to exercise that power without the supervision of his trusted lieutenants. Not long after he took office, Sheng began dispatching these lieutenants to key sites of independent publishing around the province, with the aim of centralizing Xinjiang's press around the capital like spokes on a wheel.

In August 1934, a new official arrived to take charge of the Ili region: Sheng's father-in-law, Qiu Zongjun (邱宗浚). For decades a hotbed of underground organizations and rebellion, Ili would now be under the watchful eye of a man with intimate ties to Xinjiang's new ruler. Within a couple months of Qiu's arrival in Ili, the well-equipped print shop of the *Ili River Newspaper* was obliged to start printing the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette* (*Ili Shingjāng gezitesi*) as well, thus marking the establishment of the provincial newspaper's official Ili branch. With the resources of the state fully behind the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*, *Ili River Newspaper* was soon squeezed out of the market, and ceased printing by the end of 1935. The content of Ili's new newspaper mostly overlapped with that of its predecessor, but the chain of command now stretched back to Ürümchi.[122] At the

[120] Xinjiang ribao she shi zhi ban 新疆日报社史志办, *Xinjiang ribao she zhi (1949-1990)* 新疆日报社志（1949–1990）(Ürümchi: Xinjiang ribao she, 2005), 15.
[121] Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi*, 101–02.
[122] Lai Hongbo 赖洪波, *Yili shidi wenji* 伊犁史地文集 (Hong Kong: Yinhe chubanshe, 2005), 55; Yili Hasake zizhizhou difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 伊犁哈萨克自治州地方志编纂委员, eds., *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi* 伊犁哈萨克自治州志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2004), 864–65; Tursun Zérdin, "Ilida gézitning barliqqa kélishi." The founding date of the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*, 10 Oct. 1934, was noted on the masthead of subsequent issues.

same time, as noted above, a number of experienced editors and managers at *Ili River Newspaper* were summoned to the capital to take up leading posts at the new provincial paper—a transfer of talent that had the effect of weakening local autonomy in Ili's newspaper business, even as it provided the relocated Ili intellectuals a unique opportunity to shape the emerging Uyghur mass culture in Xinjiang.

Kashgar was a tougher nut to crack. Since 1934, the city and its environs had been governed in a tense coalition between the provincial government and a local Uyghur faction loyal to Mahmud Muhiti, commander of the Kashgar garrison. Muhiti's allies among the literati were ascendant in the city's cultural and intellectual life; the newspaper *New Life*, previously the house organ of the now-defunct Republic of Eastern Turkestan, was closely associated with Muhiti's faction, and thus enjoyed the protection of Muhiti's troops. Sheng's administration, conscious of the newspaper's role in shaping Kashgar public opinion, did not like what it saw. To ensure that the ideology and policies of the Ürümchi government would remain unchallenged in the press, Sheng needed to curb the independence of *New Life*, and he needed to do it with cajoling and browbeating rather than military force. He had just the man for the job.

Meshür Roziev, under his alias Mansur Effendi, was well known throughout Xinjiang by early 1936, when Sheng sent Roziev to southern Xinjiang as a member of the Inspection Team. As detailed above, the Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team spent much of its time berating local officials who had failed to fully implement Sheng's Six Great Policies in their communities; Roziev, seasoned in Soviet-style exhortative management, usually played bad cop. After a whirlwind tour of mass meetings and private interviews across central and southwestern Xinjiang, the Investigation Team arrived in Kashgar for its most delicate assignment.

Soon after entering the city, Roziev made the acquaintance of Qutluq Haji Shewqi, long-time chief editor of *New Life*, whom he soon sized up as an enemy of Marxism-Leninism and a "standard-bearer of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism."[123] Wasting no time, on his second day in Kashgar, Roziev paid a visit to Mahmud Muhiti's barracks. After a strained but respectful conversation on general political topics, Roziev broached to Muhiti the subject of Kashgar's feisty local newspaper. "Why does *New Life* refrain from promoting the government's Six Policies program? It didn't even report our arrival in the district. Why?" Muhiti responded curtly that Roziev could ask the editor. Roziev, shifting from the ultra-polite second-person pronoun *sili* to the merely polite *siz*, got down to brass tacks. "Your Honor has his finger in every pot; you are the leader," he declared, implying that Muhiti was responsible for the newspaper's content. Muhiti replied that he and his comrades had shed blood for their people's liberation, and were entitled to care for their people's welfare as they saw fit: "You were not involved in the revolution, so how dare you arrogantly assume to tell us what to do?" Switching back to the respectful *sili*, Roziev inquired about *New Life*'s editor: "What sort of man is the honorable Qutluq Haji Shewqi? I hear he is your close associate, a loyal ally." Muhiti heaped praise on the editor, but Roziev was unimpressed. The meeting ended inconclusively.

Not long after, Roziev and Muhiti both attended a meeting in Kashgar to discuss the affairs of the local Enlightenment Association, which unlike its counterparts in other cities functioned largely independently of the provincial government and was closely linked to Muhiti's faction.[124] Roziev proposed that the Association turn over responsibility for its finances to the government, and that the Association—as well as its publishing enterprises, including *New Life*—thereby submit to Ürümchi's jurisdiction. Muhiti, unsurprisingly, registered strong

[123] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 226–40.
[124] Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi*, 106.

opposition to the idea—though given *New Life*'s constant financial woes, the offer of government funding might have seemed attractive to some.[125] In the end, Roziev and his colleagues were unable to bring Kashgar's Enlightenment Association to heel, but did manage to install Sheng ally Lang Daoheng (郎道衡) as executive of *New Life*, while Qutluq Haji Shewqi retained his post as head editor. Lang was from Sheng's hometown, and they had studied together in Japan—personal ties which for the time being protected him from Sheng's overarching suspicion.[126]

Soon after, in June 1936, *New Life* announced that it would henceforth straddle the Ürümchi-Kashgar fault line by serving simultaneously as "an official newspaper of the government as well as the print organ of the [Kashgar] Uyghur Enlightenment Association."[127] The newspaper's masthead changed immediately to reflect this. Later in the year, the Ürümchi government bought *New Life* a Soviet printing press with a Uyghur typeface closer to the style used in Xinjiang's other papers, and ordered the construction of a new office for the newspaper next to Kashgar's civil administration complex.[128] *New Life*, which had relied since its inception on a printing press in Kashgar run by Swedish missionaries, was thereby brought into bureaucratic and typographic conformity with the *Xinjiang Gazette*'s other branches. Even as these turf battles raged behind closed doors, the appearance of calm was maintained in public. Roziev, in a speech at a large festival in Kashgar, took pains to praise Mahmud Muhiti and his allies, and to stress their common cause with the Ürümchi government. A few months later, after

[125] By early 1937, *New Life* reported that the Xinjiang state was paying the lion's share of its expenses. Yengi ḥayāt idārāsi, "Gizite oqughuchilirimizghe!" *Yengi ḥayāt*, 22 Feb. 1937: 4.
[126] Lang was one of the "Ten Big Experts" that Sheng Shicai invited to Xinjiang from inner China; his own account of his career in Xinjiang is given in Lang Daoheng 郎道衡, "'Shi da boshi' xiao zhuan '十大博士'小传," *Wulumuqi wenshi ziliao* 1 (1982): 83–96.
[127] Idāre, "Bildurush," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 1 Jun. 1936: 4.
[128] Āqārtu uyushme bāshliqi Ḥāji ʿAbdallāh, "Mubārek bolsun," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 20 Aug. 1936: 1; Idāre, "Kāshgherde yéngi meṭbe'e khānemiz ichildi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 20 Aug. 1936: 1.

the newspaper had set up shop in its new building next to the local government offices, Muhiti publicly congratulated the paper and thanked "Xinjiang's pro-culture and pro-development government" for its role in purchasing the new printing press.[129]

This tense coexistence lasted about a year. *New Life* continued to be printed under its old title, even while its editors now answered—at least in theory—to the *Xinjiang Gazette* head office in Ürümchi. Lang Daoheng himself recalled that the affairs of the paper continued relatively unchanged under his management. "The paper's content was still the same old *New Life* content. Furthermore, the *Xinjiang Gazette* head office had no lines of communication with the branch office [in Kashgar], and no press releases or editorial directives were provided; the branch office had to fend for itself."[130] Toward the end of 1936 the newspaper did make efforts to embrace a Soviet-style "correspondent" model of journalism, wherein local activist-reporters would write in to the paper on topics dictated partially by the political climate. (A *New Life* correspondent's duties would include "recording the ill intentions of bad people who oppose the government's policies.")[131] The paper's overall content and editorial line, however, shifted only gradually, and Qutluq Haji Shewqi stayed on as chief editor.[132] Events finally came to a head in spring 1937, when Mahmud Muhiti's flight to India precipitated a Muslim uprising in Kashgar, and Sheng called in Soviet troops to bring the south to heel. Not long after, Sheng took

[129] "Manṣur Effendining nuṭuqi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 16 April 1936: 2; Sijāng Maḥmud Miḥiṭi, "Yengi meṭbe'e mubarek bolsun," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 27 Aug. 1936: 1.
[130] Lang Daoheng 郎道衡, "'Xinjiang ribao' de pianduan 《新疆日报》的片段," *Xinjiang wenshi ziliao xuanji* 6 (1980): 174-78.
[131] Gizite Idāresi, "Shingjāng Kāshgher gizite shö'be idāresining mukhbirliqi uchun tokhtātqān qarārnāme," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 29 Oct. 1936: 2. On the role of worker and peasant correspondents in Soviet journalism and society, see Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State,* 233–37.
[132] The carefully balanced roles for Ürümchi and Kashgar appointees, as well as the increased involvement of the state in local publishing and intellectual life, was underlined once more in March 1937 when Lang Daoheng and Qutluq Haji Shewqi were confirmed as co-chairs of Kashgar's Propaganda Department (Uy. Teshwiqāt bölümi, Ch. *Xuanchuan bu* 宣傳部). The department had sections devoted to translation, literature and publishing. "Kāshgherde 4nji ayning 12side bolādurghān nemāyishghe teyyārgerlik qilmāq uchun shenjāng yāmulidā 3nji ayning 9nji kuni sā'et 3de mejlis ichilib her bölümlerge tobendekiche bāshliq we e'ẓāler sāylāndi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 15 Mar. 1937: 2.

advantage of the chaos in the south and the paranoid climate in the USSR, and with Soviet blessing extended the Great Purge to Xinjiang's intellectuals. By the end of the year, southern Xinjiang was firmly under Ürümchi's control, and Qutluq Haji Shewqi had been arrested and executed.[133]

Chöchek's newspaper *Our Voice* also put up a fight. In early 1936, a branch of the *Xinjiang Gazette* was established in Chöchek, where it printed editions in Uyghur, Chinese, and Mongol and took orders directly from the head office in Ürümchi.[134] The Uyghur edition of the Chöchek *Gazette* was printed on the *Our Voice* press, at least in its early months, and for a time the two papers seem to have competed for readership.[135] Niyaz Is'haqi, prominent local educator and long-time editor of *Our Voice*, managed to stay in business for a while, but was ultimately forced to shutter his paper. One source has him subsequently working as an editor at the new *Chöchek Xinjiang Gazette*.[136] Before long, though, he too was caught up in the unfolding purge, and multiple sources report that he was arrested and killed in Sheng's prisons.[137] *Our Voice* gave way to Ürümchi's voice.

Aqsu News did not fare much better. While detailed contemporary accounts are lacking, individuals who had been involved with the paper later recalled that head editor Dānish

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[133] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 278–82.

[134] "Tacheng Han Weiwen bao chukan Mengwen bao rinei yi jiang faxing 塔城漢維文報出刊 蒙文報日内亦將發行," *Xinjiang ribao*, 4 March 1936: 3; Tacheng shi difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 塔城市地方志编纂委员会, eds., *Tacheng shi zhi* 塔城市志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1995), 602–04.

[135] The only 1936 issue of the *Tacheng Xinjiang Gazette* that has yet come to light lists its publisher as "'Bizning Tāwush' bāsmākhānesi." See *Chuwāchek Tārbāghātāy khewerliri*, 12 April 1936, held at Stanford University Library.

[136] Seypidin Ezizi, *Ömür dastani (eslime 1): zulum zindanlirida* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1990), 470. Ezizi reports that when he arrived in Chöchek in December 1937 to take up work at the *Chöchek Xinjiang Gazette*, Niyaz Isaqi [*sic*] was working at the paper as assistant head editor.

[137] Esqiri, "Azadliqtin ilgiri," 148; Tayier Taxibayefu 塔依尔•塔西巴也夫, "Tacheng diqu jiefang qian chuban shi jianjie 塔城地区解放前出版史简介," in *Yili wenshi ziliao hedingben (6-10 ji)*, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi, Yili Hasake zizhizhou weiyuanhui and Wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 276-82 (Yining: Jinsheng jingmao youxian ziren gongsi, 2009).

Dāmollām was arrested by Sheng's police, and his mimeograph confiscated.[138] Some local intellectuals managed to revive the paper for a short time, but in 1937 they threw in the towel, and their leader left Aqsu. A couple years later, the *Xinjiang Gazette* opened a branch in the city, reportedly employing some of *Aqsu News*' former writers, and housed—much like its Kashgar counterpart—in the local civil administration complex. With the *Aqsu News* supplanted by the Aqsu branch of the *Gazette*, the final vestiges of genuinely autonomous publishing in Xinjiang had been brought under the watchful eye of Sheng's rapidly Stalinizing administration.

Things were changing in Ürümchi as well. In October 1937, Sheng called a mass public meeting to announce the uncovering of a vast conspiracy to overthrow Xinjiang's government. Arrests warrants fell thick and fast, as officials and intellectuals across the province were ensnared in the widening net. With rival power centers in Kashgar and Khotan neutralized, Sheng moved to further consolidate his authority by removing many of the individuals who had helped establish his regime. The purge reached deep into the *Xinjiang Gazette* offices, in Ürümchi as well as in the branches around the province. As noted above, even Meshür Roziev, then vice chair of the provincial *Gazette* and one of Sheng's most influential Soviet advisors, was imprisoned and eventually repatriated to the USSR.[139] *New Life* chief Lang Daoheng was recalled from Kashgar to Ürümchi, placed in charge of a textbook editing and translation office, and unceremoniously jailed a month later—old school ties to Sheng notwithstanding. Lang lived to tell the tale, though, and would emerge several years later to once more hold high-ranking posts in the Xinjiang government.

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[138] Esqiri, "Azadliqtin ilgiri," 162–65; *Baoye zhi*, 56; Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi*: 101–02; "Fazhan wenhua sheng zhong de yi ji xin jun: *Akesu Xinjiang ribao* chukan 發展文化聲中的一技新軍 阿克蘇新疆日報出刊," 15 July 1939: 3. A decade later, during a period of liberalization in Xinjiang, Dānish Dāmollām reemerged triumphant as the newly elected leader of Aqsu Prefecture's Uyghur Enlightenment Union, in which capacity he quickly set about reforming Aqsu's school system, then largely administered by the Enlightenment Union. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Tomuri, "Mekteb ma'ārifi üstidiki köngülsizlik eḥwāllār emdi tüzelmekde," *Shingjāng giziti*, 10 July 1946: 3.

[139] Zhou, *Xinjiang shi nian*, 79–82; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 319–45.

Others were not so lucky. The bloody winter of 1937–38 claimed the lives of numerous Xinjiang officials and literati, including some of the province's most prominent Uyghur writers and intellectuals. Sheng, having acquired a taste for removing potential rivals at gunpoint, continued to purge intellectuals, officials, and wealthy individuals in fits and starts for the remainder of his time as governor. The disappearances were widespread in the nascent field of Uyghur-language publishing. Hamit Hakimi, who had worked as a translator and editor at Chöchek's *Our Voice* before taking up a job at the *Xinjiang Gazette* in Ürümchi, was one such casualty.[140] Amidst the fear and the indiscriminate denunciations, it counted for little that Hakimi, one of relatively few bilingual writers in 1930s Xinjiang, had played a key role as translator of Sheng's speeches and other works.[141]

Yet the *Xinjiang Gazette* continued to flourish. The USSR provided up-to-date printing technology as well as technical personnel, and a Soviet engineer designed a new and much larger building for the flagship paper in Ürümchi, with construction completed in 1939. Other equipment and personnel arrived from inner China. One perpetual issue was the inadequate supply of newsprint, with one writer observing in 1941 that paper production remained the most significant problem in Xinjiang's publishing industry. For a time the USSR provided newsprint for Xinjiang's papers, though in the mid-1940s—when Soviet aid was no longer forthcoming—visitors to the *Gazette* reported that the print shop was using a horse-powered paper mill.[142] Particularly after Sheng's purges began, the paper was sometimes short of staff; but this problem was partially alleviated when a number of Chinese Communist Party members arrived in Xinjiang from Yan'an at Sheng's invitation, with some of them filling vacant posts at the

[140] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 389–90.
[141] Among others, these included Sheng's political manifesto, *Hokumet āldidiki muhim wezifiler* (cited above).
[142] Bai 1941; Liu Xianzhi 刘先贽, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' 抗日战争时期的《新疆日报》," *Wulumuqi wenshi ziliao* 11 (1986): 1-18; Qadiri, Ölke tārikhi, 159.

Gazette's central and branch offices. While the emphasis given these CCP agents in PRC historiography has been disproportionate, they did play an undeniable role in the functioning and development of the *Gazette* between 1938 and 1942.[143]

Between January 1938 and January 1939, nine Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members arrived in Ürümchi to work at the *Xinjiang Gazette*.[144] The embattled CCP could be expected to demonstrate considerable compliance toward Sheng, for they needed him as much as he needed them. Xinjiang was one of the CCP's only supply routes to the USSR, and besides, the CCP had little to bargain with, especially after Stalin gave his blessing to Sheng's overtures in their direction. From a personnel perspective, the CCP members were a boon for the *Xinjiang Gazette*. The CCP's operatives at the *Gazette* were highly capable, and could draw on extensive networks of contacts. CCP member Sa Kongliao, for instance, managed to import printing hardware and operators from Hong Kong. During the CCP operatives' tenure at the *Xinjiang Gazette*, the newspaper held several training courses for technical personnel, and CCP employees at the *Gazette* also presided over the construction of the paper's new headquarters at Xidaqiao in Ürümchi.[145]

In return for this assistance, the CCP enjoyed some control over editorial policy. Beginning in 1938, the *Gazette* began publishing frequent and laudatory articles on the Red

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[143] Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui dangshi gongzuo weiyuanhui 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会党史工作委员会, eds., *Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi Zhongguo Gongchandang ren zai Xinjiang ribao she de huodong* 抗日战争时期中国共产党人在新疆日报社的活动 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1993).
[144] Shi ji 史辑, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' (shang）抗日战争时期的‘新疆日报’（上）," *Xinjiang xinwen jie* 3 (1985): 47. For a full list of CCP personnel working at the Xinjiang Daily in this period, see Zhongguo Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui dangshi gongzuo weiyuanhui 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会党史工作委员会 and Zhonggong Wulumuqi shi weiyuanhui dangshi gongzuo weiyuanhui 中共乌鲁木齐市委员会党史工作委员会, eds., *Balujun zhu Xinjiang banshichu* 八路军驻新疆办事处 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), 265.
[145] Shi ji, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' (shang)," 47; *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, 15-16.

Army, as well as speeches and pamphlets by CCP leaders.[146] In December 1938, the *Gazette* printed eight thousand copies of Mao's *On Protracted War* and *On the New Period*, and in 1940, the paper printed twenty thousand copies of his *On New Democracy*—a substantial print run for mid-century Xinjiang.[147] Aside from this, the basic content of the paper did not change substantially; it was the CCP's policy for its operatives in Xinjiang to act deferentially toward Sheng, and to regard his Six Great Policies as compatible with CCP principles and appropriate for Xinjiang's contemporary circumstances.[148]

The total circulation of the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette* newspapers expanded throughout this turbulent period. In the early 1940s, the provincial *Gazette*, previously a semi-weekly publication, began printing every other day, with a print run that stayed steady at around 5,000 per issue.[149] Meanwhile, the print runs of the *Gazette*'s branch newspapers continued to grow. Having displaced Chöchek's *Our Voice*, the state-supported *Chöchek Xinjiang Gazette* soon achieved a weekly print run substantially larger than *Our Voice* at its peak, and in 1939 began publishing daily editions.[150] The Aqsu branch of the *Xinjiang Gazette*, whose independent predecessor *Aqsu News* had in 1935 been circulated in fifteen handwritten copies a week, had by 1940 achieved a weekly mimeographed print run of about 1,500 copies.[151] As it displaced and absorbed local newspapers in cities like Kashgar and Aqsu, the *Gazette* opened new branches in

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[146] See, e.g., "Zhu Zhongguo gongchandang ershi danchen 祝中国共产党二十诞辰," *Xinjiang ribao* 1 July 1941, reprinted in *Balujun zhu Xinjiang banshichu*, 225-26.
[147] *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, 15-17.
[148] Shi ji, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' (shang)," 47.
[149] Total yearly distribution figures for the Ürümchi *Xinjiang Gazette* seem to have remained relatively constant from 1940 through 1943, with the circulation per issue falling somewhat after 1940 as the number of weekly issues increased. Compare the total 1940 figures given by Bai Shan with the figures for the subsequent three years cited in Yang Hong 杨红, *Minguo Xinjiang xinwen shiye yanjiu* 民国新疆新闻事业研究 (M.A. diss., Xinjiang daxue, Ürümchi, 2006), 18; Liu, "Kang Ri zhanzheng," 11–2; and Zan Yulin 咎玉林, "Cong shubao shiye de fazhan kan kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi Wulumuqi de minzu guanxi 从书报事业的发展看抗日战争时期乌鲁木齐的民族关系," *Wulumuqi wenshi ziliao* 10 (1985): 65-68.
[150] Zhou, *Xinjiang shi nian*, 51–52; "Tacheng ribao Weiwen ban gaichu rikan 塔城日報維文版改出日刊," *Xinjiang ribao*, 21 Jan. 1939: 3.
[151] The print run for most issues in this period was listed on the masthead.

areas that had never before had Turkic-language periodicals. In Altay, in the far north of Xinjiang, the *Gazette* opened a Kazakh-language branch in late 1935, likely China's first Kazakh newspaper.[152] In 1939, the southeastern oasis of Khotan became home to its own edition of the *Gazette*, the first Uyghur-language newspaper to be published in any quantity in this major population center.[153] The provincial *Gazette* enthused that its Khotan branch would "serve as a powerful propaganda weapon for the government's policies."[154] This authoritarian optimism was not misplaced; by early 1942 the *Khotan Xinjiang Gazette* was published weekly in a print run of over 5,000.[155]

Yet despite the impressive expansion of Xinjiang's Uyghur-language print culture during this period, the question of the papers' actual readership and influence inevitably arises. Following the Sheng administration's successful centralization of publishing in the province, Xinjiang's newspapers were by the late 1930s fully controlled and subsidized by the state. Given the administration's emphasis on controlling and expanding these newspapers, it is clear that the Ürümchi government (and likely also its Soviet patrons) saw them as a medium with potentially broad readership and influence. Even so, if newspaper publishing in Sheng's Xinjiang was driven by state policy and ideology rather than reader demand, the mass printing of papers cannot be assumed to imply the mass reading of papers. In the early Soviet Union, newspaper print runs were sometimes increased without a corresponding rise in reader demand, in order to satisfy political imperatives from the center and justify increased state subsidies. Coercion was utilized at times to increase Soviet papers' subscriber base, and unsold copies piled up in

[152] Esqiri, "Azadliqtin ilgiri," 154-55; *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi*, 865. The Altay branch also began publishing a Chinese edition the following year. "Ashan xiaoxi 阿山消息," *Xinjiang ribao*, 25 Sep. 1936: 2.
[153] Esqiri, "Azadliqtin ilgiri," 173–81; Wei and Ai, 86.
[154] "*Hetian Xinjiang ribao* chukan le 和闐新疆日報出刊了," *Xinjiang ribao*, 31 May 1939: 4.
[155] *Khoten Shingjāng giziti*, 12 Jan. 1942: masthead.

distribution offices.[156] The historiography of reading in Republican-era Xinjiang cannot draw on contemporary readership studies of the sort carried out by sociologists in the early USSR, or on fieldwork investigations like those of early Maoist China. Indirect evidence, however, will enable us to draw some conclusions about Uyghur newspapers' readership.

Lost puppies and stolen stamps

In May 1941, a five-month-old shepherd puppy with pointy ears got lost near the Prefectural Hospital in Ili. A few days later, the dog's owner placed a notice in the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*, offering a reward to anyone who could find the dog, which answered to the name "Zund."[157] Notices and advertisements of this sort appeared frequently in the local editions of the *Xinjiang Gazette* in the decade following Sheng's ruthless consolidation of publishing power in Ürümchi. While the main editorial line of local newspapers after the mid-1930s followed closely the direction set by the provincial government, the branch papers' local news, literary offerings, editorials and advertisements continued to distinguish them from the flagship publication in Ürümchi, and from each other. As mentioned above, local content in Kashgar's *New Life* changed only gradually after Sheng's handpicked editor Lang Daoheng assumed official leadership of the newspaper. Lang, like most of the loyal retainers Sheng placed in charge of the *Gazette*'s various branches, could not read Uyghur, a fact which would have limited the Ürümchi government's direct control over Uyghur-language branch papers' day-to-day operations.

Advertisements, while seemingly the most ephemeral of the newspapers' locally distinctive forms of content, provide some of the most useful indicators of the papers' geographic and social penetration. The effort and expense required to place an advertisement in

[156] Matthew Lenoe, "NEP Newspapers and the Origins of Soviet Information Rationing," *The Russian Review* 62.4 (1963): 614–36.
[157] Unsigned ad, *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 14 May 1941: 4.

any medium implies an assumption that enough potentially interested parties will encounter the ad to justify its placement. While government notices would likely have been printed without charge in Xinjiang's Republican-era papers, placing a notice or advertisement would have been relatively costly for most Xinjiang residents—and thus worthwhile only if the papers were actually distributed and read. A close look at advertisements and other privately placed notices, and a consideration of their intended audiences, can therefore help shed light on the readership of Xinjiang's early Uyghur newspapers.

Particularly frequent were notices for lost personal seals, the stamps without which no official business can be transacted in China. The notices usually specified that any documents stamped with the seals after their date of loss should be considered null and void, and sometimes requested assistance in finding the misplaced seals. Seal owners' professional affiliations and locations were often listed, providing some indication of the newspapers' social and geographical exposure. In the early 1940s, the Aqsu *Xinjiang Gazette* carried notices of lost seals from prefectural residents like Rashid the Baker, Helim the Hospital Employee, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Ghafur the Driver, and Wensu County merchant Muhammad Niyaz.[158] In a 1936 issue of Kashgar's *New Life*, Niyaz Haji Osman Haji, proprietor of an "education store" in the neighboring town of Yengisar, gave notice that his lost stamp was no longer valid.[159] The ubiquity of announcements for lost stamps might be ascribed in part to a desire to disclaim responsibility for documents stamped with a purloined seal. Yet a pro forma legal motivation cannot satisfactorily explain why some such ads ran in multiple consecutive issues of the same

[158] Muḥammad Niyāz, "I'lān," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 22 Mar. 1941: 4; Nāwāy Rāshid bin Āqshāl Qāsim Oghli, untitled advertisement, *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 5 Apr. 1941: 4; Dokhturkhāne khiẓmetchisi Ḥelim, "I'lān." *Shingjāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 14 Nov. 1942; "I'lānler," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 18 Jan. 1941: 4.
[159] Niyāz Hāji ʿOsmān Ḥāji Oghli, "I'lān," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 11 May 1936: 4.

newspaper, or why some advertisers, like Muhammad ʿAbd al-Ghafur the Driver, offered a reward to anyone who could return a lost stamp.[160]

Members of other communities also sometimes gave notice of misplaced items in the Uyghur newspapers. In spring 1946, a traveler named Zong Fuguang checked into a Kashgar hotel carrying a bundle of books and documents wrapped in a sheet. A certain Mr. Liu in Ürümchi had entrusted him to deliver these items to an official named Shang in the city of Yarkand, but during Zong's stay in the Kashgar hotel, the bundle disappeared. Advertising repeatedly in the *Kashgar Xinjiang Gazette*, Zong offered a hefty sum to anyone who could produce the missing items.[161] Less urgent notices included one in a 1941 issue of the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette* by an Uzbek gentleman named Burhan Ali, of Andijan neighborhood in Ghulja, who offered a reward to anyone who could find two stolen rugs. In the same issue of the Ili paper, a resident named Varaninkov promised to reward anyone who could provide information on his lost cow to the local Russian authorities.[162]

Livestock always seemed to be wandering off, judging by the frequent notices in Xinjiang's local newspapers, which often included physical descriptions of the misplaced horses and cows. In October 1937, the Ili Public Security Bureau's #2 Branch announced in the local *Gazette* that its office had spent several days caring for two lost horses, one black and one gray. Their owner was encouraged to come pick them up as soon as possible; if they remained unclaimed, they would be sold.[163] In June 1946, a government office in Ürümchi offered 5,000 dollars (a less princely sum than it sounds—inflation was rampant in Xinjiang) for anyone who

[160] "I'lānler." Another typical notice offering a reward for a lost stamp is "I'lānlār," *Chuwechek Shing Jāng giziti*, 12 Sep. 1943: 2.
[161] Zong Fuguang, "Muhim I'lān," *Kunduluk Qeshqer Shingjāng giziti*, 12 Mar. 1946: 2. Reprinted 18 Mar. 1946: 2.
[162] "I'lānlār," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 9 May 1941: 4.
[163] "Māl yoqātghānlār diqqetige," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 7 Oct. 1937: 1.

could find the office's gelded, russet horse, which had gone astray the previous night.[164] And it was not only horses and cows that went missing. In a poignant 1936 notice in Kashgar's *New Life*, ʿAbd al-Ghafur Akhund wrote that his thirteen-year-old son had disappeared on his way home from school earlier that month. ʿAbd al-Ghafur asked that "anyone in town or countryside who has heard anything" please report it to the Kashgar Education Office.[165]

More prosaic were the frequent advertisements for various products: tea or textbooks in Kashgar, beer or shoes in Ili.[166] Some advertisers hoped to sell houses, while others sought to attract customers to restaurants. When a Russian resident of Ili advertised a newly opened cafeteria (referred to by the Russian *stolovaya*), he took pains to note that the chef was a Muslim.[167] In 1946, the provincial *Gazette* carried a notice from Ürümchi's new Bugeda Restaurant, encouraging local diners to try its "European-style" cuisine, prepared by Chef Isma'il, including hot dishes as well as cookies, coffee, and cocoa.[168] Ads for training courses of various types—truck driving lessons in Aqsu, a military translation course in Ürümchi—were often repeated in multiple issues.[169] Employers sometimes posted notices as well; the state trading monopoly, reorganized in 1946, advertised in multiple issues of the provincial *Gazette* for

[164] Shyekhuychu, "I'lān," *Shingjang giziti*, 21 June 1946: 4.
[165] ʿAbd al-Ghafur Ākhund, "I'lān," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 21 May 1936: 4.
[166] A local teahouse offered two kinds of tea to Kashgar residents in "I'lān yākhshi chāy iching," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 11 Feb. 1935: 2. Alphabet primers and other items were advertised in Meṭbe'e Mudiri Wurutnikuf [Vorotnikov], "I'lān," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 19 Dec. 1935: 4. An ad for the "New Asia" Beer Company appeared in *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 26 Sep. 1941: 4. Shoes as well as other goods were advertised in Denyujang Ching, "Bildurushler," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 25 Nov. 1942: 4.
[167] A typical house ad was ʿAbdallāh, "Ilānlār," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 18 June 1941: 4, and was reprinted the following two days. The "stolovaya" ad is Pāltoski, "Bildurush," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 22 June 1941: 4; also Pāltoski, "Bildurush," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 24 June 1941: 4.
[168] "I'lān," *Shingjāng giziti*, 8 July 1946: 4. "Restaurant" still being an unfamiliar word for some readers, the ad glossed it with the Persianate *āshkhāne*. The advertisement was repeated over the next several issues.
[169] The truck driving training course ads include "I'lān," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 29 Mar. 1941: 4; "I'lān," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 5 April 1941: 4. The military translation course, to be held in Ürümchi, was advertised in the Ili newspaper: "Bildurush," *Kunduluk Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 18 Jun. 1941: 4, with the notice reprinted the next few issues.

craftsmen of all types, "without regard to ethnicity or gender."[170] Around the same time, the Ürümchi city government invited interested bricklayers and carpenters to register for construction work with a state-managed workers' association.[171] In a September 1941 issue of the *Ili Xinjang Gazette*, two separate ads encouraged silk worm farmers to bring their cocoons in for sale.[172] Demand for the placement of advertising and other paid notices in the provincial *Gazette* was such that in summer 1946, the newspaper authorized two storeowners in other parts of Ürümchi to handle such requests for the Uyghur, Kazakh, and Russian editions of the paper, for the convenience of those residing farther from the newspaper offices.[173]

The ads and notices reviewed above, and the numerous others in Xinjiang's Republican-era newspapers, give a sense of the demographics and locations the newspapers were expected to reach. Ads and notices in the Ili, Aqsu, and Kashgar papers were regularly placed by individuals from multiple counties in each of these prefectures, consistent with other evidence suggesting a widely distributed subscriber base for these periodicals. The advertisements also give some suggestion of the social and professional groups exposed to the newspapers: farmers in Ili, merchants in Aqsu, teachers in Kashgar. The numerous and varied advertisements and notices in Xinjiang's Republican-era newspapers suggest that the papers were expected to be widely distributed and read. Yet even after years of Soviet aid, accompanied by Sheng's consecutive three-year plans of modernization and industrialization, Xinjiang's transport and communications infrastructure remained underdeveloped into the 1940s, and literacy among adults was far from universal. In a culture that had for centuries revolved around oral and

[170] "Shin Jāng sing chi niye gungsi ṭerefidin her türlük mutekhessis qābiliyetlik kishilerni imtiḥān qilib khizmetke élish toghruluq chiqirilghān élān," *Shingjāng giziti*, 22 July 1946: 4. Repeated in subsequent issues.
[171] "Ürümchi sheher ḥokumet idārisigha tābi' ishchiler hey'itining ishke chāqirish i'lāni," *Shingjāng giziti* 27 July 1946: 4.
[172] Ili Tusān Gunsi Kāturi, "Bildurush"; Ismā'il Eliwānof, "Yifek quruti bāqqā dihqānlirimiz diqqetige," *Ili Shingjāng giziti*, 26 Sep. 1941: 4.
[173] Neshriyāt bölümi, "Muhim ukhturush," *Shinjang giziti*, 12 June 1946: 4.

manuscript literature, the habit of newspaper subscription had only just begun to form. How did the region's Uyghur newspapers successfully navigate this challenging landscape, and lay the groundwork for Uyghur mass culture in Xinjiang?

Subscribers, readers, and listeners

When the *Xinjiang Gazette* began its province-wide expansion in the 1930s, roads and postal service remained rudimentary in many parts of Xinjiang, and acquiring a newspaper might mean a two-hour cart ride to the nearest large town. Newspapers were expensive, and in most locales only a small minority of individuals took out subscriptions, with many newspaper copies going to schools and various other institutional subscribers. In many smaller towns and villages, literacy rates in modern Uyghur remained low, especially among adults. Despite these inauspicious circumstances, subscription rates for Uyghur-language newspapers grew rapidly, and their influence in Uyghur society likely exceeded what even their peak circulation numbers would suggest.

Traditional reading practices in Uyghur communities, which often involved a significant oral and communal element,[174] may have provided a model for the way in which some citizens encountered the newspapers. State officials encouraged imams to read the papers to their congregations, and school administrators encouraged teachers to use them in their classrooms.[175] Newly literate children, having used newspapers as curricular material at school, sometimes read

[174] For a detailed study of reading practices in Xinjiang before the era of mass print, see Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (2014), 114–22, and passim.

[175] One high-ranking Kashgar official proposed in 1936 that in order to increase exposure to newspaper content among school pupils and mosque-goers, teachers and imams lacking funds for newspaper subscriptions could receive financial assistance from *waqf* endowments. Mishu Chu Jāng Niẓām al-Dīn, "Gizitler kop tārālse idi," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 10 Feb. 1936: 1–2. A school principal in Yengisar announced the same year that he had signed up all of his school's teachers for newspaper subscriptions. Yengiḥiṣār mekteb mudiri Ẕākirjān Ibrāhim Zāde Ṭurfāni, "Giziteler heqinde bir otinish," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 13 Feb. 1936: 3.

them aloud to their parents.[176] Store owners kept newspapers in their shops for customers to peruse, and in the bazaars, neighborhoods, and villages, literate people would read or summarize the paper to those unable to read.[177] The ranks of the literate grew rapidly, especially among the younger generation, as Sheng's Soviet-style education policies led to the exponential growth of Xinjiang's school system, as well as literacy classes for children and adults in towns and villages across the province.[178] In the 1940s, after Sheng's departure and the beginning of Guomindang rule in Xinjiang, the state continued to view widespread newspaper consumption as key to increasing literacy as well as the reach of official propaganda.[179]

Among a population with limited prior exposure to periodical literature, popularizing the purchase and reading of newspapers would require a certain amount of exhortation. In some cases, this took the form of simple salesmanship. In late 1935, for example, a salesman was dispatched far and wide to peddle subscriptions to the fledgling *Xinjiang Uyghur Gazette* (precursor of the provincial *Xinjiang Gazette*), and a year later the *Gazette* reported fielding subscription requests from all across the province. Even then, the newspaper continued busily sending out sample copies to attract subscribers. A 1936 issue of the paper concluded with an ad inquiring, "Brother, have you become a subscriber to *Xinjiang Uyghur Gazette*?"[180]

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[176] 'Abd Allāh Dāmollā Muhemmed Hāji and Manṣur Effendi, *Jahān'girlik wa Shing Jāng de millet mes'lesi*, 30-31.
[177] Mishu Chu Jāng Niẓām al-Dīn, "Gizitler köp tārālse idi"; Ẕākirjān Ibrāhim Zāde Ṭurfāni, "Giziteler heqinde bir otinish"; ʿAbdullā Dāmollā Muḥammad Ḥāji, *Jahān'girlik*, 30–48; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 56–7; Rozi, "Qisqiche eslime," 353; July 2014 interview with Mirsultan Osmanov, who grew up in Ghulja in the 1930s and 1940s.
[178] Xinjiang's contemporary newspapers abound with announcements and descriptions of literacy classes in nearly every corner of the province, as well as pieces extolling the benefits of reading. Ruzi Momini of Abad (Awat) County in Aqsu reported in 1940 that a woman came to him in a dream and inspired him to attend a literacy class, after which he could "read and understand any kind of newspaper or journal." Rūzī Mömini, "Oqub sāwādliq boldum," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 7 Sep. 1940: 4.
[179] A June 1946 meeting of Xinjiang's provincial and county educational departments resolved—among other plans—that state anti-illiteracy clases would henceforth use Three People's Principles propaganda and New Life Movement manuals as their designated reading matter; that the public should be encouraged to become literate and read newspapers; and that the use of wall newspapers should be increased. Mukhbir, "Ma'ārif naẓāretining yéngi ḥerikiti," *Shingjang giziti*, 13 June 1946: 3.
[180] "Weiwen Xinjiang ribao chuban qishi 維文新疆日報出版啟事," *Xinjiang ribao*, 25 Dec. 1935: 1; "Bildurush," *Shing Jāng Uyghur giziti*, #24 (50) May 1936: 4; *Shing Jāng Uyghur giziti*, 7 Dec. 1936: 4.

Some individual subscribers to Xinjiang's newspapers were signed up during intensive subscription campaigns, often orchestrated by various branches of the Uyghur Enlightenment Association. In 1940, on a single autumn day in Aqsu's Awat County, the local Enlightenment Association successfully urged over a hundred people to subscribe to the provincial *Xinjiang Gazette*, the Aqsu *Gazette*, and other *Gazette* branches elsewhere in the province. In the first half of 1944, the Enlightenment Association of Kashgar's Merkit County gathered a dozen new subscribers for the provincial *Xinjiang Gazette* as well as twenty-one new subscribers for the newspaper's Kashgar edition. By March 1946, the *Kashgar Xinjiang Gazette* reported that the Enlightenment Association of Kashgar Prefecture had garnered for the newspaper more than a thousand subscribers, and a few months later another article noted that the Kashgar *Gazette* had recently added a total of two thousand new subscribers.[181] In Aqsu's Kuchar County, the local Enlightenment Association reported in June 1946 that it had been regularly distributing 150 copies of the *Xinjiang Gazette* and 50 of the *Aqsu Gazette* to local subscribers, and that it would now seek to triple the local subscriber base of the provincial *Gazette*.[182] The degree of coercion in these subscription drives likely varied, but given the omnipresent literacy campaigns and new schools, both of which promoted the new Uyghur literary language, the newspapers thus distributed likely found an audience.

This is particularly so given the substantial cost of newspaper subscriptions at a time when Xinjiang's Uyghur population was struggling economically and inflation was rampant. Scholars note the difficulty of determining distribution and readership of the Soviet press in its earliest years, given that newspapers were largely free of charge, with print runs primarily

[181] Sābit Kenjiyof, "Teshwiq netijesi," *Shing Jāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 16 Nov. 1940: 4; Semet Semeri, "6 āyliq teshwiq yeküni," *Qeshqer Shingjang giziti*, 24 July 1944: 3; "Gezitemizning kunduluk bolup chiqishi ḥeqqide soz," *Kunduluk Qeshqer Shingjang giziti*, 10 Mar. 1946: 1; R. Bahāri, "Tenqidge jawāb," *Shingjāng giziti*, 21 June 1946: 4.

[182] Ṣidiq Tömüri, "Kuchār kheberliri," *Shingjang giziti*, 14 Jun 1946: 3.

determined by their publishers' bureaucratic strength and ideological aims.[183] Xinjiang's newspapers, on the other hand, charged for subscriptions from their earliest days, and actively sought individual subscribers. Furthermore, contemporary sources make it clear that these subscribers were not mere notches in the newspapers' bureaucratic belts; they were crucial for the papers' survival in a nascent publishing industry that remained at least partially demand-based. Repeated requests for the payment of overdue subscription fees can be found in the pages of nearly all of Xinjiang's Republican-era newspapers, with particularly plangent appeals in Kashgar's *New Life*. In April 1935, the editors of this perpetually cash-strapped newspaper implored 400 delinquent subscribers to send in their overdue fees, "given that our newspaper readers are not feeble impoverished folks." After further reminders, the *New Life* office was by mid-1936 reduced to dispatching its employees to personally collect late subscription fees. By early 1937, the newspaper began threatening that subscribers' overdue fees would be collected by their local magistrates.[184]

In addition to the many subscriptions purchased by individuals, "collective subscriptions" to Xinjiang's papers were often sold to schools, government offices, and other organizations, a practice also widespread among Soviet newspapers.[185] The *Khotan Xinjiang Gazette* sold many of its copies to state institutions and quasi-state organizations throughout the Khotan region: county governments, Uyghur Enlightenment Associations, farmers' unions.[186] In many parts of the province, the local and provincial newspapers could be found in reading rooms, some of them fairly well trafficked. One reading room in Kashgar City attracted twenty-five or thirty

[183] Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 224–5.
[184] Yengi ḥayāt idāresi, "Bildurush," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 12 Apr. 1935: 2; Yengi ḥayāt idāresi, "ʿOmūm gézite oqughuchilirimizghe i'lān," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 13 Jan. 1936: 2; Idāre, "*Yengi Ḥayāt*ghe mushtiri olghān muḥterem burāderlirimizghe…" *Yengi ḥayāt*, 18 May 1936: 4; Kāshgher gizite Yengi Ḥayāt, "ʿOmūm gizite oqughuchilirige muhim bildurush!" *Yengi ḥayāt*, 25 Jan. 1937: 4.
[185] On subscription drives and collection subscriptions for Soviet newspapers, see Lenoe, "NEP Newspapers," 622–25.
[186] Neshriyāt Bölümi, Untitled, *Khoten Shingjāng giziti*, 12 Jan. 1942: 4.

visitors a day after it opened in 1934, a respectable showing which nonetheless seems to have disappointed the room's managers. They attributed the failure to achieve higher attendance to "our people having grown up under the oppression of the [pre-Sheng] dictatorial regime," and the following year felt obliged to reassure potential visitors that their names would not be turned over to any outside party.[187] A decade later, a reading room in Kashgar's Merkit County reported 789 visitors in the first half of 1944, at a time when the Kashgar *Gazette* also enjoyed some success in signing up new subscribers in the same county. Still, not all visitors to Xinjiang's reading rooms perused the newspapers and other print products held there. In Aqsu's Wensu County, the Uyghur Enlightenment Association's reading room noted in 1942 that many young visitors seemed to be drawn primarily by the room's billiards table.[188]

While the precise extent of their readership may remain unclear, it is likely that Uyghur newspapers influenced communal self-perception in Republican Xinjiang more lastingly than they influenced public opinion with the ideological campaigns—anti-imperialism, the Six Great policies—that were their more explicit fare. Before the 1930s, communal identities spanning the Tarim Basin tended to be shaped by shared cosmologies, geographies, genealogies, and historical experiences—not by ethno-linguistic concepts of the nation. Not did these older concepts of community always link the Ili Valley and Dzungaria to the Tarim Basin; the sense of difference between north and south was indeed preserved in the separate "Taranchi" designation applied by the Sheng administration to the settled Turkic Muslims of Ili. Yet the Taranchis, too, read the Uyghur *Xinjiang Gazette*; there was no Taranchi newspaper in Xinjiang. In the 1930s and 1940s, the province-wide circulation of newspapers written in a common vernacular, and identified

[187] Qirā'et khānede mu'āwin Tursun, "Qirā'et khāne idāresidin me'lumāt," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 4 Jul. 1935: 2. A few months later, the reading room administrators found it necessary to once again reassure potential visitors of their benign intentions: T. R., "Qirā'etkhānedin (I'lān)," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 21 Nov. 1935: 3.
[188] Semet Semeri, "6 ayliq teshwiq yekuni"; "Qirā'et khāne yolghā qoyuldi," *Shingjāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 23 May 1942: 4.

specifically as Uyghur on the masthead, would have helped familiarize Turkic-speaking Muslims in both southern and northern Xinjiang with the idea of a Uyghur community linked by a common language. This common parlance did not only unite; it also separated: the accustomed designation "Turki," long used interchangeably for Turkic idioms in the province and beyond, was not recognized by Sheng's state as a linguistic or an ethnic designation. (PRC historiography would later anathematize the very concept of a shared Turkic heritage.)

Uyghur publishers and journalists understood this larger community as their potential readership, and worked to stimulate the province-wide circulation of periodicals. As early as 1935, *New Life* in Kashgar was encouraging its readers to subscribe to Ürümchi's *New Xinjiang* (an earlier incarnation of the *Xinjiang Gazette*) and Chöchek's *Our Voice*.[189] The October 1940 subscription drive carried out by the Enlightenment Association of Awat County in Aqsu garnered as many subscribers for the Kashgar paper as for the Aqsu branch, as well as a couple subscribers for the Ili newspaper and a much larger number for the provincial *Gazette*.[190] In 1942, perhaps an eighth of the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*'s Uyghur-language copies (and more than two-thirds of its Kazakh-language copies) were sent to subscribers and distributors beyond the city of Ghulja, where it was printed.[191] These far-flung subscriber bases proved vexing for many a newspaper accountant, perpetually obliged to remind far-flung subscribers of overdue fees.[192] Still, their efforts were not in vain, as the ever-widening circulation of newspapers began to draw the province's far-flung oases into a shared community of print. In April 1936, *New Life* printed a poem from an admirer in Ghulja, 800 miles to the north: "The press founded in Kashgar /

[189] Kashghār Yengi ḥayāt idāresi, "ʿOmūmi weṭendāshlirimiz diqqetlirighe," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 20 May 1935: 1. *New Life* continued in later issues to encourage readers to subscribe to *New Xinjiang*, providing detailed info on fees and vouching for the paper's high quality. "Bildurush," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 10 Jan. 1936: 4.
[190] S̲ābit Kenjiyof, "Teshwiq netijesi."
[191] *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi*, 865.
[192] "Idāremizde mejlis," *Shingjāng giziti: Āqsu neshri*, 23 May 1942: 4.

Scatters light to the people's hearts." The following year the paper printed a panegyric from a well-wisher in Altay, the most distant city in the province: "*New Life* is our broad spiritual orchard / Let it flower and live with honor."[193]

Publishing and purges, 1942-44

In 1942, after eight years running Xinjiang as a Soviet satellite, Sheng Shicai thought he saw his chance to break free of Stalin's embrace. As the Soviet Union reeled from the German invasion, Sheng expelled Soviet advisors and agents from the province, with Red Army units finally departing in 1943.[194] At the same time, Sheng imprisoned and in some cases executed perceived Soviet sympathizers among Xinjiang's native population, as well as CCP members working in the province. Amidst his enthusiastic purging, Sheng invited the Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party) to set up shop in the province in mid-1942, thus reasserting the Republic of China's control over Xinjiang while helping to fill the bureaucratic void left by the departing Soviets and the innumerable detained locals. Eager to reclaim the vast territory, Chiang Kai-shek wasted no time in dispatching large numbers of cadres and troops to Xinjiang, and Guomindang offices were soon set up in Ürümchi and throughout the province. Over the next few years, as we shall see, Guomindang officials involved themselves in everything from local theater to newspaper publishing.[195]

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[193] Ghulje ʿĀjiz, "Kāshgher meṭbe'esighe Ghuljedin," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 1 April 1935: 2; Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Akhlāqi, "Āltāy āltun tāghliridin sālām," *Yengi ḥayāt*, 27 Feb. 1936: 1–2.

[194] For a summary of Xinjiang politics in this period, see Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 210–30.

[195] Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥāmid, "Ārtistlerge mukāfāt birildi," *Khoten Shingjāng giziti*, 2 Oct. 1945: 3; A. Reḥimof, "Qārghiliqtā mukhbirler gruppāsi uyushturuldi," *Khoten Shingjāng giziti*, 8 Jan. 1945: 3. In summer 1946, residents of Shahyār no doubt flocked to the county Nationalist Party headquarters to take in the latest Guomindang theatrical stylings, as an official competition pitted the county's four district Guomindang offices against each other. Q. Khudāberdi, "Shahyārdā firqe ishliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 3 June 1946: 3. Meanwhile, the new director of Turpan's Guomindang bureau, a Mr. Song, made it one of his first orders of business to meet with Siyit Niyaz, head of the local Uyghur Enlightenment Association, in order to foster cooperation in cultural matters, and specifically to encourage local writers to compose plays in order to "satisfy the public's appetite for entertainment." Mukhbir,

Meanwhile, the purge continued apace. The bloodletting was especially ferocious within the government and its publishing organs, as we can see from an examination of the *Xinjiang Gazette* in the final years of Sheng's rule. In 1942 alone, Merup Se'idi, Ayub Manṣuri, and Khelil Sattari, *Xinjiang Gazette* editors who had begun their careers at *Ili River*, were executed in Sheng's prisons.[196] That year, as Sheng turned from Moscow to Nanjing, Soviet Communist Party member Wang Baoqian resigned his posts as chief of Xinjiang's Foreign Affairs Office and editor at the *Xinjiang Gazette* and decamped for Moscow. Chinese Communist Party members in Xinjiang, now under threat as the USSR—erstwhile guarantor of their security—pulled its armies out of the province, began casting around frantically for a way out. Between June and August, all CCP members left the *Xinjiang Gazette*; the luckier ones for Yan'an, the less lucky for Sheng's prisons.[197] Sheng's purge went well beyond party members and fellow travelers, ultimately targeting anyone who seemed to hold the very sort of modernizing ideas Sheng had been promoting for nearly a decade. The purge of the *Xinjiang Gazette*'s editorial board caught up actual Soviet sympathizers like *Xinjiang Gazette* Assistant Editor Uyghur Sayrani and literature page editor Lutpulla Mutellip, as well as right-wing nationalist intellectuals like Abduréhim Ötkür (1923-1995).[198]

The *Xinjiang Gazette* was understaffed once more, and by now Sheng's talent pool was running dry; repeated purges from the left and the right had left Xinjiang intellectuals of all ethnicities wary of being honored by an "invitation to work in Ürümchi." Sheng's old school friend, Lang Daoheng, had more reason than most to be suspicious; his old school ties with the

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"Ṣohbetdiki yéngi qarār," *Shingjāng giziti*, 3 June 1946: 3.

[196] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 369–413 includes biographies of these and other writers who fell victim to the terror.

[197] Shi ji, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' (shang)," 47; Shi ji 史辑, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de Xinjiang ribao (zhong) 抗日战争时期的《新疆日报》（中）," *Xinjiang xinwen jie* 4 (1985): 48; *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, 18-19.

[198] Muhemmed Rozi, "Qisqiche eslime," 369.

Governor had meant little when Sheng locked him up during his first purge in 1937-38. Now, though, with the provincial *Gazette* lacking a competent chief editor, Lang—who had acquired some experience in newspapers as editor at the Kashgar *Gazette*—was released to fill the role.[199] The Guomindang, eager to insert its personnel into Xinjiang before the mercurial Sheng switched allegiances yet again, took the opportunity to supply some of its own personnel for the *Gazette*.[200] Guomindang loyalists were placed in charge of the *Xinjiang Gazette*'s head office, and remaining Uyghur journalists and editors with perceived Soviet leanings were replaced by others considered more congenial to Guomindang ideology and policy.[201] The pro-Soviet propaganda in Xinjiang's Uyghur-language periodicals was soon replaced by equally strident Guomindang propaganda, and articles on Gorky gave way to quotations from Confucius.[202]

Sheng then pushed the *Gazette*'s remaining Uyghur employees into a lethal game of musical chairs between the paper's various branches. Ehmed Ziya'i, who had been a top editor at the *Kashgar Xinjiang Gazette*, remembered feeling a sense of dread at the letter of "promotion" he received in spring 1943, inviting him to work at the increasingly empty offices of the *Xinjiang Gazette* in Ürümchi. Soon after he arrived, he was asked to take up the post recently vacated by literature page editor Lutpulla Mutellip, whose increasing popularity in Ürümchi had caused the *Gazette* to transfer him to a less influential post at the paper's Aqsu branch. After little more than

[199] Lang, "Shi da boshi," 94.
[200] Shi ji 史辑, "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' (xia) 抗日战争时期的《新疆日报》(下)," *Xinjiang xinwen jie* 1 (1986): 47.
[201] For a sense of *Xinjiang Gazette* office politics under Guomindang rule, see Zhang Zige 张紫葛, *Zai lishi de jiafeng zhong—yi Zhang Zhizhong xiansheng* 在历史的夹缝中一忆张治中先生 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1986); Li Fanqun 李帆群, "Guomindang tongzhi shiqi de 'Xinjiang ribao' 国民党统治时期的《新疆日报》," *Xinjiang wenshi ziliao xuanji* 2 (1979): 74-91.
[202] "Māksim Gorki," published in *Kunduluk Ili Shingjāng Giziti*, 17 June 1941: 3, was a typical cultural offering from Sheng's socialist period. During the Guomindang ascendancy that followed, Confucius was ubiquitous in provincial newspapers; e.g., the quotation gracing the masthead of *Chuwechek Shingjāng giziti*, 12 Sep. 1943.

half a year on the job, Ehmed Ziya'i's fears were realized, and he was tossed into one of Ürümchi's numerous prisons as Sheng embarked upon his final purge.[203]

Xinjiang's overcrowded prisons groaned as Sheng attempted yet another about-face, this time locking up his newly hired Guomindang employees in a bid to regain Stalin's trust. By this time, Ürümchi, with a population of less than 70,000, had six prisons full of political prisoners; after Sheng's purges began, prisons had likewise been constructed in each of Xinjiang's major cities. Individuals were unable to inquire into the whereabouts of imprisoned family members, and prisoners' families were considered "traitors' families," with others afraid to interact with them.[204] The *Xinjiang Gazette*'s editorial staff was caught up in this ever-widening net; Lang Daoheng's school ties with Sheng counted for little when the time came to drag him to jail along with the various Guomindang members employed at the *Gazette*. In late summer 1944, Sheng successfully removed Guomindang personnel from the newspaper's staff as well as various other government organs; but this proved a pyrrhic victory. Over the preceding two years the Guomindang had established a robust military presence in Xinjiang, and not long after Sheng commenced his final purge, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the governor's transfer away from the province.[205] Sheng Shicai would live out the remainder of his days first as the Nationalists' Minister of Forestry and Agriculture in Chongqing, and then in exile in Taiwan.

In October 1944, Wu Zhongxin, trusted acolyte of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang's selection to replace Sheng Shicai as Xinjiang's governor, appointed his own loyal retainer, Zhou Kuntian, editor of the *Xinjiang Gazette*. Wu then sent the Guomindang employees of the *Gazette*, recently imprisoned by Sheng, back to their offices at the newspaper. The *Xinjiang Gazette*,

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[203] Ehmed Ziya'i (transcribed by Dildar), "Ehmed Ziya'ining öz hayati toghrisidiki eslimisi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 145-55, and passim.
[204] Zhou, *Xinjiang shi nian*, 99; Qadiri, *Ölke Tarikhi*, 116-17.
[205] "Kangri zhanzheng shiqi de Xinjiang ribao, xia," 47; Jacobs, "Empire Besieged," 375-84.

meanwhile, managed to persevere through the ceaseless staff changes, and to tack with the political winds. Though the content changed periodically, Xinjiang's print media was still speaking in a single voice; but dissent was in the air.



Figure 3: Sheng Shicai, dapper as always. Life*, 13 Dec. 1943: 100.*

2. WAR, PEACE, AND POETRY: ILI TRIUMPHANT

> "We Taranchis don't know anything. If you ask why, it's because they took our forebears from the Six Cities, settled them in Ghulja, and never let them go anywhere else. So we know nothing beyond this Ghulja of ours. In this world there is the Chinese king. There are the Six Cities. Aside from these, we Taranchis haven't heard of anything else!"
>
> —The Taranchi Sultan, quoted in Qasim Beg, *Chronicle of Events in Ghulja*, c. 1870s[1]

> "Ghulja shall not lose its political and economic significance and its central cultural role… We all know that young people studying at the province's institutions of 'higher' education in Ürümchi… would rather come study at a high school in Ghulja."
>
> —Ahmadjan Qasimi, 1949[2]

This chapter explores in detail the key historical episode of the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR), a Soviet-backed breakaway state that governed northern Xinjiang for the second half of the 1940s. While the ETR is the subject of considerable attention in the historical literature on Xinjiang and Sino-Soviet relations, the nature of the republic remains little understood, as does its cultural and social significance for the Uyghur nation. This chapter will constitute the first extended study of the ETR to draw extensively on primary sources in Uyghur, Chinese, and Russian, the three key source bases for understanding this republic established by Soviet-backed Muslims in northwest China. In addition to exploring the long-term social, cultural, and political

[1] IVR RAN B 4018, "Ghuljāning wāqi'ātlarining bayāni." I am grateful to Eric Schluessel for sharing his transcription of this manuscript with me. The translation is my own.
[2] Aḥmad Jān Qāsimi, "Rehbirimiz Aḥmad Effendim janāblirining sozligen nuṭiqi," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 19.

implications of the ETR for Xinjiang's Uyghur community, the account below will shed light on numerous unanswered questions regarding this short-lived but historically significant state. It will also add substantially to our understanding of the USSR's postwar involvement in socialist and nationalist movements across Eurasia, and will demonstrate that Republican China set a precedent in employing decolonizing rhetoric as a governing strategy in former Qing borderlands—a strategy that the People's Republic later followed with greater success.

The chapter will explore two major social and cultural trends that took place against this political backdrop. The first is the formation of an informal yet cohesive cohort of writers, intellectuals, and officials grouped around Ghulja, leading city of the ETR and longtime cultural center of the Ili region. This cohort had begun to form in the 1920s and 1930s, but the ETR proved a catalyzing experience for the Ili network, which was joined by a significant number of adoptive members from elsewhere in Xinjiang. The Ili network would go on to dominate Uyghur culture during the Mao era, and indeed to set the tone for Uyghur culture indefinitely. The chapter also examines the accelerating struggle to define Uyghur culture and identity in this early phase of nation formation. The Ili network, which worked closely with the ETR state in shaping a socialist Uyghur literary canon, was only the most successful of these. At the same time, the Chinese Nationalist Party worked to offer Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims a plausible variant of cultural and communal identity within a Chinese matrix, while their anti-communist allies in the Uyghur and Kazakh communities propounded a pan-Turkist identity for the region's Muslims. The chapter's final section retraces these complex ideological struggles through a detailed case study of the posthumous reputation of Lutpulla Mutellip, an Ili poet who was killed in 1945 during the rebellion. Lutpulla Mutellip will remain a key motif for the remainder of the

dissertation, and this case study of his reputation offers significant insights on canon formation in general.

GUOMINDANG XINJIANG AND THE EASTERN TURKESTAN REPUBLIC

In June 1944, a group of Kazakhs from the Xinjiang border town of Chöchek crossed into Soviet territory, where they were met by a Uyghur man who introduced himself as Abdulla Ramazanov.[3] In the border village of Baqti, Ramazanov helped the group set up a paramilitary headquarters under the guise of a trading post, and in subsequent months continued to proffer material and bureaucratic assistance. The Kazakh partisans, led by Qasimakhun Ismailov, used their Soviet redoubt to organize underground resistance groups in northern Xinjiang. Later that year, when several prominent Uyghur members of the Chöchek resistance crossed into the USSR, Ramazanov helped them organize another headquarters along Xinjiang's border in Qara Bash.[4] The resourceful Ramazanov appears nowhere in the historical record before this episode, nor is there any mention of him after the mid-1940s, for the simple reason that there was no Abdulla Ramazanov. The man who introduced himself by that name to the Chöchek partisans was in fact none other than Soviet agent extraordinaire Meshür Roziev, alias Mansur Effendi, alias Weten Oghli, who in the 1930s had fulfilled key roles in the Xinjiang government on his previous assignment from the Soviet secret service. Now, in 1944, Roziev had once more been assigned an alias and a mission in Xinjiang; this time, however, Roziev did not come as an ally of the Ürümchi government. For the Guomindang administration in Xinjiang, which two years before

[3] *Shinjang üch wilayet inqilabigha da'ir chong ishlar khatirisi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1995), pp. 15-16; Meshür Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida: küresh tarikhidin yadname* (Almaty: self-published, 2007), 346.
[4] Ablimit Hajiyow, "Üch wilayet inqilabining aldi-keynidiki Tarbaghatay," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 26 (1989): 7-22.

had helped Sheng Shicai push Soviet troops and advisers from the province before ultimately pushing out Sheng himself, the return of Roziev did not bode well.

In winter 1944, northern Xinjiang exploded in rebellion.[5] Erratic and heavy-handed policies from Ürümchi and Beijing had led to widespread disaffection among the province's Turkic Muslims, both Uyghurs and Kazakhs, a state of affairs that had not escaped the notice of Soviet authorities. Still smarting from Sheng's desertion, the Soviets were eager to obtain renewed access to northern Xinjiang's mineral riches, and in the festering discontent they saw an opening.[6] Fueled by Soviet arms, advisors, and propaganda pamphlets, the uprising began in the town of Nilqa in October 1944, and the next month claimed the city of Ghulja, economic and cultural hub of the Ili region. In November, a new government was proclaimed: the Eastern Turkestan Republic, a name that echoed the breakaway state that briefly ruled Kashgar in 1933-34. With a groundswell of support from northern Xinjiang's Uyghur and Kazakh communities and continued military assistance from the USSR, the young state expanded rapidly, and by summer 1945 seemed poised to drive Chinese troops from Xinjiang's capital and perhaps from the province as a whole. "God willing, with the aid of the Lord and the selfless bravery of our battle-ready troops, we will soon liberate all of our kin and countrymen throughout Eastern Turkestan," thundered the ETR press, "and banish the yoke of the Chinese oppressors from our homeland forever."[7]

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[5] For a detailed account of the Ili rebellion, see Linda K. Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944–1949* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990).

[6] Northern Xinjiang's mineral resources were "the richest and best documented" in Xinjiang, and following the Ili rebellion Soviet authorities wasted little time in commencing extensive mining operations in rebel-held territory, in cooperation with the new Soviet-backed Ili government. Judd Creighton Kinzley, "Staking Claims to China's Borderland: Oil, Ores and State-building in Xinjiang Province, 1893-1964" (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, San Diego, 2012), 276-89. Soviet involvement in the Ili rebellion paralleled contemporaneous interventions by the USSR in northern Iran, where Soviet aid was crucial to setting up semi-autonomous Kurdish and Azeri republics in the mid-1940s. Cf. Krista Goff, "Territory, War, and Nation-Building in the South Caucasus," paper presented at "New Directions in Central and Inner Asian History" workshop, Harvard University, Cambridge, December 2018.

[7] Merkezi ḥökümet teshwiqāt bölümi, *Ẓulum āstidā yétish jināyet, weṭen üchün köresh qilmāsliq khiyānet, āzādliq*

In autumn 1945, with the ETR army at the gates of Ürümchi, Chinese rule over Xinjiang seemed to be slipping away. The crisis precipitated a change in leadership, as Chiang Kai-shek recalled the conservative Wu Zhongxin and replaced him with Zhang Zhizhong (張治中, 1895-1969), a left-leaning Guomindang general with a track record of successful mediation with the Communist Party. Zhang swiftly opened negotiations with the ETR and its Soviet patrons, who had recently sealed an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek at Yalta, and obtained a ceasefire in September 1945. By this time, the ETR's territory encompassed the districts of Ili, Tarbaghatay (the district centered around Chöchek), and Altay: Xinjiang's three northernmost prefectures. Zhang persisted in his peacemaking, and after more than half a year of talks, with dozens of meetings continuing into summer 1946, a full peace agreement between the Guomindang and the ETR was finally signed in the wee hours of a June morning.[8] The treaty was a remarkable diplomatic achievement, and called for a reunited Xinjiang Province to be ruled by a coalition government in Ürümchi comprised of the former ETR delegation and the local Guomindang bureau. General Zhang would chair the new administration; he would share power with deputy chairs Ahmadjan Qasimi (also Qasimov), leader of the ETR and a Ghulja-born Uyghur, as well as Burhan Shehidi (1894-1989), a polyglot Tatar and veteran provincial official.[9] Ministries and posts were doled out so as to create a rough parity between Guomindang and ETR officials. All of this promised Xinjiang's native peoples a role in the province's government undreamed of even during the heyday of Sheng Shicai's indigenization policies.

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küreshke ātlininglār! (Ghulja: Āzād Sharqi Turkistān Gizit Idāre Meṭbe'esi, 1945), 14.

[8] "Khush kheber: 4,000,000 khelqining bekht āwāzi: Ili özgürüshi tinchliq yol bilen tügüdi," *Shingjāng giziti* 7 June 1946: 3. The article notes that while the substance of the eleven-point agreement had been hammered out and signed in January, the intervening months had been spent negotiating an addendum to the tenth point, which dealt with the disposition of ETR troops within Eastern Turkestan territory.

[9] Aḥmad Jān Qāsimi et al., "Olkemizdiki her bir millet khelqlirige murāju'et," *Shingjāng giziti* 4 July 1946: 2-3.

The cold truce of autumn 1945 had warmed by the following summer into a promising honeymoon, as Zhang Zhizhong undertook a raft of confidence-building measures, including the return of property confiscated by Sheng Shicai's government and the mass amnesty of political prisoners.[10] A decade of purges under Sheng's erratic rule had filled Xinjiang's prisons to bursting, and the large-scale release of political detainees was a major component and selling point of the Guomindang-ETR peace treaty. "The prison doors have been thrown wide open," declared the ETR leadership in Ürümchi, "and the captives released from that living hell."[11] Working to build trust with their socialist interlocutors in the USSR and the ETR, Zhang's administration in Ürümchi further ensured the safe passage to Yan'an of those surviving Chinese Communist Party members who had languished in prison since Sheng's anti-communist purges, along with their family members.[12] The ETR, for its part, returned nearly four thousand Guomindang officers and soldiers captured during the 1944-45 conflict.[13]

Scattered incidents of intercommunal violence continued around the province even after the peace treaty took hold, but Governor Zhang and Vice Governor Qasimi both urged restraint and reconciliation. Zhang encouraged his fellow Han to see episodes of inter-ethnic violence by the province's Muslim population as regrettable but understandable score-settling, given that Xinjiang's Muslims had "in times past been subjected to terrible oppression and great

[10] The coalition government appointed a committee to see to the return of confiscated property, and placed frequent notices in the newspapers to inform citizens of the procedures for requesting the return of their property; e.g., "I'lān," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 4.
[11] Qāsimi et al., "Olkemizdiki her bir millet khelqlirige murāju'et."
[12] Mukhbir, "Türmide yātqān kāmunist e'zāliri Yenggen'ge māngdurulmāqchi," *Shinjāng géziti* 10 June 1946: 3. In mid-July, the Ürümchi government received a telegram of thanks from Yan'an base leader Zhu De, reporting that the long-lost Communist operatives had arrived safely at their destination. Gizitimiz khebiridin, "Olkumizdin āzād qilinib Yeng'en'ge iwetilgen Junggo kommunist ādemliri Yeng'en'ge sāq sālāmet yétip bārghān," *Shingjāng giziti* 29 July 1946: 2.
[13] Mukhbir, "Merdni meydānda körüng," *Shingjāng giziti* 20 July 1946: 3; Mukhbir, "Ölkülük ḥökümet mu'āwin re'isi Aḥmadjān Effendining mukhbirgha eytqan sözi," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 3.

suffering."[14] Qasimi, in a September 1946 speech in Ürümchi, similarly insisted that "the chilly attitude toward Han individuals in our province" was the unfortunate result of "those who came here as representatives of a [Han] nation and assumed the mantle of ruler." Qasimi assured his listeners that the disappearance of Chinese tyranny in the province would "naturally lead to the disappearance of this phenomenon."[15] As tensions cooled, peace seemed to take root in the province. In Manas County, where ETR troops had made their final advance before the ceasefire, fortifications were dismantled by the end of summer 1946.[16] The Eastern Turkestan Republic declared that its "temporary revolutionary administration" had completed its mission, and that Ili, Tarbaghatay, and Altay were now once more prefectures of Xinjiang.[17]

In reality, ETR state building continued apace, with extensive Soviet involvement. In northwestern Xinjiang, this was nothing new; longstanding trends in Ili and Tarbaghatay had made the region an appealing target for Soviet intervention, even beyond the Kremlin's hankering for tungsten and petroleum. As outlined in previous chapters, the Ili crisis of the 1870s and the subsequent Russian annexation of the western Ili Valley (Semirech'e) had set the stage for continued Russian influence in subsequent decades, and helped create a transborder Taranchi community that would ultimately play an outsized role in modern Uyghur history. Bidirectional Taranchi immigration over the Sino-Russian (later Sino-Soviet) border resulted in the maintenance of familial and cultural links between Chinese Ili and Soviet Semirech'e, with migrants' citizenship status often somewhat ambiguous.[18] A robust cross-border trade further strengthened these links.

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[14] Jāng Jzh Jong [Zhang Zhizhong], "Bütün olke her millet qérindashlirimizgha murāji'et," *Shingjāng giziti* 26 Aug. 1946: 1-4.
[15] A. Qāsimi, *Tāllānmā eṣerler* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng khelq dimokrātiye ittifāqining bāsh ijrā'iye heyiti, 1950), 13.
[16] Mukhbir, "Mānāsdiki soqush istiḫkāmliri yoqālghusi," *Shingjāng giziti* 21 Aug. 1946: 3.
[17] Aḥmad Jān Qāsimi et al., "Olkemizdiki her bir millet khelqlirige murāju'et."
[18] The extent of this ambiguity is underlined in Zhihua Shen and Danhui Li, *After Leaning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 167-81.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Soviet and secular influence continued making inroads in Ili and the neighboring district of Tarbaghatay (often called Chöchek after its principal city), further increasing northwestern Xinjiang's cultural distance from the south of the province. Sizable communities of Russian and Soviet émigrés exercised significant cultural sway in northwestern Xinjiang, and by the 1920s Turkic-language literature printed in the USSR had filtered in some quantity into the area. A network of Soviet-influenced cultural centers as well as other institutions like hospitals and schools was established in Ili and Chöchek, by locals, migrants, and the state—a phenomenon with little parallel elsewhere in Xinjiang outside the capital. In 1939, when Sheng's government established a Chinese-Soviet Cultural Association in Xinjiang (*Zhong-Su wenhua xiehui Xinjiang fen* 中蘇文化協會新疆分), the first year of operation saw local branches opened in Ili, Tarbaghatay, and Altay—the three future districts of the ETR—and nowhere else in the province.[19] By the mid-1940s, Soviet cultural clout in Ili and Tarbaghatay was a major social force—one little diminished by Sheng Shicai's 1942 rejection of his erstwhile Soviet patron. The Soviet leadership was well aware of this, and explicitly cited the USSR's continued cultural influence in Ili and Chöchek as a decisive factor in their decision to arm and support a rebellion in northwestern Xinjiang.[20]

Having judged the region ripe for rebellion, the Soviet leadership hurried to press their soft power advantage. More than a year before the Ili rebellion's first shot was fired, Soviet organs were working assiduously to further deepen Soviet sympathies in northwestern Xinjiang, with Uyghur and Kazakh printing playing a central role. In May 1943, the Politburo officially

[19] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区编纂委员会 and Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆同志•著述出版志》编纂委员会 (eds.), *Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi* 新疆同志•著述出版志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang kexue jishu chubanshe, 2006), 9. The Association's reading rooms offered materials in Russian, Chinese, and Uyghur.

[20] V. A. Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg* (Barnaul: Barnaul gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 1999), 75-78; Justin M. Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 130-35.

resolved to seek the removal from power of the "ungrateful and dishonorable" Sheng Shicai, and toward that end pledged to support the formation of "national revival groups" tasked with fomenting rebellion in Xinjiang.[21] In autumn of that year, publishing facilities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan dusted off Arabic typeset disused since the latinization campaign of the late 1920s, and Soviet operatives like Meshür Roziev and Qadir Hesenov set to work.[22] The first issue of *Eastern Truth* (*Sherq ḥeqiqiti*), an Arabic-script Uyghur journal printed in a bimonthly run of 5,000, rolled off the Tashkent presses in September 1943 and soon began filtering over the Xinjiang border. While Xinjiang's official press had by then soured on the Soviets, Uyghurs with access to *Eastern Truth* could read about the happiness and heroism of the Soviet Uyghur community: the great strides made by Uyghur women thanks to Soviet policies of gender equality; Soviet Uyghurs' contributions to socialist construction; and the brave exploits of Sergeant Sabitov—a Uyghur officer in the Red Army—during the battle of Stalingrad.[23]

Some *Eastern Truth* articles dealt with Xinjiang's culture, history, and literature, with expositions on classical poets like Alishir Nava'i and Yusuf Khas Hajib and the occasional article on Xinjiang's economy; the pretense of political neutrality was retained by scrupulous avoidance of commentary on contemporary Xinjiang.[24] In fact, during its entire existence from 1943 to 1950, the journal made few if any direct mentions of the Eastern Turkestan Republic, the state for whose reading public the journal was primarily intended. Yet while *Eastern Truth* ostensibly confined itself to historical topics and the glories of the USSR, its editors found

[21] Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg*, 71-72.
[22] Gasanly, *Sin'tszian v orbite sovetskoi politiki*, 139-40.
[23] 'Usman, "Sultankhan Yusopowa," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 1 (1943): 7; Aybik, "Uyghur khelqining 'alim qizi," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 1 (1943): 7; A. Ismayilof, "Uyghurlar khelq qurulushida," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 1 (1943): 3; M. 'Osman, "Sirzhant Sabitof," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 1 (1943): 9.
[24] The closest the journal came to contemporary events was a late 1947 article on Xinjiang's geography and economy, which emphasized the great and beneficient contributions of the USSR during the Sheng era, and Sheng's subsequent reactionary policies and his abandonment of his Soviet patron. Chiraq, "Sherqi Turkistan: gi'ografik—iqtisadi ochirk," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 12 (1947): 8-13.

indirect ways to comment on current events in Xinjiang. As the Ili rebellion raged in the early months of 1945, *Eastern Truth* regaled its readers with the proud history of "the Uyghur people's uprising for national liberation"—in the 1860s, against the Qing empire.[25] By 1945, following the collapse of Chinese authority in northern Xinjiang, the trickle of Soviet publications over the border rapidly became a flood. As the Eastern Turkestan Republic assumed responsibility for education in its territory, publishers in Soviet Central Asia quickly expanded their repertoire to include Arabic-script Uyghur textbooks for ETR schools and poetry collections for ETR readers.[26] Soviet Uyghur publications for the ETR had sufficient circulation and readership that old copies of *Eastern Truth* were still furtively passed around in Xinjiang in the early 1960s.[27]

The ETR drew not only on the ideological resources of socialism and anti-imperialism, but on the popular pull of Islam as well. Some early ETR documents speak of an "Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan," or *Sharqiy Turkistān Jumhuri-i Islam*, and the republic flew "the star-and-crescent flag passed down by our forefathers."[28] Establishing a Ministry of Religion was a top priority of the new state, and the Eastern Turkestani army attached Muslim clerics to its regiments. In melding socialism and Islam in time of war, the ETR was following recent precedent on the part of its Soviet patron. Beginning in 1943, as the USSR staggered from the German invasion, Stalin reversed years of anticlerical Bolshevik policy and forged an alliance between the Soviet state and the USSR's Christian and Islamic clergy, who in turn played a key role in raising public morale for the war effort.[29] The ETR's propaganda was likewise often infused with Islamic exhortation, particularly while the war with the Guomindang was ongoing.

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[25] E. H., "Uyghur khelqining milliy azadliq qozghilingi," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 1-2 (1945): 10-11.
[26] Soviet books and periodicals for distribution in the ETR were printed primarily by Sherq heqiqiti and Ozbekistan dowlet neshriyati in Tashkent and by Qazaq éli in Almaty.
[27] Söyün'gül Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin* (Istanbul: Teklimakan Uyghur neshriyati, 2013), 104.
[28] Merkezi ḥökümet teshwiqāt bölümi, *Ẓulum āstidā yétish jināyet*, 8-9, 13; Markaziy ḥarbiy diniy mufti 'askar idāresi, *Polk ākhunliri ḥifẓ-i ṣiḥḥat qollānmāsi* (Chöchek: "Khelq āwāzi" giziti meṭbe'esi, 1946).
[29] Eren Tasar, *Soviet and Muslim: The Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943-1991* (New York: Oxford

If decades of cross-border contacts had helped prepare the ground for the Ili rebellion, Soviet influence in Ili and Chöchek became deeper still once the rebellion gained steam and the ETR state was established. The Soviet complexion of Eastern Turkestani governance was assured by the Soviet operatives who served as high-ranking officials in the ETR government and military. Soviet generals—many of them Turkic natives of Central Asia—commanded ETR troops in battle, while Soviet agents filled key government posts.[30] Meshür Roziev, continuing to work under the alias Abdulla Ramazanov, served as assistant prefect of Tarbaghatay in 1945-46, where he continued his involvement in the cultural sphere by encouraging local authors and working to improve the district's education system.[31] While his title was assistant prefect, it seems likely that Roziev—like many of the Soviet agents working in the ETR—was in fact responsible for many key decisions. A local colleague in the Tarbaghatay prefect's office later recalled that Roziev led the general meetings every Saturday afternoon, at which personnel would go over the previous week's work and discuss the following week's—much the same role Roziev had performed as Soviet minder to Khoja Niyaz Haji a decade earlier.[32] Even when ETR natives were in command, Soviet orders usually overrode local initiative. The ETR military had called off the siege of Aqsu on Soviet orders, despite widespread enthusiasm in ETR ranks for spreading the revolution to southern Xinjiang. Eastern Turkestani foreign policy likewise aped Moscow's.[33]

University Press, 2017), 46-55.

[30] Polat Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi* (Ürümchi: Āltāy neshriyāt idāresining tārikh-jughrāfiye turkumi, 1948), 139; Ablet Kamalov, "Uyghur Memoir Literature in Central Asia on Eastern Turkestan Republic (1944-49)," in *Studies on Xinjiang Historical Sources in 17-20th Centuries*, ed. James A. Millward, Shinmen Yasushi, and Sugawara Jun (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2010), 273-75.

[31] Talip, "Chong tarikhiy weqelerning shahidi"; Abulimiti Hajiyefu 阿布力米提•哈吉也夫, "Tacheng jiaoyu de sishi nian 塔城教育的四十年," ed. Tayier 塔依尔 and Yang Renzhi 杨任志, in *Yili wenshi ziliao* 3 (1987): 27.

[32] Hajiyow, "Üch wilayet inqilabining aldi-keynidiki Tarbaghatay," 43.

[33] Justin Jacobs, *Empire Besieged: The Preservation of Chinese Rule in Xinjiang, 1884–1971* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2011), 407-11, 463-64.

For all that, the ETR was not a mere Soviet puppet—though historical analyses focusing on the ETR's geopolitical posture have tended to interpret it along those lines. The governance of the ETR state was to a great extent determined by domestic politics within the ETR's three districts; and the cultural policies and activities of the state—ultimately its most consequential aspects—were determined almost entirely by local Uyghur intellectuals, with writers from Ghulja playing a dominant role. Perhaps the most significant factor here was numerical: Ghulja was not only the Eastern Turkestan Republic's leading city and most populous county; it was also the Republic's only county with a Uyghur majority.[34] Most of Xinjiang's Kazakh population resided in the north of the province, in lands that fell to the Ili rebellion; of the ETR's total population, Kazakhs constituted a majority, and were more than twice as numerous as Uyghurs.[35] Kazakh political strength in the ETR was somewhat diluted, however, given that much of the Republic's Kazakh community remained nomadic, and therefore less concentrated in towns and cities. While the composition of the ETR army reflected the Kazakh proportion of the Republic's population, the ETR's top political leadership was largely drawn from settled peoples: Uyghurs, Tatars, Uzbeks. With the printing presses located in urban centers and run by government employees, ETR public culture was similarly dominated by Uyghurs, in cooperation with Uyghur-speaking Tatars (Es'et Is'haqov, Uyghur Sayrani) and Uzbeks (Anwar Khanbaba). If the Uyghurophone elite centered around Ghulja therefore enjoyed disproportionate power within the ETR, it was the overall political and military strength of the ETR—with some 700,000 citizens and a Soviet-armed military—that magnified the Ghulja elite's power throughout Xinjiang.

[34] "Shing Jāng olkuluk nāhiye we sheherlerning tizimi nāhiye sheherlik kéngesh e'ẓālirining sāylinish jedwili," *Shingjāng giziti* 10 Sep. 1946: 3, 12 Sep. 1946: 3, 13 Sep. 1946: 3, 14 Sep. 1946: 3, 16 Sep. 1946: 3.
[35] Yili Hasake zizhizhou difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 伊犁哈萨克自治州地方志编纂委员, eds., *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi* 伊犁哈萨克自治州志. Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2004, 177.

While issues of relative Uyghur and Kazakh representation in the ETR bureaucracy seem to have caused some amount of tension between the ETR central leadership and local Kazakh leaders, the new republic's most contentious ethnic questions centered around its Han minority. At every level of the ETR state, most responsible posts were held by Uyghurs and Kazakhs, with the remainder held primarily by Russians, Mongols, Hui, and Sibe (a group closely related to the Manchus). The ETR soon boasted a cohort of Turkic-speaking officials unequaled anywhere in southern or eastern Xinjiang, where Han officials continued to dominate the bureaucracy. Han officials had been similarly dominant in the north, but the Ili rebellion had seen the flight of much of northern Xinjiang's Han officialdom as well as scattered reprisals against the general Han population.[36] The ETR leadership, at least in official pronouncements, had from early on spoken out against mistreatment of Han civilians in combat zones and in the new republic's territory. Ahmadjan Qasimi, in a late 1944 article in the leading ETR state newspaper, insisted, as he would multiple times in subsequent years, that "the task of our national liberation movement is in no way a struggle against the Chinese people." [37] Even a strident 1945 pamphlet calling the people of the ETR to battle with the "Chinese oppressors" took pains to note that "our revolution is not directed at all members of the Han nation, but rather against the dictatorial Chinese government and those who fight us to preserve it."[38] N. N. Mingulov notes that the ETR government guaranteed freedom of employment and commerce to "all individuals of Chinese nationality who manifest a desire for peaceful existence," and that Chinese-language newspapers were published in the ETR.[39] Chöchek, the ETR's second city and historically a multiethnic

[36] Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State*, 152; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 215-16.
[37] N. N. Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie narodov Sin'tsziana kak sostavnaia chast' obshchekitaiskoi revoliutsii (1944-1949 gody)," in *Voprosy istorii Kazakhstana i Vostochnogo Turkestana*, ed. V. F. Shakhmatov, T. Zh. Shoinbaev, and V. S. Kuznetsov (Almaty: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk Kazakhskoi SSR, 1962), 80.
[38] Merkezi ḥökümet teshwiqāt bölümi, *Ẓulum āstidā yétish jināyet*, 10.
[39] Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie," 80.

border town, sent two Han representatives to the coalition government's 1946 provincial assembly.[40]

For the most part, though, the ETR's Han citizens seem to have led a somewhat tense existence, in some ways mirroring the challenges Uyghurs have often faced in the People's Republic of China. The 1945 pamphlet, while affirming that the Ili rebellion was not directed against all Han, nonetheless referred to the ETR's Han population as "the Han community that has been living as émigrés in our Eastern Turkestan," thereby seeming to exclude them from full membership in the new polity—though it also noted that they were "joining in the rebellion" against the "dictatorial Chinese government."[41] In spring 1947, as tensions heated up between the Uyghur-dominated ETR and the Han-dominated Guomindang, the inaugural Chinese-language issue of Chöchek's newspaper *Voice of the People* was at pains to express the Chöchek Han community's support for the "democratic government" of "our Eastern Turkestan."[42] In the newspaper's topmost article, the leaders of Chöchek's Han community addressed continuing tensions in Xinjiang's capital and voiced their outrage at "the small minority of shameless reactionaries in Ürümchi's Han community" who in their opposition to the ETR did not represent "the peace-loving majority of Han in Ürümchi." Even in multicultural Chöchek, members of the Han community were no doubt keenly aware of their limited options: two thousand Han residents of the county, largely officials and soldiers, had fled the area in summer 1945 before the advancing ETR army and sought refuge in the USSR—which promptly interned them.[43] In

[40] "Shing Jāng olkuluk nāhiye we sheherlerning tizimi nāhiye sheherlik kéngesh e'ẓālirining sāylinish jedwili," *Shingjāng giziti* 13 Sep. 1946: 3.
[41] Merkezi ḥökümet teshwiqāt bölümi, *Ẓulum āstidā yétish jināyet*, 11.
[42] "Ben shi Hanzu minzhong zhaokai dahui tongguo zhi zheng fuzhuxi dianwen dui Dihua shaoshu fandongfenzi biaoshi fenhen 本市漢族民眾召開大會通過致正副主席電文對迪化少數反動份子表示忿恨," *Tacheng "Minsheng" bao: Hanwen ban*: 30 April 1947: 1.
[43] V. A. Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg* (Barnaul: Barnaul gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 1999), 62-63; Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 346. A year after those events, following the signing of the ETR-Guomindang peace treaty, ETR official Reḥim Jān announced that an Eastern Turkestani

1949, as ETR rule came to an end, Han comprised perhaps 5-6% of the ETR population—only slightly lower than the 6.7% Han proportion of Xinjiang's total population, but likely much reduced from pre-ETR days, given that Xinjiang's Han population had historically resided disproportionately in the north of the region.[44]

Despite continued intercommunal frictions, the second half of 1946 marked a high point for relations between the ETR and the Guomindang, and for the Guomindang's relations with the large Muslim population it now governed in southern Xinjiang. Following the signing of the peace treaty in early June, southern Xinjiang's Muslim communities, and particularly young people, had high hopes for the coalition government. General Zhang, eager to see his hard-won treaty implemented, relied—like Sheng Shicai before him—on fact-finding missions to keep the provincial government appraised of circumstances in the south. Weeks after the signing of the treaty, Zhang sent a Southern Xinjiang Inspection Team (Ch. *Nanjiang shichatuan* 南疆視察團, Uy. *Jenubi Shing Jāng teftish ömiki*) to visit a succession of towns and villages in the south of the province. The Inspection Team received a hero's welcome from the local population wherever they went, with young people and intellectuals particularly excited to meet representatives of the new coalition government. Yet in each locale the excitement was short-lived, with residents bitterly disappointed to learn that the coalition government's inspection team was not empowered to remove corrupt local officials and resolve other local issues.[45] After years of hardship followed by the lofty promises of the peace treaty, southern Xinjiang's Muslims were impatient to see tangible improvement in local governance.

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operative had been dispatched to facilitate the swift repatriation of the Tarbaghatay garrison soldiers from the USSR to Guomindang territory. Mukhbir, "Ichki ishlār mu'āwin nāẓiri Reḥim Jān Effendining mukhbirgha eytqān sözliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 3.

[44] *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi*, 177, *Renkou zhi*, 269.

[45] Ibrāhim Turdi, "Jenubi Shing Jāngda néme boliwātidu?" *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 1.

Yet the pace of change remained frustratingly slow in subsequent months, at least outside the provincial capital. While many members of the coalition government—notably Zhang and his Ili counterparts—took seriously the concerns of southern Xinjiang's Muslim communities, bureaucratic inertia and political infighting obstructed attempts at reform. Outside of Ürümchi, unpopular and corrupt local officials largely remained in their posts, and rapacious army regiments continued to abuse local populations. Soon, complaints began to pour into the provincial government's offices, often hand-delivered by representatives from communities across the south, and sometimes reprinted in the provincial newspaper. In late summer 1946, an open letter with over a thousand signatories from the province's Muslim community noted that while the provincial government had made substantial progress in replacing problematic officials in Ürümchi, the government's "offices, organizations, and employees in other prefectures and particularly in the Six Cities have persisted with their habitual despotism."[46] The same month, representatives of Pichan's Turkic population protested to the coalition government that "in all parts of our province, Turks have suffered more than a little abuse at the hands of military officers, particularly Han officers."[47]

The first item of the Guomindang-ETR peace treaty of 1946 had stipulated that the people of Xinjiang's seven Guomindang-ruled districts would elect government officials from among "trusted local individuals,"[48] but these elections were marred from the beginning by violence and intimidation. Power in most locales remained in the hands of long-serving

[46] Neẓer Qāẓi, Ḥāmid Qāẓi, Niyāz Hājim, et al., "Olkuluk ḥokumet hey'et e'ẓālirighe," *Shingjāng giziti* 20 Aug 1946: 4.
[47] Ḥāmid Khwāje Aḥmadi and Bahā' al-Din 'Oshuri, "Shing Jāng ölkülük ḥökümetke 'erẓ."
[48] The treaty specified that within three months of its signing, each county in Guomindang-ruled Xinjiang would elect a local council by popular vote, with the county councils then empowered to select a magistrate, who would govern the county and appoint individuals to other high-level local posts. Prefectural representatives would be chosen by the public and confirmed by the government. Once the county councils were formed, they would elect a provincial council to "monitor and assist" Xinjiang's central government. Ḥeqiqet, "Yéngi ḥayāt bāshlāndi," *Shingjāng giziti* 12 July 1946: 3.

Guomindang officials—predominantly Han, but also including a number of Uyghur officials, some of them deeply unpopular in their own communities.[49] Similarly, despite a strong start in diversifying Xinjiang's state workplaces in the early treaty period, the coalition government ultimately fell far short of filling 60% of government jobs with Turkic Muslims, as guaranteed by the peace treaty.[50] By spring 1947, the failure to hold fair elections in Guomindang territory, the slow pace of change within the provincial bureaucracy, and other violations by both sides of the letter and spirit of the accords had dampened the afterglow of the peace agreement, and by mid-1947 the optimism of the previous summer had given way to open hostility between the two camps. As complaints piled up, the friendly tone taken by both states' press and propaganda organs deteriorated into mutual accusations and sniping, and protests shook several cities in Guomindang territory. By summer 1947, the situation had become untenable, and the coalition government's ETR members left Ürümchi for Ghulja, followed by a number of Ürümchi's most prominent Turkic intellectuals. Only a year after it began, the ETR-Guomindang honeymoon had definitively come to an end.

HOMETOWN NETWORKS: THE ILI COHORT

While the Eastern Turkestan Republic's achievements on the battlefield were impressive, it was in the field of public culture that the ETR had the most lasting impact. From its earliest days, the

[49] Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg*, 126-27; Ibrāhim Turdi, "47- yili 24-féwrāldiki 'namāyish,'" *Ittifāq* 2 (1949): 115-16; Khéwir Tömür, "Shinjangda '11 bitim'ning tüzülüshi we uning buzulushi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 15 (1984): 1-22.

[50] Soon after the signing of the ETR-Guomindang treaty, 'Abd al-Karim 'Abbāsi (Abdukérim Abbasov), deputy secretary general of the new coalition administration, announced that more than sixty "Turk Muslim youths" had already been hired by the newly formed provincial government—a down payment on the terms of the peace treaty, which stipulated that 60% of posts in every government office be filled by Turkic Muslims. "If this great work is to be realized, all young intellectuals from our province and our city will be sought by every [government] office." Mukhbir, "Yāshlirimizgha her bir idārening ishige ochuq," *Shingjāng giziti* 22 July 1946: 3. Zhang's policy and the obstacles to its realization are detailed in Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg*, 132-35; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 221.

republic's leadership was dominated by intellectuals who ensured strong state support for public culture. The leading political organization in the early days of the republic, the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Association (*Sharqiy Turkistān inqilābchil yāshlār teshkilāti*), was deeply involved in publishing, as was Ahmadjan Qasimi's Union for Peace and Populism (*Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni himāye qilish ittifāqi*), which replaced the Youth Association in August 1948. The ETR's governmental and quasi-governmental institutions took an active role in the arts, supporting theatrical production in local languages, training young musicians, and organizing art competitions.[51] More notable still was the ETR state's investment in the expanding world of Uyghur-language print culture, notably journalism. The Union for Peace and Populism's press bureau provided news reports directly to the ETR's newspapers, and published several periodicals of its own. Ahmadjan Qasimi, himself a writer and orator of considerable skill, believed journalism and publishing had a special revolutionary role and paid close attention to both, often writing the lead articles in *Liberated Eastern Turkestan* and *Union* himself. (A favorite pseudonym was "Ahmad of Ili.")[52] ETR officials at the local level also took an active interest in publishing and journalism, often directly participating in journalistic enterprises—no doubt helping thereby to assure that publications toed the party line.[53]

One of the new republic's first acts was the establishment of an official newspaper in Ghulja, where the ETR government was based. *Liberated Eastern Turkistan* (*Āzād Sharqi Turkistān*) was printed on the former *Ili Xinjiang Gazette* press in no fewer than six languages:

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[51] Ittifāq, "Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi bir yil jeryānni bésip ötti," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 13-14.
[52] Mömin Sepiri, "Üch wilayet inqilabi," 142; Dilber Thwaites, "Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity: The dilemma of a Uyghur writer under Chinese rule" (Ph.D. Diss., Australian National University, 2001), vol. 2 (Appendix), 4. Qasimi's "Ahmad of Ili" pseudonym is referred to in Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie," 79; an example is A. Ililiq, "Ādem ḥoquqi niqābi āstida ādem ḥoquqining defsende qilinishi," *Ittifāq* 2 (1949), 7-18.
[53] Bortala education official Yasin Ḥesenov, for example, was elected to head the county reporters' group in August 1948. "Mukhbirler mejlisi otkuzuldi," *Inqilābiy Sharqiy Turkistān*, 5 Sep. 1948: 3.

Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongol, Chinese, Russian, and Sibe.[54] As the rest of northern Xinjiang fell to ETR troops, the other newspapers of the north were reborn as ETR organs: the *Altay Xinjiang Gazette* became *Free Altay* (*Erikti Altay*), while the *Chöchek Xinjiang Gazette* was replaced with *The People's Voice* (*Khelq Awazi*), its name echoing the earlier Chöchek paper *Our Voice*.[55] Smaller newspapers sprang up in the ETR's other counties, including some that had never before had local periodicals.[56] A number of these publications catered to more specific audiences, like Tarbaghatay's *Revolutionary Youth Gazette*.[57] The ETR state and its quasi-governmental organizations directly administered most publishing organs, and the republic's proliferating periodicals hewed faithfully to state policy.[58] In addition to its house journal, *Union*, the Union for Peace and Populism published multiple newspapers. Its flagship paper was *Forward* (*Algha*), printed in both Uyghur and Kazakh; the Union also published *Populist* (*Khelqchi*) in Chöchek and *Correct Path* (*Toghra yol*) in Altay, in addition to a Russian-language newspaper, *Democrat* (*Démokrat*).[59]

As it expanded the scope of its publications, the ETR also worked to enlarge its reading public. Some twenty thousand adults learned to read in literacy classes organized by the Union for Peace and Populism; those unable to read the newspaper themselves could hear it read aloud at Union chapters.[60] Across the ETR, the Revolutionary Youth Association and the Union for Peace and Populism opened dozens of reading rooms stocked with books, journals, and

[54] Tursun Zérdin, "Ilida gézitning barliqqa kélishi."
[55] Esqiri, "Azadliqtin ilgiri," 154–55; Taxibayefu, "Tacheng diqu," 279–80.
[56] S. ʿÖmeri, "Neshriyāt ishliri kéngeymekde," *Inqilābi Sharqi Turkistān* 7 Apr. 1947: 3.
[57] The *Youth Gazette* was later reorganized as a monthly journal. "Yéngi zhurnal sétiliwatidu," *Inqilābi Sharqi Turkistān* 3 Aug. 1948: 3.
[58] For an analysis of national ideology as expressed in ETR publications, see Ondřej Klimeš, *Struggle by the Pen: The Uyghur Discourse of Nation and National Interest* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 233–47.
[59] Ittifāq, "Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi bir yil jeryānni bésip ötti," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 13.
[60] Nāḥiyelerde qirā'et khānilār teshkil qilin'ghān, *Inqilābi Sharqi Turkistān* 3 Aug. 1948: 4; Ittifāq, "Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi bir yil jeryānni bésip ötti," 13-16. As in Guomindang Xinjiang, the reading rooms also attracted visitors with billiards and other games.

newspapers. By spring 1948, Tarbaghatay Prefecture alone boasted nineteen reading rooms and twice as many designated locations where periodicals were read aloud to the public. The profusion of Uyghur-language periodicals in the ETR, as well as the growing reading public, provided an excellent opportunity for aspiring writers to hone their craft and made possible the emergence of a substantial class of professional authors.

In southern Xinjiang, by contrast, a much larger Uyghur population had access to a much smaller number of periodicals. While a couple of Guomindang-affiliated Uyghur publishing houses were permitted in Ürümchi after 1946, it was only during Zhang Zhizhong's liberal experiment in 1946-47 that publishing on any significant scale was countenanced in the rest of the south beyond the handful of local *Xinjiang Gazette* offices. Coming at a key period in the emergence of Uyghur-language print culture, this north-south bifurcation in the 1940s had significant implications for literary productivity and the emerging shape of Uyghur official culture in Xinjiang. In one authoritative recent reference work on Uyghur literature, a section covering the second half of the 1940s devotes more chapters and pages to ETR writers than to authors from the remainder of Xinjiang, where the total Uyghur population was some twenty times greater than in the ETR.[61]

The ETR's state institutions and publishing organs provided unprecedented career opportunities for Ili writers; but it was hometown loyalties and personal networks that formed a powerful cohort of writers and intellectuals around those institutions and transformed them into centers for the projection of Ili culture throughout the province. In some ways, the power of personal networks lies precisely in their unofficial nature, which enables them to transcend formal hierarchies and bureaucratic barriers. This same informal quality can make them difficult for historians to reconstruct; nonetheless, surviving records and ephemera of the mid-century Ili

[61] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3.

network allow us to retrace some of the loyalties, affinities, and favors around which the network grew. The density of connections between Ili intellectuals of that period, as well as the central place of print culture in their public and private activities, provide numerous points of entry for exploring the personal connections between the writers, intellectuals, and officials whose careers lie at the center of this study.

Take, for example, a 1946 issue of the ETR journal *Struggle*, preserved in a private collection in Almaty and bearing on its back cover the handwritten inscription, "Gift from Z. Qadiri to Elqem Ekhtem, 10 Dec. 1946."[62] Ili-born playwright Zunun Qadiri (1912-1989) grew up in poverty in Ghulja, and received only a few years of education as a boy.[63] He read voraciously, however, and later recalled in particular the influence of *Ili River Newspaper*, where he published his first works. In the mid-1930s, Sheng Shicai's Soviet-inspired cultural policies opened up new educational opportunities for young people with limited means, and Qadiri studied first at a teacher training course in Ghulja and then at the Provincial Agricultural Institute in Ürümchi, where his career as a writer began in earnest, and where he joined Sheng's Anti-Imperialist Society (*Fandihui* 反帝會). It was in Ürümchi that Qadiri grew close to other politically active intellectuals from Ili, including a number of younger men like Lutpulla Mutellip, Elqem Ekhtem, and Abdukérim Abbasov—each of whom would later play a prominent role in twentieth-century Uyghur cultural life. In 1941 Qadiri returned to Ghulja, where he worked in the Uyghur Enlightenment Association's theater department alongside individuals like Ziya Semedi (1914-2000), a writer who would later play a leading role in Uyghur official culture in both Xinjiang and the USSR. Qadiri began working in journalism in the early days of the Ili

[62] I am grateful to the family of the late scholar and ETR veteran Sabit Abdurakhmanov for permitting me access to his papers. The issue in question is the September-October 1946 issue.
[63] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 396-97; Tursun Zérdin, "Ilida gézitning barliqqa kélishi"; *Zunun Qadir eserliri*; Thwaites, "Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity," vol. 2, 1-4.

rebellion, and before long had become head editor of *Struggle*, house journal of the ETR's leading political organization, the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Union. As editor of the widely read *Struggle*, Qadiri played a supportive role in the careers of a number of young Ili intellectuals. Around the time he inscribed an issue of *Struggle* for Elqem Ekhtem, he was also furnishing the younger writer with publishing opportunities, including coauthoring articles with him for the journal.[64]

Elqem Ekhtem (1922-1995), a Soviet-born Uyghur who moved as a young boy with his family to the Ili region, was teaching high school when the Ili Rebellion broke out in 1944.[65] He soon began a precocious career as a journalist, and benefited greatly from the unprecedented career opportunities afforded young Uyghurs in the ETR. By 1947, twenty-five-year-old Elqem was an editor at the ETR's leading newspaper, and had traveled across Xinjiang as a war reporter alongside ETR leader Ahmadjan Qasimi. At the same time, Elqem was busily making a name for himself as a poet and man of letters. As coeditor of the *Almanac*, the first major literary anthology published in the Eastern Turkestan Republic, he played a substantial role in determining the shape of the ETR literary canon—which, as we will see below, ultimately shaped the Uyghur literary canon as a whole. And just as supportive elders like Zunun Qadiri took Elqem Ekhtem under their wings, Elqem in turn fostered the careers of the ETR's youngest generation of writers.

Téyipjan Éliev (1930-1989), son of a mullah and younger brother of a prominent local official, was one of the ETR's most gifted young poets; but what distinguished him from other

[64] E.g., Z. Qadiri and '. Ekhtem, "Uyghur khelqining ataqliq qehrimani we qoshaqchisi: Sadir Palwan," *Küresh* 4 (15) (April 1947): 13-19.
[65] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 486-89; Ailikanmu Aihetanmu 艾里坎木・艾合坦木, "Ailikanmu Aihetanmu (zizhuan) 艾里坎木・艾合坦木（自传）," in *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiandai zuojia zhuanlüe* 中国少数民族现代作家传略, ed. Wu Chongyang 吴重阳 and Tao Lifan 陶立璠 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 45-48.

equally talented peers was the support of older writers like Elqem Ekhtem and Zunun Qadiri.[66] Elqem Ekhtem repeatedly published Éliev's work—under Éliev's pseudonym, "The Bold One" (Jür'eti)—in the pages of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, often alongside the work of more experienced writers, thus lending Éliev the imprimatur of his seniors.[67] Éliev was still an unemployed poet, though, when Zunun Qadiri recommended him to the editorial staff of *Forward*, official newspaper of the ETR's governing Union for Peace and Populism.[68] Qadiri's pull in the Union for Peace and Populism was considerable; he had recently become managing editor of *Unity*, the organization's house journal and the successor to *Struggle*.[69] It was through connections like these that Éliev, still in his late teens, joined the ranks of salaried ETR literati and began climbing the ranks of the ETR cultural bureaucracy in the waning days of the short-lived republic.

Movement over the Sino-Soviet border was another thread connecting the careers of many individuals in the emerging Ili network. Zunun Qadiri's deputy editor at *Struggle*, Mirsultan Osmanov (1929-2017), had moved to Ili from Kazakhstan as a young boy, and studied at the No. 6 Gymnasium in Ghulja before graduating in 1943 and leaving to work as a farmer.[70] Around the time of Osmanov's graduation, his teacher, Seydulla Seypullayov, a left-leaning intellectual who had studied in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, left once more for the USSR, where he received training near Almaty in anticipation of the Ili rebellion.[71] Returning soon after

[66] Background on Éliev's family from interview with Batur Ershidin, Almaty, January 2014.
[67] E.g., Jür'eti, "L. Muṭṭalib," *Inqilābiy Sharqiy Turkistān* 8 Sep. 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh"). Éliev's poem is printed here as an accompaniment to Elqem Ekhtem's eulogy for Lutpulla Mutellip.
[68] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 502.
[69] Abdushükür Turdi and Azad Rehmitulla Sultan, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 478. Ahmadjan Qasimi himself was chair of *Unity*'s editorial board, as noted on the journal's masthead.
[70] Interview with Mirsultan Osmanov, Ürümchi, 2014. While *Struggle*'s masthead listed many names, most were honorary board members. The journal was in fact run largely by Qadiri with help from Osmanov.
[71] Seydulla Seypullayof, *Men shahit bolghan ishlar*, ed. Abdul'eziz Ismayil and Meryem Shérip Khushtar (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 2005), 80-100; Zhongguo Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui 中国中共党

the rebellion began, Seypullayov rose quickly to a leadership position in the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Association. Recalling his former student Mirsultan and his excellent handwriting, Seypullayov invited Osmanov to return to Ghulja to work in publishing. The teenaged Osmanov soon began working for Zunun Qadiri at *Struggle*, where he copied out articles; this was the beginning of Osmanov's distinguished career as a writer, linguist, and classicist. By the late twentieth century, Osmanov was widely recognized as one of the most distinguished Uyghur men of letters of his generation; and it all began with a Ghulja connection, mediated through the USSR.

Many of the strongest personal bonds in the Ili network were formed not in Ili but in Ürümchi. Elqem Ekhtem and Lutpulla Mutellip, both Soviet-born Uyghurs who immigrated to Ili as young boys, had taken the same truck to Ürümchi in 1939 to study at the Provincial Teachers' College, thus inaugurating a friendship that would have major implications for Uyghur culture in Xinjiang. Even when work and war left them in separate cities and on opposite sides of the ETR-Guomindang front, their mutual affection persisted, and Elqem Ekhtem emerged after Lutpulla's death as one of his most prolific eulogists. Many of the most prominent Ili literati of this era studied or worked in Ürümchi, where their hometown ties with other Ili intellectuals were strengthened still further in the rarified environment of the capital. In the 1930s and early 1940s, hometown loyalties, ideological affinities, and personal connections bound these writers into an increasingly cohesive cohort. After the 1944 creation of the ETR, the tendency toward strong local connections was further augmented by the political division of the province, and by a dilapidated transportation system further damaged by war. In the fast-changing, understaffed,

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史人物研究会, *Zhonggong dangshi shaoshu minzu renwu zhuan* 中共党史少数民族人物传 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2012), vol. 1, 277-78.

small world of the ETR, a single government connection, combined with talent and ambition, could jump-start a career with remarkable rapidity.

In nurturing a cohort of self-consciously progressive, socialist-leaning intellectuals and officials, the ETR was building on pre-existing trends in the territory it governed. As recounted in the previous chapter, Ili and Chöchek provided a relatively congenial milieu for educational innovation in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Russian ocupation of Ili in the 1870s and the subsequent division of the Taranchi community between Chinese and Russian Turkestan marked the beginning of continual movement and contacts across the border. By the beginning of the twentieth century, with Taranchi and Tatar intellectuals regularly traversing the Sino-Soviet frontier in northwestern Xinjiang, reformist currents from Russia's Muslim community were filtering into the Ili region. Largely as a result, local education societies and new-style schools—Jadidist institutions as well as wholly secular schools, some taught in Tatar or Russian—flourished in Ili and (somewhat later) Chöchek.[72] In the early 1910s, Ghulja's prosperous and influential Tatar community overcame the misgivings of local clergy and successfully opened a girls' school in the city.[73] Although most early students were Tatar, the predominantly secular school soon began to attract some Uyghur and Hui students as well, as did a companion school opened soon after for boys. Ili's Tatar community continued to play a notable role in local education in subsequent decades, with a larger Tatar school opening in Ghulja in 1939 and attracting teaching talent by offering higher salaries than state schools.

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[72] On reformist schools in early twentieth-century Ili, see Dolqun Rozi, "Uyghur yéngi ma'aripi Ilidin bashlan'ghan," *Ili tarikh matériyalliri* 31: 34-135. Naṣir al-Din Nāṣiri, educated in Ili in the 1920s, recalled that state-run schools in Ili were then much inferior to privately run alternatives. "Konā me'āruf ehwāli ustide," unpublished mss., private collection, Ürümchi. Education initiatives in Chöchek during the first half of the 1930s are described in "Nashr-i ma'ārif jem'iyetining ḥisābi," *Bizning tāwush*, 20 Dec. 1935: 2. For a general overview of Turkic-language education in Republican-era Chöchek, see Abulimiti Hajiyefu 阿布力米提•哈吉也夫, "Tacheng jiaoyu de sishi nian 塔城教育的四十年," *Yili wenshi ziliao* 3 (1987): 21-32.

[73] Usmanov, "Tatar Settlers in Western China," 255-57.

Outside of explicitly Tatar schools, Tatars were also prominent as teachers in schools with predominantly Uyghur and Kazakh student bodies.

Many Uyghur intellectuals who grew up in Ili and Tarbaghatay in the 1920s and 1930s were educated in both reformist and traditional schools, a background that would have helped prepare writers like Zunun Qadiri and Téyipjan Éliev to persuasively present modernizing ideas to culturally conservative Uyghur audiences.[74] Other intellectuals who grew up in northwestern Xinjiang in those decades were educated almost entirely in reformist and secular contexts; the prominent poet Lutpulla Mutellip, for example, was educated at both Tatar- and Russian-medium schools in Ghulja before continuing his education in Ürümchi.[75] Students in Ili and Chöchek's new schools were exposed not only to secular-style education, but more specifically to Soviet cultural and ideological norms, as carried across the border by Central Asian émigrés and publications. Education and publishing in northwestern Xinjiang were deeply influenced by the long-term residence and communal activism of a number of Muslim intellectuals from the Russian empire (and later the USSR), as well as a substantial contingent of intellectuals from Xinjiang who studied in the USSR before settling in Ili or Chöchek.[76] Soviet-printed books in Turkic languages were circulating widely in northwestern Xinjiang by the 1930s, where they exerted a profound effect on young Uyghur writers like Zunun Qadiri.[77]

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[74] Zunun Qadiri described his education in some detail in his memoirs, reprinted in *Zunun Qadir eserliri*, 460-78, 591-618. On Téyipjan Éliev's education as preparation for expressing modern ideas in traditional poetic forms, see Michael Friederich, "Literary Representations of Xinjiang Realities," in *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*, ed. Ildikó Bellér-Hann, et al. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 97-98.
[75] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 38-117.
[76] The substantial Tatar contribution to Turkic-language publishing—particularly newspaper publishing—in northwestern Xinjiang is outlined in Usmanov, "Tatar Settlers in Western China," 260-62. On Xinjiang students returning from study in the USSR, see Abdurakhman Abdulla, *Tashkentchiler* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2002).
[77] Qadiri recalled that in the 1930s he read extensively in Soviet Turkic literatures—Uyghur, Kazakh, Tatar—as well as Turkic translations of Russian authors like Pushkin and Gorkii. Thwaites, "Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity," vol. 2, 2.

Most of southern Xinjiang, by contrast, proved less hospitable soil for Jadidist or Soviet-style educational reform. While the Kashgar region enjoyed trade links with Russia and then the USSR, intellectuals and ideas from the Russian Muslim community had much less of a presence there than in northern Xinjiang. The communal strength and prestige of southern Xinjiang's Islamic clerical and educational establishment also presented an obstacle for reformist educational initiatives,[78] as did the relatively slow development of print culture in the south of the province. Bolshevik agent Meshür Roziev, touring southern Xinjiang in 1936 on assignment from Governor Sheng, visited a village near Korla, where an Ürümchi-trained teacher instructed both children and adults in secular subjects from a single tattered textbook. While the teacher's "revolutionary attitude" allowed him to make good use of his meager resources, he complained of constant conflict with the local mullah, who taught Islamic courses at the same school. Their arguments over the "scientific" and "religious" points of view had escalated to the point of fistfights.[79]

It was unsurprising that the secular, socialist variety of modernity would meet with powerful resistance in the Tarim Basin. For centuries, the larger oases of the southwestern Tarim, notably Kashgar and Yarkand, had been the primary centers of religious learning and prestige throughout the region now known as Xinjiang. When a promising student elsewhere in the

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[78] For a sense of the differential reception accorded educational reformists in Ili and Kashgar in the final years of the Qing dynasty, see Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 93-96, 105-13. Clerical opposition to educational reform in southern Xinjiang continued into the Republican era; see Ildikó Bellér-Hann, *The Written and the Spoken: Literacy and oral transmission among the Uyghur* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 2000), 56-59; Wang Jianxin, *Uyghur Education and Social Order: The Role of Islamic Leadership in the Turpan Basin* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 2004), 47. Clerical resistance to secular education was not unknown in the Ili region, however; memoir literature records examples of the local Islamic establishment's discomfort with educational reform; e.g., Hakim Jappar, "Meripet yultuzi—Merup Se'idi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 34 (1993): 220-21.

[79] Roziev, *Uyghur ziminida*, 142-43. Islamic courses had been a fixture in state schools from the Sheng era, when the provincial government's trusted clerics produced religion textbooks for Xinjiang's Turkic-language schools; see the first section of Chapter One for further discussion. Islam continued to be a standard and apparently popular subject in state schools after the Guomindang displaced Sheng in the mid-1940s; in Shayar, for example, state schools' religion teachers continued offering courses even after the summer vacation had begun. Q. Khudāberdi, "Shehyār kheberliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 19 July 1946: 3.

region had exhausted the educational resources of their home oasis, Kashgar and Yarkand were the natural destinations for further study, and young clerics traveled from around the province to attend their madrasahs.[80] By the end of the Qing period, Kashgar had emerged as the pinnacle of Islamic prestige in Xinjiang, and clerics with a Kashgar pedigree led congregations across the south. At the beginning of the Mao era, more than 200 students from across the province were pursuing higher Islamic studies in Kashgar's three most prominent madrasahs, and a total of more than 2,500 students were enrolled in Islamic schools of all levels in the city. In addition to its religious preeminence, the Kashgar region was Xinjiang's most populous, and well into the twentieth century often served as a metonym for southern Xinjiang as a whole, with many travelers and geographers referring to the entire Tarim Basin as Kashgaria.[81]

Yet by the late Republican period, as Xinjiang entered its second decade of state-mandated educational reform, perceptions of cultural capital had begun to change in the province. After 1944, the military and political success of Ili seemed to further confirm the primacy of the secular culture and education favored by Ili's elites, with young people in particular attracted to the new model. This redefinition of cultural capital in Xinjiang's Muslim communities began to shift the geographical axis of cultural power in the province, a fact acknowledged even among Kashgar's famously proud local elites. In 1946, 'Abd al-Majid Hesen, writing from Kashgar's Old City, sounded an unaccustomed note of humility: "If our educational cadres and our people work even harder, we may reach still greater heights of educational progress, and our county may become a 'top educational region' not only in our prefecture but in the province as a

[80] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar in the 1950's," 13; Bellér-Hann, *The Written and the Spoken*, 49-56; Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 48-51, 55; Lu Xin 陆薪, "Jiefang qianhou Nanjiang nongcun de wenhua jiaoyu 解放前后南疆农村的文化教育," in *Nanjiang nongcun shehui* 南疆农村社会, ed. Guojia minwei minzu wenti wuzhong congshu bianji weiyuanhui 国家民委民族问题五种丛书编辑委员会 and "Zhongguo shaoshu minzu shehui lishi diaocha ziliao congshu" Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu bianjizu "中国少数民族社会历史调查资料丛书" 新疆维吾尔自治区编辑组 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1979 [1953]), 197.
[81] Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, 40.

whole."[82] A generation before, no Kashgari intellectual would have conceded their city's pride of place in Xinjiang's educational and cultural scene; but by the mid-1940s, ambitious young people who would previously have flocked to Kashgar's madrasahs were setting their sights on the upstart republic in northern Xinjiang, and particularly on its capital city, Ghulja.

Following on the soaring prestige of Ili, the ETR's talent pool was further deepened by a steady influx of highly motivated Uyghur youth and intellectuals from elsewhere in the province. Some, like the prominent poet Nim Shéhit, fell in with the ETR army as it marched into southern Xinjiang in 1945, and made the northward journey to Ili after the peace accords with the Guomindang were signed. Even after the formation of the coalition government and the retreat of ETR troops to the north, a steady stream of ambitious Uyghur youth from around the province continued to enter Eastern Turkestani territory. Some of these migrants were fleeing the deteriorating political and economic conditions in Guomindang Xinjiang; many were drawn by the proud independence and impressive military showing of the young Turkic republic.[83] Even in Ürümchi, the center of Guomindang power in Xinjiang, the ETR's prestige among the Uyghur population was palpable. When the ETR's top leaders arrived in Ürümchi in late June 1946 to take up their positions in the new coalition government, more than 6,000 residents of the capital—a third of the city's entire Uyghur and Kazakh population—surged unbidden to the airport, banners in hand, to welcome the "Ghulja revolutionaries."[84] After a brief speech by

[82] 'Abd al-Majid Ḥesen, "Qeshqer kohne sheherning medeni ma'ārifi," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 3.
[83] Mehemmet Hesen Arslanow, "'Yette wilayet khelqchiler birleshmisi' heqqide eslime," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 30 (1991): 276-80. The migration even included some clerics with dissident political views. See the brief biography of 'Alim Abdurashid in Jianping Wang and Jan Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar in the 1950's," unpublished mss., 11.
[84] Qelem, "Untulmās kün," *Shingjāng giziti* 4 July 1946: 4. In 1949, Ürümchi's Uyghur population was 18,310, and its Kazakh population was 779; 1946 figures were likely lower. Wulumuqi shi dangshi difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 乌鲁木齐市党史地方志编纂委员会, eds., *Wulumuqi shi zhi* 乌鲁木齐市志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1994), 231.

Ahmadjan Qasimi, over a hundred halal butchers on horseback led the procession from the airport into the city.

In the weeks that followed, the atmosphere of celebration and anticipation in Xinjiang's Turkic Muslim communities showed no signs of abating, and unofficial delegations began to arrive in Ürümchi from towns and cities across the province. A typical delegate, sent by Muslim youth in the eastern Xinjiang town of Gucheng, arrived in the capital bearing a letter decrying political and educational conditions in Gucheng and seeking assistance from the Ili leaders, those "esteemed great holy wise men of our homeland and our people."[85] As the visitors continued to stream in, Ahmadjan Qasimi was forced to restrict his visiting hours to a two-hour period each afternoon.[86] The outpouring of enthusiasm across Guomindang Xinjiang for the Ili rebels was all the more notable given the persistence of fierce hometown rivalries among the province's town-dwelling Muslim population. Turkic Muslim solidarity with Ili did not necessarily derive from a specific ethnic identity: in their letter to the Ili leaders, the youths of Gucheng referred to themselves as Turks, Muslims, and Eastern Turkestanis—not as Uyghurs or Kazakhs. (The use of these broader communal terms may have represented an effort to embrace both Gucheng's Uyghur and Kazakh communities, or may simply have reflected the most commonly accepted communal markers among the signatories.)[87] What is clear, though, is that by the mid-1940s, many Turkic Muslims in southern, central, and eastern Xinjiang had come to see the Ili rebels as the vanguard of their community and their cause; and throughout the province, many young Muslims wanted a piece of the action. As hostilities between the Guomindang and the ETR

[85] Guchin yāshlāri, "Guchin yāshlāridin Aḥmad Jān, Isḥāq, Reḥim Jān efendilerge yézilghan bir pārche khet," *Shingjāng giziti* 15 July 1946: 2-3.
[86] Qasimi's daily visiting hours are noted in "Muhim kheber," *Shingjāng giziti* 26 July 1946: 3.
[87] In 1946, Gucheng sent eleven representatives to the provincial assembly, apportioned carefully by ethnicity: seven Han, two Uyghurs, one Hui, and one Kazakh. "Shing Jāng olkuluk nāhiye we sheherlerning tizimi nāhiye sheherlik kéngesh e'ẓālirining sāylinish jedwili."

ceased, border controls between their respective territories were relaxed, travel documents were declared unnecessary, and northward migration surged.[88]

By late summer 1946, the flow of young people and intellectuals to the ETR was such that brain drain emerged as a significant problem in the rest of Xinjiang. Ahmadjan Qasimi addressed the issue in an August 1946 editorial addressed to "Young People Seeking Passage to Ili!" and published in the *Xinjiang Gazette*.[89] Qasimi, now ensconced in Ürümchi as vice chair of the provincial coalition government, noted that young people from central and southern Xinjiang constantly sought his "permission to go to Ghulja and work in [government] offices, join the national army, or study." Some youths chose not to wait for Qasimi's approval, instead "leaving for Ghulja on their own, forty or fifty at a time." Young people in distant counties sent representatives hundreds of kilometers to make immigration inquiries from ETR officials in Ürümchi. The influx of talent was so great that the ETR labor market struggled to absorb it; Qasimi encouraged young intellectuals to remember that other parts of the province were more urgently in need of their services than the ETR, especially since the peace treaty had stipulated that civil servants would now be drawn from each area's native population. In Ghulja, conversely, state offices had reduced their staffs since the formation of the coalition government, and many of the young republic's soldiers had been furloughed following the cessation of hostilities.[90] While the glamor of the new Turkic republic attracted aspiring students in droves, Qasimi protested that Xinjiang's higher educational institutions were all still located in Ürümchi.

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[88] The relaxation of travel restrictions is reported in Mukhbir, "Oz khelqighe ishen'genlikdur," *Shingjāng giziti* 29 July 1946: 3.

[89] Olkulk Ḥokumet mu'āwin re'isi Aḥmad Jān Qāsimof, "Ghuljeghe bārishni ṭeleb qilghuchi yāshlārghā!" *Shingjāng giziti* 21 Aug. 1946: 2. Qasimi specified that he was addressing "anyone seeking to come to Ghulja for anything other than manual labor."

[90] By early August 1946, ETR Lieutenant General Is'haq Beg reported that ETR active-duty troops had been reduced, in accordance with the peace treaty, to 11-12 thousand, with discharged soldiers returned home. "Ölkülük ḥökümet mu'āwin re'isi Aḥmadjān Effendining mukhbirgha eytqan sözi," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 3.

The limits of the Eastern Turkestan labor market notwithstanding, the ETR continued for the remainder of its existence to exercise a powerful attraction for intellectuals and youth from the rest of the province. The resulting northward migration greatly enriched the intellectual life and civil service of the breakaway republic, even as it deprived southern and eastern Xinjiang of numerous gifted and ambitious young people and professionals. While this group of migrants did not share hometown ties with the original ETR cohort from Ili and Chöchek, their common experience of the twentieth century's only sustained experiment in Uyghur self-government catalyzed their integration into the broader Ili-Chöchek cohort. The ETR's personal and professional networks swiftly absorbed migrants like Turpan-born Uyghur Sayrani, who left his post as head editor of Ürümchi's Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette* to serve as head editor of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan* in Ghulja; Ibrahim Turdi, a native of Atush who left a publishing and government career in Ürümchi to run an organization in the ETR for volunteers from southern and eastern Xinjiang; and Ismayil Yasinov, who had spent his youth working various jobs around the province before making a successful career for himself in the ETR's education sector.[91] For individuals like these, the ETR offered career opportunities, relative political safety, and national pride. Their talents were welcomed by an ETR leadership that had already demonstrated an openness to southerners: Seypidin Ezizi (1915-2003), the ETR's

[91] The ETR's pull proved equally powerful for the small Kazakh population residing in Xinjiang outside the ETR. When Ibrahim Turdi, head of the provincial Uyghur Enlightenment Association, left to run the Democratic Union of the Seven Districts in Ili, Qasim Effendi, head of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Enlightenment Association, also left Ürümchi to serve as his deputy. On Ibrahim Turdi, Qasim Effendi, and the "Democratic Union of the Seven Districts" organization, see Arslanow, "'Yette wilayet khelqchiler birleshmisi' heqqide eslime," 277, and Xinjiang sanqu geming shi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆三区革命史编纂委员会, *Xinjiang sanqu geming dashiji* 新疆三区革命大事记 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe), 194. Ibrahim Turdi and Uyghur Sayrani were also founding organizers of the ETR's governing Union for Peace and Democracy; see Mukhbir, "Shinjāngdā tinchliqni we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi teshkili hey'itining 2nji qétimliq yighini otkuzuldi," *Inqilābiy Sharqiy Turkistān*, 1 Sep 1948: 3. Uyghur Sayrani, despite his name, was the scion of a prominent Tatar family; his entire career, however, took place in a Uyghur context. Uyghur Sayrani, "Uyghur Sayranining eslimisi," ed. Quddus Abdusemet, *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 107-34. For a detailed account of Ismayil Yasinov's remarkable life, see Guo Han 郭涵, "Renmin gongpu: xingwei dianfan 人民公仆：行为典范," Xinjiang wenxue wang, 11 Jan. 2014, http://news.ifeng.com/gundong/detail_2014_01/10/32913253_0.shtml.

minister of education, had been born and raised in Atush and pursued his education and career in Tashkent, Ürümchi, and Chöchek before arriving in Ghulja in the mid-1940s.

The emergence of northwestern Xinjiang—and Ili in particular—as the destination of choice for the province's Muslim intellectuals represented a stunning historical reversal from previous centuries, when the cultural ascendancy of Kashgar and Yarkand had been unquestioned. By mid-1949, Ahmadjan Qasimi could boast with some justice that "We all know that young people studying at the province's institutions of 'higher' education in Ürümchi… would rather come study at a high school in Ghulja."[92]

PRINT AND IDEOLOGY IN GUOMINDANG XINJIANG

Despite the ETR's considerable advantages in developing Turkic official culture in Xinjiang and winning hearts and minds among the province's Muslim population, Zhang Zhizhong's administration in Ürümchi made genuine efforts to offer a plausible alternative. Perhaps Zhang's most innovative gambit was his cultivation of a small but influential coterie of pan-Turkist elites from Xinjiang: intellectuals like Mes'ud Sebri, Yusuf Eysa Alptekin, Muhammad Emin Bughra, and Polat Qadiri. In addition to giving his Turkic allies (they largely eschewed the ethnonym Uyghur) free reign to promote pan-Turkic solidarity in print, General Zhang took the unprecedented step of appointing Mes'ud Sebri, a Xinjiang-born Muslim, governor of the province in May 1947. As relations between the Guomindang and the ETR deteriorated, Sebri worked with ideologically sympathetic Turkic intellectuals in Ürümchi to fashion an alternative communal narrative for Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims: one centered around pan-Turkic identity, Islam, anti-Communism, and membership in the Chinese nation. While they typically couched

[92] Aḥmad Jān Qāsimi, "Rehbirimiz Aḥmad Effendim janāblirining sozligen nuṭiqi," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 19. As relations between the ETR and the Guomindang soured after 1947, the Eastern Turkestan leadership had ceased any effort to discourage young migrants from abandoning Guomindang Xinjiang for the ETR.

this narrative in terms of timeless tradition, these intellectuals were eager to use the most modern methods of print distribution to propagate their ideas.[93] Zhang Zhizhong was happy to oblige them, and placed in their hands control of much of Ürümchi's Turkic-language publishing apparatus.

In his openness to mass print as a means of influencing public opinion, General Zhang again differed starkly from his predecessor. From autumn 1944 through autumn 1945, as the Ili rebellion raged, residents of Ürümchi and southern Xinjiang had kept abreast of developments primarily through word of mouth. Governor Wu Zhongxin's pusillanimous press policy banned all mention of the Ili rebellion from the press, as well as any mention of the ongoing civil war between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communists. In early 1945, Wu installed a close confidante, Jin Shaoxian, as temporary editor of the *Xinjiang Gazette*, and in November 1945 replaced him with Zhang Zhenpei, another trusted lieutenant said to be a relative of Wu. Governor Wu was clearly keen to keep close watch over the *Gazette*, by then an influential publication with a print run of more than 10,000 in Chinese and 5,000 in Uyghur.[94] Governor Wu saw the paper more as a liability than as a tool; there is no record of Wu attempting to win the sympathies of Xinjiang's Turkic Muslim masses. His preferred method of governing Xinjiang's Muslims and Mongols harkened back to Yang Zengxin and the Qing viceroys who preceded him: establishing close relationships with local notables and entrusting them with the management of the province's non-Han populations.

By the mid-1940s, however, native-language literacy and print culture had made deep inroads in Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking communities, and no amount of courting local elites or censoring the press would enable Wu to turn back the clock. His successor, Zhang Zhizhong,

[93] The fullest account in English of the ideology promoted by this group is Klimeš, *Struggle by the Pen*, 187-226.
[94] "Kangri zhanzheng shiqi de Xinjiang ribao, xia," 47-48; *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, pp. 19, 54; Zhang, *Zai lishi de jiafeng zhong*, 45; Li, "Guomindang tongzhi shiqi de 'Xinjiang Ribao'," 83.

seems to have appreciated this reality. Dispensing with Governor Wu's policy of governing through local elites, the Xinjiang government under General Zhang made real efforts to reach the masses directly through print. As in the ETR, local governments in Guomindang Xinjiang made an effort to raise literacy levels and expand their reading public, though their efforts were more erratic and less centralized than the ETR's literacy campaign. In Kashgar's Old City, each primary school offered literacy classes for adults, with almost four thousand men and women learning to read during 1945-46 winter literacy classes; the county government intended to continue enrolling similar numbers in literacy classes each year.[95]

Despite an expanding reading public, book publishing in Guomindang Xinjiang progressed only slowly, with demand for non-Chinese books far outstripping supply. While Soviet publications in Turkic languages poured into the ETR, such imports were neither available nor ideologically acceptable to the Guomindang. Nor was the USSR eager to share printing equipment with the Guomindang as it did with the ETR. For Turkic-speakers in Guomindang Xinjiang, it was clear that the Chinese Nationalists were unable or unwilling to fulfill their needs. In summer 1946, in the heady early days of the peace accord, Turkic-speaking youths in Gucheng appealed for assistance to the ETR leaders in Ürümchi. "Although the feeling of modern progressive thought and love of country and nation overflows in our youth, we lack textbooks, books on our people's ancient and modern history, and books that explain true populism. Our youths dearly hope to read such books. If possible, we ask that you take measures toward this end!"[96] With the new school year approaching, Toqsun's Turkic-speakers similarly appealed to the Ürümchi government to provide textbooks for the county's primary schools, as

[95] 'Abd al-Majid Ḥesen, "Qeshqer kohne sheherning medeni ma'ārifi," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 Aug. 1946: 3.
[96] Guchin yāshlāri, "Guchin yāshlāridin Aḥmad Jān, Isḥāq, Reḥim Jān efendilerge yézilghan bir pārche khet," *Shingjāng giziti* 15 July 1946: 2-3.

promised in the peace treaty.[97] The coalition government took printing seriously, and in late summer the provincial government's standing committee approved Education Minister Seyfidin Ezizi's request for additional funding and printing hardware for the Culture Bookstore, the state publishing house originally established by Sheng Shicai's government a decade before.[98] Altay Publishers in Ürümchi meanwhile put out a number of books promoting their pan-Turkist ideology.[99]

A key tenet of the peace agreement was freedom of speech and of the press—a stipulation which Zhang seems to have done his best to honor. Within months of the peace accord's ratification, independent periodicals sprang up across Guomindang-ruled Xinjiang. Journals like *Khan Tengri* and *Altay*, mostly printed in Ürümchi, offered a range of viewpoints on topics of current interest.[100] Young intellectuals in Ürümchi had worked toward founding *Khan Tengri* during the chaotic period immediately preceding the Guomindang-ETR peace accords, but state pressure had initially stymied plans for the journal. *Khan Tengri* editor Nurmuhammad Sadirov pointed specifically to the interference of Qasim Qurbani, a lackey of Governor Wu who "twirled his mustache" while his network of spies sent numerous Uyghur youths to prison. Qurbani spread rumors among Ürümchi officialdom that the *Khan Tengri* activists were attempting to "found a branch of [Soviet journal] *Eastern Truth* in Ürümchi… in

[97] Ḥāmid Khwāje Aḥmadi and Bahā' al-Din 'Oshuri, "Shing Jāng ölkülük ḥökümetke 'erẓ," *Shingjāng giziti* 8 Aug. 1946: 2.
[98] Mukhbir, "Olkuluk ḥokumetning 5inchi qétimliq dā'imi hey'etler yighinida teṣdiqlān'ghan qārārlār," *Shingjāng giziti* 20 Aug. 1946: 3.
[99] Representative publications of Altay Publishers are discussed in Klimeš, *Struggle by the Pen*, 198-226.
[100] *Altay*, which appeared in both Chinese and Turkic editions, had in fact been printed in Chongqing since the early 1940s, when a number of prominent Uyghur nationalist intellectuals made common cause with the Chinese Nationalist leadership. It was only after Zhang Zhizhong arrived in Xinjiang, however, that the journal established its "Turkistan publishing house," and began printing the journal in Xinjiang itself, with Mes'ud Sebri as honorary chair of the Turkistan [Xinjiang] branch. "Chongchingdiki Āltāy mejmu'e idāresi Turkistān neshriyāt idāresining niẓāmnāmesi," *Shingjāng giziti* 24 June 1946: 2-3; "Turkistānda 'Āltāy' neshriyāt idāresining qurulush murāsimi," *Shingjāng giziti* 24 June 1946: 3. A couple weeks after announcing the opening of its Xinjiang branch, *Altay* posted a wide-ranging call for submissions in the provincial newspaper. "Āltāy neshriyātining Tūrkistān sho'besi ṭerefidin bildürüsh," *Shingjāng giziti* 6 July 1946: 4.

which it seems they will attack the government."[101] Polat Qadiri, another *Khan Tengri* editor, similarly recalled that state officials suspected the young activists of anti-government activity and support for the Ili rebels, with the police chief calling Qadiri and others in for questioning.[102]

Mere days after the peace accord was signed in June 1946, however, *Khan Tengri*'s first issue was finally published amidst effusive praise from the provincial government, including a warm front-page welcome in the provincial newspaper. Some of the leading lights of Ürümchi's intellectual circles were in attendance at a thousand-person inaugural gala for *Khan Tengri* held in the wooded Ürümchi suburb of Ulanbay, joined by top representatives of the Ili and Guomindang administrations.[103] The next month, *Khan Tengri* head editor Ibrahim Turdi was appointed to an official state inspection tour of southern Xinjiang, and announced that he would use the opportunity to personally distribute 500 copies of his journal's first issue throughout the south of the province.[104] It was a remarkable reversal of fortune for the new journal; and it was all made possible by the Guomindang-ETR peace treaty.[105]

Across the south of the province, independent Uyghur-language newspapers were established in counties with little or no history of periodical printing: *Voice of Unity* in Bügür,

[101] "19- Iyul küni Uyghur uyushmāsidā yālghān khelq wekillirige nārāziliq bildürüp échilghān zor khelq yighinidā yāshlār wekili Nurmuḥammad Sādirofning sözligen nuṭiqi," *Shingjāng giziti* 27 July 1946: 3.
[102] Polat Qadiri, *Ölke tārikhi* (Ürümchi: Āltāy neshriyāt idāresining tārikh-jughrāfiye turkumi, 1948), 163-75.
[103] The gala included speeches by the *Xinjiang Gazette*'s new editor Huang Zhenxia, high-ranking Guomindang official and former Khotan revolutionary Muḥammad Imin Bughra, leading intellectual Ibrahim Muṭi'i, and *Khān Tengri* director Ibrahim Turdi. "Khān Tengri bāzārgha chiqdi" (unsigned advertisement), *Shingjāng giziti* 7 June 1946: 3; "Khān Tengrige ilhām bérimiz," *Shingjāng giziti* 11 June 1946: 1; "Toy shundāq qizisā," *Shingjāng giziti* 13 June 1946: 4, *Shingjāng giziti* 14 June 1946: 4. From its second issue, *Khan Tengri* began publishing two editions, one in "the Uyghur, Uzbek, and Tatar dialects" and the other in the "Kazakh and Kyrgyz dialects." Unsigned article, "Sheher khebiri," *Shingjāng giziti* 5 July 1946: 3.
[104] Mukhbir, "Jenubiy Shing Jāngni tekshürüsh ömegi yolgha chiqdi,"*Shingjang giziti* 5 July 1946: 3. Youth in Kashgar, having caught wind of the hullabaloo around the journal, waited eagerly for the first copies to arrive. Gāng Qelem, "Qeshqer kheberliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 19 June 1946: 3. Nur Sadiri temporarily served as head editor while Ibrahim Turdi was on the southern inspection tour. "Sheher kheberliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 6 July 1946.
[105] *Khan Tengri* returned the coalition government's newfound affection, seeing to the publication of political speeches by Ahmadjan Qasimi and Burhan Shehidi in a special booklet (*risale*), to be sold at Khan Tengri's own storefront. Mukhbir, "Khān Tengrining yene bir khizmiti," *Shingjāng giziti* 27 July 1946: 4.

Nightingale of the Meadow in Toqsun, *Taklamakan* in Lopnur, and numerous others.[106] Facilities were often simple in comparison with the increasingly mechanized *Xinjiang Gazette* branches; the first newspapers in Qarasheher were printed by mimeograph, while Qumul's first newspaper published its weekly issues on lithograph.[107] In Kashgar, the local branch of the *Xinjiang Gazette* was temporarily replaced by a newspaper called *Consciousness* (*Ang*),[108] while a new paper called *Teacher* (*Mu'ellim*) began publication in the same city.[109] In towns with no periodicals, wall newspapers went up, some of them unauthorized and openly critical of local authorities. Turkic-speaking residents of Gucheng, walking disappointedly home from a town assembly at which the magistrate and other Han officials had delivered remarks exclusively in untranslated Chinese, were delighted to come across a Turkic-language wall newspaper placed prominently in the main thoroughfare. The paper, which had been placed there by a secret youth group, was full of poems and articles denouncing prior abuses by local officials and calling the people to "freedom and national liberation."[110]

But with the coalition government promising a new era of freedom and justice, secret societies and guerrilla propaganda tactics were no longer the only way to express complaints against the state, and particularly against corrupt local governments and army units. Young Muslims in Turpan, hoping that public pressure could sway a sympathetic administration in Ürümchi, sent a detailed letter of complaint to the *Xinjiang Gazette*, which printed it for distribution throughout the province.[111] The letter recounted how Turpan's Han magistrate had

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[106] ʿÖmeri, "Neshriyāt ishliri kéngeymekde."
[107] T., "Qumulda heftilik gizit neshir qilindi," *Shingjāng giziti* 11 July 1946: 3.
[108] It is possible that reports of a much earlier Kashgar newspaper called *Ang* (see above), for whose reported 1918 publication no evidence has come to light, took inspiration in part from this 1946 newspaper.
[109] For an account of Kashgar's *Teacher* newspaper, see Memtimin Noruz, "Bitim mezgilidiki 'Mu'ellim' Géziti." *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 32: 182–85.
[110] Guchin yāshlāri, "Guchin yāshlāridin Aḥmad Jān, Isḥāq, Reḥim Jān efendilerge yézilghan bir pārche khet," *Shingjāng giziti* 15 July 1946: 2-3.
[111] "Bu khiḍmetchilerning bizge néme kéregi bār?!" *Shingjāng giziti* 29 July 1946: 3.

unconvincingly declared himself a Muslim upon his arrival in the city the previous year, and had proceeded to mercilessly exploit the local Muslim population while favoring the Han community. Meanwhile, Turpan's Turkic-language education system floundered under the leadership of a Uyghur official named Tursun (also known by the Chinese name Gu Jingqing), who was too busy brawling drunkenly in the streets to attend to the people's educational needs. More than a hundred letters of complaint to Governor Wu Zhongxin, and more than ten such letters to his successor Zhang Zhizhong, had so far produced no result. Having found no redress through their numerous petitions to state authorities, the traditional mode of expressing civic grievance in China, Turpan's Muslim youth now hoped for results from a new means of political action: public protest via mass print.

Similar letters appeared regularly in Xinjiang's press during the peace treaty era, imploring the provincial government to right various local wrongs, cashier corrupt officials, and implement the terms of the peace treaty. Writing in the provincial *Gazette* "in the name of all residents of Toqsun," Khéwir Tömür complained in August 1946 that Han drivers regularly wreaked havoc on their way through the town, beating up and even killing residents, while "government soldiers don't lift a finger, despite eating Toqsun's flatbread for years amidst promises to protect us."[112] The people of Toqsun had thus sent representatives to Ürümchi to take up the matter through official channels; if their efforts were unsuccessful, Toqsun's residents "would not shrink from gathering these inhuman brutes and sending their souls to hell." A few days later, having reached Ürümchi, the Toqsun representatives published their own letter in the *Gazette*, enumerating this and other grievances, and making a series of requests from the

[112] Kh. Tömüri, "Toqsun fuqrāliri ghezebke keldi," *Shingjāng giziti* 3 August 1946: 3. Khéwir Tömür (also Tömüri, 1922-1992) played a major role in the development of Uyghur historical fiction in the 1980s; see chapter 7.

coalition government.[113] Many such letters were addressed specifically to the ETR members of the coalition government, whom Muslims throughout Xinjiang hoped would lend a receptive ear to their troubles. "To our great compassionate father the honorable Mister Vice Chairman Ahmad!" began a petition from the Turkic community of Fukang, not far from Ürümchi.[114] "We Uyghur and Kazakh residents of Fukang County… have long suffered greatly under the dark corrupt policies that have left us in ignorance… oppression which has continually deepened right up to the present day." The Fukang Turkic community hoped that Ahmadjan Qasimi could expedite implementation of the peace treaty in Fukang, and published their letter in the provincial *Gazette* to help increase pressure on the Ürümchi government.

Freedom of speech inevitably led to some degree of competitiveness among the proliferating publications. In summer 1946, a small feud began when one Jari Effendi (Mr. Jari) published an article "On Literary Art" in the *Xinjiang Gazette*, in which he asserted in passing that "the *Kashgar Gazette* has greatly deteriorated in comparison with the past, and is failing to make progress."[115] A couple months later, a *Kashgar Gazette* partisan named R. Bahari fired back, with the *Xinjiang Gazette* graciously opening its pages to his lengthy rebuttal. Bahari pointed out that the *Kashgar Gazette* had recently moved from semi-weekly to daily publication, and inquired whether Mr. Jari would be satisfied if the paper began publishing hourly editions. In response to Jari's criticism that the *Kashgar Gazette* lacked dedicated sections like Literature, Bahari noted that though the *Kashgar Gazette* lacked the resources to regularly run such sections, the paper frequently published "political and literary poems" that "promote principles, improve the public mood, raise public consciousness, develop popular literature [khelq edebiyāti], and

[113] Ḥāmid Khwāje Aḥmadi and Bahā' al-Din 'Oshuri, "Shing Jāng ölkülük ḥökümetke 'erẓ," *Shingjāng giziti* 8 Aug. 1946: 2.
[114] Omārqān Nur al-Din, Qāsim Iminof, et al., "Büyük ghemkhor ātāmiz mu'āwin re'isi Aḥmad effendi jānāblirige!" *Shingjāng giziti* 26 Aug 1946: 4.
[115] R. Bahāri, "Tenqidge jawāb," *Shingjang giziti* 19 June 1946: 4; 21 June 1946: 4.

perform other important works for country and nation." As the Jari-Bahari debate makes clear, Xinjiang's newspaper publishers took their public role quite seriously.

Meanwhile, things were getting complicated at the *Xinjiang Gazette* head office. One of General Zhang's first important press initiatives after assuming the governorship had been to fire Zhang Zhenpei, Governor Wu's appointee as Editor of the *Gazette*.[116] Zhang Zhenpei had permitted the printing of an article perceived as anti-Soviet, imperiling General Zhang's policy of rapprochement with the USSR. Since his arrival in Xinjiang, Zhang Zhizhong had avidly promoted warm relations with the Soviets in hopes of maintaining peace with the Soviet-backed ETR; this extended from the creation of a Chinese-Soviet Cultural Association to the maintenance of a friendly press policy vis-à-vis the USSR.[117] It would hardly do, then, to have anti-Soviet articles appearing in the Xinjiang government's official print organ before the ink was dry on the peace treaty.

Having fired Zhang Zhenpei in a hurry, General Zhang appointed Huang Zhenxia and Zhang Zige as the *Gazette*'s temporary Editor and Assistant Editor, respectively.[118] Zhang Zige was then a Xinjiang Institute professor with a progressive reputation, and thus presumably palatable to the Soviets. That very quality, though, made him suspicious to General Zhang's superiors. The right-wingers known as the "CC clique," then ascendant in the Guomindang leadership, would have been skeptical of Zhang Zige, who while teaching at a Guomindang military academy had faced accusations of being a closet Communist. Governor Zhang needed

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[116] Zhou, *Xinjiang shi nian*, 277.

[117] Echoing the organization founded by Sheng Shicai in the 1930s, Zhang created a Chinese-Soviet Cultural Association (Zhong-Su wenhua xiehui 中蘇文化協會) in October 1946. Zhang's Chinese-Soviet Cultural Association was tasked with running reading rooms and with translating extracts from Soviet books and periodicals for publication in the Uyghur-language Xinjiang Daily and other venues. *Zhushu chuban zhi*, 10.

[118] *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, 19; Shi ji 史辑, "Kangzhan shengli hou dao heping jiefang de Xinjiang ribao 抗战胜利后到和平解放前的《新疆日报》," *Xinjiang xinwenjie (dangdai chuanbo)* 2 (1986): 47-48; Bai Runsheng 白润生, ed., Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xinwen chuanbo tongshi 中国少数民族新闻传播通史 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2008), 336-37.

some right-wing window dressing to distract the Guomindang from the left-wing window dressing he was preparing for the Soviets. Huang Zhenxia (黄震遐 1907-74), a virulently nationalist journalist whose career had taken him from Shanghai to northwestern China, must have seemed the perfect candidate.[119]

The revealing ironies of Huang's brief career in Xinjiang help illustrate the seriousness of General Zhang's overtures toward the province's Muslim majority. In his salad days in prewar Shanghai, Huang Zhenxia had been a founding member of the "nationalist literature movement," a Guomindang-sponsored artistic tendency that sought to promote national unity through blood-and-soil literary propaganda. Lu Xun, sizing up the movement, criticized Huang's epic poem *Blood of the Yellow Race* as a veiled anti-Soviet polemic.[120] Huang's active journalistic and literary career in Shanghai was cut short by the Japanese invasion, and he left the coast to join up with Guomindang forces in the Northwest. After serving as an army instructor and holding various high-level publishing posts in Shaanxi and Gansu, Huang entered Xinjiang after the Guomindang had successfully wrested control of the province from Sheng Shicai.

Despite his ardently right-wing background, Huang proved most adaptable to Zhang Zhizhong's conciliatory policy toward the Soviet Union and the ETR.[121] Soon after arriving at the *Xinjiang Gazette*, the inveterate Chinese nationalist Huang announced at a meeting of the newspaper's bureau chiefs that "From now on, the most important work at the newspaper office will be on the Uyghur and Kazakh papers. These papers will have pride of place; the Chinese

[119] Zhang, *Zai lishi de jiafeng zhong*, 40-41; Bai Zhensheng 白振声 and Liyuan Xinyi 鲤渊信一, eds., *Xinjiang xiandai zhengzhi shehui shilüe* 新疆现代政治社会史略 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1992), 439.
[120] Wang-Chi Wong, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: The Chinese League of Left-Wing Writers, 1930-36* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), esp. 122-24.
[121] Shi ji 史辑, "Kangzhan shengli hou dao heping jiefang qian de Xinjiang ribao 抗战胜利后到和平解放前的《新疆日报》," in Xinjiang xinwen jie 2 (1986): 47-48.

paper will be published as an ancillary."[122] The next month, in his "Open Letter to Muslim Youth," Huang—never one for understatement—described his mutual affection for Xinjiang's young Muslims as "like love and hope constantly reborn between brothers."[123] Along with Zhang Zige, Huang published a flurry of sympathetic articles about the USSR and the ETR rebels, and Huang accompanied Governor Zhang on a trip to meet the ETR leadership in their capital, Ghulja. Huang sent back dispatches singing the praises of the rebellion, rhapsodizing that he truly understood the rebels' feelings and admired the bravery of their heroes.[124] In a lengthy series on "the current state of Uyghur culture," Huang eulogized the "genius" Lutpulla Mutellip, the left-wing poet and dramaturge who had been executed the previous year by Guomindang authorities in Aqsu as the ETR army besieged the city.[125] This Chinese fascist's paean for a Uyghur socialist epitomizes the ideological contortions undergone in the 1930s and 1940s by the Xinjiang state and by the intellectuals, both Han and Muslim, who were willing or obliged to cooperate with it.

Despite his impressive ideological flexibility, Huang's tenure at the *Xinjiang Gazette* did not last long. For three days in September 1946, employees of the *Gazette* carried out the first strike in the paper's history after management had fallen months behind in paying their wages. When the strike broke out, Huang was holidaying in the Nanshan Mountains outside Ürümchi, and was flustered when called back to deal with his striking employees. He failed to negotiate a deal, and the workers were placated only once the city government agreed to pay their back wages in full. A few weeks later, Huang was quietly transferred away from his post at the

[122] Mukhbir, "Gizit khāne kheberi," *Shingjang giziti* 7 June 1946: 3.
[123] "Musulmān yāshlirigha khiṭāb (mekhsus maqāle)," *Shingjāng giziti* 15 July 1946: 1; 16 July 1946: 2. This odd, patronizing feuilleton draws on romantic nationalist tropes—a specialty of Huang's—to paint an exotic picture of Xinjiang's oasis towns and Muslim youth, and to proffer unsought advice to Xinjiang's young Muslims.
[124] *Xinjiang ribao* 9 September 1946, cited in Zhang Dajun 張大軍, *Xinjiang fengbao qishi nian* 新疆風暴七十年, vol. 12 (Taibei: Lanxi chubanshe, 1980), 7115-16.
[125] Huang Zhenxia, "Weizu wenhua de xiankuang, liu: Lutefula pipan 維族文化的現況，六，魯特夫拉批判," *Xinjiang Ribao*, 8 June 1946: 3.

newspaper.[126] Wage disputes were not the only source of managerial chaos at the newspaper during this period. Zhang Zige, who in fact performed much of the managerial work at the paper during Huang's tenure, wasted little time in imposing his own ideological preferences on the *Gazette*. Shortly after his appointment as Assistant Editor, Zhang Zige—with the enthusiastic assent of General Zhang Zhizhong—fired all of the Guomindang operative he could find working at the paper and replaced them with his own students from Xinjiiang Institute.[127] His base thus secure, Zhang flourished at the *Gazette*, and was promoted from assistant editor to senior editor in June 1946.[128]

Despite the administrative instability at the newspaper offices, the Uyghur-language *Gazette* continued to expand throughout this period. A June 1946 ad in the *Gazette* invited young men ages sixteen through twenty-five to apply for a six-month apprenticeship program in printing and typesetting, provided that the applicants had "good morals, mid-level education, and full literacy."[129] A couple months later, the *Gazette*'s print shop put out another call for apprentices, noting that applicants of all ethnic backgrounds would be considered, but that

[126] Chen Fengtao 陈锋涛, "1946 nian Xinjiang ribao she gongren bagong jishi 1946 年新疆日报社工人罢工纪实," in *Wulumuqi wenshi ziliao* 13 (1987): 36; Li, "Guomindang tongzhi shiqi de Xinjiang Ribao," 87. Around the time of Huang's dismissal from the *Xinjiang Gazette*, he proposed founding a Northwest Historical-Geographical Society. General Zhang approved the Society's creation, allotted it a building, personnel, and funds, and made Huang its director. Huang wasted no time in displaying his unique managerial style, lighting out for Shanghai and Nanjing a month after the opening ceremony with a substantial chunk of the Society's funds, ostensibly to procure necessary personnel and materials. He never returned to Ürümchi, nor did the piggy bank of the Society, which quickly became defunct. Zhang, *Zai lishi de jiafeng zhong*, 84-85. After the Communist victory in 1949 Huang washed up in Hong Kong, where he served in various senior editorial capacities at the Hong Kong Times and other publications. In 1973, a year before his death, Huang became a consultant for America's RAND Corporation—no doubt one of the few RAND consultants with a prior career praising martyred Communist poets.

[127] Ibid., 59-60.

[128] Mukhbir, "Gizit khāne kheberi," *Shingjāng giziti* 7 June 1946: 3. At the same 6 June staff meeting, Polat Qadiri was promoted to replace Zhang as vice editor.

[129] "Gizit khānening basma bolumi we tizish bolumige shāgird qobul qilinmāqchi," unsigned advertisement, *Shingjāng giziti* 7 June 1946: 3.

applicants were limited to healthy young men with an elementary school education or the equivalent.[130]

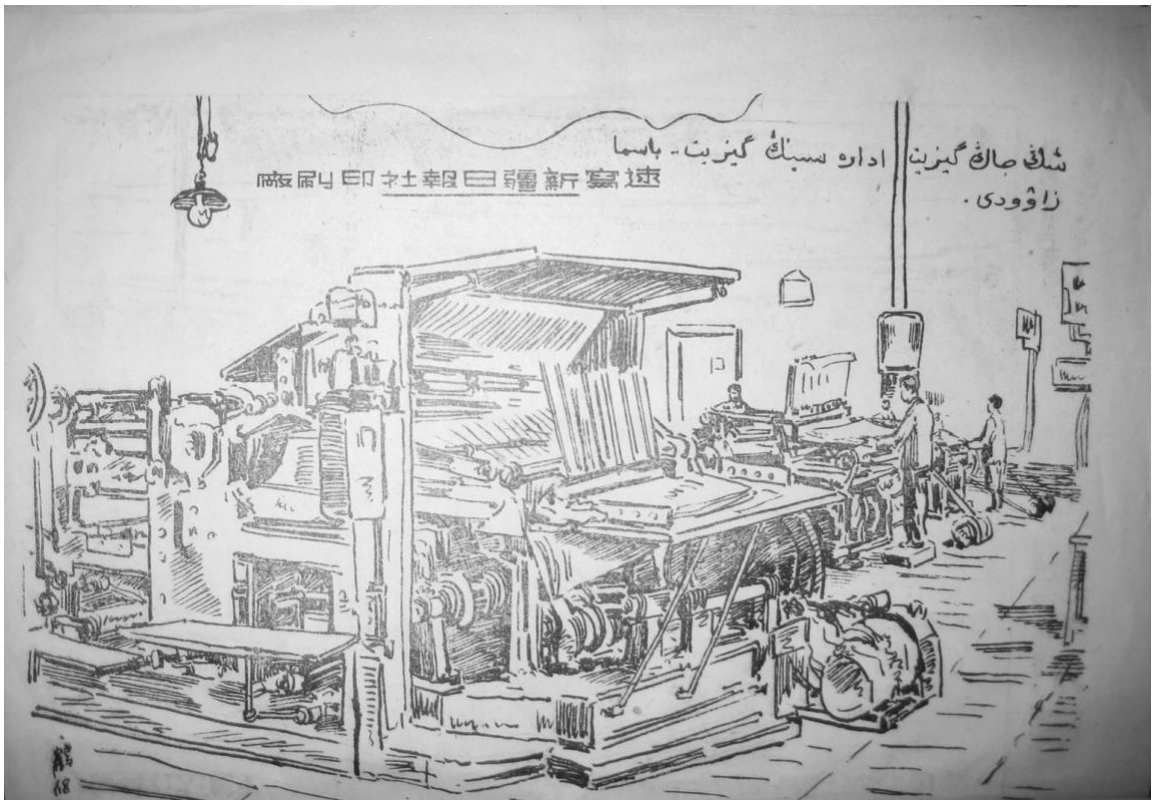


Figure 4: Xinjiang Gazette *print shop, summer 1946*
Qingbai huakan 清白畫刊 *7 (Ürümchi: Qingbai huakan she, Aug. 1946), n. p.*

Meanwhile, a schism had developed between the Chinese and Uyghur-Kazakh sections of the *Gazette*'s Ürümchi headquarters. After the ETR-Guomindang peace treaty was signed, the Uyghur and Kazakh editions of the *Gazette* had aligned themselves openly with the ETR leadership; and as friction increased within the coalition government, the *Gazette*'s Turkic editions called for fuller implementation of the treaty's terms.[131] As one ETR author put it,

[130] Bāsmā zāwudi, "Bāsmā zāwutidin ukhturush," *Shingjāng giziti* 3 August 1946: 4. The divergent spellings of *zawud*/*zawut* were typical of the orthographic confusion in Xinjiang's mid-century press.
[131] Ismayil Esqiri, "'Shinjang géziti' toghrisida qisqiche eslime," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 26 (1989): 208-09.

"*Xinjiang Gazette* in Ürümchi, which had been singing to the tune of the dictatorial government, began to speak also of the people's interest."[132] At the same time, the *Gazette*'s Chinese edition maintained an editorial policy of support for the Guomindang authorities. With tensions rising, General Zhang acceded to the ETR leadership's request to divide the *Gazette* in two. The Uyghur and Kazakh sections were reorganized as a separate bureau and placed under ETR administration, while the Chinese section remained under the purview of the Guomindang.[133]

By 1946, then, the *Xinjiang Gazette* had lost its monopoly on Uyghur-language journalism in the province; and for the first time since Sheng had centralized Xinjiang's newspapers in the mid-1930s, competing views on politics and society could be encountered in Xinjiang's press. Zhang Zhizhong no doubt soon regretted agreeing to split the *Gazette*. The Uyghur and Kazakh editions maintained a highly critical stance toward the Ürümchi government's failure to fully implement the terms of the peace accords, and by May 1947, as the treaty teetered and ultimately collapsed, the Chinese- and Uyghur-language versions of the *Xinjiang Gazette* were openly attacking each other and their sponsors in repeated editorials and letters to the editor.[134] A May 1947 Chinese *Xinjiang Gazette* editorial, directed at the paper's estranged Uyghur brother, bore the title "Who's the Reactionary?"[135] In the Uyghur *Xinjiang Gazette*, writers waxed poetic against the sins of the Guomindang. "They foresook us and ignored/ the Eleven-Point Peace Accord/ so many times we wrote complaints/ over and over we implored," wrote Bügür assemblyman Imin Mufti—no poet, to be sure, but no pushover

[132] ʿÖmeri, "Neshriyāt ishliri kéngeymekde."
[133] Li, "Guomindang tongzhi shiqi de Xinjiang ribao," 85–86; *Baoye zhi*, 57, 60; Esqiri, "'Shinjang géziti' toghrisida qisqiche eslime," 208–09; *Shinjang üch wilayet inqilabigha da'ir chong ishlar khatirisi*, 241.
[134] Benson, *The Ili Rebellion*, 117; *Baoye zhi*, 57. The Uyghur-language letters and editorials are mentioned in Uyghur Sayrani, "Uyghur Sayranining eslimisi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 124-25.
[135] "Shei shi fandongfenzi? 誰是反動分子?", *Xinjiang ribao* 17 May 1947: 2.

either.[136] The Guomindang retaliated by threatening to withhold the salary of the Uyghur-Kazakh *Gazette* office's staff, and by placing a Guomindang representative at the paper to keep watch. Finally, in April-May 1947, the Guomindang attempted to arrest Uyghur Sayrani, head editor of the *Gazette*'s Uyghur and Kazakh editions since July 1946, whom they held responsible for the Turkic editions' critical posture toward the Guomindang. Sayrani fled to the ETR's Ürümchi offices, where Guomindang police dared not tread, and ultimately escaped to Ghulja in late August with the last group of ETR officials to leave Ürümchi.[137]

The Guomindang quickly moved to reestablish control over the Uyghur-Kazakh *Xinjiang Gazette*, and to close the recently opened independent newspapers scattered across the south of the province. Polat Qadiri, a pan-Turkist Guomindang stalwart and an associate of newly installed Xinjiang Governor Mes'ud Sebri and his deputy Yusuf Eysa Alptekin, was placed in charge of the Uyghur-Kazakh *Gazette*,[138] and before long the newspaper's Uyghur and Kazakh editions were once more a reliable wellspring of Guomindang propaganda. ETR officials' speeches and editorials disappeared from the pages, and were replaced by endless articles on General Zhang's meetings with various dignitaries and officials; speeches by Mes'ud Sebri and Yusuf Eysa; and articles by various right-wing Uyghur luminaries. Emblematic of the Guomindang administration's efforts to meld right-wing Chinese nationalism with local Islamic

[136] Imin Mufti, "Olkuluk ḥokumet erbāblirigha 'erẓ: 'dād faryād,'" *Shingjāng giziti* 27 May 1947: 4. The bulk of the poem is concerned with complaints against the government's economic policies, high taxes, and failure to pay teachers' salaries.

[137] Sayrani's July 1946 appointment as head editor of the *Gazette*'s Uyghur and Kazakh editions is noted in "Sheher kheberliri," *Shingjāng giziti* 6 July 1946: 3. Sayrani was an old friend of ETR leader Abdukérim Abbasov, and after Sayrani arrived in Ghulja in 1947, Ahmadjan Qasimi put him in charge of the leading ETR newspaper, which he ran until the beginning of CCP rule. In 1949, Sayrani became one of the CCP's first native recruits in Xinjiang, and was appointed assistant editor of the reunited Chinese-Uyghur-Kazakh *Xinjiang Daily* before once more being cashiered in 1950, an incident described below in Chapter Three. On Sayrani's newspaper career in Ürümchi and the ETR, see Uyghur Sayrani, "Uyghur Sayranining eslimisi," passim; Shérip Niyaz Khushtar, *Shinjang yéqinqi zaman tarikhida ötken shekhsler* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2003), 323; Muhemmed Rozi, "Qisqiche eslime," 371; *Shinjang üch wilayet inqilabigha da'ir chong ishlar khatirisi*, 241.

[138] Many sources claim, erroneously, that the Uyghur and Kazakh newspapers continued to be administered by the ETR until the advent of CCP rule; this is definitively refuted by contemporary sources and reliable memoir literature, e.g., Esqiri, "'Shinjang géziti' toghrisida qisqiche eslime," 210-13.

pieties was the *hadith* quotation beside the masthead in each issue of the Uyghur *Gazette*, and the newspaper's new practice of listing the date in Islamic, Gregorian, and Minguo (Republican) format. As independent publications in Guomindang-ruled Xinjiang were suppressed, the pan-Turkists grouped around Sebri were given a free hand to promote their version of Turkic unity under the aegis of the Chinese state. A thrice-weekly periodical called *Freedom* (*Erk*) emerged as the flagship periodical for pan-Turkist Guomindang allies, under a masthead bearing the slogan "We are populists, we are nationalists, we are for all mankind."

Mes'ud Sebri's term as governor was rocky, marked by violent protests, disrupted elections, and the final breakdown of the peace treaty. In January 1949, the unpopular Sebri resigned, and was replaced by Zhang Zhizhong's deputy Burhan Shehidi, a Russian-born Tatar who had previously served in the administrations of both Yang Zengxin and Sheng Shicai, despite the radical ideological differences between the two. Following the nadir of ETR-Guomindang relations during the Sebri administration, the politically flexible Burhan's ascension to the provincial governorship heralded a gradual thaw, reflected in the official press of both states. Following the suppression of independent publications, the *Gazette* had once again become the dominant periodical in Guomindang-ruled Xinjiang, and under the leadership of Burhan appointees Yusuf Se'idi and 'Oshur 'Ali the paper's stance toward the ETR softened markedly.[139] Whether voluntarily or not, some of the most right-wing journalists at the *Gazette* resigned from their positions.[140] Ineed, the *Gazette* seemed focused for most of 1949 not on politics, but on self-improvement. The paper's editorial policy in the late 1940s was heavily focused on bringing modernity in its Chinese Nationalist guise—typified by Chiang Kai-shek's

[139] Esqiri, "'Shinjang géziti' toghrisida qisqiche eslime," 214-15. Se'idi replaced the right-wing Polat Qadiri, a change of personnel announced in "Idāremizning mudirliqighe Yūsuf Se'idi belgülendi," *Shingjāng giziti*, 11 Jan. 1949: 3.

[140] "'Eysa Beg Effendi butun ishindin istifā berdi," *Shingjang géziti* 11 Jan. 1949: 3; "Bash muḥerrir Otkur Effendi istifa berdi," *Shinjang géziti* 14 Jan. 1949: 3.

New Life Movement—to Xinjiang. As the Editorial Board of the *Gazette* opined in early 1949, "Our publication, as the print organ of our government, considers it to be its most honorable duty to proceed under the directives of our government and according to the hopes of our people, and to lead our people to higher culture, save them from cultural ignorance, help them achieve a modern economy, help them be a modern people with training in modern morals, and make them rich in their lifestyle and versed in scientific knowledge... in short, to help them achieve all of the things which modern life might demand of them."[141]

In summing up the ideological twists and turns of the previous two decades, *Gazette* Editor Polat Qadiri, a faithful right-wing partisan, shrewdly skewered those Turkic intellectuals in Xinjiang who trimmed their sails to the political winds. "Because we are a people who have long lived in ignorance, unable to tell black from white, we have been unable to find our own road, and have always walked the path others have shown us… Thus we young people, we people have reached a condition of blind following in everything we do."[142] Qadiri compared young Uyghur intellectuals unfavorably to members of the animal kingdom, noting that while crickets and birds may change their color to adapt to their climate, they each continue to sing their own distinctive song. He argued that "we have discarded the principle of adapting to the environment, and have gone beyond changing our external colors; we have become accustomed to changing our blood, our conscience, our principles, and our appearance all at the same time. That is to say, if we were pigeons, when our color changed from gray to yellow, we would also give up our pigeon song and start singing like crows." Qadiri's unsparing account of mainstream Uyghur intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s provides a useful encapsulation of Xinjiang's ideological trends during that period.

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[141] Unsigned article, "Bizning metbu'āṭimiz," Uyghur *Shingjang geziti* 14 Jan. 1949: 1.
[142] Pulāt Qādiri, "Meslek we muḥitghā lāyiqlāshish," *Shingjāng giziti* 13 Jan. 1949: 4.

> In the Sheng Shicai era, the influence of the new [Soviet-style] education caused all of the youths and educated people to go in for "Western principles," to make those principles their own, and to attack any other kind of principle. After that era ended and the national principle of the Three Principles of the People [the official Guomindang ideology] entered, all young intellectuals immediately abandoned this and made themselves out to be supports of the Three Principles… After some time, the Ili Rebellion broke out, and in order to look good to men like Mes'ud [Sebri] Effendi, 'Eysa [Yusuf] Beg Effendi, and Emin [Bughra] Hezritim, who were then arriving in this land, these people abandoned it all and immediately made themselves out to be nationalists and began attacking other principles… After a bit more time, the Peace Treaty [between the Guomindang and the ETR] was ratified and the nationalists' reputation declined as the Ili revolutionaries came to Ürümchi; these young intellectuals then immediately abandoned nationalism, cut their relations with the three effendis [Mes'ud Sebri, Yusuf Eysa, Emin Bughra], and started to speak badly of them in order to impress the Ili revolutionaries. Beginning with Mes'ud's appointment as governor and Eysa Beg's as General Secretary, a number of other things changed suddenly, and [these individuals] made themselves out to be nationalist Mes'udists.

The passing fads of ideology, Qadiri argued, could not stand against the timeless truths he held dear. "Our principle is nationalism, our nation is Turk, and in every age we must live with that name, in every age by that principle." Quoting Sun Yat-sen to the effect that "nationalism is a tool that can save a nation," Qadiri stated that his nation—which remains unnamed in the piece, in a likely effort to appeal both to pan-Turkists and to ethno-nationalists—must, as part of the Chinese nation, find a way to preserve and promote itself which would not conflict with the good of China. For an oppressed nation like Qadiri's which had "long lived without education, economy, or freedom," nationalism was the "most necessary goal." Qadiri himself envisioned his pan-Turkic nation as embracing peoples from Western China to the Balkans, and seems to have had little interest in the notion of a Uyghur nation.

Yet the Uyghur-language newspaper Qadiri edited was identified on the masthead as the organ of the "Provincial Uyghur-Kazakh Newspaper Office," and was published separately from the Kazakh-language edition. The Chinese title on the masthead identified the paper as the

Uyghur-Language Xinjiang Gazette (*Weiwen Xinjiang ribao* 維文新疆日報). While editorialists at the Uyghur-language *Gazette* could speak of editions printed in "the Turk Uyghur accent [lahja] and the Turk Kazakh accent,"[143] the fact remained that the two papers were printed separately, in visibly different languages, to largely distinct subscriber bases. These realities persisted unchanged throughout the Republican period, and would have a more lasting influence on public perceptions than any amount of editorializing on whether subscribers were Uyghurs, Taranchis, Uyghur Turks, or Uyghur members of the Chinese national family, or whether their parlance was a language or a dialect. As debates raged over the national identity of Xinjiang's Turkic majority, each ideological group—pan-Turkists, Uyghur nationalists, socialists, Guomindang allies—worked assiduously to fashion a national culture that would bolster its preferred ideology. Yet despite the radically different forms of community to which they aspired, each group ultimately felt compelled to draw on similar sets of cultural resources; the ensuing competition for these resources was intense. Once the guns had fallen silent in 1945, the ideological struggle moved to the realm of public culture.

LUTPULLA MUTELLIP AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN UYGHUR CANON

> "Should we be martyred in this cause, our hearts will harbor no regret,
> for it's in struggle that we may achieve our greatest power yet."
>
> —Lutpulla Mutellip, "In the Great Struggle's Embrace," 1938[144]

[143] "Bir yildin buyānqi ghézitimiz," *Shingjāng giziti* 1 Jan. 1949: 6.
[144] Lutpulla Mutellip, "Chong küresh qoynida," in *Muhebbet hem nepret*, ed. Muhemmet Sidiq Nurozow (Ürümchi: Shinjang xelq neshriyati, 1956), 26-27.

Following the collapse of the Guomindang-ETR coalition, armed hostilities did not resume, but the struggle for Turkic Muslim hearts and minds flared up with a new intensity. By 1947 clear battle lines had been drawn, and each side armed with its own ideology, intellectuals, print organs, and canon. In a province where Turkic Muslims made up seven-eighths of the population, any state that offered a persuasive political identity to these communities would enjoy a tremendous strategic advantage.[145] The ETR and the Guomindang thus each lavished resources on the print organs that carried out this ideological competition, in the process providing powerful fuel for the creation and promotion of Uyghur public culture in Xinjiang.

A pair of representative works will give an initial sense of the dueling canons forged in northern and southern Xinjiang in those years. 1947 saw the publication of the *Almanac*, a literary anthology printed in Ghulja by the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Association and distributed widely in the ETR, as well as the inaugural issue of *Literature* (*Adabiyāt*), an ambitious Turkic-language journal published by the Guomindang's Northwest Society for Cultural Promotion.[146] The *Almanac* was edited by ETR poets Elqem Ekhtem and Muhammad Sidiq Noruzov (1922-?), while *Literature*'s head editor was Haji Ya'qub Yusufi, who had been castigated months earlier by ETR supporters in Ürümchi as a Guomindang lackey and betrayer of his people. The *Almanac* and the inaugural issue of *Literature* each offered readers treatises on the meaning of literature, and each presented a selection of authors representative of its own vision for Turkic literature in Xinjiang. The *Almanac* anthologized a set of writers from the Ili network, working in genres including drama, prose, and poetry, and in styles ranging from classicist Persianate compositions on well-worn subjects to free verse on contemporary socialist

[145] Population figures are from *Renkou zhi*, 269-70.
[146] M. Noruzof and Elqem Ekhtem, eds., *Ālmānākh* (Ghulja: Sharqiy Turkistān inqilābchil yāshlār teshkilātining meṭbeʿesi, 1947); *Adabiyāt (tughum sāni*), ed. Ḥāji Ya'qub Yusufi (Nanjing: Shimal gharb medeniyet tā'minlesh jem'iyiti, 1947). Many thanks to Professor Shinmen Yasushi of Chuo University for providing me a scan of the *Ālmānākh* from the collection of Islamic Area Studies in Japan.

themes. *Literature* also ranged across genres, but was ideologically unified around the project of fusing Guomindang-style Chinese nationalism with Islam and pan-Turkic ideology. Highlights included an article on theater among the "Uyghur Turks," selections from the classical Central Asian poet Nava'i, a rousing march exhorting youth to read the Qur'an, and a paean to Chiang Kai-shek by the young right-wing poet 'Abd al-Rahim Otkur (also Abduréhim Ötkür, later famous in the reform era as a historical novelist).

Contemporary writers in the ETR and the Guomindang worked assiduously to assure their places in the literary canons established by their respective ideological camps. Writers who were no longer living, however, sometimes had such cultural resonance throughout the province that multiple canons worked to claim them for their own. Of figures from modern Xinjiang, perhaps none were as hotly contested as Lutpulla Mutellip (1922-45), a young poet killed during the Ili Rebellion. Almost from the moment Lutpulla's own voice was stilled, others have worked to claim him, and his martyrdom, for a seemingly contradictory array of causes. In poetry, fiction, song, scholarship, news media, and public celebration, his legacy has been shaped and reshaped across years, languages, borders, and doctrinal divides. Close analysis of that legacy will demonstrate that despite the specific ideological provenance of all canonical tradition, a canon's ideological payload can be completely reconfigured without diminishing its cultural power. In this section and in subsequent chapters, it will be argued that canonical figures and works present both the possibility and the necessity of appropriation. Canon should be understood as a set of highly malleable symbols, which can be reconfigured to a greater or lesser extent in order to serve ideological needs; this creates the possibility of appropriation. At the same time, canon, once created, is not easily erased. Indeed, attempts to remove figures from the canon or censor canonical works often have the effect of adding to their luster. Rapid ideological change cannot

easily be accompanied by an overturning of the existing canon; moreover, the weight of existing canon is often needed to anchor the shaky foundations of any radically new order. This creates the necessity of appropriation.

A good deal of scholarship over the last two decades has examined conflicts of rhetoric and ideology between Uyghurs and the Chinese state.[147] Much less attention has been paid, however, to divergence and competition among Uyghur groups—the conflicts flowing under the surface of what is often seen from outside as "the Uyghur narrative." This chapter has explored in depth some of the ideological and geographical fissures within the Uyghur community in the 1940s; the present section will retrace how these competing visions for Turkic identity in Xinjiang were expressed through commemoration of a martyred poet. Competing interpretations and commemorations of Lutpulla Mutellip will be a recurring theme through the remainder of the dissertation, and will provide a focal point around which to analyze the emerge of a dominant Uyghur understanding of history and the present. For while in the broader Chinese frame this Uyghur narrative may be subversive, within the Uyghur nation the dominance of this story represents the triumph of some Uyghur factions over others, and the selection of some modes of interpretation out of many.

The making and remaking of the Uyghur canon ties into important questions about traditional social relations in modernizing states. Modernity, whether in its capitalist or its communist guise, has since Weber often been understood as entailing the replacement of relationship-based governance with rationalized bureaucracies. This study's findings, however, are in line with recent research suggesting that the power of small-scale personal networks can

[147] E.g., James A. Millward, "A Uyghur Muslim in Qianlong's Court: The Meaning of the Fragrant Concubine," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.2 (1994): 427-58; Jay Dautcher, "Reading Out-of-Print: Popular Culture and Protest on China's Western Frontier," in *China Beyond the Headlines*, ed. Timothy B. Weston and Lionel M. Jensen (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 273-94; Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

show remarkable tenacity through social change, including aggressive reordering of the political system.[148] And as scholars like Jane Spencer have demonstrated, these traditional modes of interaction can continue to shape the evolution of canon even in a rapidly modernizing society.[149]

The Historical Lutpulla Mutellip

Lutpulla Mutellip was born in 1922 in Chundzha (Shonzhy), in present-day Kazakhstan's Semirech'e (Yettisu) Province, then part of the Turkestan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic.[150] He began his education in Soviet schools, but while still a young boy moved across the Chinese border with his family to their ancestral home in Nilqa, a village in the Ili Valley not far from Ghulja. The family's relocation to Xinjiang was part of a larger migration of Uyghurs and Kazakhs from Soviet Central Asia to China, where they hoped to avoid the collectivization process and campaigns against class enemies then taking place in the USSR.[151]

In Ili, Lutpulla studied at Tatar and Russian schools, and became proficient in those languages in addition to his native Uyghur; his fluency in Russian would remain a key advantage throughout his brief but successful career.[152] Lutpulla's passion for literature developed early, and he sought out mentors like the poet and editor Anwar Nasiri, who played a role in the publication of Lutpulla's first works in the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*. As is evident from his earliest published work, Lutpulla was particularly influenced by the simplified meters and novel subject matter employed by contemporary Tatar and Central Asian poets. A major turn in Lutpulla's life

[148] E.g., Paul McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[149] Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and the Canon 1660-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[150] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip: hayati, pa'aliyiti we ijadiy emgekliri toghrisida* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2007), 32-44.
[151] On the mass migration of Uyghurs from Kazakhstan to China amidst the Soviet collectivization and anti-kulak campaigns of the early 1930s, see William Clark and Ablet Kamalov, "Uighur Migration across Central Asian Frontiers," in *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 2, 169.
[152] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 53-81.

came in August 1939, when the Provincial Teachers' College (Olkelik Dār al-Muʿallimīn) administered entrance exams for prospective students in counties across Xinjiang.[153] Along with Lutpulla, the successful examinees in Ghulja included two individuals whose lives would remain entwined in various ways with Lutpulla's: Elqem Ekhtem (1922-95), like Lutpulla a Soviet-born Uyghur who immigrated with his family to Xinjiang as a boy, and Turghun Almas (1924-2001), a Kashgar-born Uyghur who had recently moved to Ili. Later that month, all three boys were among the large group of Ili students who traveled by official car to the Teachers' College in Ürümchi.

In the provincial capital, Lutpulla delved eagerly into Uyghur literary life. A number of his poems were printed in the provincial newspaper, and his theatrical works created some stir among young Uyghurs in Ürümchi. During his time there, Lutpulla remained in close contact with other Uyghur intellectuals from Ili, particularly those who shared his interest in literature.[154] After a few semesters at the Teachers' College, Lutpulla was hired as a translator by a Soviet geological expedition headed for southern Xinjiang, part of a larger Soviet effort in those years to map the province's rich mineral resources for extraction.[155] Lutpulla never completed his studies at the Teachers' College, but the friends and associates he made there would play a major role in the remainder of his career and in the development of his reputation.

On his return to Ürümchi after several months with the geological expedition, Lutpulla was hired by the provincial *Xinjiang Gazette* and placed in charge of the Uyghur-language edition's literature section, at the time the most influential print venue for Uyghur literary works

[153] T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille," *Shingjāng giziti* 11 May 1947: 4; Ehmet'imin Elnezer, "Men bilidighan Lutpulla Mutellip," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 1 (2006): 54.
[154] E.g., Zunun Qadir, *Zunun Qadir eserliri*, ed. Eziz Turdi (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2006), 611-12, 666.
[155] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip* 118-37; T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille." On Soviet geological exploration and extraction in Sheng-era Xinjiang, see Kinzley, "Staking Claims to China's Borderland," 209-19.

in Xinjiang.[156] As editor of the literature page, Lutpulla gave encouragement and assistance to aspiring young Uyghur writers in Ürümchi, and particurly to his former classmates at the Teachers' College.[157] His efforts ensured that his cohort and personal network were well represented in Xinjiang's most influential print media, and would have helped earn him the gratitude and loyalty of his young colleagues. In 1943, though, things started getting dicey at the *Gazette*, as Sheng Shicai—now allied with the Chinese Nationalists—began to purge left-leaning Uyghurs from the provincial newspaper office. Many were hauled off to prison, but Lutpulla was spared for the time being and sent in autumn 1943 to work at the paper's Aqsu branch, a transfer plausibly interpreted by many as an attempt to diminish the young poet's growing influence with the Uyghur public.[158]

The Aqsu police, on orders from the provincial government, closely monitored Lutpulla's activities, with the net drawing ever tighter. Eventually, in 1944, an order for Lutpulla's arrest and imprisonment arrived from Ürümchi.[159] Appreciating the talented young writer's potential utility to the state, the Aqsu police chief tabled the arrest warrant in exchange for Lutpulla consenting to serve as leader of the police bureau's theater troupe—one of many such theater groups formed under state auspices in Xinjiang during this period.[160] With impressive energy,

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[156] Five years later, a literary critic could still describe the *Gazette* as the dominant venue for publication of Uyghur-language literary works in Xinjiang. Bulbul, "Edebiyāt gulzārining ārālārida," 26 July 1946: 4. Lutpulla's fluency in Russian may have been a factor in his hiring by the *Gazette* at such a young age; his responsibilities there included translating TASS radio broadcasts and excerpts from Soviet periodical for the newspaper. Tursun Ershidin, 150-52.
[157] T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille."
[158] Ehmed Ziya'i (transcribed by Dildar), "Ehmed Ziya'ining öz hayati toghrisidiki eslimisi," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 146-49; T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille"; Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 164-69, 181-86. Even as a student at Teachers' College, the outspoken Lutpulla seems to have attracted attention from Sheng Shicai's ever-vigilant security apparatus, and he arrived at Aqsu under a cloud of state suspicion. Ehmet'imin Elnezer, "Men bilidighan Lutpulla Mutellip," 55-56.
[159] Ehmet'imin Elnezer, "Men bilidighan Lutpulla Mutellip," 57; Abdukérim Sabitov, *Tarikhning öchmes izliri* (Almaty: "MIR" neshriyat öyi, 2011), 198-200.
[160] In Aqsu, the Uyghur Enlightenment Association had been deeply involved in theater for some time. Mukhbir, "Ṣanāyi' nafiseni jānlāndurushghe dā'ir," *Āqsu Shingjāng giziti* 21 June 1943: 3. The Xinjiang state took an active interest in theater during the Sheng era as well as the Guomindang era that followed, as noted in chapter 2; and it was not unusual for local police departments to have a hand in these efforts. In Bügür County, for example, the

Lutpulla combined his theatrical work with his responsibilities at the paper and a busy social schedule, and his reputation in Aqsu continued to grow. His hasty marriage to a local schoolteacher (and reported government spy), as well as the birth and premature death of his son, seem not to have slowed him down in the least. Meanwhile, the Eastern Turkestan Republic had been proclaimed in Ghulja, and the ETR army, having consolidated its victories in the north, had set its sights on southern Xinjiang. Aqsu, lying due south of Ghulja over the Muzart Pass, would be the Eastern Turkestani army's entry point to the Tarim Basin.

Aqsu was in a ferment, and Lutpulla Mutellip, with his energetic activism and considerable stature among young Uyghurs in the city, quickly emerged as a leading underground organizer. Apprised of all this by their numerous informants, the Aqsu authorities briefly imprisoned Lutpulla, but upon his release he once more plunged into organizing work.[161] In anticipation of the ETR army's approach, Lutpulla and several associates created the Eastern Turkestan Sparks Union (*Sharqiy Turkistān uchqunlar ittifāqi*), with the intention of fomenting resistance within Aqsu and paving the way for the ETR army's capture of the city.[162] Having established links with Eastern Turkestan operatives, Lutpulla informed his contacts that "we've washed our hands for Friday prayers; God willing we'll join you in prayer on Friday." But it was not to be. Weeks later, with the ETR army within marching distance of Aqsu, the spy-riddled Sparks organization was swiftly and efficiently dismantled by the local police. Lutpulla was arrested once more, soon to be joined in prison by the rest of the Sparks organization's leadership. In mid-September 1945, as the ETR army besieged Aqsu, the city's panicked

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Uyghur Theater Group was led by Vice Police Chief Seyfiddin, with local school principal Sāyit Qāsim as his assistant, and various Guomindang officials—both Han and Uyghur—performing other leadership roles. 'Abd al-Jélil Tomuri, "Bugurde tiyātir omigi teshkil qilindi," *Shingjāng giziti* 8 June 1946: 3.

[161] T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille"; Sabitov, *Tarikhning öchmes izliri*, 200-01.

[162] Posthumous hagiographies would often portray Lutpulla as the primary organizer of the Sparks organization; in fact, he was only one of several influential members. Eysa Yüsüf, who was working in Aqsu at the time of the organization's rise and fall, stated that the leading organizer was Muniridin Haji. "Wenxue yishu jie dangwai renshi zuotanhui jixu juxing 文學藝術界黨外人士座談會繼續舉行," 15 June 1957: 3.

Guomindang authorities ordered the Sparks leaders executed along with dozens of other prisoners. Legend has it that before he was led out to the execution grounds, Lutpulla daubed a poem on the cell wall with his own blood: "This wide world has been for me a hell/ My young flower's wilted in that bastard's cell!" Some prisoners were shot, while others were beheaded. The corpses were mangled beyond recognition, and Lutpulla's was never positively identified. He had not yet turned twenty-three.[163]

Lutpulla left behind a modest body of work; his extant poems, essays, and dramatic works can be easily read in an afternoon. His style, while lively, was not particularly original; his influence in Uyghur literature consisted primarily of popularizing Soviet literary trends in Xinjiang. Lutpulla's energy, charisma, and courage were impressive, and his martyrdom tragic; but in an era and a place that saw the untimely death of too many talented youths, all this was far from unique. The attention Lutpulla has received since his death, however, has been unique from the very beginning, and out of all proportion to his cultural significance during his life. Lutpulla Mutellip has been the subject of more historical fiction than almost any other Uyghur figure; countless poems have been written in his honor; the rock musicians Esqer and Hong Qi have commemorated him in popular song; until recently, his stern face looked out from posters in schools, libraries, and restaurants. Lutpulla's leadership of the abortive revolt in Aqsu was the subject of one of the first feature films made in Uyghur, and his image has in recent years been emblazoned on Web site banners and even a commemorative watch. His frequently reprinted works are covered at length in Uyghur literature textbooks at all levels of education, and given their limited scope, they are the subject of a truly remarkable amount of academic work. These are the paraphernalia of canon formation, and as we shall see below, they are mobilized on

[163] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 208-42; Sabitov, *Tarikhning öchmes izliri*, 202-06.

behalf of a given figure by a convergence of achievement, personal connections, group interests, and sheer chance.



Figure 5: Lutpulla Mutellip, Aqsu, summer 1945, following release from first imprisonment. Tursun Ershidin, Lutpulla Mutellip *(Ürümchi: Shinjang güzel sen'et – foto süret neshriyati, 1995), 18.*

The Making of a National Poet

During Lutpulla Mutellip's early years as a student and aspiring writer in Ürümchi, while his intelligence, energy, and outgoing personality won him the admiration of his friends and classmates, his peers did not initially regard him as an unusually talented poet. Turghun Almas, Lutpulla's classmate at Xinjiang Teachers' College, recalled that in 1941 Lutpulla and his classmate Ibrahim Qurban had each written a poem in honor of May Day, and that both were printed on the same page of the *Xinjiang Gazette*, with Lutpulla's appearing second. Readers agreed that Ibrahim Qurban's was the superior poem, which the good-natured Lutpulla openly

acknowledged to his classmates.[164] Yet by the late 1940s, readers encountered the very same Lutpulla Mutellip poem in a different light—and they encountered Ibrahim Qurban's poem not at all. The May 1, 1947 issue of the provincial *Gazette*, in the literature section that had been Lutpulla's own fiefdom during his time at the paper, reprinted Lutpulla's poem of six years before—this time, at the top of the page. While the authors of the other poems on the page were listed after their respective works, Lutpulla's name was printed at the head of his poem, marking his work as special and distinct.[165] The blossoming of Lutpulla's reputation during the final few years of his life, and the even more dramatic elevation of his cultural stature after his death, meant that by 1947 readers were encountering his "May, Month of Struggle" as a contemporary classic of Uyghur poetry.

In her influential work on canon formation, Jane Tompkins has used the example of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) to problematize the aura of inevitability and inherent greatness surrounding works regarded as classic. While Hawthorne's work was comparable in style and quality to many of his contemporaries, and at first received no special attention, his personal contacts with editors and publishers played the decisive role in elevating him above his peers onto the national stage. Particularly helpful was a glowing book review from Hawthorne's college friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82), by then an influential writer and academic. "The circle of well-educated, well-connected men and women who controlled New England's cultural life at mid-century" saw Hawthorne as their representative, and continued to furnish much of the American critical establishment for decades after his death.[166]

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[164] T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille," *Shingjāng giziti* 11 May 1947: 4.
[165] Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib, "Māy küreshchān āy," *Shingjāng giziti* 1 May 1947: 4.
[166] Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3-37.

Lutpulla's place in the Uyghur canon, more illustrious even than Hawthorne's in American literature, owes just as much to personal connections, circumstance, and group loyalties. While Lutpulla's work was not in itself sufficient to distinguish him from his contemporaries, his reputation benefited from his power as a newspaper editor at a time when newspapers were the center of Uyghur print culture in Xinjiang. The poignant backdrop of Lutpulla's death would also prove a major factor in cementing his reputation. And perhaps most importantly, Lutpulla's life and career were from the beginning closely intertwined with the Ili network of writers and intellectuals, a network which would grow dramatically in influence in the years after his death. In Ürümchi and Aqsu, too, the charismatic poet had enmeshed himself in personal networks that would prove crucial in securing his reputation.[167] But for Lutpulla, who met such an untimely demise, these connections would come fully into play only after the writer himself had left the stage.

In the days following Lutpulla's execution, songs eulogizing the martyred poet and his comrades became popular among the residents of Aqsu, then still under heavy-handed Guomindang control. A contemporary journal reported that among these songs was one of Lutpulla' own composition, which seemed to have predicted the tragic turn of events: "My name Mutellip is left to you / And my cries of grief, as I pass through / Death has pressed me to its breast / I go with sorrow now to my rest."[168] This song, from Lutpulla's opera *Ṭāhir-Zuhrā*, follows Central Asian literary tradition by incorporating the poet's own name into its final lines. In preparing the much-retold Central Asian tragedy *Ṭāhir-Zuhrā* for the stage, Lutpulla—who by

[167] Network analysis of early twentieth-century abstract artists has likewise found that close participation in elite cultural networks in multiple locales predicts an artist's fame much more strongly than any measurable aspect of their work. Banerjee, Mitali and Paul L. Ingram. "Fame as an Illusion of Creativity: Evidence from the Pioneers of Abstract Art." HEC Paris Research Paper No. SPE-2018-1305; Columbia Business School Research Paper No. 18-74. 2018. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3258318 (accessed 1 March 2019).

[168] Mejmūʿe hey'et taḥrīriyesi [editorial board], "Suyumluk shāʿirimiz Luṭf Allāh," *Kẖan Tengri* 3 (1946): 21-22; Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 243-45.

many accounts sensed his own demise approaching—added resonance to his own story by weaving it into a classic love epic.[169] In the same way, Lutpulla's own biography would become the powerful backdrop for narratives spun by those who came after him.

Within a year of his death, influential writers, critics, and editors were helping secure Lutpulla a lasting place in the Uyghur cultural pantheon. In a lengthy series on contemporary Uyghur poetry published in the provincial *Gazette*, a critic writing under the pseudonym Bulbul (Nightingale) heaped criticism on young poets whose works filled the pages of the province's periodicals.[170] Young poets these days mangled their case endings, Bulbul groaned; they mimicked Mayakovsky without reading him; they danced to the tune of the state even while the people suffered. In the final section of the series, however, Bulbul offered a list of seventeen young poets worth reading. While offering no individual comment on the first fifteen, Bulbul drew readers' attention to the final two names on the list: one was Ahmad Ziya'i, who "makes us proud," and the other was "our beloved poet L. Mutellip, who struck fear in the hearts of enemies with his mighty creations." As for why this exacting critic saved pride of place for Lutpulla Mutellip, a Mayakovsky emulator if ever there was one and an accomplished panegyrist of of state policy, we can look to Bulbul's own words in the article's concluding paragraph. "No poet becomes known to the world merely through writing poems," wrote Bulbul. "There are other requirements as well."

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[169] With a plot line resembling *Romeo and Juliet*, variants of *Ṭāhir-Zuhrā* have been told for centuries by Central Asian bards. For a synopsis of the most common Uyghur version, see Osman Ismayil Tarim, *Uyghur khelq éghiz edebiyati heqqide omumiy bayan* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2009), 655-57. G. Raquette transcribes, translates, and analyzes a representative *Ṭāhir-Zuhrā* manuscript from Xinjiang in *Täji bilä Zohra: Eine Osttürkische variante der sage von Tahir und Zohra*, Lunds universitets årsskrift, n.f., avd. 1, bd. 26, nr. 6 (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup; Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1930).

[170] Bulbul, "Edebiyāt gulzāri ārālirida,"*Shingjāng giziti* 26 July 1946: 4; 27 July 1946: 4; 29 July 1946: 4; 30 July 1946: 4; 3 Aug. 1946: 4; 5 Aug. 1946: 4.

A Hometown Hero: Lutpulla Mutellip and the Ili Network

In the years immediately following his death, it was in the newly formed Eastern Turkestan Republic that Lutpulla Mutellip was most actively honored, with writers and officials from his boyhood region of Ili playing the major part. it was the administration and intelligentsia of the newly-created Eastern Turkestan Republic that most actively honored him in the second half of the 1940s. In 1946, following the Guomindang-ETR peace treaty and the formation of the coalition administration, a delegation of leaders from both governments had made the rounds of southern Xinjiang to assess the treaty's implementation. During the tour, ETR leader Ahmadjan Qasimi took time out of a hectic schedule to investigate the circumstances of Lutpulla and his comrades' death.[171] The next month, Qasimjan Qembiri (1910-56), an ETR army officer and publicist, led an Eastern Turkestani commission to the town of Kucha, near Aqsu, where he presented Lutpulla's widow with 1600 *som* in aid. The following April, while passing through Kucha on another tour of the south, Ahmadjan Qasimi assigned Elqem Ekhtem, Lutpulla's lifelong friend and a prominent poet and journalist himself, to pay another visit to Lutpulla's widow.

The ETR elite's exceptional interest in the martyred poet no doubt owed a good deal to Lutpulla's role in the Eastern Turkestan Sparks organization, and to his considerable profile in northern Xinjiang as a writer. Yet more personal factors seem to have played an equally significant role. Most notably, Elqem Ekhtem, by then a rising star in the ETR elite, had been close to Lutpulla from childhood, and the parallels and intersections in their biographies must have made Lutpulla's death especially poignant for him. Born within a couple months of each other in Kazakhstan, Elqem and Lutpulla both moved with their families to towns near Ghulja when they were young boys, and in 1939 rode the same truck to Ürümchi to attend the Teachers'

[171] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 283-84.

College.[172] But whereas Lutpulla's shifting fortunes led him to southern Xinjiang, back to Ürümchi, and then to Aqsu, Elqem Ekhtem returned to Ghulja in 1942, where he worked as a high school teacher before participating in the 1944 Ili rebellion and then in the state to which the rebellion gave birth. He became a writer and editor for various ETR publications, and in this capacity contributed greatly to the reputation of his late friend.

In mid-1946, the ETR's most widely distributed journal, *Struggle* (*Küresh*), printed an article by Elqem Ekhtem and Ibrahim Qurban, another poet and former classmate of Lutpulla's. Mourning dozens of "revolutionaries and poets" martyred during the siege of Aqsu, they placed particular emphasis on "the killing of L. Mutellip, the bold and famous young poet of the Eastern Turkestani people and especially the Uyghur people, at the hands of brutal, feeble China's bloodsucking regime."[173] A year later, as the anniversary of Lutpulla's death once more approached, Elqem Ekhtem commemorated Lutpulla with another *Struggle* article. As usual, he did not mince words: "Today, as we mourn the 320 revolutionary martyrs for the homeland, led by our poet [Lutpulla Mutellip], we continue to protest the tyrannical fascist Chinese marauders [*Khiṭāy bāsqunchiliri*], and cannot refrain from shouting once more the slogan of 'vengeance.'"[174] As in the previous year's article, excerpts from Lutpulla's poetry were included, reinforcing the connection between Lutpulla's work and his martyrdom. The piece was all the more powerful for Elqem Ekhtem's choice of language made resonant by years of use in Xinjiang state propaganda: throughout the Sheng Shicai era, Uyghur periodicals had daily denounced "Japanese marauders" (*Yāpon bāsqunchiliri*) and "fascist Germany."

A still greater contribution to Lutpulla's posthumous reputation was the early 1947 publication of the *Almanac* (*Almanakh*), a literary anthology edited by Elqem Ekhtem and his

[172] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 486; Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, ch. 7.
[173] Ibrahim Qurban and Elqem Ekhtem, "Yash sha'irimiz L. Mutellip ḥeqqide," *Küresh* 6-7 (1946): 15-22.
[174] Elqem Ekhtem, "Waṭan Qurbanliri," *Küresh* 8-9 (1947): 29-33.

fellow Ghulja poet Muhammad Sidiq Noruzov. This collection of poems and plays by nearly two dozen predominantly ETR authors devoted more space to Lutpulla than to any other poet, and identified him in the introduction as "Uyghur literature's foremost writer."[175] The *Almanac*, likely the first bound volume to include Lutpulla's work, gave him pride of place as the second author in the chrestomathy, directly following Anwar Nasiri, identified in the introduction as Lutpulla's mentor. Given the limited number of Uyghur-language books available in the ETR, the *Almanac* had a significant canon-forming role, and the prominence the editors gave to Lutpulla's work increased his literary stature considerably.

Both the *Almanac* and the journal *Struggle* were published by the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Organization (Uy. *Sharqiy Turkistān inqilābchil yāshlār teshkilati*), an entity created soon after the ETR itself and entrusted with organizing and mobilizing the youth of the new state.[176] In the ETR, as in many twentieth-century revolutionary movements, organizing the youth was the key to political power. The ETR, formed from an underground rebellion, was dominated from its earliest days by young people, and by young Ili intellectuals in particular; and it was among precisely this group that Lutpulla's friends were most numerous and his reputation strongest. Throughout the ETR period, former associates and admirers of Lutpulla used their key positions in the republic's cultural organs to burnish the late poet's reputation.

As detailed above, *Struggle* was run primarily by Zunun Qadiri, a prominent ETR author and editor who had been close to Lutpulla in early 1940s Ürümchi, where they had traded advice and compliments. Qadiri read and edited articles submitted for *Struggle*, and would have been the one to approve Elqem Ekhtem and Ibrahim Qurban's commemorations of Lutpulla for the

[175] M. Noruzof and Elqem Ekhtem, eds., *Ālmānākh*, 11.
[176] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 473-75.

journal.[177] *Struggle*, which ran from early 1946 to late 1948 in a print run which grew within a year from 500 to 2,000, was widely circulated and read in the ETR.[178] In addition to individual subscribers, the journal was house organ of the Eastern Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Association, and served as instructional material in weekly study sessions by the Association's membership.[179]

The Revolutionary Youth did not confine their commemorative activities to print culture. On September 21, 1946, the Revolutionary Youth Organization Central Committee organized a mass meeting in Ghulja to mark the first anniversary of the death of Lutpulla and his Aqsu comrades. Chaired by Es'et Is'haqov, a significant figure in ETR literary and political circles who would later become Vice Governor of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the meeting was devoted in to part adopting measures for the perpetual commemorationof Lutpulla Mutellip, with the goal of increasing his stature as a role model. To that end, participants proposed renaming a Ghulja public park after Lutpulla and preparing a large portrait of the poet for public display, as well as paying tribute to all revolutionary martyrs with a memorial tower and a yearly day of remembrance.[180]

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[177] In an interview, Mirsultan Osmanov, a former copy editor at *Struggle*, noted that most of the "editorial board" listed on the journal's masthead were honorary; the majority of the work of evaluating submissions and editing the journal was performed by Zunun Qadiri. Ürümchi, July 2014.

[178] Print runs are listed in each issue. Mirsultan Osmanov notes that the ETR never had more than one domestically printed general-interest journal at a time (first *Struggle*, and then *Union*), and that each was widely read by literate individuals in the republic. Journals and newspapers from Ürümchi and Altishahr did not circulate in any quantity in the ETR. Interview, Ürümchi, July 2014.

[179] Seydulla Seypullayof puts the organization's membership at 14,000 in "Men shahit bolghan bezi ishlar," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 2 (2001): 17; Tokhti Ibrahim cites it at 30,000 in his memoir, *Milliy armiyining jenggiwar musapisi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2003), 278. During the ETR-Guomindang thaw in 1946-47, *Struggle* articles were occasionally picked up by periodicals in Ürümchi; e.g., Küresh mejmu'esi, "Sharqi Turkistān tārikhi toghrisidā," *Khān Tengri* 3 (1946): 13-17. Ershidin Tatliq suggests that the journal had some circulation in southern Xinjiang; "1949- yildin burun Shinjangda Uyghur tilida neshir qilin'ghan gézit-zhurnallar," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 3 (2004): 55. Former ETR official Batur Ershidinov, however, stated in an interview that *Struggle* did not circulate much widely outside the ETR. Almaty, January 2014.

[180] Tiyifujiang [Téyipjan] 提義甫江 (Jin Ba 金拔 ed.), "Minzu shiren Li Mutalifu: —jinian Weizu qingnian shiren ji geming qingnian xunnan wuzhounian 民族詩人力•木塔利夫：一紀念維族青年詩人及革命青年殉難五週年," *Xinhua yuebao* 3.1 (Nov. 1950): 225-26; *Shinjang üch wilayet inqilabigha da'ir chong ishlar khatirisi*, 257; Tursun

The Revolutionary Youth Organization's commitment to Lutpulla was likely encouraged by Abdukérim Abbasov (1921-49), a top ETR military and political leader who was the Revolutionary Youth Organization's founding Chairman as well as the inaugural editor of *Struggle*. (He left both posts after the 1946 ETR-Guomindang peace accords to join the new coalition government in Ürümchi.) Abbasov had been good friends with Lutpulla in Ürümchi, where they moved in the same circles as Zunun Qadiri, Elqem Ekhtem, and other young Uyghur intellectuals. Alongside Qasimjan Qembiri, Abbasov had commanded the ETR army which besieged Aqsu in the days leading up to Lutpulla's execution, and his own younger brother had been executed alongside Lutpulla for his membership in the Sparks organization. In the midst of pitched battle, on learning of the execution of his brother and Lutpulla, Abbasov reportedly broke down in tears.[181]

Other ETR publications also helped secure Lutpulla's place in the Uyghur canon. Chief among these was *Liberated Eastern Turkestan*, official state newspaper of the ETR, printed in half a dozen languages and distributed throughout the republic.[182] The Uyghur edition was particularly influential, and its literature page, "Growing Up" ("Ösüsh"), played a key role in the careers of many young ETR writers. In September 1946, the editorial board of the newspaper published an appraisal of "L. Mutellip's Place in Our Literary History."[183] Two years later, the literature section devoted its entire page to Lutpulla, marking "three years since the demise of our poet at the hands of the murderers."[184] A lengthy article on Lutpulla by Elqem Ekhtem filled most of the page, with the rest given over to a poem eulogizing Lutpulla and signed "Jürʿeti"

Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 455-56.
[181] Seypidin Ezizi, *Ömür dastani (eslime 2)*, 131-34.
[182] Following the ETR-Guomindang peace accords, the newspaper was renamed *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan* (*Inqilābiy Sharqiy Turkistān*) in a gesture of conciliation with Guomindang authorities who did not consider ETR territory "liberated."
[183] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 476.
[184] Elqem Ekhtem, "Shāʿir L. Muṭṭalib Qaynam Örkishi"; Jürʿeti, "L. Muṭṭalib," *Inqilābī Sharqī Turkistān* 8 September 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh").

("the bold one"), pen name of the young poet Téyipjan Éliev, discussed in the following chapter. Elqem Ekhtem reviewed Lutpulla's poetic and revolutionary achievements, and again lamented his death at the hands of the "Chinese brutes [*Khiṭāy waḥshiyliri*]," while Jürʿeti warned ominously that "the bird of vengeance is not without wings." Three days later, "Growing Up" published a full page of poems dedicated to Lutpulla, presenting work by six poets of greater and lesser renown.[185]

By the time his September 1948 article about Lutpulla was published in *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, Elqem Ekhtem had become head of the paper's editorial department. Nim Shéhit, Lutpulla's close friend and former supervisor at the *Aqsu Xinjiang Gazette*, also worked at the paper.[186] In 1946, both men had written some of the earliest poems commemorating Lutpulla.[187] These interlocking networks of ETR intellectuals—like Hawthorne's New England gentry—constituted both the motivation and the means for promoting the memory of Ili's favorite son. Much as in the case of the American novelist, region played a crucial role in enhancing Lutpulla's reputation, with Ili loyalties arguably stronger in the twentieth century than New England allegiances had been in the nineteenth. Hometown identity among Uyghurs in the early and mid-twentieth century often rivaled any sense of belonging to a wider ethnic group or polity, and hometown chauvinism (*yurtwazliq*) was—and indeed remains today—widespread among Uyghur authors: the privileging of other writers from the same town, beyond considerations of talent or merit.

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[185] *Inqilābī Sharqī Turkistān* 11 September 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh").
[186] Mömin Sepiri, "Üch wilayet inqilabi mezgilidiki akhbaratchiliq we neshriyatchiliq," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 36 (1993): 143. Nim Shéhit had joined the ETR army during its 1945 incursion into Aqsu and returned with the army to Ili.
[187] "Hepside ketken dostum L. Mutellipke" [dated June 1946, Ghulja], "Weten qurbanlirining khatirisige" [dated December 1946, Ghulja], in Nim Shihit, *Weten muhebbiti* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1957), 34-38, 48-50. Elqem Ekhtem, "Töküldi yash" [dated June 1946], in Elqem Ekhtem, *Yéngish dolqunliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1985), 9-10; "Échinish" [dated September 1946], in Elqem Ekhtem, ed. Q. Ḥesenof, *Ümid tolqunliri* (Almaty: *Qazaq éli* zhurnaling neshriyati, 1951), 27-30.

A Uyghur's *teg* (literally, "base"), or ancestral hometown, can be a more significant marker of identity than the town where the individual grew up. Thus a Uyghur born to Kashgari parents living in Ürümchi may identity more strongly as a Kashgari, even after spending a lifetime in Ürümchi. The rebellion that developed into the ETR had broken out in Nilqa, Lutpulla's ancestral hometown, and the Republic itself had been proclaimed in Ghulja, where Lutpulla spent much of his youth. This background greatly enhanced Lutpulla's connections and reputation among the preponderance of ETR intellectuals hailing from the Ili region, and their identification with Lutpulla expressed itself after his death as a special concern with his memory. The sense of Lutpulla as lost specifically to Ili, and not just to Uyghurs generally, is accentuated in Fahri's poem, published in *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan* on the third anniversary of Lutpulla's death: "Far away your grave now lies, in Aqsu's desert wilderness / We lead our brothers in your footsteps, marching toward our goal."[188]

Chinese Nationalists, Pan-Turkists, and the Meanings of a Martyr

Like the ETR network of socialist-leaning Uyghur intellectuals, the right-wing Uyghur intellectual network allied with the Guomindang drew more heavily on one area of Xinjiang—the south—but was not geographically exclusive. The Ürümchi-centered Guomindang cohort of native intellectuals could easily incorporate individuals like Mes'ud Sebri, who hailed from Ili, and Abduréhim Ötkür, who grew up in Qumul, in eastern Xinjiang. The most crucial point of connection for this network was a political and ideological alliance with the Chinese Nationalist Party, combined with attachment to a communal identity defined more by religion and pan-Turkic belonging than by Uyghur or Kazakh nationalism—an identity which was thus more palatable to the Chinese state. The Guomindang and its native allies in Xinjiang were fiercely

[188] Fahri, "Okunush," *Inqilābī Sharqī Turkistān* 11 September 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh").

opposed to communist influence in the province, and were eager to counterbalance the USSR and the ETR's tremendous prestige among the Uyghur population. To achieve these goals, some ideological flexibility was in order.

Thus it was that right-wing Uyghur intellectuals from southern Xinjiang found themselves eulogizing a martyred socialist poet from Ili. The ideological incongruity was further mitigated by the many influential friends and admirers Lutpulla had acquired during his years as a leading newspaper editor in Ürümchi and Aqsu, where he moved largely in literary and intellectual circles. Thus it was that in July 1946, an issue of *Khan Tengri*—the Ürümchi-based journal whose inauguration the coalition government had celebrated the previous month—mourned this "beloved young Turk poet," this "nightingale of nightingales, who first flapped his wings in our garden." Claiming that Lutpulla had been betrayed by less talented poets who envied his gifts and acclaim, the article asserts that these frustrated bards "delivered our beloved poet Lutpulla, our historian Abdulla Dawutov, our young teacher Osman Muhammad, and the poet Bilal Azizi to the bloodthirsty swords of the tyrannical Chinese butchers."[189] Such anti-Chinese venom seems shocking from a journal operating openly in 1946 Ürümchi with the blessing of Chinese Nationalist officialdom. Yet the context is hinted at near the end of the article: "Alas! If only our beloved poet Lutpulla and his comrades were still living. How our free press would welcome them in our happy life today."

[189] Mejmūʿe hey'et taḥrīriyesi, "Suyumluk shāʿirimiz Luṭf Allāh," 21-22. Some publications before the early 1950s spelled Lutpulla's name "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib," in conformance with traditional Perso-Arabic orthography. Others preferred a form closer to the spoken Uyghur "Lutpulla Mutellip." Emblematic of the period's orthographic upheaval is the fact that Elqem Ekhtem's 1946 *Struggle* article refers to "L. Mutellip," while a few pages later, *Struggle* reprints an essay by Lutpulla under the byline "L. Muṭṭalib"—the spelling Elqem also used for his 1948 rememberance. Since the script reforms of the early '50s, all officially-sanctioned Uyghur-language publications in Xinjiang have adhered to the former variant. Lutpulla Mutellip himself wrote his name a number of different ways over the course of his brief life, including "Luṭfullā Muṭṭallip," "L. Mutellipov," and his favored pseudonym, "Qaynam Örkishi" (Whirlpool Wave). For simplicity's sake, the contemporary spelling is used throughout this dissertation except in citations and quotations.

The journal's publication coincided with the high tide of Governor Zhang's tolerant policy toward Turkist heterodoxy in Guomindang Xinjiang, part of the raft of liberal reforms that came to full fruition with the signing of the Guomindang-ETR peace accords in 1946. As noted above, Zhang's efforts to reconcile Xinjiang's native peoples to Chinese rule included welcoming home to Xinjiang a number of pan-Turkist activists who had been waiting out the Sheng Shicai years in inner China and abroad.[190] The strategies pursued by the Guomindang's Turkic allies in this period were various. While the authors of the *Khan Tengri* piece celebrated Lutpulla as a Turk rather than a Uyghur, *Khan Tengri*'s editors and writers in fact included both pan-Turkists like Polat Qadiri and Uyghur nationalists like Nur Sadirov, who referred to the Ili rebellion as "our resurrection, the light of our lives."[191]

In the congenial climate of Zhang Zhizhong's first two years in the province, Lutpulla enjoyed more than a few mentions even in Guomindang Xinjiang's state media, particularly the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette*—which, as we have seen above, enjoyed substantial editorial independence from the Guomindang state during this period. Lutpulla's time working at the *Gazette* earlier in the decade had allowed him to forge connections with journalists and editors at the most widely distributed publication in Xinjiang; following his death, these connections added considerably to his reputation. In 1947, the *Gazette* carried commemorations of Lutpulla in poetry and prose by writers like Qutluq Qasimi and Turghun Almas, Lutpulla's friend and former

[190] Jacobs, "Empire Besieged," 412-18, presents an insightful reinterpretation of Zhang Zhizhong's stint as the GMD's top man in Xinjiang. See also Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia*, 196-218.
[191] "19- Iyul küni Uyghur uyushmāsidā yālghān khelq wekillirige nārāziliq bildürüp échilghān zor khelq yighinidā yāshlār wekili Nurmuḥammad Sādirofning sözligen nuṭiqi," *Shingjāng giziti* 27 July 1946: 3. Emblematic of the balancing act performed by Turkic nationalists under Zhang's rule was *Khān Tengri*'s cover, which in addition to the journal's name in Uyghur and Chinese, carried the year according to three calendars: the Gregorian, the Islamic, and the Minguo (Republic of China) calendar. The month was given only according to the Gregorian system, which applied also to the Minguo calendar. Calendrical confusion was not uncommon in Republican China; see Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, 65-70. *Khān Tengri*'s contents were ideologically diverse as well. The issue including the article on Lutpulla also featured reprints from the ETR journal *Struggle* (see above) and the Soviet Uyghur journal *Eastern Truth* (*Sherq ḥeqiqiti*), as well as an essay by ETR leader Ahmadjan Qasimi.

classmate at the Teachers' College. Some of these works appeared on the very literature page that Lutpulla had established when he worked at the paper.[192] Chinese-language state media in Xinjiang also celebrated Lutpulla. Typical was an interview with the prominent Guomindang-aligned Uyghur poet Abduréhim Ötkür, carried in the short-lived journal *Verses of the Desert* (*Shamo shige* 沙漠詩歌).[193] Ötkür had been friendly with Lutpulla in early 1940s Ürümchi, and the two composed a well-received play together. In the interview, Ötkür waxed elegiac for his fallen friend; given the gulf separating their ideological affinities, though, his comments on Lutpulla's life and activities were decidedly vague.

Of Lutpulla commemorations in Guomindang Xinjiang, perhaps the most remarkable was penned by Huang Zhenxia, the right-wing Chinese nationalist who as chief editor of the *Xinjiang Gazette* was obliged to adopt a conciliatory posture toward the ETR and Xinjiang's Uyghur population as a whole. Huang detected shades of Shanghai cosmopolitanism in the Ili region, and echoes of the May Fourth movement in Lutpulla Mutellip. In a series of articles on Uyghur culture published in summer 1946, Huang reviewed Lutpulla's career and accomplishments at length, appraising him as "a poet who stands ahead of the rest." Huang declared that "we must publish his poems, mourn him, work to understand him better, and review his work. For he is no longer among us... He had a strong soul and a passionate mind; he lived in hard times and died as chaos unfolded. This is a loss for the country, and a sorrow for Xinjiang."[194] This was perhaps

[192] T. Almas, "Luṭf Allāh Muṭṭalib bilen bille," *Shingjāng géziti* 10 May 1947: 4, 11 May 1947: 4; Qutluq Qāsimi, "Yādlāymiz (marḥum L. Muṭṭalibge béghishlāb)," *Shingjāng géziti* 1 June 1947: 4.

[193] Hai Yan 海燕, "吳鉄庫爾德訪問 Wutieku'er de fangwen," *Shamo shige* 1 (May 1949): 10.

[194] Huang Zhenxia 黃震遐, "Weizu wenhua de xiankuang, wu, Aheimaiti Qiya; liu, Lutefula pipan 維族文化的現況，五，阿黑麥提、齊亞；六，魯特夫拉批判," *Xinjiang ribao*, 8 June 1946, p. 3. The series was simultaneously serialized in translation in the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette*. Jin Sha [Huang Zhenxia], "Uyghur medeniyet heriketining ḫāḍirqi eḫwāli [also "Uyghur medeniyetining ḫāḍirqi eḫwāli"]: 5—Aḥmad Ẓiyā'i; 6—Luṭf Allāh (Muṭṭalib) qa bahā bérish," tr. '. T., *Shingjang giziti* 13 June 1946: 2; 14 June 1946: 2; 15 June 1946: 2. Huang's stature in Chinese nationalist journalism was such that his articles were reprinted a few months later in *Zhongyang ribao* (中央日报, *Central Daily*), the Guomindang's nationally-syndicated official newspaper. Thus, not quite a year after his death, Lutpulla received what was likely his first China-wide coverage. Huang Zhenxia, "Weizu wenhua de

the first time Lutpulla's death had been specifically construed as a loss for China—a perspective that presaged the transformation of the poet's reputation over the following decade.

THE DENOUEMENT OF GUOMINDANG XINJIANG

Through summer 1949, the civil war raged through northwest China, and the Nationalist front rapidly collapsed, with Guomindang units retreating from Shaanxi to Gansu and Qinghai. By the end of August, Gansu's capital, Lanzhou, had fallen to the Communists, and the People's Liberation Army stood at the doorstep of Xinjiang. The province's administration was faced with a choice between doomed resistance to the PLA or peaceful acquiescence to Communist rule. Some Guomindang hard-liners—Han military officers as well as anti-Communist Uyghur politicians and intellectuals like Muhammad Emin Bughra and Polat Qadiri—chose to flee over the Himalayas. The Han officers primarily ended up in Taiwan, while the Uyghur nationalists found their way to India, Turkey, and Europe, where many of them remained politically active for decades in the Uyghur diaspora.[195] Meanwhile, Zhang Zhizhong, Burhan Shehidi, and General Tao Zhiyue led the majority of Xinjiang's civil administration and Nationalist Army units toward a peaceful transfer of power.[196] Shehidi, as Xinjiang's governor, made the public announcement that "to preserve a lasting peace in Xinjiang and ensure the welfare of its more than four million people, we must stand with the new government in Beijing and sever our ties to the government in Canton," where the Chinese Nationalist leadership had retreated.[197] It was

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xiankuang (san)," *Zhongyang ribao*, 1 Sep. 1946: 6.

[195] Polat Qadiri spent the remainder of his days in Turkey, and true to his word, he never changed his tune, publishing books and articles in support of Eastern Turkestani independence to the end of his life.

[196] James Z. Gao, "The Call of the Oases: The 'Peaceful Liberation' of Xinjiang, 1949-1953," in *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China*, ed. Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 189-93.

[197] "Olkuluk ḥokumetde shereflik yéngi siyāsi burulushi," *Shingjāng giziti* 28 Sep. 1949: 1.

literally a red-letter day for Xinjiang: the provincial newspaper printed Shehidi's proclamation, and the entire issue, in red type, typically reserved for holidays.

In the months that followed, as the CCP consolidated power in Xinjiang, the party swiftly reestablished unified control over the province's Uyghur-language media, and was able to efficiently propagate its ideology and edicts among the Uyghur population—a capability crucial to establishing the emerging party-state's authority and legitimacy in a community with no previous party presence. At the dawn of CCP rule in Xinjiang, then, Uyghur publishing infrastructure stood prepared to deliver the new government's message to every corner of the province. Two decades of Uyghur publishing, with all its complexities and contradictions, had given rise to a mature Uyghur-language print culture in Xinjiang.

Print media in Ürümchi and southern Xinjiang transitioned quite smoothly during fall 1949 from propagandizing for the Guomindang to performing the same function for the CCP. In September 1949, immediately after the transfer of power in Xinjiang, the Uyghur *Xinjiang Gazette* printed Mao Zedong's *On New Democracy* in a translation by Ibrahim Muti'i, the nationalist intellectual who had written extensively for the *Gazette* at its most vociferously pro-Guomindang and who (along with Polat Qadiri) had served as Assistant Editor for the right-wing, pan-Turkist paper *Erk*. In December, Mao wrote the title for the Chinese *Xinjiang Gazette*'s masthead in his own calligraphy.[198] The following summer, the Uyghur and Kazakh editions of the *Xinjiang Gazette* were joined once more with the Chinese edition under a single roof, where they would henceforth serve as the official publishing organ of the Communist Party's Xinjiang Bureau. In Xinjiang, the revolution would be printed; the following months and years would determine the crucial question of who controlled the printing presses.

[198] Esqiri, "'Shinjang géziti' toghrisida qisqiche eslime," 215, 220; *Xinjiang ribao she zhi*, 20-21.

3. PATRONAGE AND POWER IN EARLY MAOIST XINJIANG

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the Ili region was until the early twentieth century regarded as culturally backward by the inhabitants of Xinjiang's more populous southern oases, where traditional systems of Islamic authority and education were far more deeply rooted. In the first half of the twentieth century, these structures of clerical power and prestige helped prevent secular and socialist trends from making inroads in the south. In Ili, however, where Islamic institutions were weaker and Soviet influence more directly felt, socialism left a deep imprint by the end of the 1920s. These trends intensified further under Sheng Shicai's quasi-socialist administration in the 1930s and early 1940s, during which Ili's socialist-leaning intellectuals accumulated substantial cultural and bureaucratic power in the Xinjiang state; but Sheng's repressive policies and repeated purges ultimately left northern Xinjiang's population as deeply alienated as the rest of the province. In 1944, this alienation—along with decades of Soviet cultural influence, years of Soviet political meddling, and months of undercover Soviet military aid—culminated in the Ili Rebellion, which successfully established an Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR) in Xinjiang's three northern prefectures.

The ETR governed northern Xinjiang through the end of the 1940s, its leadership dominated by northern Xinjiang's Uyghur community—and in particular by the Uyghur community of the Ili region, centered around the city of Ghulja. The Uyghur intellectuals of Ili and Tarbaghatay, building on their regions' heavy involvement in cultural production during the Sheng years, moved rapidly to codify an official Uyghur culture for the Eastern Turkestan Republic, where print culture was accorded extensive attention and resources by the state. By the time the ETR was incorporated into the newly founded People's Republic of China in 1949, the

Sheng decade and the ETR half-decade had furnished northern Xinjiang's Uyghur intellectuals with extensive experience in socialist-style bureaucracy and cultural production.

For a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that through autumn 1949 lacked a single Uyghur member, ETR intellectuals and officials—mostly hailing from Ili, or adoptive members of the Ili network—formed by far the most qualified talent pool for the party's efforts to create a socialist Uyghur culture, and to govern a province whose population remained predominantly Uyghur. This chapter will demonstrate how Ili writers, intellectuals, and officials quickly came to dominate the CCP's new cultural bureaucracy in Xinjiang, and how this tight-knit group used their bureaucratic advantage—and the unprecedented resources devoted to print culture by the party-state—to place Ili's lasting imprint on official Uyghur culture, language, and identity. By the end of the 1950s, the small Uyghur community of Ili had set the cultural standard for the new Uyghur nation, effectively reversing Ili's position in Xinjiang's cultural hierarchy: from cultural periphery to cultural capital within a generation.

Losing a State, Gaining a Nation

In fall and winter 1949, as Nationalist army units retreated or defected and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched largely unopposed into Xinjiang, the CCP came into possession of a vast, Muslim-majority province—one which it was entirely unprepared to govern. The party had no presence on the ground in Xinjiang and precious little institutional knowledge of local conditions; the last CCP operatives in the province had been executed or expelled during Sheng Shicai's purges in the early 1940s. Most importantly, the party lacked a single Uyghur member, and therefore had no native spokespeople to credibly explain party policy to Xinjiang's Uyghur community, which remained suspicious of Chinese rule and generally unfamiliar with Chinese

language and customs. As the CCP rolled out its new administration in the province, the Communist leadership could plausibly claim that its defeat of the Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party) heralded the end of Chinese oppression in Xinjiang, and that the province's people would now rule themselves through an indigenized branch of the new party-state. But to persuade Xinjiang's wary Uyghur community, which then comprised three quarters of the province's population, the CCP would have to make self-rule more than just a slogan.[1]

As the People's Liberation Army entered central and then southern Xinjiang, the leadership of the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR) watched anxiously from the northwest. Their official position vis-à-vis the Chinese Communists was cooperative, however; the ETR's Soviet patrons had made clear in 1949 that the breakaway republic was to submit peacefully to the Chinese Communist Party. By the early 1950s, the ETR's territory had been fully reintegrated into Xinjiang, now part of the newly established People's Republic of China, and ETR institutions had been dismantled or merged with their PRC successors. For ETR leaders, officers, and writers who for half a decade had bitterly fought Chinese rule with the pen and the gun, the imposition of Chinese authority over the now-defunct ETR's territory might have seemed a defeat, or at the very least a serious career impediment. But a funny thing happened on the way to Maoist Xinjiang.

Seypidin Ezizi, the ETR education minister who in 1944 had helped lead the bloody Ili rebellion against Chinese rule, in December 1949 became one of the very first Uyghurs inducted into the CCP, and within a few years was Xinjiang's governor and vice chair of the regional

[1] Official figures put Xinjiang's Uyghur population in 1949 at around 3.3 million, or 75.9% of the province's total population. Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: renkou zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•人口志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di shisan juan: renkou zhi* 新疆通志第十三卷：人口志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2008), 269.

party apparatus.[2] Ibrahim Turdi, an ETR-affiliated intellectual whose journal *Khan Tengri* spent 1946 decrying the "tyrannical Chinese butchers,"[3] became a CCP member not long after Ezizi, and by the mid-1950s had risen to helm Xinjiang's Department of Civil Affairs.[4] The ETR poet-polemicist Elqem Ekhtem, who in 1948 had castigated "Chinese brutes" in the pages of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*,[5] was in 1951 appointed by the CCP to help run Ili's propaganda department and prefectural newspaper, and before long had ascended to still higher posts in the provincial capital.[6] For each of these ETR alumni, and for scores more like them, the pre-1949 activities and associations that should have been a liability in early Maoist China instead proved a valuable asset. The Uyghur elite of official Xinjiang in the 1950s was dominated by ETR veterans and Ili intellectuals—a fact which has had far-reaching implications for Uyghur culture and identity up to the present day.

To understand why the victorious Chinese Communist Party chose to empower ETR officials and writers who had spent years fighting for independence from Chinese rule, we can begin by considering a November 1949 directive from CCP central leadership to the party officials who were then just arriving in Xinjiang.[7] Declaring it "appropriate to induct progressive elements among the minorities into the Chinese Communist Party," the directive instructed

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[2] "Zhonggong zhongyang Xinjiang fenju pizhun Saifuding deng ren ru dang 中共中央新疆分局批准賽福鼎等人入黨," *Xinjiang ribao*, 2 March 1950: 1.

[3] Mejmūʿe hey'et taḥrīriyesi [editorial board], "Suyumluk shāʿirimiz Luṭf Allāh," *Khan Tengri* 3 (1946): 22.

[4] Fu and Tian, *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang lishi dashiji*, 20; Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi • minzheng zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•民政志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di ershisi juan: minzheng zhi* 新疆通志第二十四卷：民政志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), 281.

[5] E.g., Elqem Ekhtem, "Shāʿir L. Muṭṭalib Qaynam Örkishi."

[6] Ailikanmu Aihetanmu 艾里坎木・艾合坦木, "Ailikanmu Aihetanmu (zizhuan) 艾里坎木・艾合坦木（自传）," in *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiandai zuojia zhuanlüe* 中国少数民族现代作家传略, ed. Wu Chongyang 吴重阳 and Tao Lifan 陶立璠 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 47.

[7] Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui zuzhibu 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会组织部, Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui dangshi yanjiushi 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会党史研究室, and Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu dang'anju 新疆维吾尔自治区档案局, eds., *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao 1937-1987* 中国共产党新疆维吾尔自治区组织史资料 1937-1987 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1996), 22.

officials to recruit several dozen new party members in Xinjiang, "primarily from the progressives amongst the Uyghurs and other minorities," and to waive the probationary period usually preceding full party membership. The old party hands who had recently arrived in Xinjiang were then to join with these new members and fan out across the province, forming new party branches and inviting forward-thinking locals in each area to join the party. Clearly, the CCP was in a hurry in Xinjiang.

The CCP's efforts to rapidly expand the ranks of Muslim officialdom in the province were understandable, given that only a handful of high-ranking Muslim officials in the Xinjiang government had proven willing and able to make the transition from serving the Chinese Nationalists to serving the Chinese Communists. Perhaps most prominent was Burhan Shehidi, a silver-tongued Tatar who had served as the final Guomindang governor of Xinjiang and was kept on by the Communists for several years.[8] Fluent in Russian and Chinese as well as the province's Turkic languages, Shehidi played an important role negotiating between Han officialdom and Xinjiang's Muslim communities. His Guomindang career had won him plentiful enemies as well as friends; when Zhou Enlai consulted the ETR delegation in Beijing about retaining Shehidi as governor, they made known their opposition, describing Shehidi as an "unprincipled careerist."[9] But it was precisely Shehidi's ideological flexibility that helped ensure his continued career success after the 1949 transition, as the CCP, having promised indigenous rule in Xinjiang, confronted the scarcity of Muslim officials in the province.

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[8] Shehidi's own memoirs conclude with the advent of CCP rule in Xinjiang, but a useful summary and analysis of Shehidi's career in early PRC Xinjiang is provided in Donald Hugh McMillen, "Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Sinkiang, 1949-73: Revolutionary Integration vs. Regionalism" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Colorado, Boulder, 1976), 62-63. *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 43 (2000) is devoted entirely to articles on Shehidi, several of which deal with his PRC career.

[9] A. A. Khakimbaev, a member of the 1949 ETR delegation, recounted the exchange in *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973) [*Spetsial'nyi biulleten' Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* 9 (148)], 44.

This scarcity was due in part to the Chinese Nationalists' governance of the province over the previous half-decade. After the Guomindang established control of southern and eastern Xinjiang in the mid-1940s, the ranks of the bureaucracy were dominated by Han, despite the official policy of bureaucratic indigenization promulgated by Zhang Zhizhong. Of the relatively small pool of experienced Uyghur officials in Guomindang Xinjiang who enjoyed any degree of public trust, a large proportion—like their Chinese Nationalists patrons—were virulently anti-Communist. Many of the most prominent Uyghur officials in Guomindang-ruled Xinjiang, as well as other anti-Communist Uyghur intellectuals, prudently fled the province in late 1949 alongside retreating Nationalist troops.[10] By the time CCP operatives reached southern Xinjiang in the wake of advancing PLA units, there was a diminished pool of Uyghur officials from whom they could plausibly recruit, even if they chose to overlook ideological heterodoxy. Most members of southern Xinjiang's Uyghur intelligentsia were employed as teachers or in various non-official capacities, with only a small proportion possessing recent government experience.[11] To find native cadres who could help administer the state and win hearts and minds in the Uyghur community, the party would need to look elsewhere. The answer lay to the north.

"Amongst the minorities of Xinjiang, due to Soviet influence… there are already a number of progressive communists and like-minded individuals," noted the November 1949 directive from CCP headquarters.[12] "They have already formed communist organizations, as well as a Union for Peace and Democracy; there is thus a preexisting basis for establishing Communist Party organizations among the minorities of Xinjiang." Soviet influence and

[10] A first-hand account of the exodus of Guomindang-affiliated Uyghur officials and intellectuals on the eve of the Communist victory is Qutlan, "Ghulamidin Pakhtaning hayati (4): Qeshqerdiki akhirqi künler we hijret sepiri," *Yoruq sahillar*, Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 30 May 2017, http://www.rfa.org/uyghur/yoruq-sahillar/ghulamidin-paxta-05302017151713.html (Accessed 8 Nov. 2017).
[11] Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)*, 55.
[12] Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui zuzhibu et al., *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao*, 22.

communist sympathies in Xinjiang were largely concentrated in the three northern districts comprising the Eastern Turkestan Republic; the Union for Peace and Democracy in Xinjiang was the ETR's primary political organ.[13] By late 1949, the CCP was well apprised of the ETR's revolutionary credentials. While the rest of Xinjiang was still *terra incognita* for the party, its contacts with the ETR had been firmly established before the first PLA soldier set foot in the province.

In July 1949, a CCP delegation in Moscow had reached an understanding with the Soviet leadership on the future of Xinjiang, in whose affairs the USSR had been happily meddling for the better part of two decades.[14] After several years backing Xinjiang's pro-Soviet despot Sheng Shicai, and several more years backing the breakaway ETR, the USSR was by 1949 finally prepared to accept Chinese sovereignty in Xinjiang, now that its ideological brethren were poised to take power in the province. The ETR leadership, deeply dependent on their Soviet patrons, understood that they were to cooperate with the CCP. In August, Deng Liqun, a member of the CCP delegation at the Moscow talks, set out for the ETR, accompanied by three other Chinese communists—two radio technicians and one cipher clerk. After arriving in Ghulja, the ETR's de facto capital, Deng commenced meetings with the ETR leadership and established radio contact with Beijing, Moscow, and the PLA First Field Army. The various parties came to an agreement on military cooperation between the ETR army and the PLA, and resolved to send a high-level

[13] For more on the Union for Peace and Democracy in Xinjiang, see N. N. Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie narodov Sin'tsziana kak sostavnaia chast' obshchekitaiskoi revoliutsii (1944-1949 gody)," in *Voprosy istorii Kazakhstana i Vostochnogo Turkestana*, ed. V. F. Shakhmatov, T. Zh. Shoinbaev, and V. S. Kuznetsov (Almaty: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk Kazakhskoi SSR, 1962), 91-94. General Wang Zhen, CCP leader in Xinjiang, offered his thoughts on the Union in "Xinjiang fenju shuji Wang Zhen tongzhi zai Saifuding deng jiaru gongchandang de yishi shang de jianghua 新疆分局書記王震同志在賽福鼎等加入共產黨的儀式上的講話," *Xinjiang ribao*, 2 March 1950: 1.

[14] Barmin, *Sin'tszian v Sovetsko-Kitaiskikh otnosheniiakh 1941-1949 gg*, 179-80. Barmin downplays the aforementioned Soviet meddling, but his account, based on unprecedented access to Soviet archives, nonetheless sheds significant light on these events. On Deng Liqun's visit to the ETR, see also "Liu Shaoqi to Cde. G.M. Malenkov," August 1949, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 109-00004-03, 10, tr. Gary Goldberg, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/208329 (accessed 14 May 2019).

delegation of ETR representatives to the upcoming National People's Political Consultative Conference, to be held in Beijing that September.

On August 22, with most of Xinjiang still in Guomindang hands, the top leadership of the ETR—Ahmadjan Qasimi, Abdukérim Abbasov, Delilhan Sugirbaev, and several others—boarded a Soviet airplane to Beijing. They never made it there. Official Chinese and Soviet accounts reported that the plane had crashed en route to Beijing, killing all on board.[15] Conclusive evidence confirming or disproving the official version of events has not come to light, and debate over the ETR leaders' actual fate continues, with some reports suggesting that Qasimi and his comrades died in a Soviet or Chinese prison. In the ETR, the inevitable suspicions were heightened by the fact that the leaders' death was not made public for a full two months.[16] Education Minister Seypidin Ezizi, one of the few remaining ETR leaders of any stature, did his best to put a good face on this dubious delay when he finally announced his former superiors' death.[17] "We needed to please their souls by successfully advancing the people's struggle that began under their leadership," he told a Ghulja meeting of the Union for Peace and Democracy. "Needless to say, it was for precisely this reason that we found it appropriate to keep this tragic news temporarily secret, and to walk in their footsteps. We went to Beijing, and in the name of Xinjiang's people we attended the National People's Consultative Conference and the foundation of the new state; we successfully resolved the Xinjiang question; and we have now returned."

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[15] Ibid., 180; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 233-34. Dzhamil' Gasanly suggests that the official Soviet explanation for the delegation's death echoed a suspicious 1947 car accident which claimed the life of Seid Jafar Pishevari, head of the Azerbaijan People's Government in northern Iran. Pishevari's short-lived separatist state was another post-war Soviet satellite that outlived its usefulness. Dzhamil' Gasanly, *Sin'tszian v orbite sovetskoi politiki: Stalin i musul'manskoe dvizhenie v Vostochnom Turkestane 1931-1949* (Moscow: FLINTA, 2016), 324-27.

[16] A month after the ETR's top leadership departed for the Beijing conference, the ETR's leading journal printed a brief "Declaration of Our Province's Delegation to the National Political Consultative Conference," accompanied by the rather unhelpful byline "Those from Xinjiang Who Attended the National Political Consultative Conference." No mention was made of any misfortune having befallen the delegation. Junggo khelq siyāsi kéngesh mejlisige Shing Jāng olkusidin ishtirāk qilghuchilar, "Olkumizdin Junggo khelq siyāsi kéngesh mejlisige ishtirāk qilghuchilarning bayānāti," *Ittifāq* 10 (1949), inside cover.

[17] Sayf al-Din, "Sayf al-Din Effendim Jānāblirining qāyghuluq bayānāti," *Ittifāq* 11-12 (1949), 4.

The Xinjiang question, however, was anything but successfully resolved. The demise of the top ETR leadership deprived the CCP of its most credible potential intermediaries with Xinjiang's Muslim majority; the charismatic and eloquent Qasimi, in particular, had been highly popular throughout the province. At the same time, the loss of its most influential statesmen robbed the ETR of whatever clout it might have had in negotiating for some form of continued autonomy under CCP rule. In March 1951, when a group of several dozen predominantly ETR intellectuals lodged a formal request with Beijing for high-level autonomy in Xinjiang—an "Uyghuristan Republic" officially under Chinese auspices, but with an independent army and a UN observer—the Chinese leadership scoffed at the "separatist" and "bourgeois nationalist" proposal.[18] A parallel proposal by Kazakh intellectuals for a "Kazakh Autonomous Province" was likewise rebuffed. Over the following weeks and months, the party-state publicly aired and attacked these propositions, in the process making it abundantly clear that no genuine political autonomy would be contemplated for the ETR, much less for Xinjiang as a whole.[19]

The CCP proceeded apace in monopolizing political and military authority in the province, and within a couple years the last official vestiges of the ETR faded away. Yet even as

[18] Sheng Mao, "Frontier Politics and Sino-Soviet Relations: A Study of Northwestern Xinjiang, 1949-1963" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2017), 47-49, 103-04; Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)*, 96-98; "M. Zimianin to the Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU and to Comrade Iu. V. Andropov," August 18, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, fond 5, opis 49, delo 130, listy 164-176, tr. David Brophy, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175901 (accessed 11 Feb. 2019).

[19] The March 1951 intellectuals had initially presented their "Uyghuristan" proposal in response to a central government questionnaire, soliciting the opinions of top non-Han cadres in Xinjiang on potentially renaming the province and reforming its government structures. Yet the fierce state backlash to their proposals foreshadowed the party's call for unfettered criticism and subsequent attack on critics during the Anti-Rightist Campaign several years later. In April 1951, PLA Chief Wang Zhen publicly attacked proposals for the establishment of "Uyghuristan," for the replacement of PLA troops with an army drawn from the region's native peoples, and for independence or Soviet annexation for the region. As Wang fulminated in his speeches against "anti-popular elements intent on aiding imperialism and preserving feudalism in Xinjiang," supporters of the Uyghuristan heresy were pilloried in the press. Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)*, 96-99. Typical was a broadside by Daxiafu, formerly a leading editor of ETR Mongol-language periodicals and subsequently one of the first ETR officials to receive CCP membership. Echoing Wang Zhen, Daxiafu castigated the "Uyghuristan" proponents as "imperialist spies" and as "running dogs" of American imperialism and the Guomindang. Daxiafu 達夏甫, "Jianjue fandui weifan gongtong gangling de pohuai xingwei 堅決反對違反共同綱領的破壞行為," *Xinjiang ribao* 8 May 1951: 1.

the Ili-dominated republic lost the battle for political survival, the Ili-Chöchek network of intellectuals and officials began acquiring a degree of cultural power that exceeded anything they had enjoyed in the ETR. While the three ETR prefectures contained only about five percent of Xinjiang's total Uyghur population, they produced a cohort of officials and intellectuals who would dominate Uyghur official culture across the province for years to come—and set the tone indefinitely for Uyghur culture and identity.[20]

In December 1949, the CCP inducted its first fifteen members in Xinjiang.[21] At least twelve of the fifteen had worked in the ETR government, military, or publishing sphere; of the six Uyghurs in this first Xinjiang CCP cohort, fully five were ETR alumni. The same month, Beijing approved the candidate list for Xinjiang's new People's Government. Of the new provincial government's thirty-three members, a dozen had held office in the ETR, including most of the new government's Uyghur members—most prominently, Xinjiang's new vice chair Seypidin Ezizi.[22] And this was only the beginning. Over the following months and years, the CCP absorbed large swathes of the ETR civil service, intelligentsia, and officer corps. Across the province, and particularly in the capital Ürümchi, individuals with ETR backgrounds filled key positions in the new government and were overwhelmingly prevalent in the cultural bureaucracy. Throughout Uyghur public life in early Maoist Xinjiang, these veterans of a vanished republic cast a very long shadow.

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[20] For the ETR proportion of Xinjiang's Uyghur population in 1949, compare *Yili Hasake zizhizhou zhi*, 177, with *Renkou zhi*, 269. Similar proportions were found by the 1953 census; see *Renkou zhi*, 283.

[21] The first fifteen CCP members inducted in Xinjiang are listed in Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao*, 23. Comparison of this list with authoritative biographical sources yielded the above figures on ETR veterans' representation.

[22] Fu and Tian, *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang lishi dashiji*, 16. Like Burhan Shehidi's autobiography, Ezizi's extensive memoirs conclude in 1949. A detailed account of Ezizi's PRC career can be found in Qi Ruoxiong 祁若雄 and Xiong Kunjing 熊坤静, "Saifuding Aizezi 赛福鼎•艾则孜," in *Zhonggong dangshi shaoshu minzu renwu zhuan: di yi juan: dang he guojia lingdaoren, zaoqi geming yinglie 10 ren* 中共党史少数民族人物传: 第一卷：党和国家领导人、早期革命英烈 10 人, ed. Zhongguo zhonggong dang shi renwu yanjiu hui 中国中共党史人物研究会 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2012), 245-96.

To understand how this ETR cohort successfully traded political sovereignty for cultural supremacy, the first factor to consider is the depth of the ETR talent pool. On the eve of the CCP assumption of power in Xinjiang, the ETR's governing quasi-party, the Union for Peace and Democracy, had well over 50,000 members—a membership level that the CCP would achieve in Xinjiang only in the mid-1950s.[23] The Union continued to grow in the early months of CCP rule in Xinjiang. Well over half of the Union's members were Uyghur, and more than a quarter were Kazakh; Mongols, Hui, Russians, and Kyrgyz comprised most of the remainder. The Union, which had been formed at the direct request of the Soviet leadership, was avowedly socialist in its principles, calling for limits on the concentration of wealth and property and a greatly expanded welfare state.[24] Union members were expected to take part in study circles to raise their "political consciousness," and to engage in "praise and criticism" sessions in which members would constructively point out each other's failings and strengths. In addition to managing their own affairs, Union branches were also tasked with running state cultural institutions at the local level.[25] Though its personnel policies were not as exacting as the CCP's vaunted party discipline, the Union nonetheless ensured that its members acquired experience in political organizing and some measure of socialist ideological training. The CCP central

[23] By June 1949, the Union had 50,000 members in the three ETR districts, with the Ili branches having grown most quickly. Ittifāq, "Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi bir yil jeryānni bésip ötti," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 11. A year later, the Union—which remained operational into the early 1950s—had more than 75,000 members; see the detailed breakdown in Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie," 92-93. ETR General Zunun Téyipov, a former leader of the Union, wrote in his memoirs that the Union's total membership ultimately exceeded 80,000. Zunun Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1977), 127. CCP membership statistics for 1955 are given in Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui zuzhibu, *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao*, 21.

[24] The Soviet Council of Ministers' October 1947 proposal for forming the Union and the subsequent Politburo ratification of the proposal are detailed in Gasanly, *Sin'tszian v orbite sovetskoi politiki*, 289-90, 306-07. The Union as ultimately constituted in the ETR followed closely the blueprint laid out by the Soviets. The avowed principles of the Union are enumerated in Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie," 91-92.

[25] Ittifaq, "Shing Jāngdā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqi bir yil jeryānni bésip ötti," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 15; Oṣmān Ziyām, "Ittifāq sefide polātdek āngliq intiẓām ornutush uchun oz-arā teqdir, tenqid yurguzushning ehmiyiti we chārisi," *Ittifāq* 8 (1949): 26-30. The Union's personnel and organizational guidelines are laid out in Ittifāq merkiziy komititet teshkilāt bölümi, *Shing Jāng dā tinchliq we khelqchilliqni ḥimāye qilish ittifāqining teshkiliy ishlār waqitliq qollānmisi* ("Ittifāq" meṭbe'esi, 1949).

leadership was on firm ground in considering the Union a potential foundation for Communist organizing in Xinjiang.[26]

The ethnic composition of the ETR government was similar to that of the Union. The ETR state employed perhaps 7,500 cadres from local nationalities, with two-thirds of those working in Ili.[27] As a self-described Turkic liberation movement, the ETR state functioned primarily in Uyghur and Kazakh, and hired mostly from the Uyghur and Kazakh communities that together constituted four-fifths of the republic's population.[28] The small Xibo, Tatar, Mongol, and Hui communities also supplied significant numbers of cadres, many of whose careers were facilitated by the multilingual fluency common in each of these communities. A number of these Xibo and Tatar ETR officials went on to prominent careers in the 1950s CCP.[29] The ETR army—and its officer corps of more than 3,000—was overwhelmingly Uyghur and Kazakh, with small but prominent Russian, Xibo, Tatar, and Hui contingents.[30] Akhunds were attached to ETR army regiments, and charged with maintaining both spiritual and sanitary order in the ranks.[31] The contrast was stark with the predominantly Han civil service in Guomindang Xinjiang, and even more so with the Han-dominated Guomindang army stationed in the south of the province. Han Chinese were sparse in the ranks of the ETR state and military, their numbers

[26] Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui zuzhibu et al., *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao*, 22.
[27] Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)*, 55.
[28] A good sense of the composition of the ETR government's middle and top ranks is given by Zhang Dajun 張大軍, *Xinjiang fengbao qishi nian* 新疆風暴七十年 (Taibei: Lanxi chubanshe, 1980), vol. 11, 6531-41. On the ethnic composition of the ETR's population, see Mao, "Frontier Politics and Sino-Soviet Relations," 124-25.
[29] Of the first fifteen CCP members inducted in Xinjiang, two were Xibo ETR veterans and one a Tatar ETR veteran. Es'et Is'haqov, a Tatar who served the ETR as a translator, editor, and state official, later became vice chair of the Xinjiang People's Government under Seypidin Ezizi. *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao*, 23; Shérip Khushtar, "Péshqedem ziyaliy - Es'et Is'haqow," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 29 (1990): 315-19.
[30] Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane (1949-1969 gg.)*, 55.
[31] Markaziy ḥarbiy diniy mufti 'askar idāresi, *Polk ākhunliri ḥifẓ-i ṣiḥḥat qollānmāsi* (Chöchek: "Khelq āwāzi" giziti meṭbe'esi, 1946).

in northern Xinjiang having been substantially depleted by the flight of Han soldiers, officials and civilians amidst the intercommunal violence accompanying the Ili rebellion.

In addition to the ETR's advantage in experienced Uyghur officials and officers, the small republic had by 1949 become home to an impressive network of writers and intellectuals experienced in socialist-style official culture and ideology—a network with no parallel elsewhere in the province. As outlined in the previous chapter, the Ili and Chöchek regions' existing communities of socialist-leaning intellectuals were greatly augmented in the second half of the 1940s by the influx of ambitious Uyghur youth and intellectuals from elsewhere in the province, most of whom were rapidly integrated into the ETR network. The ETR state, devoted to mass mobilization on the Soviet model and with an economy less precarious than inflation-ridden southern Xinjiang, devoted substantial attention and resources to establishing its own publishing facilities and periodicals, with newspapers playing a particularly prominent role. Young poets writing for ETR periodicals learned to pen the simplified meters preferred in Soviet Turkic publications;[32] prose fiction, previously little known in Xinjiang, emerged as a significant genre, as ETR authors absorbed the novels and story collections imported from the USSR and serialized in Soviet Uyghur periodicals.[33] ETR editorialists learned to compose Soviet-style broadsides, while a substantial fraction of the news pages consisted of translations from Soviet news agencies, continuing a longstanding practice of Ili newspapers.[34]

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[32] The "Ösüsh" ("Growing") literature page of *Inqilābiy Sharqiy Turkistān* is filled with poems in *barmaq wezin* (finger meter), the simplified verse form popularized in Xinjiang by the works of Tatar poets like Ğabdulla Tuqay.
[33] In a July 2014 interview, Mirsultan Osmanov, who grew up in Ili in the 1930s and 1940s, recalled that novels imported from the USSR, such as Abdulla Qodiriy's *Scorpion from the Pulpit*, were eagerly passed from hand to hand in the ETR. *Eastern Truth*, the Arabic-script Uyghur periodical printed in Uzbekistan for distribution in the ETR, included short stories and excerpts from novels like Aybik's *Newayi*. E.g., Aybik, "Newayi: romandin parche," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 10 (1947): 15-16.
[34] A series of ads in the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette* in summer 1941 sought a Uyghur-speaking translator to collect news from Russian-language radio. "Bildurush," *Kunduluk Ili Shingjang giziti*, 17 June 1941. Other Xinjiang newspapers during Sheng's pro-Soviet period also reprinted Soviet news reports; by the mid-1940s, however, newspapers outside of the ETR had switched to Guomindang news agencies and other sources.

All of this meant that by the beginning of CCP rule in Xinjiang, ETR officials and intellectuals were uniquely prepared to staff Xinjiang's new cultural bureaucracy. In terms of administration, the top-down ETR government, led by the Union for Peace and Democracy, was in effect a one-party state, with a corps of officials trained to implement socialist policy. While Han CCP officials called most of the shots in Xinjiang's economic and political spheres after 1949, Uyghur officials were needed to implement state policy at the local level. And for the project of creating Maoist mass culture in Xinjiang, the ideological confluence between the CCP and the ETR was even more promising. For years, the CCP—like the ETR—had largely followed Soviet precedent in official culture, with a number of local adaptations.[35] CCP leaders understood that if their efforts at popular outreach and socialist mass culture in Xinjiang were to succeed, the primary role must be played by writers and intellectuals as fluent in Uyghur language and culture as they were in socialist ideology and idiom. If ETR intellectuals and officials could manage to seize the moment, there was a world of career possibilities in early Maoist Xinjiang for Uyghur intellectuals steeped in socialist ideology, Uyghur bureaucrats experienced in mass popular organizations, and Uyghur writers practiced at socialist realism and populist poetry.

At the same time, the Islamic education and Persianate literary chops on which southern Xinjiang's intellectuals prided themselves were suddenly much less in demand. In the first half of the twentieth century, while Sheng Shicai's bloody purges had cut short many lives across the province, the structures of cultural power in Xinjiang's conservative south proved largely resilient, with modernizing ideologies and Soviet influence making only limited inroads. In the

[35] Mao Zedong himself had delivered the classic statement of CCP cultural policy in his Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art. A Uyghur translation of the talks was one of the first books the CCP cultural apparatus distributed in Xinjiang. Māwzeydong, *Yengngende otkuzulgen edebiyāt we sen'et soḥbetide sozlen'gen nutuq* (Beijing: Merkezi khelq hokumet milliy ishler hey'eti, 1950).

oasis communities ringing the Taklamakan Desert, traditional education and hereditary privilege remained the primary keys to cultural, political, and financial capital.[36] In literature, classical forms largely held sway, and the south's printing sector remained relatively anemic, while manuscript culture continued to flourish through the end of the Republican period.[37] While ETR publications privileged a popular style influenced by the spoken language as well as the publications pouring over the Soviet border, most of the relatively limited publishing in southern Xinjiang still hewed to the ornate classicism of Xinjiang's traditional Turkic literary register.[38]

Major southern oases like Kashgar and Yarkand had for centuries stood at the center of Muslim high culture in Xinjiang. Yet as the source of cultural capital in Xinjiang began to change—slowly in the first decades of the twentieth century, rapidly after the mid-1930s—it was in part these southern oases' very rootedness in tradition that prevented easy adjustment. Even as the province's Ili-dominated official cultural apparatus rapidly developed and propagated a new Uyghur culture, the south's manuscript culture was disrupted and ultimately nearly sundered by Maoist policies.[39] The CCP orchestrated book-burnings across the province in the early 1950s, with manuscripts a primary target—so much so that by the mid-1950s, many previously accessible manuscripts had become hard to find.[40]

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[36] Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 40-48.
[37] On the continuity of manuscript culture and the scarcity of printing in Republican-era southern Xinjiang, see Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 177-87.
[38] Typical was Ahmad Ziya'i's 1948 *Blossoms That Shall Not Scatter*, printed in 500 copies by the *Kashgar Xinjiang Gazette*, where Ziya'i was then head editor. The collection consisted of classically metered *ghazals* on traditional themes as well as an opera script based on the classic Rabi'e-Se'idin legend, and was decidedly conservative in orthography, grammar, and lexicon. Aḥmad Ẓiyā'i, *Tozumās chéchekler* (Kashgar: Kāshgher Shingjāng gizite idāresi, 1948).
[39] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 191-93. Cf. Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, 135-36; the advent of quasi-socialist rule in Bukhara had likewise spelled the end of Persianate high culture's longstanding hegemony in the region.
[40] While traveling in Khotan in late 1956, Soviet linguist E. R. Tenishev was unable to find a copy of the guild manual (*risale*) of the carpet-makers, a manuscript which would in years past have been easily located in Khotan, carpet capital of Xinjiang. One of Tenishev's local companions explained that it had become "exceptionally difficult to find [such books]. In the first years after Liberation many books were burned on the grounds that they belonged to landlords." *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia: dnevniki 1956—1958* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995), 115. Book burnings are also mentioned in Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (19)," *Yoruq sahillar* 29 Jan. 2019.

Even Guomindang officials had by the mid-1940s come to recognize the increasing ideological and cultural divide between northern and southern Xinjiang. As right-wing Guomindang journalist Huang Zhenxia wrote from Ürümchi in 1946, "Kashgar is the ancient capital of the Uyghurs, the place from which Persian and Arab culture spread in Xinjiang. Ili, on the other hand, is the Shanghai of Xinjiang, the entry point of Western culture in the province."[41] Ili poet Lutpulla Mutellip, declared Huang, represented "the vanguard of the May Fourth Movement in Xinjiang." But while Guomindang figures publicly praised Ili intellectuals during the 1946-47 coalition government with the ETR, in general the Guomindang viewed Soviet-leaning Ili Uyghurs as rivals not only in realpolitik but in ideology as well; the Muslim conservatives of southern Xinjiang seemed more natural allies to most Guomindang leaders. When the CCP entered the province, this calculus was neatly reversed; while conservative-leaning Uyghurs from Kashgar and Khotan could be useful to the CCP, the party's ideological overlap with the socialist ETR was inevitably far greater.

Of equal significance, by 1949 the ETR and the CCP had a common enemy in the vanquished Guomindang. Both had fought the Chinese Nationalists on the battlefield and in the political realm, and had spent years decrying Guomindang oppression of China's population. Particularly after the 1946 peace treaty, the Eastern Turkestan leadership and press had struck a notably conciliatory tone toward the people of China; even after the ETR's relations with the Guomindang soured the following year, the overheated rhetoric in the ETR press was balanced by regular assurances from the leadership that the enemy was the Guomindang, not the Han people as a whole. In summer 1949, Ahmadjan Qasimi openly regetted the "completely wrong

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https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/yoruq-sahillar/qaraqurum-burkiti-01292019145350.html (accessed 10 Feb. 2019).

[41] Huang Zhenxia 黄震遐, "Weizu wenhua de xiankuang, wu, Aheimaiti Qiya; liu, Lutefula pipan 維族文化的現況，五，阿黑麥提、齊亞；六，魯特夫拉批判," *Xinjiang ribao*, 8 June 1946, p. 3. A Uyghur translation appeared as Jin Sha, "Uyghur medeniyetining ḫāḍirqi eḥwāli," *Shingjāng giziti*, 15 June 1946: 2.

and unjust" mistreatment suffered by some Han during the Ili rebellion, and affirmed that "Han populists are our allies" in the struggle against Guomindang tyranny.[42] "The Guomindang reactionaries would rather treat China as an American colony than allow the Chinese people any political rights of their own," declared Qasimi. "Having made our province their own colony, will they recognize the rights and liberties of its people? Of course not." Qasimi knew, of course, that an alternative Chinese government lay just over the horizon, and his article appeared as the ETR was establishing links with the Chinese Communist Party. A few months later, with Communist victory in the Chinese civil war all but won, the ETR's state-controlled press welcomed the October founding of the People's Republic of China, even as the Guomindang army still held sway in the remainder of Xinjiang.[43] With Chinese Communist military units and party cadres preparing to enter Xinjiang the following month, the stage had been set for the smooth integration of ETR institutions and personnel into China's emerging party-state.

Finally, if it was the ETR's peaceful incorporation into China's new socialist government that made ETR veterans kosher for the party, it was conversely the ETR's fierce resistance to Chinese domination during the Guomindang period that constituted much of its appeal to Uyghurs. Xinjiang's native peoples have in the modern era rarely known self-rule, and the brief existence of an independent state left deep traces in Uyghur historical memory.[44] It is no accident that even today, the three-volume historical epic *Motherland* (*Ana yurt*), chronicling the rise and fall of the ETR, is claimed as a favorite novel by many, perhaps most Uyghurs, even those who have not plowed through its nearly two thousand pages.[45] An Eastern Turkestan Republic

[42] A. Qāsimi, *Tāllānmā eṣerler* (Ürümchi: Shing Jāng khelq dimokrātiye ittifāqining bāsh ijrā'iye heyiti, 1950), 267, 271.
[43] E.g., "Jungkhuā khelq jumhuriyiti merkizi khelq hokumetining qurulushini tebrikleymiz," *Ittifāq* 10 (1949): 3-7.
[44] See for example the approving attitude toward the Ili Rebellion expressed by Ismayil Tokhti's otherwise conservative father in Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 55.
[45] Zordun Sabir, *Ana yurt: tarikhiy roman* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 2000). For more on *Motherland* and the ETR's place in Uyghur historical memory, see Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in*

connection has added luster to the reputation of any Uyghur intellectual since the ETR was proclaimed in 1944. At the dawn of CCP rule in Xinjiang, therefore, ETR veterans presented a potential source of native authority for a CCP eager to persuade Uyghurs that Chinese Communists came as allies, not oppressors. At the same time, playing a significant role in the new party-state seemed to offer the Ili-Chöchek network an opportunity to extend their influence far beyond the borders of the ETR. In the fast-changing political conditions of early Maoist Xinjiang, however, it would take deft maneuvering to bring this ETR-CCP nexus into being.

In summer 1949, a few months before his death, Ahmadjan Qasimi addressed a general meeting of civil service personnel in Ghulja. "I believe that even when the provincial question is fully resolved, Ghulja shall not lose its political and economic significance and its central cultural role," he predicted. "Ghulja will be a cultural hearth cultivating for our province capable, modern cadres at all levels. We are striving even now with all our means and ability to lay the foundation for that cultural hearth."[46] Qasimi's words would prove prescient. But the civil servants and intellectuals who attended his speech would soon find themselves politically orphaned, after Qasimi and the rest of the ETR's top leadership were wiped out en route to Beijing, and the republic they had governed was absorbed by the new People's Republic of China. Qasimi had been right to point out Ili's unique advantages in the fast-changing provincial scene; but to translate this potential into power, Ili's officials and intellectuals would need to find new sponsors.

Their Own Land (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 97-99.

[46] Qāsimi, "Rehbirimiz Aḥmad Effendim janāblirining sozligen nuṭiqi," 19. Qasimi spent the rest of his speech exhorting his listeners to recover the rigorous ethic of the ETR's early days, and lamenting that the civil service seemed content to rest on its laurels following the peace treaty with the Guomindang.

REVOLUTIONARY NETWORKS: PATRONAGE AND THE PARTY

Having never held substantial power in the province, the CCP entered Xinjiang with a largely blank slate, and wasted no time in reassuring the local population that unlike the chauvinistic Guomindang, the enlightened People's Republic would allow Xinjiang's native peoples to govern themselves. These beneficent declarations created an immediate dilemma for Xinjiang's new party apparatus, which was in fact just as dominated by Han officials as the preceding Guomindang administration. The early party-state in Xinjiang prioritized economic development and political stability above all else; and in both spheres, the Han party leadership was generally unwilling to entrust native cadres with genuine authority.[47] The CCP, like Sheng Shicai in the 1930s and Zhang Zhizhong in the 1940s, did endeavor to establish a veneer of local rule, installing native cadres in conspicuous leadership posts from the governor's mansion in Ürümchi down to local county offices. Often enough, though, these non-Han cadres were entrusted with few responsibilities beyond sitting through interminable meetings and affixing their stamps to official documents that arrived at their desks.[48] In matters that the party-state deemed important, personnel and policy decisions were generally made by the Han officials who in theory served under or alongside these native cadres. As Xinjiang Highway Bureau deputy chief Mamut Kérimhaji put it, "I've worked on highways for twenty-two years, I know a thing or two about fixing and maintaining roads. But I'm not fulfilling the role of a deputy head. Most of the workers in our office are Han, but not a single one has come to me to report on their work… I just sit and read journals and newspapers… in reality I'm a deputy head in name only."[49]

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[47] Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State*, 182-94; McMillen, "Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Sinkiang," 79.

[48] Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane*, 57. Khakimbaev, an ETR veteran of Uzbek background, was a high-ranking cadre in Xinjiang in the early 1950s. While his account of the period is somewhat polemical, it largely coincides with other contemporary reports.

[49] "Dui dangwei lingdao kexue jishu fangmian tichu piping he yijian 對黨委領導科學技術方面提出批評和意見," *Xinjiang ribao*, 5 June 1957: 3.

In the cultural sphere, however, the CCP was prepared to make good on its promises of autonomy in a tangible way. Preoccupied with economic, political, and military matters, the party leadership in Xinjiang was largely willing to let native intellectuals and cadres run their own cultural and educational affairs, so long as they fulfilled the imperative of "national in form, socialist in content." The Uyghur writers and intellectuals who acquired positions in the early Maoist cultural bureaucracy would have genuine control over their printing presses and schools, provided they toed the party line on questions of politics and economics. The hometown origins and affinities of these Uyghur cadres were for the most part as illegible and immaterial to Han party officials as those Han officials' hometown networks in Hunan or Tianjin were to their new Uyghur colleagues. More significant were the political complexion and bureaucratic expertise of potential recruits for the Xinjiang party-state. But ideology and expertise were not enough; to get a foot in the bureaucratic door, one had to have the right connections.

ETR officials hit the ground running in cultivating patronage within Xinjiang's new party-state hierarchy. Seypidin Ezizi and Es'et Is'haqov had interacted extensively with Deng Liqun during his visit to the ETR in summer 1949, and that autumn Deng played a key role in selecting Ezizi to lead the ETR delegation to the National People's Consultative Conference in Beijing.[50] In December, following the advent of CCP rule in Xinjiang, Deng recommended Ezizi and Is'haqov for party membership, and days later they joined the first cohort of Xinjiang party members. As the most visible ETR official remaining after the top leadership's untimely demise, Ezizi played a crucial role in negotiating the ETR's integration into the People's Republic of

[50] Shérip Khushtar, "Péshqedem ziyaliy," 317-18; Ablimit Hajiyow, "Yoldash Es'et Is'haqowni esleymen," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 32 (1992): 330-43; Ezizi, *Ömür dastani (eslime 2)*, 420-21; *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao 1937-1987*, 23. On Deng's role in selecting the second ETR delegation to Beijing, see Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane*, 41-42.

China, and over the next few decades emerged as the CCP's most trusted and successful Uyghur statesman.

Ezizi, however, was only the most prominent example of the ETR-CCP symbiosis in early Maoist Xinjiang. As outlined above, the first months of CCP rule in Xinjiang saw numerous other ETR leaders inducted into the party or appointed to high-ranking posts in the new provincial government. In addition to Deng Liqun, their sponsors for party membership included exalted figures like PLA General Wang Zhen, then the ranking party leader in the province. Wang, generally considered a hard-liner on ethnic affairs and consistently unsympathetic to Uyghur aspirations for autonomy, nonetheless recognized ETR alumni's potential utility to the party. Several years administering an independent socialist state and commanding an army had endowed ETR officials with the kind of experience the CCP needed. At the same time, appointing ETR leaders to conspicuous posts helped defang opposition to Chinese rule among the ETR populace and military, and enhanced the CCP's credibility among minority citizens throughout the province.[51] The persistence of the ETR army, too, brought hard-power leverage to the table as remaining ETR leaders maneuvered for sinecures in the new administration.

The CCP needed more than a few highly visible leaders, however; it had a whole bureaucracy to fill. The Han party leadership, lacking familiarity with Xinjiang's native communities, depended heavily on the recommendations of the party's first local recruits. High-ranking ETR officials formed a dominant plurality among these first Xinjiang party members, and as their patronage relationships with Han CCP officials grew stronger, minor ETR officials began riding their coattails into the province's expanding party-state bureaucracy. Typical was

[51] Clarke, *In the Eye of Power*, 216-21; Donald H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 33-39.

the path traveled by Turghun Almas, former editor of the ETR newspaper *Forward*, who in 1953 obtained a position at the Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles with the direct intervention of Seypidin Ezizi.[52] Intellectuals and writers like Turghun Almas were perhaps the foremost beneficiaries of the CCP-ETR nexus, as the party-state hastened to fill the ranks of Xinjiang's propaganda apparatus and cultural bureaucracy; but the ETR networks were favored across the early Maoist state in Xinjiang. As the CCP's central leadership had predicted, these ETR officials and intellectuals proved willing and effective exponents of CCP policy, and in the early 1950s much of the ETR's intelligentsia and civil service was grandfathered into the new provincial government.[53]

The ETR army was likewise largely absorbed into the People's Liberation Army, and reorganized as the PLA Fifth Army in Xinjiang.[54] Veteran ETR officers played significant roles in Xinjiang's military and political life after 1949, with many decommissioned officers ultimately trading military rank for civilian postings.[55] Typical was Hemdulla Qurbanov (1910-92), an ETR officer who had studied in the USSR in the 1930s and spoke some Russian in addition to his fluent Chinese. Beginning in 1950, Qurbanov was appointed to a series of positions in the Aqsu district government, and as Aqsu Public Security chief received a medal of distinction for his leading role in trying and punishing those considered responsible for the deaths of Lutpulla Mutellip and his comrades. In 1956 he was transferred to Ürümchi to take up a high-ranking post in the cultural bureaucracy.[56] As units of the former ETR army were

[52] Qutluq Almas, "Dadam Turghun Almasning terjimihali," *Algha tor zhornili* 1 (2010): 125.
[53] During the Long March of 1934-35, the CCP had set a precedent for tolerating and even allying with local elites among non-Han populations. See Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 80.
[54] Caodanuofu Zayier 曹达诺夫•扎伊尔, *Wu jun de geming licheng* 五军的革命历程 (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1989), 103-07; Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride*, 132.
[55] Even a partial list of these ETR veteran officers reads like a "Who's Who" for the Uyghur official and military elite of early Maoist Xinjiang. See Tokhti Ibrahim, *Milliy armiyining jenggiwar musapisi*, 211-31.
[56] Ablimit Abdulla, "Qumul diyaridin üch wilayet inqilabigha qatnashqan ezimetler," *Qumul shehirining tarikh*

stationed at different points throughout the province and other units demobilized to assist in a "spring planting campaign," some ETR veterans were distressed by the dilution and gradual disarmament of their military. In the early days of CCP rule in Xinjiang, there were reports of scattered resistance by small groups of former ETR soldiers and officers, all quickly suppressed by the PLA. Resistance seems to have been minimal overall, though; with the dissolution of the Eastern Turkestan Republic's state institutions and borders, the ETR was spent as an armed force.[57] In bureaucratic patronage and official culture, however, the defunct ETR had never been stronger.

As the careers of ETR veterans flourished in the early and mid-1950s, local elites in southern Xinjiang saw their influence steadily diminish. This divergence of fortunes was closely linked to the changing nature of political, economic, and cultural patronage in the province, as long-standing systems of elite sponsorship were increasingly replaced by networks that drew on different forms of authority. The land reform campaigns of the early 1950s effectively deprived clerical authorities and local notables of their accustomed economic power, and the party-state worked assiduously to replace local cultural initiative with mass movements directed by the center. In Xinjiang as in the rest of China, the small urban bourgeoisie soon lost the financial capacity to support the nascent urban popular culture.[58] These changes proved especially disruptive in southern Xinjiang, where for centuries cultural power and communal prestige had revolved around Islamic education and authority, largely financed through a system of Islamic land endowments (*waqf*) and enforced by Islamic magistrates (*qadi*) at local courts.[59]

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matériyalliri 7 (2000): 122-23; Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 71-73.
[57] Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride*, 132-33; Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane*, 70-74.
[58] Richard Curt Kraus, *The Party and the Arty in China: The New Politics of Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 10, 37.
[59] A useful summary of Islamic institutions in Xinjiang in the decades preceding Communist rule is Ildikó Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters in Xinjiang, 1880-1949: Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Uyghur* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 316-50.

The CCP initially took a conciliatory posture toward the Islamic authorities in Xinjiang. Eager to cultivate the sympathies of the province's Muslim peasantry and cognizant of the Islamic clergy's continuing influence in the villages, the CCP granted a significant number of Muslim clerics sinecures in the new administration, and ultimately absorbed large swathes of the province's Islamic establishment into a state-directed clerical body.[60] This arrangement allowed the party-state to tap the clerics' grassroots prestige, even while making Xinjiang's religious leaders ever more dependent on state financial and political support. Similar concern for local Muslim sentiment led the party to spare the holdings of some Islamic institutions during the land reform campaign.[61] In preparation for the campaign, a high-level 1952 party report had concluded that the landlord class used *waqf* endowments as "a land ownership system of feudal exploitation," but nonetheless recommended that when dealing with *waqf* lands, officials carrying out land reform should tread carefully and take local conditions into account.[62] In late 1956, a Soviet advisor traveling in southern Xinjiang noted that the *waqf* system was still functioning, if in reduced form, in large parts of the province.[63]

At the local level, the party-state lacked the personnel and expertise to immediately replace all religious institutions with their civil equivalents. Well into the 1950s, Islamic

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[60] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar in the 1950's," 9-12. In 1955, the Xinjiang party-state decreed that all of the region's thousands of akhunds would become state employees, and draw a state salary if local tithes proved insufficient for living expenses. Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 101-02.

[61] A. G. Iakovlev, "Agrarnye otnosheniia i agrarnaia reforma v provintsii Sin'tszian (1949-1953 gg.)," in *Uchenye zapiski instituta vostokovedeniia, 11: Kitaiskii sbornik*, ed. Akademiia nauk SSSR: Institut vostokovedeniia (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1955), 252.

[62] Deng Liqun 邓力群 and Gu Bao 谷苞, "Nanjiang de wahafu di wenti 南疆的瓦哈甫地问题," in *Nanjiang nongcun shehui* 南疆农村社会, ed., Guojia minwei minzu wenti wuzhong congshu bianji weiyuanhui 国家民委民族问题五种丛书编辑委员会 and "Zhongguo shaoshu minzu shehui lishi diaocha ziliao congshu" Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu bianjizu "中国少数民族社会历史调查资料丛书" 新疆维吾尔自治区编辑组 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1979 [1953]), 109.

[63] Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 76. Qizil resident Weli Yaqub and poet Nim Shéhit Armiye Éli Damolla explained to Tenishev that the *waqf* system still existed "in a highly limited form" in Aqsu, including mosque, madrasah, ancestral, and other endowments. Government official Imin Tursun added that the *waqf* system was "particularly developed" in Khotan.

institutions continued to function in much of southern Xinjiang, while secular state institutions operated in parallel while gradually expanding their capacity and purview. The pace of this ad hoc approach depended on local conditions. One source reports that *qadi* courts in Kashgar were shuttered in the early 1950s, their silver seals confiscated; legal authority thereafter resided with those who wielded the red seals of the PRC civil courts. Only a vestigial Islamic legal authority was allowed to persist in the person of the chief Qadi of Kashgar.[64] In Khotan, however, the Islamic legal system seems to have been fully functioning at least into the mid-1950s on an equal basis with the civil courts, with the Xinjiang state acknowledging the validity of Shari'ah court proceedings.[65]

The Islamic educational system was permitted to continue functioning for most of the 1950s,[66] in significant part due to the lack of qualified teaching staff for the secular state schools. In the remote oases of Chira and Kériye, nestled between the Karakoram Mountains and the Taklamakan Desert in southern Xinjiang's Khotan District, well into the 1950s fewer than one in eight residents could read modern Uyghur.[67] The statistics offer no information on literacy in Persian, Arabic, or the Eastern Turki orthography that preceded modern Uyghur, all languages disused in the new schools; the party-state was committed to the promotion of modern Uyghur and of a secular, state-controlled education system. By the time E. R. Tenishev visited the area in late 1956, the religious and secular school systems in both counties had reached a rough parity.

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[64] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashar," 3-5.

[65] Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 101-02. Tenishev reported that Islamic clergy retained some degree of legal authority in Kashgar, Yarkand, Kuchar, and Turfan as well, though he provided a detailed account only for Khotan.

[66] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashar," 14-15. Citing statistics from the Kashgar archives for 1949 through 1956, Wang and Hjärpe demonstrate that in the first years of CCP rule in Xinjiang there was little if any overall decline in the student population of the district's Islamic schools.

[67] Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 101, 106, 108. Of course, the number of schools and the size of student populations gives only a general impression of the Islamic education system's circumstances in the mid-1950s. On the ground, conditions could sometimes be less impressive than on paper. In the Turpan Basin town of Lükchün, Tenishev visited a small madrasah where a few boys studied in rather austere conditions from a *mudarris* "no older than seventeen." Still, through the mid-1950s boys were able to complete four or five years of religious training at this madrasah. *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 25-26.

In Chira, for example, thirty-eight state primary schools educated 635 students, while seventeen religious primary schools (*diniy maktab*) had a total student population of 720. The county's sole high school, located in the county seat, had 215 students, while nine madrasahs instructed a total of 187 young Koranic scholars. Even in Khotan County, center of the district, where a pedagogical college produced teachers for state schools at a rapid clip, in 1956 over a hundred Islamic primary schools and more than a dozen madrasahs still operated. The balance between secular and religious education was shifting, however, as state funds poured into the public education system, which offered graduates a toehold in Xinjiang's new economic and cultural dispensation.

Even as the CCP maintained this uneasy truce with southern Xinjiang's Islamic establishment, the party began whittling away at the clerics' financial base. While some *waqf* lands were protected during land reform, many were redistributed to landless peasants, and clerics' income declined substantially in the first half of the 1950s. Muslim citizens were instructed that traditional tithes to local Islamic institutions, previously a major source of funding for the clerical establishment, would henceforth be voluntary.[68] Islamic institutions were increasingly forced to rely on party-state stipends, deepening a trend toward state control of clerical funds that had begun during the late Republican period.[69] Having ensured state control of the clergy's finances, the subsequent curtailment of some state subsidies was a considerable blow to the religious establishment. At the same time, an equally heavy blow was dealt to the clerics' prestige and cultural influence. For those Islamic officials who received government posts in

[68] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar," 3-15, 22; Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 78-85. In revolutionary Bukhara in the early 1920s, the establishment of state control over *waqf* lands had similarly enabled the state to ensure the compliance of the Islamic clerical and educational establishment. Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, 137-39.

[69] By the mid-1940s, the quasi-governmental Uyghur Enlightenment Associations had been charged with collecting and distributing Islamic tithes on behalf of akhunds and Islamic institutions. E.g., Q. Khudāberdi, "Shehyār khebiri," *Shingjāng giziti* 24 June 1946: 3; Mukhbir, "Pichāndā 'eshre ẓākāt toghruluq ḥeriket," 15 July 1946: 3.

exchange for cooperation with the party, upward mobility was generally limited; their positions typically remained at the local level, where the party hoped to benefit from their popular credibility and authority. Few if any clerical officials were invited to Ürümchi to participate in the creation of Uyghur mass culture and education, which increasingly challenged the cultural preeminence of the Islamic establishment.

The advent of CCP rule in Xinjiang was thus accompanied not only by the redistribution of economic capital, but by the redistribution and redefinition of cultural capital as well, with profound implications for the geography of cultural power in the province. Even as the CCP undermined existing systems of Islamic authority centered around southwestern Xinjiang, it rapidly constructed its own system of cultural power centered in Ürümchi, where state institutions and an expanding printing infrastructure would provide a new cultural elite with unprecedented reach. To arrive at these new centers of cultural power, intellectuals would need to traverse new educational circuits. Whereas the most esteemed religious authorities in pre-revolutionary Xinjiang derived much of their cachet from study in India or Bukhara and pilgrimages to Mecca, the early Maoist state in Xinjiang conferred cultural authority on the basis of familiarity with socialist ideology and concomitant cultural norms.[70] Knowledge of Arabic and Persian was much less likely to earn one a spot in the province's new cultural bureaucracy than proficiency in Chinese or Russian. In the party-state's rapidly expanding new institutions, the patronage of predominantly Han officials loomed larger than the master-student relationships

[70] Comparable processes were underway in the 1950s in China's other Muslim communities as well, and had similarly profound cultural implications long past the end of the Mao era. In the 1980s, even amidst an ethnoreligious revival among Hui communities, anthropologist Dru Gladney interviewed an elderly religious scholar in Hezhou (Linxia) who described himself as having "no culture," despite his mastery of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic learning, not to mention the dozen years the *haji* had spent in the Middle East. Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991), 241-42.

and semi-hereditary positions that had long defined southern Xinjiang's clerical, educational, and social elites.

With cultural and educational institutions increasingly centralized by the party-state, the patronage of CCP officials became the surest route to a career in education, administration, or cultural production, and a sine qua non for achieving any measure of influence in Uyghur print culture and official culture generally. Even the patronage systems offered by competing parties in the 1940s had offered more scope for choice than Maoism permitted. During the later years of the Civil War, the choice between Nationalist and Communist camps remained open for many intellectuals in inner China, while a large number of Uyghur intellectuals voted with their feet for the blandishments of Zhang Zhizhong's erratic liberal patronage or the ethnic pride and partial autonomy offered by the ETR. By unifying the province under a single party and a single top-down ideology, the CCP narrowed the plausible career paths for aspiring officials and intellectuals to a single, clearly defined option. Only those willing and able to serve the CCP's ideological dictates—a role for which ETR veterans were uniquely qualified—could hope for meaningful career advancement; and only those able to cultivate patronage within the CCP bureaucracy had much chance of attaining meaningful influence.

As outlined in the preceding chapter, the 1930s and 1940s had already witnessed the growing prestige of secular education and culture on the Ili model, thereby presenting a credible alternative to the system of Islamic cultural capital centered around Kashgar and Yarkand. In the 1950s, Communist rule in Xinjiang further weakened the economic, political, and cultural basis of southern Xinjiang's long-standing systems of Islamic authority, and with it the cachet of Kashgar and its neighboring oases.[71] Though the vestigial prestige of older Islamic authority

[71] The chronology of CCP relations with Xinjiang's Islamic institutions paralleled to some extent the first decade of Soviet rule in western Central Asia. Madrasahs were early targets of state pressure in Soviet Uzbekistan, and *waqf*

figures persisted, the damage sustained by the system prevented the subsequent generation of clergy from achieving a comparable level of authority. Popular religious manifestations remained more robust through the mid-1950s, with Sufi brotherhoods and shrine pilgrimages continuing to comprise an integral part of religious life in southern Xinjiang—though the shrine system was somewhat weakened when many shrine *waqf* endowments were seized in 1953.[72] Yet pilgrimage routes and Sufi networks were much less hierarchically structured than the region's madrasah system, and comprised a numinous geography coinciding only partially with the more formal structures of Islamic education and clerical authority.[73]

Of course, the early Maoist reforms disrupted traditional economic, cultural, and religious life not only in the south, but throughout the province. While the ETR had in many respects run a socialist-style administration, the young republic's leadership recognized the necessity of cooperating with local economic and religious elites in the consolidation of their state, and for the most part refrained from redistributing the holdings of northern Xinjiang's landlords and Islamic institutions.[74] The CCP had no intention of maintaining any such modus vivendi with landlords and clergymen, and in the early 1950s the struggle for land reform and rent reduction proceeded as fiercely in the northern grasslands as in the southern oases. Indeed, former ETR activists played a prominent role in the CCP's land reform campaign, with Ili poet Téyipjan Éliev penning verses in praise of land reform and in condemnation of landlords, who "quaked

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endowments were brought under state control soon after communist rule began. As in Xinjiang, the Soviet state became openly hostile to mosques and shrines only as communist rule entered its second decade. Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, 129-30, 342-54.

[72] Wang and Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar in the 1950's," 16-22. In the mid-1950s, major gatherings, like the yearly festival to mark the fruit harvest, continued at mazars like Apaq Khoja in Kashgar and Lichinet Pasha in Chira, where sheikhs continued to serve their traditional functions. Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 107.

[73] On shrine pilgrimage routes and their cultural meaning in southern Xinjiang, see Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 133-52. As Thierry Zarcone notes, Sufi lineages in Xinjiang historically varied greatly in their degree of connection to the madrasah system. Thierry 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 Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 119-32.

[74] Mingulov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie narodov Sin'tsziana," 79.

from head to toe" when he read these works aloud at struggle sessions.[75] Éliev's best-known poem from the land reform campaign was his "Letter to Chairman Mao," a lengthy series of rustic quatrains he reportedly collected "from the mouths of the people of Pakhtekle," 650 of whom affixed their signatures to the poem.[76] "In our village, so it was/ a lively struggle started up./ All the folks they call landlords/ got tongue-tied when things heated up."

In Kashgar's old city, not far from the village where Éliev performed this poetic ventriloquism, the clerical elite and landed notables had much less reason for enthusiasm than Éliev's Pakhtekle farmers. While the distribution of land holdings was reordered in towns and villages across Xinjiang, the cultural and clerical establishment of the south had more to lose than most. Before the reforms, fully a fifth of southern Xinjiang's arable land belonged to Islamic clergy and institutions, far more than in the north of the province.[77] In Yarkand, long a center of Islamic learning and clerical power, one third of all cultivated land lay in the hands of the clergy; in some other districts, clerical holdings approached half of all arable land. As land reform ate away at the economic basis of clerical power, the party-state stepped up pressure on madrasahs and traditional schools.[78] These policies had a similarly disproportionate impact on the south of the province, and particularly the southwestern oases of Kashgar and Yarkand, where centers of Islamic learning had long been concentrated.

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[75] Wang Yizhi 王一之 and Zhang Yue 张越, "Jinfachu huoxing de chire lian'ge—qiantan Weiwu'erzu shiren Tieyifujiang de chuangzuo 进发出火星的炽热恋歌—浅谈维吾尔族诗人铁衣甫江的创作," in *Shaoshu minzu wenyi yanjiu* 1 (1982): 165. The intense and sometimes violent process of rent reduction in Ili is recounted in You Mu 攸木, "Yili zhuanqu de mianmao gaiguan le 伊犁專區的面貌改觀了," *Xinjiang ribao* 31 May 1952: 1-2. For specifics on land reform in northern and southern Xinjiang, see Khakimbaev, *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane*, 78-79.

[76] T. Éliyow, "Maw Jushigha khet," in *Mawzeydunggha khet (shé'irlar toplimi)*, ed. 'Shinjang edibiyat-sen'iti' ridaksiyisi, 1-12 (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1953).

[77] Iakovlev, "Agrarnye otnosheniia," 224-25.

[78] Anecdotal evidence suggests that advanced Islamic education did continue underground in some locales, if in much reduced form, at least until the Cultural Revolution—and perhaps persisting even though that tumultuous decade. See Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 98-101. These underground educational activities would have been much more localized than the preexisting province-wide Islamic educational system, with no special role reserved for previous educational centers like Kashgar and Yarkand.

Kashgar's loss, it turned out, would be Ili's gain. While CCP policies destabilized existing systems of cultural power in the south of the province, the party-state worked to assemble a new system centered in the provincial capital of Ürümchi. The traditional cultural dominance of southern Muslim elites faded as the party forged a tacit alliance with the reformist elites of northwestern Xinjiang, and the provincial cultural bureaucracy rapidly filled with intellectuals and writers from Ili and Chöchek. Even as Téyipjan Éliev decried the landlords and moneyed elites of the old order, he and innumerable Ili and Chöchek compatriots were emerging as the province's new Uyghur elite, and the center of cultural prestige in the province was moving inexorably north. This realignment of cultural power was premised not only on a transition from sacred to secular and from south to north, but also on a shift from manuscript culture to print culture. This process had begun in the 1930s and 1940s, with independent experiments in print culture as well as the Sheng administration's major investment in print; but the trend accelerated greatly after the CCP's 1949 arrival in the province. Xinjiang's new Communist rulers were serious about mass literacy and mass printing's potential for education and indoctrination.

While the expansion of literacy classes and public schooling during the early Sheng era had begun to make a dent in illiteracy, these efforts were more erratic in the 1940s. In July 1946, a lead editorial in the *Xinjiang Gazette* estimated that 70 to 80 percent of Xinjiang's population remained illiterate, and that a similar percentage of Xinjiang's school-age children were "deprived of schooling and instead selling malt sugar candy, herding sheep and cows, and gambling."[79] A few years later, soon after the CCP consolidated its control of the province, a party fact-finding team in southern Xinjiang reported that literacy rates still stood below 12% in one relatively well-educated Kucha village, and below 4% in an Aqsu village with less

[79] "Shing Jāngdā ma'ārif ishlirige bir neẓer," *Shingjāng giziti* 11 July 1946: 1.

convenient access to schools.[80] Xinjiang's new party-state wasted no time in addressing the issue; state-run winter literacy classes enrolled a quarter-million adults in 1950, and half a million in 1951. In many rural areas, a quarter or more of the population—children and adults—enrolled in the classes, often with impressive results.[81] Winter literacy courses and nightly adult education classes remained a fixture of early PRC Xinjiang, and in the mid-1950s continued to enroll hundreds of thousands of students each year, with some classes meeting weekly after the autumn harvest all the way through summer. The anti-illiteracy campaign sometimes took the character of a state-led mass movement, with large meetings in public squares.[82]

In many areas, the anti-illiteracy efforts produced rapid results. In the villages around Kuchar, where in 1949 a 12% literacy rate had been considered outstanding, the Soviet linguist Tenishev reported during an inspection tour in fall 1956 that a quarter to a third of the populace could read.[83] In Turpan, where literacy rates had remained stubbornly low through the end of the Republican era, Tenishev observed that the city library swelled with three hundred patrons on a typical weekend day.[84] And in Kashgar City, where CCP efforts built on a local education reform movement dating to the mid-1930s, nearly three-quarters of the populace were literate by the time of Tenishev's visit, at least according to local statistics.

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[80] Lu, "Jiefang qianhou Nanjiang nongcun de wenhua jiaoyu," 196-98.
[81] Lu, "Jiefang qianhou Nanjiang nongcun de wenhua jiaoyu," 200. A significant number of literacy classes were taught by individuals from landlord families, whose higher literacy rates seemed to offer a chance to make amends for their suspect class backgrounds. Lu mentions one such landlord literacy instructor, as does Wang, Uyghur Education and Social Order, 86-87.
[82] Enrollment in winter literacy courses was nearly 300,000 in early 1955. Baoerhan, "Guanyu Xinjiang sheng renmin zhengfu liu nian lai gongzuo baogao." In 1956, E. R. Tenishev reported that there were ten nightly adult education centers functioning in the Kashgar region alone. Visiting Yarkand's Old City, he observed a mass meeting of female anti-illiteracy activists in a public square beside the House of Culture. *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 90, 92.
[83] Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 21, 28, 39, 67, 90, 106, 108. While Lu does not specify the kind of reading ability measured by his 1949 statistics, it does seem to have included forms of literacy acquired at Islamic schools. He notes that among literate individuals in his sample, alumni of religious schools form the majority in some villages while alumni of secular schools form the majority in others. Lu, "Jiefang qianhou Nanjiang nongcun de wenhua jiaoyu," 197.
[84] Literacy conditions in Turpan at the beginning of PRC rule are described in Wang, *Uyghur Education and Social Order*, 84-87.

Literacy levels and the availability of print matter were uneven, however, with literacy in modern Uyghur notably more advanced in larger urban areas than in the towns and villages. Tenishev recorded a 15% literacy rate in Lükchün, not far from Turpan, adding that the town had "fallen behind in regard to culture" due to poor local economic conditions. The isolated town of Chara in Lop District had "no clubs, no libraries, no journals, no newspapers," he wrote, adding that the town had "fewer ties to the center than in other places: Turfan, Kashgar, Khotan." Tenishev's definition of culture (clubs, libraries, journals, newspapers) and of center (Ürümchi) are telling: for the Soviet linguist as for his Chinese colleagues, literacy and culture for Xinjiang's Uyghur population revolved around print culture in modern Uyghur, and around the part-state cultural bureaucracy based in Ürümchi. For the party-state and its allies among Uyghur elites and intellectuals, these were the new circuits of cultural power in Xinjiang. But to make these new cultural systems meaningful for the bulk of Xinjiang's population, it would be necessary to reach the younger generation on a scale the provincial government had never before achieved.

In autumn 1952, three years after the beginning of communist rule in Xinjiang, provincial Education Minister (and former ETR Education Minister) Enwer Khanbaba could report that elementary school enrollment in the province—that is, enrollment in state-run as opposed to religious schools—had increased by well over half, and that the number of secondary school students was on track to double. At the beginning of the 1955 school year, Burhan Shehidi announced that elementary school enrollment was three-quarters higher than before communist rule, and that secondary school enrollment had nearly tripled.[85] As enrollment in the Kashgar-centered madrasah system declined, enrollment—particularly among the province's Muslim

[85] Anwaer Hanbaba 安瓦爾汗巴巴, "Fazhan zhong de Xinjiang jiaoyu shiye 發展中的新疆教育事業," *Xinjiang ribao* 3 Oct. 1952: 2; Baoerhan 鮑爾漢, "Guanyu Xinjiang sheng renmin zhengfu liu nian lai gongzuo baogao 關於新疆省人民政府六年來工作報告," *Xinjiang ribao* 22 Sep. 1955: 1-2.

communities—soared at Ürümchi's advanced educational institutions, which became key entry points into the emerging provincial bureaucracy.

In the 1950s, as the state poured unprecedented resources into mass education, print culture, and propaganda in Xinjiang, the texture of Uyghur official culture and identity would be determined by those controlling what Matthew Johnson has called the propaganda-culture system.[86] Weeks after the CCP established its Xinjiang branch in late 1949, the provincial People's Government was organized, and with it the powerful Culture and Education Committee.[87] As in other regions of China, the Committee's mandate encompassed a broad swathe of the province's public life: education, publishing, broadcasting, journalism, the arts. The Committee's founding chair was Deng Liqun, the CCP official whose negotiations with the ETR leadership in summer 1949 set the stage for the republic's peaceful integration into the PRC, and who subsequently recommended multiple ETR leaders for party membership. As head of the Committee, Deng continued to draw on his ETR connections; his three deputy chairs were Ibrahim Turdi, former head of the ETR's Democratic Union of the Seven Districts; Enwer Khanbaba, a former ETR education official and veteran of Uzbek cultural activism in Xinjiang; and Yu Wen, an old party hand from Hebei with considerable experience in journalism.[88] In addition to his responsibilities at the Committee, Deng concurrently held a number of other important leadership posts, and would have leaned heavily on his immediate subordinates in the

[86] Matthew D. Johnson, "Beneath the Propaganda State: Official and Unofficial Cultural Landscapes in Shanghai, 1949-1965," in *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism*, ed. Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 199-229.
[87] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区编纂委员会 and Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆同志•著述出版志》编纂委员会 (eds.), *Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi* 新疆同志•著述出版志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang kexue jishu chubanshe, 2006), 533-34.
[88] Enwer Khanbaba had been a member of the Provincial Uzbek Enlightenment Association's inaugural leadership team in 1938, when Enlightenment Associations had been organized on an ethnic basis under the aegis of the Sheng administration. Enwer Khanbaba, "Ölkilik Özbék medeniy aqartish uyushmisi heqqide eslime," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 30 (1991): 173-74.

Committee's day-to-day work, especially as it pertained to the local cultures and conditions that Ibrahim Turdi and Enwer Khanbaba understood far more deeply than their new colleagues.[89]

Within the Culture and Education Committee, ETR veterans chaired the two departments most influential in Xinjiang's official culture.[90] The Culture Department was headed by Ziya Semedi, a Soviet-born Uyghur who moved to Ili as a teenager, made a name for himself as a playwright in the 1930s, and served as a military and civil official in the ETR.[91] The Editing and Translation Department was helmed by Mehmutjan Ilhamjanov, a Chöchek native of Uzbek origin who also served as deputy head of Xinjiang People's Press.[92] Ilhamjanov, who often used the Chinese name Yi Baode (易抱德), had been educated at a Tatar primary school in Chöchek, a Chinese high school in Ürümchi, and finally at the provincial Russian-Language Political and Legal Academy. His linguistic prowess opened the door for a remarkable career in editing, translation, and civil service: in Ürümchi under Sheng Shicai and then under the Guomindang; in the ETR after the Ili rebellion; and finally once more in Ürümchi under the CCP. By the beginning of Chinese Communist rule in Xinjiang, the omnipresent Ilhamjanov had served as personal interpreter for warlord Sheng Shicai, novelist Mao Dun, and ETR leader Ahmadjan Qasimi.[93]

As the ETR network forged in Ili and Chöchek quickly monopolized key positions in the provincial cultural bureaucracy, intellectuals in southern and eastern Xinjiang found themselves

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[89] Yi Baode did later recall that in the early 1950s Deng Liqun visited Xinjiang People's Publishers frequently, helping with various work-related issues and teaching a class every Saturday. "Ge jie minzhu renshi jixu jiefa piping san da zhuyi 各界民主人士繼續揭發批評三大主義," *Xinjiang ribao*, 5 June 1957: 3.
[90] *Zhushu chuban zhi*, 533-34.
[91] Semedi's early career as a playwright is detailed in TsGARK 2115/1/30.
[92] Gong Ke 巩克, "Xinjiang renmin chubanshe de chuchuang sheqi 新疆人民出版社德初创时期," in *Xinjiang jishi (yi)* 新疆纪事（一）, ed. Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu guwen weiyuanhui "dangdai Xinjiang" congshu bianji weiyuanhui 中共新疆维吾尔自治区顾问委员会《当代新疆》丛书编辑委员会 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1989), 151.
[93] Ismayil Esqeri, "Péshqedem terjiman Mehmutjan Ilhamjanup toghrisida eslime," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 33 (1992): 239-50; Lu Weitian 陆维天, *Mao Dun zai Xinjiang* 矛盾在新疆 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1986), 205.

excluded from an emerging system of cultural power centered around the ministries and printing presses of Ürümchi. "Some works by writers down south are better than works by certain Ürümchi authors, but the Autonomous Region's literary journals won't publish them," complained a Kashgar-based Uyghur author in 1957. "The works of certain writers in Ürümchi are no good at all, yet they get published as scripts and performed on the stage."[94] Many southern intellectuals who achieved career advancement in Maoist Xinjiang had in fact been involved with the ETR, and were deeply enmeshed in its personal networks: Kashgaris like Turghun Almas, Atush natives like Qasimjan Qembiri and Ibrahim Turdi. Despite Maoism's egalitarian rhetoric, the CCP's lack of institutional knowledge in Xinjiang forced the party to rely heavily on the personnel recommendations of the Ili-Chöchek elites who could provide local knowledge from a seasoned socialist perspective. Even southerners with no ETR connection often found that the road to a career in the cultural bureaucracy lay through forming connections with the ETR network, and ultimately with the Han CCP officials who relied on that network. Advancement in Xinjiang's new centers of cultural power depended at least as much on political dependability and personal connections as on talent; having the right friends could make all the difference.

One of the best friends a Uyghur writer could have in early PRC Xinjiang was Liu Xiaowu (劉蕭無, 1913-2004).[95] Raised in modest circumstances in Beijing, Liu spent a few years at a local private school and worked at a grain store and a bank before embarking on a writing career in his mid-twenties. Following the Japanese invasion of 1937, the young leftist writer set out for the Communist base in Yan'an, where he joined the party and became

[94] "Ge zu wenyi gongzuozhe juxing zuotan: dui zizhiqu wenlian de guanliaozhuyi tichu piping 各族文藝工作者舉行座談：對自治區文聯的官僚主義提出批評," *Xinjiang ribao*, 25 May 1957: 1.

[95] Zhong Yuan 中原, "Zai huishou wo xin yijiu—Liu Xiaowu tongzhi yinxiang ji 在回首我心依旧—刘萧无同志印象记," *Zhongguo xibu wenxue* 5 (1992): 95-101; Liu Xiaowu, *Liu Xiaowu shicixuan* 刘萧无诗词选 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000), 1-3; Tianshan wang 天山网, "'Tianshan wenyijiang' shoujie 'gongxianjiang' huojiangzhe Liu Xiaowu tongzhi jianli '天山文艺奖' 首届' 贡献奖' 获奖者刘萧无同志简历," 18 Feb. 2004 (accessed 29 Oct. 2011). <http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/GB/channel8/35/200402/18/65554.html>.

commander of a Red Army arts troupe. As the civil war turned to the CCP's advantage in the late 1940s, Liu was assigned to army political and supply units and ultimately to the PLA Sixth Army. In November 1949, as Guomindang resistance crumbled, Liu entered Xinjiang with the Sixth Army, and it was there that he would spend the remainder of his long career. Soon after his unit reached Ürümchi, Liu was tapped to head the Culture Bureau of the Sixth Army's Political Affairs Department. With the party hierarchy of early Maoist Xinjiang dominated by the PLA, Liu's prominence in the army's cultural organs positioned him for a rapid ascent in Xinjiang's new cultural bureaucracy.[96] In 1951 he was appointed director of the Xinjiang Propaganda Department's Literature and Arts Section, in which capacity he began spending substantial time in the company of Uyghur colleagues. After a stint as deputy party secretary of Karamay, Liu became secretary of Xinjiang's Federation of Literary and Art Circles in 1958, and the next year consolidated his influence over the federation by adding the post of deputy chairman to his titles.

Almost from the beginning of his time in Xinjiang, Liu's career was closely entwined with the province's emerging elite of CCP-affiliated Uyghur writers. An important early contact was Abdukérim Khojaev, born in 1928 in a village near Qumul in eastern Xinjiang.[97] In the early 1930s, as the Qumul area was convulsed by rebellion, Khojaev's family left Xinjiang and settled in the neighboring province of Gansu, where Khojaev was educated in Chinese-medium schools. The family returned to Qumul in 1946, but Khojaev left soon after to study at the National Border Institute in Nanjing, and returned to Qumul only in mid-1949. When the People's Liberation Army marched through Qumul later that year, the bilingual Khojaev must have

[96] On PLA dominance of party structures in early 1950s Xinjiang, see McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Sinkiang*, 56-78, 94-97.

[97] Abdushükür Turdi and Azad Rehmitulla Sultan, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 232-46; Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1999), 263-69; Chen Bozhong 陈柏中, "Zuguo chunguang de bujuan gezhe: jieshao Weiwu'erzu shiren, fanyijia Kelimu Huojia 祖国春光的不倦歌者——介绍维吾尔族诗人、翻译家克里木•霍加," Minzu wenxue 9 (1983): 89.

seemed an attractive recruit to an army desperately in need of Chinese-Uyghur translators. He was swiftly inducted into the PLA, becoming one of its very first Uyghur members, and traveling on with his unit to Ürümchi.

Abdukérim Khojaev may have met Liu Xiaowu while both were working in army propaganda in Ürümchi immediately after the founding of the PRC. Khojaev received CCP membership in September 1950, and following demobilization attended the Provincial Politburo's Local Cadre Training Course, where he met another young cadre in training named Göheriye; the two married the following May.[98] In summer 1951, Khojaev began working as a translator on a state-sponsored project to collect and edit the "Twelve Muqam," considered the foundational work of Uyghur classical music. The collection and editing of the Muqams was managed by the young Ili poet Téyipjan Éliev, who had been transferred from Ghulja to Ürümchi the previous year to take up a post at the Provincial Culture Bureau's Literature and Arts Department. After Khojaev joined the Muqam project, the two struck up a friendship that would last the remainder of their lives.[99] The connection between the two men deepened still further as they commenced a rapid rise through Maoist Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy, enabled in part by a shared set of high-powered connections within the party.

Beginning in late 1952, Khojaev and Éliev joined Liu Xiaowu for a half-year journey together through southern Xinjiang to collect oral literature, during which the three men became close.[100] From 1953 Khojaev took up a post at the Propaganda Department's Literature and Arts Division, where he worked under Liu for several years. By the mid-1950s, Khojaev had emerged as perhaps the most prominent Uyghur-Chinese translator in Xinjiang, and had begun to play a

[98] Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide*, 90, 283.
[99] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar ösmürler neshriyati, 2012), 217-19; Téyipjan Éliyop, "Qayghuluq künlerdiki eslimiler," *Tarim* 5 (1988): 41.
[100] Éliyop, "Qayghuluq künlerdiki eslimiler," 42; Liu Xiaowu, "Bushen huishou Akesu 不甚回首阿克苏," *Zhongguo xibu wenxue* 5 (1985): 101.

key role as intermediary between Han cultural bureaucrats and Uyghur writers. From the late 1950s to the mid-'60s Khojaev went on to hold posts at a number of journals and professional organizations, his career no doubt boosted substantially by his relationship with Liu. It was Liu and Khojaev who recommended Téyipjan Éliev for Party membership in 1953, thereby helping launch the career of one of the Party's most prolific and talented Uyghur poet-propagandists.[101] Following their folklore collection trips, Liu, Khojaev, and Éliev continued working together on editorial boards and in other capacities. By 1957, when another high-ranking official told Liu that "two writers from a brother ethnicity say you're their best friend in Xinjiang," Liu knew that he was referring to Éliev and Khojaev. In a later poem, Éliev waxed lyrical about "my big brother from Beijing."[102]

Within Liu's network of Uyghur writers and intellectuals, Abdukérim Khojaev, a Chinese-educated Uyghur from eastern Xinjiang, was something of an exception. From the early 1950s onward, the preponderance of Liu's Uyghur associates were drawn from the still vibrant ETR intellectual networks. With ex-ETR writers like Éliev and ex-ETR officials like Ziya Semedi surrounding him in Xinjiang's new CCP cultural apparatus, Liu soon developed close relations with other ETR alumni as well. In the early 1950s, he served on editorial boards with ETR-linked writers like Turghun Almas; in the late 1950s, he and Abdukérim Khoja collaborated with ETR writer Elqem Ekhtem on a film script. As a high-ranking and trusted Han party official, Liu's patronage and approval was key to the development of these Uyghur intellectuals' careers in Maoist Xinjiang, and his support proved crucial in protecting them through the endless

[101] Éliyop, "Qayghuluq künlerdiki eslimiler," 42.
[102] Chen Bozhong 陈柏中, "Huiyi Liu Xiaowu na yi chuang mingyue ban chuang shu 回忆刘萧无那一床明月半床书," *Xinjiang jingji bao*, 18 Sep. 2008: A7; Chen Bozhong, "Wo jiyi zhong de 'Lao Tie' 我记忆中的‘老铁’," *Xinjiang jingji bao*, 21 Aug. 2008: A10; Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide*, 184; Liu, "Bushen huishou Akesu," 101. Sheila Fitzpatrick notes that Soviet party patrons and their clients also tended to tactfully describe their patronage relationships as a form of friendship—though in some less common cases, actual friendship did indeed exist between them. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 110-13.

political campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s. From the beginning of its rule in Xinjiang until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the CCP benefited greatly from the services of former ETR intellectuals, and Liu Xiaowu was the Party's high-powered talent scout.

For Liu Xiaowu, loyalty to the CCP and the promulgation of minority official cultures were mutually reinforcing commitments. He seems to have genuinely believed that CCP cadres in Xinjiang should acquaint themselves with local history and literature, even if it meant taking time out from revolutionary studies—a position which would eventually make Liu a controversial figure as CCP minority policy became harsher in the second decade of Maoist rule in Xinjiang. Chen Bozhong, Liu's former deputy at the Federation of Literary and Art Circles, recalled how Liu encouraged Federation employees "not only to read Marx, Lenin, and Mao, but to read books about Xinjiang's history and culture."[103] Batur Ershidinov, a prominent figure in Xinjiang party-state circles in the CCP's first decade, recalled that Liu had a smattering of Uyghur, which even then was relatively uncommon for Han party officials not born in Xinjiang.[104]

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, ETR writers constituted a tight-knit and mutually supportive network, with elders like Zunun Qadiri regularly lending a hand to young writers and intellectuals. These personal connections were maintained and perhaps even strengthened after the demise of the ETR, as veterans of the defunct republic worked to promote their faction's bureaucratic and cultural power within the terra incognita of a Han-dominated party-state. It is likely that Téyipjan Éliev and Elqem Ekhtem, having enjoyed Zunun Qadiri's assistance early in their ETR careers, returned the favor to the older writer once their own careers in the PRC had taken off. In 1954, Qadiri was summoned to Ürümchi from the Ghulja girls'

[103] Chen Bozhong, "Huiyi Liu Xiaowu."
[104] Personal communication, January 2014, Almaty.

school where he had been working and given a post in the Provincial Cultural Affairs Bureau's Composition Department. In 1957, he was appointed Deputy Chair of the Autonomous Region Federation of Literary and Art Circles, where he subsequently worked alongside Federation Secretary Liu Xiaowu.[105] Liu pronounced Qadiri's works excellent, and suggested that his humble background had imbued his innovative literary works with a style amenable to the masses.[106]

While the bonds between intellectuals like Qadiri, Éliev and Elqem Ekhtem had been forged by the ETR experience, even Ghulja writers who came of age after the dissolution of the ETR found their careers in Maoist Xinjiang on a fast track. Ghulja-born Qemer Qurbanova, one of the first female poets to have a collection published in Xinjiang, had been writing only five years when her first anthology was brought out by Xinjiang Youth Press in Ürümchi.[107] Qurbanova, then twenty years old, had already been working for a year as an editor at Xinjiang People's Education Press, her rapid success in Xinjiang's state-owned publishing sector emblematic of Ili's 1950s dominance of official culture in Xinjiang. In 1957, the same year her poetry collection was published, Xinjiang People's Education Press brought out a reader Qurbanova had compiled for second-year middle school students. Without exception, every Uyghur author included in the anthology was an Ili native, an ETR veteran, or a Soviet writer.[108]

Ili intellectuals working at Xinjiang's publishing houses provided a crucial leg up to Ili writers looking to break into publishing in 1950s Ürümchi. Poet ʿAbd al-Wali Khalifat, who cut

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[105] Dilber Thwaites, "Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity: The dilemma of a Uyghur writer under Chinese rule" (Ph.D. Diss., Australian National University, 2001), vol. 2 (Appendix), 2-4. Qadiri reportedly had little interest in bureaucratic affairs, commenting to Éliev that "I'm made for doing my own work; I'm not management material." Aihaiti Tuerdi 艾海提•吐尔迪, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian 丁香花小院里的怀念," tr. Zhang Shirong 张世荣 *Minzu wenxue* 5 (1999): 65.

[106] Liu Xiaowu, "Mao Zedong wenxue sixiang zai Xinjiang de weida shengli 毛澤東文學思想在新疆的偉大勝利," *Tianshan* 6 (1960): 7.

[107] Qemer Qurbaniwa, *Dostlar elbomigha (shérlar toplimi)* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar neshriyati, 1957).

[108] Qemer Qurbanowa, ed., *Edibiyat oqushlighi: toluqsiz ottura mekteplerning ikkinchi zhillighi üchün* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq ma'arip neshriyati, 1957).

his literary teeth in the ETR newspapers in the late 1940s, was in 1951 working as a high school teacher in Ghulja when he was summoned to work at ETR legacy publications *Unity* and *Forward* in Ürümchi. The following year Khalifat took up a position at Xinjiang People's Publishers, where he rose quickly through the editorial ranks.[109] His key role at Xinjiang's leading publishing house allowed Khalifat to shepherd into print works by other ETR alumni like Muhammad Sidiq Noruzov, whose first poetry collection was published in 1957 at People's Publishers headquarters on Ahmadjan Street.[110] The street's namesake, martyred ETR leader Ahmadjan Qasimi, had been proven fully correct in his 1949 prediction that Ghulja would retain its "central cultural role" even after the ETR question had been resolved.

This is not to say that the Ili network of party-state officials enjoyed carte blanche in administering the state cultural apparatus. Even for Muslim officials who held positions of genuine influence, the CCP leadership in Xinjiang was alert for deviations from party orthodoxy—particularly if they threatened to affect public opinion in the province via the state-controlled print organs. Uyghur Sayrani, former head editor of both the Ürümchi-based *Xinjiang Daily* and the Ghulja-based *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, was appointed assistant head of the *Xinjiang Daily* soon after CCP rule began in the province. His tenure did not last long; when *Daily* correspondents reported that People's Liberation Army soldiers were behaving abusively toward southern Xinjiang's local population, Sayrani relayed the reports to his editor, who forwarded them to Xinjiang PLA chief Wang Zhen. Wang, who just weeks before had recommended Sayrani for CCP membership, was furious that an editor of the official state newspaper would dare besmirch the army's name, particularly given the centrality of the army to CCP ideology and propaganda. After a special session of Xinjiang's CCP Committee accused

[109] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 500-01.
[110] M. Noruzow, *Jawab (shéirlar toplimi)* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1957).

Sayrani of local nationalism and anti-Han sentiment, he was removed from his post at the paper and sent to Alma-Ata, capital of Soviet Kazakhstan, as PRC Vice Consul. A plum posting, to be sure—but also one that ensured Sayrani would have no further influence over the editorial line in Xinjiang's official press.[111]

Despite such occasional hiccups, throughout the first half of the 1950s the network centered around Ili and the former ETR deftly navigated Xinjiang's new patronage systems, drawing on the Ili cohort's unique cultural and experiential advantages. In a few short years, the defunct ETR conquered the civil bureaucracy of Maoist Xinjiang, from the workaday chairmanships of small offices and sub-bureaus to the pinnacle of the bureaucratic elite. From the early 1950s, ETR colonel and man of letters Ziya Semedi presided over the regional writers' federation and held other key cultural posts.[112] ETR poet and journalist Elqem Ekhtem continued his successful writing career in Maoist Xinjiang, even while holding a succession of ever-higher positions in the state bureaucracy. Ibrahim Turdi, who had spent the late 1940s helping the ETR organize volunteers from Chinese-held territory, was in early 1955 entrusted by the CCP with the directorship of Xinjiang's Civil Affairs Department.[113] And in autumn of that year, when Xinjiang Province was officially reorganized as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,

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[111] A. A. Khakimbaev, who held high-level civil service posts in the ETR as well as early PRC Xinjiang, provides an account of the affair in *Natsional'naia politika Maoistov v Sin'tsziane*, 95. The brevity of Sayrani's tenure at the PRC-era *Daily* is confirmed in *Baoye zhi*, 69. Sayrani noted in his oral memoir that Wang Zhen had been the one to recommend him for CCP membership, which he received in December 1949. "Uyghur Sayranining eslimisi," ed. Quddus Abdusemet, *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 131.

[112] Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhi bu 中共中央组织部, Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi 中共中央党史研究室, and Zhongyang dang'anguan 中央档案馆, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao: Zhonghua renmin gongheguo qunzhong tuanti zuzhi (1949.10-1997.9): fu juan si* 中国共产党组织史资料: 中华人民共和国群众团体组织（1949. 10-1997. 9）附卷四 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 276-77.

[113] *Minzheng zhi*, 281; Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and *Xinjiang tongzhi: zhengwu zhi: zhengfu* bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志・政务志・政府》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di shiwu juan: zhengwu zhi: zhengfu* 新疆通志第十五卷・政务志・政府 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006), 1120, 1127.

former ETR Education Minister Seypidin Ezizi was named chair of the new regional government; of his three deputy chairs, two were ETR veterans.[114]

This bureaucratic dominance placed Ili intellectuals in a unique position to shape the emerging Uyghur mass culture and identity. Typical was a symposium held in August 1956 by the Xinjiang Language Research Committee, charged with developing language policy for the province.[115] Committee chair Abdulla Zakirov (former secretary general of the ETR youth league) gave opening remarks, while his deputy chair Elqem Ekhtem (former editor of the ETR's leading newspaper) presented on the progress of the committee's work.[116] The symposium's opening ceremony proceeded in grand fashion, with the leading lights of Uyghur officialdom gracing the meeting. Provincial chairman Seypidin Ezizi (former ETR Education Minister) delivered a speech on the significance of the committee's efforts, while deputy provincial chairmen Muhemmet'imin Iminov (former ETR cavalry commander) and Es'et Is'haqov (former head editor of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan* and a prominent member of Xinjiang's Tatar community) looked on.

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[114] "Sheng diyi jie renmin daibiao dahui dierci huiyi shengli wancheng tade zhongda renwu: Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu chengli 省第一屆人民代表大會第二次會議勝利完成它的重大任務：新疆維吾爾自治區成立," *Xinjiang ribao*, 1 Oct. 1955: 1. The three vice chairs were former ETR military leader Muhemmet'imin Iminov, by then a high-ranking officer in the People's Liberation Army; Patikhan Sugirbaev, ETR veteran and son of Delilkhan Sugirbaev, one of the ETR's most prominent Kazakh leaders; and Gao Jinchun 高锦纯, a Red Army veteran from Shaanxi. A good source on Iminof's career is Liu Xianghui 刘向晖, Huang Xiaohe 黄小禾, and Bing Zhe 兵者, eds., *Kaiguo jiangjun huazhuan diqiji: Maimaitiming Yiminnuofu* 开国将军画传第七辑：买买提明•伊敏诺夫 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013). For more on on Patikhan Sugirbaev, see Kang Kejian 康克俭, *Yili fengyun* 伊犁风云 (Beijing: Zhongguo Chang'an chubanshe, 2008), 256-57. The preponderance of ETR veterans among PRC Xinjiang's Kazakh officials was unsurprising, given that most of the region's Kazakhs lived in the former ETR territories.

[115] Jin Yimin 金一民, "Zizhiqu minzu yuyan wenzi kexue taolunhui kaimu 自治區民族語言文字科學討論會開幕," *Xinjiang ribao*, 15 Aug. 1956: 1; Jin Yimin 金一民, "Zizhiqu minzu yuyan wenzi taolunhui yuanman bimu: ge minzu wenzi gaige yi zuochu chubu fang'an 自治區民族語言文字討論會圓滿閉幕：各民族文字改革已作出初步方案," *Xinjiang ribao*, 23 Aug. 1956; Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 16-18.

[116] The ubiquitous Elqem Ekhtem seems to have played a leading organizational role in language reform in Xinjiang during this period—not only for Uyghur, but for Kazakh as well. Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 123.

With Ili notables dominating the committee and its chief state sponsors, a week of deliberations produced a raft of unsurprisingly Ili-centric policy recommendations.[117] These included transitioning the Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tatar languages in Xinjiang from the Arabic script to Cyrillic, in order to promote the exchange of texts and ideas with Turkic peoples in Soviet Central Asia. (The Xibo language, spoken in Ili, was also recommended for transition from its modified Manchu alphabet to Cyrillic.) Stronger cultural and linguistic links to Soviet Turkestan would only further enhance the Ili region's sway within Xinjiang, given Ili's central role as a conduit of Soviet influence in the region. Ultimately, cyrillization efforts in Xinjiang fell through amidst worsening Sino-Soviet relations; but some of the Language Research Committee's other resolutions were more consequential.

Notably, the committee resolved that the standard Uyghur language should be based on the "central dialect," encompassing Ili, Turpan, and Kashgar.[118] And within the central dialect, Ili would have pride of place, with the pronunciation of official Uyghur drawn from the speech of Ili's capital city, Ghulja. In adopting this recommendation—soon confirmed by the People's Government—the committee was surely reflecting its own Ili-dominated composition. The committee members argued, though, that they were simply recognizing the increasing ascendancy of the Ili dialect in "the literary language."[119] They had a point. By 1956, with

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[117] "Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu renmin weiyuanhui guanyu gaige Weiwu'er, Hasake, Ke'erkezi, Menggu, Xibo, Wuzibieke, Tata'aer deng minzu wenzi yu bangzhu shang wu wenzi de minzu chuangli wenzi de jueyi 新疆維吾爾自治區人民委員會關於改革維吾爾，哈薩克，柯爾克孜，蒙古，希伯，烏孜別克，塔塔爾等民族文字與幫助尚無文字的民族創立文字的決議," *Xinjiang ribao*, 9 Feb. 1957: 1.

[118] Ibid. E. R. Tenishev, a Soviet linguist who presented at the conference, put this decision in the broader context of building socialism in China: "After the establishment of the people's power in China, a linguistic project of massive scale unfolded. Before the linguists of the PRC stood the assignment… to reform existing literary languages, and to recreate them on the basis of designated dialects." Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 230.

[119] Tenishev noted when traveling through Xinjiang's Lop District the following month that even in the isolated village of Chara, "the place of the traditional Lopnuri language has notably narrowed; they only speak it at home, and a few particularities are preserved in the speech of the elderly; the youth speak in Uyghur." During a meeting at the village school, one local man told Tenishev, in flawless standard Uyghur, that "until Liberation—that is, until 1949—we spoke our native dialects in all circumstances; now we speak in the Uyghur language." Tenishev himself

Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy largely in the hands of Ili intellectuals and officials, Uyghur culture in Xinjiang had developed a distinct Ili accent.

ILI CULTURE AS UYGHUR CULTURE

It was the Communists' victory in the Chinese civil war that brought Xinjiang into the new People's Republic of China, and the People's Liberation Army that subsequently established CCP authority on the ground in Xinjiang. The new party-state, however, was not content to govern its citizens purely by military force and political compulsion. Socialist doctrine, at least in its Maoist version, required the transformation of individual attitudes and beliefs alongside the reordering of economic and political relations. Cultivating the new socialist man would require the creation of a new mass culture; and so in Xinjiang, as elsewhere in the People's Republic, the party turned to its trusted writers and intellectuals. Across China, these small groups of literati would be entrusted with immense power to determine official culture for their communities; and in Xinjiang, with the cultural bureaucracy increasingly dominated by members of the Ili network, it was inevitable that Uyghur official culture would be shaped in their image. As state schools opened at a rapid clip and state-monopoly print culture spread across the province, the official culture created by Xinjiang's new Uyghur elite found rapid purchase among the population.

In shaping Uyghur identity and codifying Uyghur culture, the Ili-dominated elite worked within a relatively circumscribed sphere. Of the many Uyghur-language printed books on science, agriculture, society, history, mathematics, and myriad other topics that circulated in Xinjiang in the 1950s, the preponderance were translations: at first mostly from Russian and Central Asian

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played a role in ensuring that this "standard Uyghur" continued to develop on an Ili basis. Having received permission from the central government to train a cohort of Uyghur linguists in Beijing from 1957-59, Tenishev found himself teaching a class comprised of Uyghurs from two cities: Ürümchi, the capital of Xinjiang; and Ghulja, the urban center of Ili. Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 40; 237-38.

languages, and after the middle of the decade increasingly from Chinese. The crucial exception was literature. As in the 1930s and 1940s, literary works, as well as textbooks on literature and language, were written in Uyghur by Uyghur authors—overwhelmingly members of the Ili elite. Combined with the esteem in which Muslim society in Central Asia had for centuries held poets and bards, these circumstances made literature and language the key site in which Uyghur official culture and identity would be defined in Maoist Xinjiang. As in many Eastern European societies,[120] national poets and writers played a key role in the formation of the Uyghur nation. But while Eastern European literary nationalisms flowered largely in nineteenth-century aristocratic circles, literary nation building in twentieth-century socialist Eurasia often privileged precisely those elements of society that had least benefited from the old social order. Under the hothouse conditions of Soviet and Chinese communism, the convergence of print culture, literary nationalism, and socialist ideology brought about the enthronement of a new cultural elite, and the reordering of cultural power on a national level. In Xinjiang as in other areas, this radical cultural shift was made possible by an accompanying technological shift: the emergence of mass printing in a language that had previously relied on manuscript and oral traditions.

In the early years of CCP rule in Xinjiang, as enrollment in state schools ballooned and the ranks of the literate expanded, the need for books and periodicals far outpaced Xinjiang's existing print facilities. Immediately after the CCP assumed power in Xinjiang in 1949, the provincial school system ordered large quantities of Turkic-language textbooks from the USSR, whose Central Asian publishing facilities had for years furnished the ETR with Uyghur-language textbooks. By the mid-1950s, the Xinjiang party-state had imported millions of Soviet-published textbooks in Uyghur and Kazakh, printed in Arabic script specifically for use in Xinjiang, with

[120] Andrew Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant After Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 12-26.

People's Liberation Army vehicles dispatched to distribute the teaching materials throughout the province.[121] Among these were numerous textbooks on language and literature, beginning in 1950 with a full set of literature and grammar textbooks for the first few grades of school.

Unsurprisingly, these volumes were heavily inflected by the USSR's Ili-dominated Uyghur official culture. *A Reader for Fourth-Grade Students*, edited by four Soviet Uyghur authors (including Meshür Roziev) and printed in Almaty, was typical.[122] The reader consisted largely of stories and poems by Russian authors, Soviet Uyghur authors, and Xinjiang Uyghur authors; of the authors from Xinjiang, nearly all were from Ili: Lutpulla Mutellip, Elqem Ekhtem, Téyipjan Éliev, Zunun Qadiri, Muhammad Sidiq Noruzov, Abdulhey Rozi. While the textbook bore a distinct Soviet flavor, its intended audience of Chinese-citizen Uyghurs was evident throughout. The book's first item was Soviet Kazakh poet Kenen Aqin's "To the People of China," congratulating "our friends the Chinese people" on their recent socialist victory, and its final chapter is a brief introduction to Xinjiang, the only such regional introduction in the book.[123] Panegyrics for Mao Zedong, including one by Elqem Ekhtem, are sprinkled throughout the volume.[124] Uyghur poetry collections from the Soviet Union were also imported and circulated in the early days of Maoist Xinjiang. Of particular note was a quartet of chapbooks printed in Almaty which played a significant role in cementing the reputation of several Xinjiang Uyghur poets—all of them from Ili.[125] The collection's editor, Qadir Hesenov, had also been one

[121] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: jiaoyu zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•教育志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di qishisi juan: jiaoyu zhi* 新疆通志第七十四卷：教育志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 587.
[122] Q. [Qadir] Ḥesenof, M. [Meshür] Rozééf, H. Nighmetof and E. Eḥmedof (eds.), *Oqush kitabi: bashlan'ghuch mekteblerning tortinchi sinéfi uchun derslik* (Almaty: "Qazaq éli" zhurnalénng neshriyati, 1950).
[123] "Kenen Aqin" is Kazakh for "Kenen the Poet." Kenen Aqin, "Junggo khelqige," 3-4; "Shing Jang," 278-97.
[124] Elqem Ekhtem, "Tang atqanda," 244-46. Another poem by Elqem Ekhtem, "Qish," also appears in the volume (141-42).
[125] Makhmut Zeyidi, "Yérim esirlik sir," *Shinjang yashliri* 2 (2011): 53; Rabik Ismaiilov, "Medeniiitimiz chirighini öchermigenler," *Uighur avazi*, 14 May 2012.

of the editors of the 1950 *Reader*,[126] and the poets he chose for these volumes were largely the same that he had helped promote in literature textbooks: Lutpulla Mutellip, Elqem Ekhtem, Téyipjan Éliev, and Nur Bosaqov.[127]

The importation of Soviet books, however, was only a stopgap, as Xinjiang's new cultural bureaucracy worked assiduously to expand its own publishing capacities in the region's indigenous languages. Xinjiang People's Press, founded in 1951, had by the end of the following year printed nearly two million textbooks in Uyghur, Kazakh and Mongol.[128] By the end of 1956, the press had published over 10 million Uyghur books and journals, of which approximately 60% were textbooks.[129] Soviet textbooks were important models for the Ürümchi-based editors of these new teaching materials, and when Xinjiang Education Press was founded in 1956, Soviet experts were invited to help lead the editing of minority-language textbooks.[130] By the next year, though, deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations led the Xinjiang government to begin phasing out Soviet textbooks in the region's schools.[131] By this time, Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy and print facilities were sufficiently developed to begin meeting the publication needs of the region's expanding school system and book market on their own.

Uyghur-language periodical publishing soared in the early Mao era, as the party-state sought to get educational and propaganda material into the hands of an expanding reading public.

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[126] Hesenov, affiliated with the Qazaq éli (Kazakh nation) press, which the USSR had used for Xinjiang-directed publications since the ETR era, was one of the few Soviet Uyghur writers of the old guard to make it through the 1930s Stalinist purges alive, and by the 1950s had become a major force in Soviet Uyghur publishing.

[127] Ismaiilov, "Medeniiitimiz chirighini öchermigenler." L. Mutellib, *Zhillargha jowab*; Nur Bosaqof, *Yéngilmes küch*; Elqem Ekhtem, *Ümid tolqunliri*; Téyib Éliyéf (Jür'éti), *Sherq nakhshisi (shé'irlar)*, ed. Q. [Qadir] Ḥesenof (Almaty: "Qazaq éli" zhurnaling neshriyati, 1951). Éliev's volume reprints his 1948 paean for Lutpulla (10-11).

[128] Anwaer Hanbaba, "Fazhan zhong."

[129] Xinjiang renmin chubanshe 40 nian jinian huace bianweihui 新疆人民出版社 40 年纪念画册编委会, eds., *Xinjiang renmin chubanshe 40 nian jinian huace* 新疆人民出版社 40 年纪念画册 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1991), 18; *Zhushu chuban zhi*, 218. Other Uyghur-language books were printed at Nationalities Publishers in Beijing and distributed in Xinjiang.

[130] *Jiaoyu zhi*, 587.

[131] Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 256.

Between September 1951 and May 1952, as the rent reduction campaign freed up disposable income among Uyghur farmers and literacy campaigns expanded the pool of potential readers, newspapers like *Xinjiang Gazette* and *Southern Tianshan* tripled their distribution.[132] Villagers across the province were encouraged to form reading groups at which newspapers were read aloud and discussed—a key element of the state's cultural efforts in rural areas where many remained illiterate.[133] The official culture being codified in Ürümchi and reproduced en masse by the state printing presses thus reached every corner of the province, including rural areas that had been relatively little affected by the state educational and cultural efforts of the 1930s and 1940s. And always, in the Ürümchi publishing houses and journal editorial boards, the Ili network was a dominant force. From Kashgar to Khotan to Qumul, the Uyghur official culture born in Ili and incubated in the Eastern Turkestan Republic was introduced to a generation of schoolchildren across Xinjiang as their timeless cultural heritage.

Building on the efforts of Soviet Uyghur editors who had begun introducing Xinjiang's schoolchildren to an Ili-centered version of Uyghur culture, Xinjiang's Ili intellectuals played the central role in determining how a generation of schoolchildren, as well as legions of newly literate adults, would be introduced to Uyghur culture, language, and identity. By the mid-1950s, language textbooks were peppered with examples drawn from Ili poets and writers, with Lutpulla Mutellip as always a particular favorite.[134] Literature textbooks were dominated even more thoroughly by Ili writers. A typical 1956 anthology for sixth-graders from Xinjiang People's

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[132] Iakovlev, "Agrarnye otnosheniia," 251. *Southern Tianshan* (*Jenubiy Tyanshan*) was the house organ of the CCP's Southern Xinjiang Regional Committee, and began printing in May 1950 as the official replacement for *Kashgar Xinjiang Gazette*. In 1954, the *Aqsu Xinjiang Gazette* was also folded into *Southern Tianshan*. *Baoye zhi*, 93; Qadir Megit, "Azadliqtin burunqi 'Aqsu Géziti' heqqide," *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 42 (1999): 154-55.
[133] Lu, "Jiefang qianhou Nanjiang nongcun de wenhua jiaoyu," 200; Tenishev, *U tiurkskikh narodov Kitaia*, 76.
[134] E.g., Shinjang khelq neshriyati, eds., *Uyghur tili dersligi: grammatika, imla, til osturush: bashlan'ghuch mekteplerning uchinchi sinipi uchun derslik* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1955); Shinjang khelq neshriyati, eds., *Grammatika: grammatika, imla, til osturush: bashlan'ghuch mekteplerning tortinchi sinipi ucun derslik* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1955). Lutpulla's work appears on pages 22, 48, 77 of the former textbook, and on pages 114, 137 of the latter.

Press begins with another paean to Mao Zedong by the indefatigable Elqem Ekhtem, and after tributes to Lenin and Stalin by other poets, proceeds through an impressively varied selection of Russian, classical Uyghur, and Chinese authors before beginning to introduce a number of modern Uyghur authors—nearly all of them from Ili or veterans of the ETR.[135] To observe the long shadow cast over Uyghur culture by the extinct Eastern Turkestan Republic, we can compare this 1956 anthology—edited by CCP intellectuals and used in state schools—with the 1947 *Almanac*, edited and printed in the ETR. As in the *Almanac*, the first contemporary Uyghur author printed in the 1956 anthology was Lutpulla Mutellip; the second, again as in the *Almanac*, was Lutpulla's mentor, Enwer Nasiri. ETR veterans Zunun Qadiri and Nim Shéhit were among the first five authors included in both volumes; Ili poets Abdulhey (Abley) Rozi and Nur Bosaqov also appeared in both collections. Turghun Almas and Téyipjan Éliev, both ETR veterans too young to have been anthologized in the *Almanac*, were included in the later anthology. Of the dozen contemporary Uyghur writers in the 1956 anthology, only three or four were not Ili natives or ETR alumni.

Poetry proved the most vibrant and prestigious genre in Maoist Xinjiang, as it had arguably been in the region's Muslim communities for a millennium. In stark contrast to the past, however, Ili stood at the center of Maoist Xinjiang's poetic universe. Typical was the 1953 poetry anthology *A Letter to Mao Zedong*, which took its title from its lead poem, the aforementioned Pakhtekle panegyric in which Téyipjan Éliev channeled villagers' enthusiasm for land reform and Chairman Mao.[136] With a generous print run of 7,000, the collection included work by several dozen Uyghur poets (anthologies of this sort were common in 1950s Xinjiang) of whom a distinct majority hailed from Ili or had worked in the ETR. A similar

[135] Shinjang khelq neshriyati, eds., *Edibiyat: ottura mekteplerning 6- sinipi üchün: khrestomatiye* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956).
[136] 'Shinjang edibiyat-sen'iti' ridaksiyisi, eds., *Mawzeydunggha khet*.

pattern was evident in the 1955 poetry anthology *Songs of Struggle* (*Küresh nakhshiliri*), edited by four ETR veterans and printed in 5,000 copies.[137] With a foreword by ETR veteran and leading CCP cultural official Ziya Semedi, the collection gave Lutpulla Mutellip top billing, followed by six other poets from Ili. Among all poets in the collection, Ili natives and other individuals with an ETR collection formed a large majority. When volumes by individual poets began to appear in the mid-1950s, Ili writers and ETR alumni enjoyed an overwhelming advantage in the publication of their work.[138] The effect of this was to elevate the popular stature of Ili poets throughout Xinjiang. In summer 1955, when Téyipjan Éliev visited Kuchar County in central Xinjiang, word spread quickly in the county. One high school student in Kuchar later recalled spending the day wandering outside the county government offices, where he had heard Éliev was staying, in vain hopes of catching a glimpse of the famous poet.[139]

As we have seen, ex-ETR writers steadfastly supported each other's publishing careers in Maoist Xinjiang; but it was not only living writers from the Ili canon whose reputations benefited from the Ili cohort's bureaucratic dominance. Martyred writers with an Ili or ETR connection also received a great deal of attention from the party-state's print organs. Bilal Ézizi, an Uzbek poet who worked for a time as an editor at the *Khotan Xinjiang Gazette*, had been killed in 1945 by Guomindang authorities while participating in an underground Aqsu partisan organization in support of the Ili rebellion.[140] Ézizi had subsequently been much celebrated in the Eastern Turkestan Republic, where he was one of the only non-ETR poets included in the canonical 1947 *Almanac*. The ETR network's commitment to Ézizi remained strong into the

[137] T. Almas, A. Khelpetow, B. Rashidin, and E. Tatliq, eds., *Küresh nakhshiliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1955).
[138] The year 1957 alone saw the publication of poetry collections by Abdulhey Rozi, Batur Rashidin (Ershidin), Bilal Ézizi, Elqem Ekhtem, Ershidin Tatliq, Ibrahim Turdi, M. Noruzov, Nim Shéhit, Qemer Qurbanova, Rekhim Qasimov, Téyipjan Éliev, and Turdi Samsaq—every one of them an Ili native or ETR veteran.
[139] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 243.
[140] Mejmūʿe hey'et taḥrīriyesi, "Suyumluk shāʿirimiz Luṭf Allāh," *Khān Tengri* 3 (1946): 22.

Mao era; a decade after the *Almanac*'s publication, three ETR veterans with high-ranking posts in Xinjiang official culture brought out an edition of Ézizi's works from Xinjiang People's Press.[141]

But pride of place in the Ili-dominated pantheon still belonged to Ili's own martyed son, Lutpulla Mutellip. The process of incorporating Lutpulla into the emerging Maoist Uyghur pantheon was underway by the early 1950s, when Abdukérim Khojaev and Téyipjan Éliev accompanied Liu Xiaowu on a series of trips to collect folk literature in southern Xinjiang. As Liu later recalled, it was during these expeditions that Éliev and Khojaev introduced him to Lutpulla, inaugurating an interest in the late poet that would remain with Liu for the rest of his career. Éliev recited Lutpulla's well-known poem "Answer to the Years" in Uyghur as Khojaev translated it into Chinese for Liu, who felt "admiration and pride" to know that "our great motherland's brother ethnicities have among them such heroic poets."[142] Éliév and Khojaev's translation of Lutpulla's work for Liu, and Liu's approving interpretation of Lutpulla as a son of the Chinese motherland, was emblematic of the way in which elements of Uyghur cultural heritage were transmitted and repurposed for Uyghur official culture in the 1950s. In these early years of Uyghur cultural construction in Maoist Xinjiang, it was just such an alliance of Uyghur intellectuals and Han party officials that would transform Lutpulla from a Uyghur national hero of Eastern Turkestan into a socialist hero of the People's Republic of China.

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[141] Bilal Ézizi, *Bilal Ézizi: Shéirlar*, ed. Kéwir Niyaz, Ershidin Tatliq, and A. Rozi (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1957). Of the collection's three editors, two—Kéwir Niyaz and Abdulhey Rozi—had themselves been anthologized in the *Almanac*. On Abdulhey Rozi's career in 1950s Xinjiang, see Abdulhey Rozi, *Sha'ir izidin: shéirlar* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1957), i; on Kéwir Niyaz, see *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 484-85; for Ershidin Tatliq's literary autobiography, see Aierxiding Tatelike (zizhuan) 艾尔西丁•塔特力克（自传）, in *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiandai zuojia zhuanlüe* 中国少数民族现代作家传略, ed. Wu Chongyang 吴重阳 and Tao Lifan 陶立璠 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 49-50.

[142] Liu, "Bushen huishou Akesu," 102.

As recounted in the previous chapter, the years after Lutpulla Mutellip's 1945 martyrdom had seen a steady drumbeat of commemorative poems, articles, and ceremonies in the Eastern Turkestan Republic, as well as a smaller number of eulogies and articles printed in Ürümchi. It was in the 1950s, though, that Lutpulla became a truly national figure, a hero promoted to Uyghurs—and particularly Uyghur youth—across Xinjiang. As Xinjiang's new rulers sought ways to give Chinese communism an appealing Uyghur face, Lutpulla Mutellip, martyred hero of the ETR, found even greater fame as the CCP's poet poster boy for Uyghur youth. For in addition to administrators and propagandists, the CCP needed a role model credible to Uyghurs, and especially to the generations of loyal Uyghur youth it hoped to train. Lutpulla Mutellip, an avowed Communist who enjoyed immense popularity with the Uyghur public, was perfect for the role. The young poet, who had eulogized the Chinese Red Army in verse before his martyrdom at the hands of the Nationalists, could symbolize for the Party the new socialist identity they hoped to create for Uyghurs as Chinese citizens. It was the perfect opportunity for Lutpulla's supporters to hoist him onto a yet grander pedestal. But the Lutpulla Mutellip they incorporated into PRC discourse in the early 1950s was not the same martyr they had celebrated just a few years earlier.

Lutpulla Mutellip's work was included in the very first Uyghur literature textbooks imported to Xinjiang from the Soviet Union in 1950.[143] Given the key role played by literature textbooks and anthologies in conferring canonical status in a mass society, Lutpulla's inclusion in these books constitued an important stage in his canonization.[144] The book elevates Lutpulla

[143] The fourth-grade reader discussed above (*Oqush kitabi: bashlan'ghuch mekteblerning tortinchi sinéfi uchun derslik*) reprinted four of Lutpulla's poems: "Biz Shingjang oghul qizliri" [We boys and girls of Xinjiang], 22-23; "Zhillargha jawab" [Answer to the years], 163-65; "Dihqinimgha" [To my farmer], 166-67; "Lénén shundaq ugetken" [Lenin taught us so], 232-33.

[144] Literature textbooks are often taken to define the contents of a literary canon. Cf. Paul Lauter, *Canons and Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23: "I mean by the 'American literary canon' that set of authors and works generally included in American literature college courses and textbooks, and those ordinarily

still higher in the pantheon by reprinting Téyipjan Éliev's poem "Youth," in which Éliev quotes four lines from one of Lutpulla Mutellip's poems as an epigraph.[145] Five years after his death and only twenty-eight after his birth, Lutpulla had thus attained classic status sufficient to supply epigraphs to other poets. In early Maoist Xinjiang, then, Uyghur youth were from the very first years of their education introduced to Uyghur culture and literacy in a distinctly Ili variant. The Ili dialect reigned supreme on the page; Ili writers dominated the official canon; and martyred Ili poet Lutpulla Mutellip was a towering figure.

As Lutpulla's promoters in Xinjiang scaled the heights of the PRC's cultural bureaucracy in the early and mid-1950s, they brought Lutpulla along with them. But in order to do so, they needed to reinvent the late poet in much the same way they were reinventing themselves. Thus, Téyipjan Éliev wasted no time in hoisting Lutpulla onto the national stage, with a 1950 Chinese-language article about Lutpulla's life in *New China Monthly* (*Xinhua yuebao*) in which he stressed Lutpulla's struggles with the Guomindang. In this article, Éliev consciously promulgated the falsehood that Lutpulla had been born in Ili.[146] He repeated the same claim in a Uyghur-language article five years later,[147] as did every other writer who published about Lutpulla in PRC publications, right up until the 1990s. Elqem Ekhtem later claimed that it was the Sino-Soviet split that caused PRC writers in those years to claim, despite knowing better, that Lutpulla had been born in China;[148] Yet Éliev's articles appeared in a period when Sino-Soviet relations were still excellent. It is more probable that Lutpulla was simply judged to be of greater

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discussed in standard volumes of literary history, bibliography, or criticism."

[145] "Yashliq," p. 60. The reader includes several poems by Téyipjan, all under his pseudonym, here spelled "Jur'éti."

[146] Tiyifujiang [Téyipjan] 提義甫江 (Jin Ba 金拔 ed.), "Minzu shiren Li Mutalifu: —jinian Weizu qingnian shiren ji geming qingnian xunnan wuzhounian 民族詩人力•木塔利夫：一紀念維族青年詩人及革命青年殉難五週年," *Xinhua yuebao* 3.1 (Nov. 1950): 225-26.

[147] "Uyghur khelqining söyümlük sha'iri," 32.

[148] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip: hayati, pa'aliyiti we ijadiy emgekliri toghrisida* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2007), 34. Elqem Ekhtem, it is worth remembering, was also born in Kazakhstan, and his family—like Lutpulla's—crossed the border into China while Elqem was a young boy. Into the 1980s, Xinjiang publications also claimed that Elqem Ekhtem was born in Ili; e.g., "Ailikanmu Aihetanmu (zizhuan)," 45-48.

propaganda value for the People's Republic if he was provided with an impeccably Chinese genealogy—and his Uyghur promoters would have known that such a genealogy could help Lutpulla gain acceptance from the Chinese party-state. As recounted above, writers like Téyipjan Éliev and Elqem Ekhtem spent the 1950s portraying Lutpulla as a fervent Chinese patriot and a martyr for Chinese communism.

In 1952, further signs of Lutpulla's transmogrification could be glimpsed in the new journal *Xinjiang Literature and Arts* (*Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti*). A few months after printing Lutpulla's poem "Lenin Taught Us So," the journal published a larger selection of Lutpulla's works to accompany an editorial commemorating the seventh anniversary of his death.[149] The editorial board included Liu Xiaowu and Téyipjan Éliev as well as personal friends of Lutpulla like Turghun Almas and Imin Tursun (1925-2011). In their editorial, major divergences from the Lutpulla Mutellip of the late 1940s were already evident. In the half-decade after Lutpulla's death, certain themes had appeared repeatedly in Uyghur-language tributes to him: the poet's thirst for liberation (*āzādliq*), his murder at the hands of the oppressors (*ẓālimlar*), and the desire for vengeance (*intiqam*) on those responsible for his death. Each of these concepts and words remained central to commemorations of Lutpulla after Chinese Communist rule began in 1949; what changed was the real-world objects they signified. By retaining these key concepts but altering their content, Xinjiang's new administrators were able to lay claim to Lutpulla's memory even as they worked to change its meaning.

Typical of pre-Maoist commemorations was Elqem Ekhtem's 1948 article in the literature page of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, outlined in the previous chapter. Following a brief sketch of Lutpulla's biography—his birth in Kazakhstan, his youth in Eastern Turkestan, his

[149] Lutpulla Mutellip, "Linén mundaq ögetken," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 6 (1952): 7; Tehrir hey'iti [editorial board], "L. Mutellip khatirisi," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 13 (1952): 25-26; Lutpulla Mutellip [selections], in ibid., 26-30.

poetic and revolutionary deeds, his murder by the "Chinese brutes"—as well as quotations from a few of his poems to illustrate his views on literature, the article concluded with the resounding declaration that Lutpulla's poems "call our people to freedom [*erkinlik*], to liberation [*āzādliq*]." On the same page, a poem by the young Téyipjan Éliev, writing under his usual pseudonym Jürʿeti ("Bold One"), reminded readers that "Thoughts of homeland [*waṭan*] were day and night in your [Lutpulla's] heart," and vowed that "millions of compatriots [*waṭandāsh*]" intended to take revenge on the enemy [*dushman*] responsible for Lutpulla's death, an unmistakable reference to the "Chinese brutes" in Elqem Ekhtem's article.[150] In a 1946 poem mourning Lutpulla, Elqem Ekhtem had been only slightly more circumspect: "Your name was known to one and all / As you dug your traps for the enemy... The dragon grasped you in its claws / and took you off to meet your ruin."[151]

Within a few years, many of these words would be transformed, often by the same writers who had originally employed them in constructing Lutpulla's legend in the 1940s. In Elqem Ekhtem's 1953 poem "My Friend Mutellip," the "Chinese brutes" were no longer the enemy: "When the class enemy [*sinip dushmini*] is gone at last / I'll see you smile once more, my friend."[152] Even more dramatic than the reimagining of Lutpulla's enemies was the revision of his loyalties, as exemplified by a pair of 1955 articles published by Téyipjan Éliev around the ten-year anniversary of Lutpulla's martyrdom. Writing in the pages of *Xinjiang Literature and Arts*, Éliev declared that "Lutpulla put first the fate of his beloved Chinese [*Jungkhwa*, from Ch. *Zhonghua* 中華] nation, with which his own fate was completely bound up; he cared for the sufferings, struggles, hopes, and future of his beloved nation, and considered it an honor to hurl

[150] Elqem Ekhtem, "Shāʿir L. Muṭṭalib Qaynam Örkishi"; Jürʿeti, "L. Muṭṭalib," *Inqilābī Sharqī Turkistān* 8 September 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh").
[151] Elqem Ekhtem, *Ümid tolqunliri*, 28.
[152] Elqem Ekhtem, *Küresh dolqunliri* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1957), 59.

himself into the waves of struggle for the liberation [*azatliq*] of this nation."[153] Continuing the crescendo of commemoration, Éliev declared in the journal's next issue that "Today we remember our nation's pride Lutpulla Mutellip, we who live in the liberated [*azat*] era of which he dreamed."[154] Elqem Ekhtem, in his 1953 poem "My Friend Mutellip," similarly lamented that "For liberation you lay in the dungeon, and forever bid farewell to us / But the sun rose after you were gone, for the CCP has rescued us… If you could only glimpse the sweet life we now lead."[155]

Yet this was patently not the liberation that Elqem Ekhtem, writing in the pages of *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, had seen in 1948 as the message of Lutpulla's poems; nor was it the "happy life today" that the editors of *Khān Tengri*, writing in Guomindang Ürümchi, credited to Zhang Zhizhong's policies in 1946 and regretted that Lutpulla had not lived to see. The "homeland" [*waṭan*] of Éliev's 1948 poem was likewise not the one of which he spoke in 1955, describing Lutpulla's numerous literary broadsides against Japanese imperialism: "The fiery patriotic [*wetenperwer*] poet L. Mutellip, mustering all his poetic talent, threw himself into the battle to defend the homeland [*weten*] against that [Japanese] assault."[156] As the potent language of nation and liberation was claimed for China, crucial facts shifted as well; typical was Éliev's omission, in his much reprinted biographical article on Lutpulla Mutellip, of the late poet's birth and childhood in Kazakhstan, instead stating simply that the poet spent his childhood in Ili.[157]

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[153] Téyipjan Éliyéw, "Uyghur khelqining söyümlük sha'iri," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 8 (1955): 38. The spellings of *āzād*, *waṭan*, and many other words differ in work published before and after the Uyghur orthographic reforms of the early 1950s.
[154] "Chélish zhillirining batur küychisi (mekhsus maqale)," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 9 (1955): 30. This article was reprinted numerous times in slightly edited form; e.g., L. Mutellip, *Muhebbet hem nepret*, ed. Muhemmet Sidiq Noruzow (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956), 3-11.
[155] Elqem Ekhtem, *Küresh dolqunliri*, 55-56.
[156] Téyipjan Éliyéw, "Uyghur khelqining söyümlük sha'iri," 40.
[157] "Chélish zhillirining batur küychisi (mekhsus maqale)," 24. Elqem Ekhtem later claimed that it was the Sino-

If the circumstances of Lutpulla's birth were understood as impacting the poet's political significance, the circumstances of his death were even more crucial to those who would claim his legacy. It is telling that the date of Lutpulla's death has from the mid-1940s been much more often commemorated than that of his birth. Immediately after Lutpulla was slain, his death became the central site of contestation for his memory; indeed, from that time on, all aspects of Lutpulla's life and work have been understood as inseparable from his martyrdom. In this as in other ways, the commemoration of Lutpulla seems to inherit aspects of the Islamic hagiographic tradition of Altishahr (southern Xinjiang) as described by Rian Thum, a fact which surely lent this new secular canon of heroes greater resonance with Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims, even those living in Ili.[158] The creation of this new pantheon was well underway, however, by the mid-1940s, and the process continued over the following two decades; the 1980s canon of national heroes described by Thum was in significant part a reprise of these mid-century beginnings, as we will see in subsequent chapters.

The origins of the Uyghur national canon, then, can in many ways be located in the intersections of the Islamic tradition with the ideological zeitgeist of the mid-twentieth century. Thus did an Islamic language of martyrdom figure prominently in commemorations of socialist, national heroes. In his 1948 poem, Fahri wrote that "When the blood of martyrs [*shahīdlar*] moves the heart / Your vision and poems comfort the mind... In my album I saved your work as a memento / This thoughtless age took you from us as a sacrifice [*qurbān*]."[159] The purpose of this

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Soviet split that caused writers in PRC Xinjiang to state, despite knowing better, that Lutpulla had been born in China. Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 34. Yet Téyipjan's article appeared in 1955, when Sino-Soviet relations were still good. Elqem Ekhtem, it is worth remembering, was also born in Kazakhstan, and his family—like Lutpulla's—crossed the border into China while Elqem was a young boy. Into the 1980s, Xinjiang publications also claimed that Elqem Ekhtem was born in Ili; e.g., "Ailikanmu Aihetanmu (zizhuan) 艾里坎木·艾合坦木（自传）," in Wu Chongyang 吴重阳 and Tao Lifan 陶立璠 (eds.), *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiandai zuojia zhuanlüe* 中国少数民族现代作家传略 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 45-48.

[158] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 47-48.

[159] Fahri, "Okunush."

sacrifice was sufficiently clear to readers that Fahri felt no need to name it; several months earlier, though, the poet ʿAbd al-Wali Khalifat (1928-), then a young schoolteacher in Ghulja, had been more explicit. "With firm resolve you donned the cloak of justice, master poet, / Your aspiration was these dawns we've fashioned, master poet... With vengeance on his lips, Khalifat takes his saber in his hand / This is the honor due you, for you died a martyr [*shahīd*], master poet."[160] Fahri and Khalifat's poems were published in *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan*, and it was the young ETR that constituted "these dawns we've fashioned."

Seven years later, the Eastern Turkestan Republic was gone, Khalifat enjoyed a flourishing editorial career at Xinjiang People's Publishers, and Lutpulla's martyrdom was increasingly infused with a new meaning. As Téyipjan Éliev put it in his 1955 article, "Our nation's entire people has gone through many difficult struggles for the sake of liberation [*azatliq*] and a happy life. In this cause many sacrifices [*qurbanlar*] were made. One of these sacrifices was Lutpulla Mutellip. And we now live in the free, promising era achieved at the cost of those hardships and sacrifices."[161] Lutpulla's sacrifice and martyrdom remained unquestionable, yet their cause and object had changed; the dawn Lutpulla had yearned for now shone from a different sun. Éliev again: "Thanks to the long and difficult struggles carried out by the People's Liberation Army and our people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Zedong, today the dawn of liberation [*azatliq*] has broken also in the province where Lutpulla lived." Through the transformation of words like "sacrifice" (*qurban*) and "martyr" (*shahit* or *shéhit*) the Eastern Turkestan Republic and the People's Republic of China,

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[160] ʿAbd al-Wali Khalifat, "Shāʿir ūstāz," *Inqilābī Sharqī Turkistān* 21 June 1948: 4 ("Ösüsh"). On Khalifat's career, see *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 500-01.

[161] "Chélish zhillirining batur küychisi," 30-31. While the Arabic word *qurbān* traditionally refers more often to sacrifice than to martyrdom, in Modern Uyghur it is often used simply to mean "martyr." The first entry for *qurban*, the Modern Uyghur spelling, in the standard dictionary of the language reads, "One who gave his or her life for a good deed or cause." Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq milletler til-yéziq khizmiti komitéti lughet bölümi, *Uyghur tilining izahliq lughiti*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1994), 318.

both secular states devoted to socialism and revolution, hoped to lay claim to a language of martyrdom with deep roots in the Muslim tradition of Xinjiang.[162] Indeed, these were hardly the first revolutionary states that sought to transcend a religious worldview by appropriating its language and concepts.[163]

The cultural elite of early Maoist Xinjiang made no secret of their intentions in showering attention on Lutpulla; as Téyipjan Éliev put it in 1955, "these sorts of exemplary deeds from Lutpulla Mutellip's life are an important textbook for us to lovingly study."[164] By then, this textbook's potential value was equally clear to Éliev's party patron. In 1955, Liu Xiaowu penned "The Uyghur Poet L. Mutellip," published the next year in the nationally-distributed journal *People's Literature*.[165] This spirited account of Lutpulla Mutellip's life was one of the first to present the poet to Chinese-reading audiences beyond Xinjiang, and is worth careful examination due to the central role Liu's efforts played in mythologizing Lutpulla. Despite its publication in a literary journal, the genre of the piece is unspecified, a crucial ambiguity that allowed Liu to blend the known facts of Lutpulla's life with a number of elements that seem to be partially or wholly concocted. A close reading of this piece will allow us to reconstruct some of the feedback between history and fiction in the creation of the Lutpulla mythology, as well as the ways in which Liu Xiaowu and his associates successfully repackaged Lutpulla as a socialist hero for Maoist Xinjiang.

The piece begins to weave a Maoist hagiography for Lutpulla by portraying a child seemingly born a socialist. As a child, Liu wrote, Lutpulla felt deeply for the long-suffering poor,

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[162] See, e.g., Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 56-57.
[163] Ivan Strenski points out that the imagery of sacrifice, borrowed from Roman Catholicism, pervaded the "national mythology" which the aggressively anti-clerical French Revolution hoped to instill in the populace. *Theology and the First Theory of Sacrifice* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 42-43.
[164] "Chélish zhillirining batur küychisi (mekhsus maqale)," 31.
[165] Liu Xiaowu, "Weiwu'er shiren Li • Mutelifu 維吾尔詩人黎•穆特里夫," *Renmin wenxue* 2 (1956), 104-09.

and insisted on washing his own clothes in order to lighten his tired mother's load. When his older sister married a wealthy peasant (*funong* 富农, a social class of freeholding farmers targeted by the CCP in the 1950s as reactionary), Lutpulla refused his sister's offers to help fund his studies, and was unwilling even to enter his own house when she and her well-to-do husband came visiting—an episode that appears nowhere in other accounts of Lutpulla's life, and is contradicted by other biographical treatments.[166] After briefly covering Lutpulla's education and literary work in Ürümchi, the narrative follows him to Aqsu, where the young poet is depicted as engaged in a remarkable array of revolutionary activities while working as literature editor for the *Aqsu Xinjiang Gazette*.

Lutpulla's revolutionary exploits in Aqsu began at the *Gazette*, whose publisher had hired ten young people from a local orphanage to run the newspaper's print shop. Figuring that his new employees would have no means to defy him, the publisher declared to his print shop workers that he was "head of the household," and insisted that they cook his meals and wash his wife's clothes. After Lutpulla arrived at the newspaper, the twenty-one-year-old writer defied his boss and organized the workers, formulating a work code and setting specific work and rest hours. After work, the printers would rush to Lutpulla's house, where they would all tell stories, sing, and eat melon together. It wasn't all fun and games, though, and Lutpulla took every chance he could to tell the workers about Stalin.[167] This unlikely account of Lutpulla's time at the *Gazette* seems still more unlikely in light of contemporary reports: the year before Lutpulla arrived in Aqsu, the local *Gazette* announced that the newspaper would be implementing a

[166] Liu, "Weiwu'er shiren," 104-05. Téyipjan Éliev's article, published only a year earlier, notes that "Lutpulla entered the Ili Tatar school with the help of his relatives in the city." Téyipjan Éliyéw, "Uyghur khelqining söyümlük sha'iri," 32.
[167] Liu, "Weiwu'er shiren," 106-07.

training course and other improvements for print shop workers.[168] Nonetheless, this and other unsourced claims in Liu's piece found their way into subsequent non-fiction accounts of Lutpulla's life, often without attribution to Liu; thus did myth drift into biography.[169]

Following the description of Lutpulla's print shop heroism, Liu's piece describes the poet's theatrical work in Aqsu before moving on to a detailed recounting of how Lutpulla and a number of other revolutionary youth founded the "Sparks Organization." (Like many other PRC authors, Liu tactfully elides the organization's full title, the Eastern Turkestan Sparks.) In Liu's telling, as the Eastern Turkestan army (which Liu calls the People's Revolutionary Army) surrounded Aqsu, Lutpulla dispatched Bilal Ézizi, a young Uzbek poet from southern Xinjiang and member of the Sparks group, to carry out a daring raid on a police station in order to supply the resistance with weapons. But a Guomindang spy in the Sparks group betrayed them, and Lutpulla was arrested along with the rest of his comrades. The story concludes on a moonless, starless night in September 1945, when Lutpulla and the other captured members of the Sparks organization were led into the prison courtyard. As the Guomindang police chief gave the order to shoot, Lutpulla cried out: "Kill us! Kill us! Others will avenge us!" Connecting Lutpulla's martyrdom to the very soil of his homeland, Liu brought down the curtain on the final act: "A shot rang out, and the poet fell to the ground! The poet collapsed in the darkness, his blood seeping into his own land…"[170]

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[168] "Idaremizde mejlis," *Shinjang giziti: Aqsu neshri* 23 May 1942: 4

[169] The description of Lutpulla's relations with the print shop employees, for which Liu Xiaowu provides no source, seems to have been incorporated in direct Uyghur translation, and without citation, into Tursun Ershidin's *L. Mutellip* (191-92), along with several other incidents recounted in Liu's story. Compare the quotation from unidentified classmates in Liu, 105 with that in Tursun Ershidin, 108, and the account of Lutpulla's interaction with the cart driver in Liu, 106 with that in Tursun Ershidin, 189-90. Tursun Ershidin also borrows from Téyipjan Éliev's "Uyghur khelqining söyümlük sha'iri"; compare Tursun Ershidin 315-16 with Téyipjan Éliyéw 40-41. It is through such unsubstantiated claims and unspoken borrowing that the more fantastic elements of Lutpulla's official biography have become canonical.

[170] Liu, "Weiwu'er shiren," 109.

Liu's advocacy no doubt played a substantial role in the CCP's decision to present Lutpulla Mutellip's family with a Certificate of Honor for the Families of Revolutionary Martyrs. Dated August 8, 1956, this was only the second such certificate to be awarded in Xinjiang, and was signed by Mao Zedong himself. A month after Mao granted this imprimatur, Xinjiang People's Press published the first book-length collection of Lutpulla's works in Xinjiang. Titled *Love and Loathing* after one of Lutpulla's poems, the collection was edited by Muhammad Sidiq Noruzov, one of the co-editors of the 1947 *Almanac*, the literary anthology that had been the first book to include Lutpulla's work. The introduction for *Love and Loathing* was Téyipjan Éliev's much reprinted 1955 article on Lutpulla. With a large initial print run of 20,000 copies, *Love and Loathing* allowed Ili intellectuals like Éliev and Noruzov to place the full power of the Maoist cultural bureaucracy behind Lutpulla's reputation, and to confirm the poet's canonical status far behind the borders of the former ETR.[171] ETR alumni like Éliev and Noruzov had lost their state and pledged their loyalty to Xinjiang's new rulers; but in doing so, they had only enhanced the cultural power of their cohort.

The canonization of Ili culture benefited considerably from intellectuals without an ETR or Ili background, drawn into the Ili orbit after 1949 by the gravitational power of party privilege. Abdukérim Khojaev, having helped introduce Lutpulla Mutellip's poetry to Liu Xiaowu, published a short story about Lutpulla in a 1955 issue of *Xinjiang Literature and Arts*, and two years later translated the first collection of Lutpulla's poems to be published in Chinese.[172] In 1959, Khojaev collaborated with Liu Xiaowu, Elqem Ekhtem, and Zhai Disheng on the screenplay *Sparks in the Distance*, a heroic recounting of Lutpulla Mutellip's revolutionary

[171] The wide distribution and consumption of this collection throughout the region was confirmed by the author in interviews. A reader from Kashgar memorably described copies of *Muhebbet hem nepret* being eagerly passed from hand to hand at his school during the Cultural Revolution. Personal communication, Ürümchi, July 2013.
[172] A. Khojayéw, "Birinchi jengde (hikaye)," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 9 (1955): 45-53; Li Mutelifu 黎・穆特里夫, *Li Mutelifu shixuan* 黎•穆特里夫詩选, tr. Kelimu Hejieyefu 克里木•赫捷耶夫 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe).

struggles in Aqsu that was made into a swashbuckling biopic two years later.[173] *Sparks in the Distance* was one of the first feature films to be made in Uyghur, and its creation by Xinjiang's state-owned film production company testified to the importance placed by the party-state cultural apparatus on burnishing Lutpulla's reputation, including among those who did not regularly consume print media. In 1962, Liu Xiaowu visited Nilqa and penned the mournful poem "In Mutellip's Hometown"; that same year, he helped ensure the inclusion of Lutpulla's work—in Abdukérim Khojaev's translation—in the collection *Selected Poems by Revolutionary Martyrs*.[174] This widely printed collection was distributed throughout China and even abroad; Lutpulla seems to have been the only non-Han among the 110 poets included. In 1962, three years after their collaboration on *Sparks in the Distance*, Liu and Khojaev coauthored an essay to mark the twentieth anniversary of Mao's Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art. In considering the best ways to implement Mao's teachings in Xinjiang literature, they noted that "efforts to collect, edit, and publish the works of the revolutionary poet Lutpulla Mutellip have been extremely well received by the whole country's literary community."[175]

[173] *Zhiraqtiki uchqunlar* / *Yuanfang xinghuo* 远方星火, dir. Ou Fan 欧凡, Xinjiang dianying zhipianchang 新疆電影製片廠, 1961. For the script, see Liu Xiaowu 刘肖無, Alehamu Ahetaimu 阿勒哈木•阿和台木, Kelimu Hejieyefu 克里木•赫捷耶夫, and Zhai Disheng 翟棣生, *Yuanfang xinghuo* 远方星火, *Dianying chuangzuo* 8 (1959): 2-24. Liu's individual role in writing the script cannot be known; but the listing of a high-ranking Party official among the authors was no doubt crucial to the film's production.

[174] Xiao San 萧三 (ed.), *Geming lieshi shichao* 革命烈士诗抄 (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1962). Liu's role is reported by Tursun Ershidin in *Lutpulla Mutellip* (Ürümchi: Shinjang güzel sen'et – foto süret neshriyati, 1995), 35.

[175] Liu Xiaowu and Abdukérim Khojayéw, "Shinjangdiki milletlerning sotsialistik edebiyat-sen'et ishlirini tékhimu yakhshi réwajlandurayli!," in *Eng keng khelq ammisi üchün khizmet qilayli*, ed. Shinjang khelq neshriyati (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1962), 80.



Figure 6: Advertisement for 1961 film Sparks in the Distance

The twentieth-century creation of modern Uyghur literature drew not only on contemporary poets and writers, but also on Central Asia's intertwined manuscript and oral literature traditions. As we have seen in previous chapters, the process of grafting elements of this literary heritage onto the new structure of Uyghur literature entailed far more than simply rendering manuscripts and oral passages into print. A process of selection, reinterpretation, rewriting, and in some cases invention meant that Central Asia's literary heritage would be made to serve socialist nation building in much the same way as did living writers in socialist states. As we have seen in previous chapters, the beginnings of this process could be seen before the October Revolution; but Soviet Uyghurs' selective canonization of their communities'

manuscript and oral culture really began in earnest in the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1940s, intellectuals in the nascent Eastern Turkestan Republic had a rich reportoire of officially recognized Uyghur folk literature and ideologically acceptable classical Central Asian literature on which to draw. By the time Xinjiang was unified under Chinese Communist rule in 1949, a definite canon of classical and folk Uyghur literature had been worked out in ETR books and periodicals.

While it may have seemed easier simply to discard the classical literature of Central Asia as irredeemably tainted by feudal modes of thought, cultural prestige and social identity in Central Asia was thoroughly bound up with this classical heritage. No socialist state could appeal to the region's Turkic Muslims without claiming at least some continuity with the cultural glories of Central Asia's past. Much as with the posthumous reputation of Lutpulla Mutellip, it was more efficacious for the state simply to reimagine the classics and their meaning. Uyghur nation builders in Xinjiang were drawing here on Soviet precedent. Following spirited debate before and after the Bolshevik revolution on the subject of whether and how the bourgeois literary tradition should be used by a socialist state, Lenin prevailed with his argument that communist culture should draw on the achievements—and the prestige—of the precommunist literary heritage. This process advanced further under Stalin, with Pushkin reimagined as a proto-communist on the 1937 centenary of his death.[176] As Jeffrey Brooks has observed, "when the Bolsheviks came to power and sought symbols of national unity independent of the church and the autocracy, they first hesitantly, and later with great enthusiasm, used Russian culture, and particularly the literature of the nineteenth century."[177]

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[176] Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant After Communism*, 26-29; Stephanie Sandler, *Commemmorating Pushkin: Russia's Myth of a National Poet* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[177] Jeffrey Brooks, "Russian Nationalism and Russian Literature: The Canonization of the Classics," in *Nation and Ideology: Essays in Honor of Wayne S. Vucinich*, ed. Ivo Banac, John G. Ackerman, and Roman Szporluk (Boulder,

Thus were fragments of the classical Eastern Turkestani canon incorporated into Soviet Uyghur literature textbooks, reprinted in ETR books and periodicals in the 1940s, and ultimately grandfathered into the 1950s Uyghur canon in PRC Xinjiang. The literary lineage worked out during this period began with the eleventh-century *Qutadghu Bilig*, a lengthy didactic work written in ancient Uyghur verse by Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib.[178] Moving into the heavily Persianate literature of medieval Central Asia, the socialist Uyghur canon adopted the traditional placement of Timurid court poet Alishir Nava'i at the pinnacle of the literary hierarchy. Soviet publishers ensured that this canon was adopted in the ETR as well, exporting volumes of carefully selected classical literature for the Eastern Turkestani reading public.[179] The novel *Nava'i*, by Soviet author Aybik, was excerpted in Soviet periodicals distributed in the ETR, helping to guarantee Nava'i's cultural preeminence.[180]

ETR writers and intellectuals were eager participants in the process of bringing a socialist version of the Central Asian canon into print. In spring 1948, for example, Téyipjan Éliev was working to project socialist literary virtues back into the fifteenth century. In his poem "Nava'i," Éliev depicts the aristocratic Timurid court poet as a hero of the proletariat:[181]

> You rent the clouds as if you were the sun itself,
> consecrated every moment to the struggle,
> with eyes of justice you observed the madness of this world,
> with conscience pure you set your heart on truth.
> […]
> Clothing yourself in lovely robes of language,
> you unlocked the foundations of the truth.
> A brave man, you made honest work your friend,

Colorado: East European Monographs, l981), 316, and passim.
[178] Zarıyf Bäshir, *Uyghur edebiyatı* (Kazan: Jangalif, 1931), 5-7.
[179] E.g., Newayi, *Char diwan (tallanma shi'irlar)*, ed. R. Muḥemmed Oghli (Tashkent: Özbekistan dewlet neshriyati, 1947).
[180] Aybik, "Newayi: romandin parche," *Sherq ḫeqiqiti* 10 (1947): 15-16.
[181] Téyib Éliyéf (Jür'éti), *Sherq nakhshisi (shé'irlar)*, ed. Q. [Qadir] Ḥesenof (Almaty: "Qazaq éli" zhurnaling neshriyati, 1951), 17-18.

unbowed by hardship, your heart was always true.
To all mankind you scattered jewels of virtue,
on callous dark injustice you opened fire.
To the oppressed your words were as a sugared gift,
to the tyrants your words were poison.

The subject here is classical, but its elaboration is entirely modern. The struggle (*küresh*) is a familiar concept in socialist literature, and appeared constantly in leftist Uyghur poetry of this period (e.g., Lutpulla Mutellip's "In the Great Struggle's Embrace"). While the object of the struggle was not always defined, it was understood in the zeitgeist of mid-century leftist Uyghur culture to refer to the struggle against economic and political injustice. Similarly with the truth (*ḥeqiqet*) referred to multiple times in the poem—the same word used in the title of *Eastern Truth*, the Soviet periodical distributed in the ETR. Éliev's use of these undefined yet culturally resonant words allowed him to imply that this medieval Sufi poet and loyal servant of the Sultan of Khorasan was in fact a closet socialist—and thus worthy of a place in the twentieth-century Uyghur pantheon.

As with the contemporary Uyghur literary canon, the classical canon worked out in the USSR and the ETR was largely adopted wholesale in early PRC Xinjiang. Pride of place was generally granted to Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, Mahmud Kashgari, and Alishir Nava'i[182]—a classical trinity which was in fact very much a construction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Alishir Nava'i had been celebrated in Central Asia since his own lifetime in the fifteenth century, not only for his work as a poet but also for his role in promoting the highly Persianate form of literary Turkic that came to be known as Chaghatay. Around the same time Nava'i and

[182] E.g., Shinjang khelq neshriyati, eds., *Edibiyat: ottura mekteplerning 6- sinipi üchün: khrestomatiye* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956), 31-42; Qemer Qurbanowa, ed., *Edibiyat oqushlighi: toluqsiz ottura mekteplerning ikkinchi zhillighi üchün* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq ma'arip neshriyati, 1957), 58-72. The former textbook presents Kashgari, Nava'i, and Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib as representatives of "Uyghur and Uzbek literature in the feudal era"; the latter emphasizes the degree to which great works of written literature—like those of Mahmud Kashgari and Maksim Gorkii—draw on oral folk literature.

Chaghatay flourished, Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib and Mahmud Kashgari, who wrote their best known works in ancient Uyghur and Arabic respectively, largely disappeared from the Central Asian canon, at least in Xinjiang. It was European Orientalists who centuries later brought their works into print, and intellectuals in the Russian and Ottoman empires who incorporated them into modern Central Asian discourse.[183]

Ili intellectuals, as well as Tatar and Bashkir allies, carried out much of the work in bringing these writers into the socialist-era Uyghur canon; but unlike in the case of oral literature, there was no plausible means to tie the manuscript canon to Ili. Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib and Mahmud Kashgari were closely associated with Kashgar, while Alishir Nava'i made his career in Khorasan, in western Central Asia; biographical elements for each of them permitted their integration into a Uyghur national canon. No Turkic writers of comparable antiquity could be linked to Ili, which had been settled by the forerunners of today's Uyghurs only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the time a coherent Taranchi community emerged, the Chaghatay canon had to a significant extent already been established, and the ancient Uyghur canon was largely forgotten. The Turkic manuscript tradition in subsequent centuries did not incorporate any major Ili authors. If the Ili-dominated modern Uyghur literature was to win popular credibility, however, it would need to lay claim to an authentic Central Asian literary lineage, and to claim for itself something of the prestige that classical poets like Nava'i enjoyed among the community now identified as Uyghurs.

Oral literature, while it did not enjoy the prestige of the poetic manuscript tradition, was nonetheless recognized by the Uyghur public as an authentic form of communal expression. Of equal importance, oral literature had held a central place in Eurasian nation building efforts

[183] David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 44-51, 139-44.

dating back to Central and Eastern European national movements of the nineteenth century. Many influential intellectuals associated with these movements viewed oral literature as a repository of primordial national cultures, unsullied by modernity and cross-cultural mixing. Socialist ideology in both the Soviet Union and China similarly identified folklore as representing the masses, as opposed to the bourgeois literary forms accessible primarily to the educated elite.

Here, in contrast to classical literature, Ili enjoyed a natural advantage. Rian Thum notes that for pre-1949 Altishahr (southern and eastern Xinjiang), there are "few records of performances of unwritten texts with local origins" or "treating local history." The scant surviving information suggests an Altishahri oral literature closely connected to a largely Persianate canon of written texts with predominantly foreign origins.[184] Oral literature in the Ili Valley, however, was another story entirely. In the decades after the Russian occupation and partial absorption of the Ili Valley, ethnographers like N. N. Pantusov extensively transcribed Taranchi oral literature: songs, folk poems, and more.[185] Much of this oral tradition dealt with local history, and much of that was, if not fully secular, decidedly less sacred than the hagiographies that dominated local historical literature in southern and eastern Xinjiang.[186] Anti-Qing resistance heroes like Nazugum and Sadir Palwan loomed large: individuals who had made their names in battle, within living memory, and in recognizably local circumstances. Unlike Altishahri hagiographies, nineteenth-century Ili folk songs and verses eulogizing local heroes made no claims of textual descent from divinely inspired sources. Rather, these oral texts sprang

[184] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 56-58. Turn-of-the-century ethnographers like Katanov and Malov did record substantial amounts of dialogue from Altishahri informants, but relatively little of it seems to be orally transmitted literature. N. Th. Katanov, *Volkskundliche Texte aus Ost-Türkistan*, ed. Karl Heinrich Menges and Georg Hazai (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1976); S. E. Malov, *Uigurskii yazyk: Khamiiskoe narechie: teksty, perevody i slovar'* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1954).
[185] E.g., N. N. Pantusov, *Taranchinskiia piesni: sobrany i perevedeny* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1890).
[186] On the hagiographic (*tazkirah*) tradition in Altishahr, see Thum, *Sacred Routes*, passim.

from a source which twentieth-century socialists saw as far more authoritative than any divine revelation: the people.

It was thus straightforward for Ili intellectuals to ensure that the Uyghur nation's officially recognized folk canon was dominated by Ili's rich oral literature. Nineteenth-century Ili hero Sadir Palwan, to consider a prominent example, was taken up by Uyghur and Tatar intellectuals in the 1920s as a central symbol of the Uyghur nation. As with Alishir Nava'i, Sadir's story was molded to fit the political needs of the moment, with biographical particularities amenable to socialism emphasized and inconvenient issues downplayed. In the mid-1940s, Soviet publications directed at the ETR took a persistent interest in Sadir, and the ETR's own periodicals paid the late Ili hero significant attention as well.[187] The large corpus of folk rhymes attributed to Sadir Palwan was also brought into print and increasingly standardized in line with ideological dictates and evolving Uyghur linguistic standards.[188] A similar process of secularization, nationalization, and socialist reinterpretation was undertaken for Nazugum, another anti-Qing hero from Ili who had long been celebrated in oral literature. By the CCP assumption of power in 1949, the ETR and its Soviet patron could offer the new Maoist state a credible pantheon of Uyghur folk literature and folk heroes. The party-state was eager to accept this set of ideologically acceptable Uyghur folk heroes, and the Soviet textbooks imported for use in Xinjiang's Uyghur schools immediately after 1949 presented students with the Ili-dominated folk canon. Sadir Palwan in particular was ubiquitous both as a folk bard and as an anti-imperial warrior.[189]

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[187] E.g., E. Idayet Oghli, "Sadir Palwan," *Sherq ḥeqiqiti* 3-4 (1944): 8-9; Z. Qadiri and ʻ. Ekhtem, "Uyghur khelqining ataqliq qehrimani we qoshaqchisi: Sadir Palwan," *Küresh* 4 (15) (April 1947): 13-19.
[188] Sabirjan Shakirjan, "Khitay zulmi we taranchilar hem meshhur Sadir Khangruq," in Turkistan Uyghur Kammunistlirining Merkez Byurasi, "*Birinchi chamdam" mejmu'esi* (Almaty: Yette Su wilayet basmakhanesi, 1924), 92-99; ʻ. Oṣmāni, ed., "Ṣādir Pahliwān qoshāqliri," *Ittifaq* 2 (1948 Nov): 132-40.
[189] E.g., Q. Ḥesenof, M. Ruziyef and S. Ayupov, *Oqush kitabi: bashlan'ghuch mekteblerning üchinchi sinifi üchün derslik* (Almaty: Qazaq éli jurnalining neshriyati, 1950), 355-57; Q. [Qadir] Ḥesenof, M. [Meshür] Rozééf, H.

Xinjiang's party-state cultural organs also made their own efforts to collect and canonize the people's oral literature—but as in the USSR and the ETR, the Maoist state knew what it wanted to hear. Everyday citizens knew it, too; editions of newly collected folk rhymes from 1950s Xinjiang overflow with verses on the CCP's liberation of the province and the leadership of Chairman Mao.[190] The CCP presented its official culture as the triumph of folk culture and as the authentic voice of the people; in reality, though, Maoist mass culture was very much a top-down phenomenon, in which a small elite of bureaucrats and intellectuals employed the vast power of the modern, centralized administrative state to deeply shape culture on the local level. As noted above, an important folklore collection team in southern Xinjiang was led by Liu Xiaowu, with Téyipjan Éliev and Abdukérim Khojaev as his collaborators. It was altogether fitting that the collection and canonization of southern Xinjiang's folklore should be carried out by an Ili poet, a Uyghur translator from eastern Xinjiang educated in Chinese schools in Gansu, and a Han party official from Beijing.

As the Ili canon came to define Uyghur official culture in the 1950s, the Ürümchi canon of the 1940s faded swifly into obscurity, a process that had begun even before the Communist victory. Following the 1947 breakdown of the Guomindang-ETR peace treaty, some of Ürümchi's foremost literati, like *Khan Tengri*'s Ibrahim Turdi and Nur Sadirov, abandoned Ürümchi for Ghulja, and were swiftly integrated into the Ili cultural network. Still, many prominent Turkic intellectuals—particularly right-leaning writers like Polat Qadiri and Abduréhim Ötkür—remained in Ürümchi through the end of Guomindang rule, at which point they were faced with a stark choice. A number of the most prominent, like Qadiri, fled Xinjiang in 1949 along with their Guomindang patrons, and spent the rest of their days in exile,

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Nighmetof, and E. Eḥmedof, eds., *Oqush kitabi: bashlan'ghuch mekteblerning tortinchi sinéfi uchun derslik* (Almaty: "Qazaq éli" zhurnalénng neshriyati, 1950), 107-08.

[190] E.g., "Shinjang edibiyat-sen'iti" rédaksiyisi, ed., *Qoshaqlar* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956).

castigating the Chinese Communists from Turkey and Germany. Others, like the poet Ötkür, remained in Xinjiang after the Communist victory, but were largely denied the opportunity to publish their work for the following three decades, with some taking up their pens again only in the 1980s. The ornate, classicist style, language, and subject matter employed by these writers doomed them to Maoist obscurity almost as surely as did their suspect ideological pasts. Yet all this could perhaps have been overlooked, had these ex-Guomindang writers been in possession of the bureaucratic patronage enjoyed by the ex-ETR writers. As it was, the Guomindang Uyghur canon melted away once its political patrons lost power, joined the Communists, or vanished over the Himalayas. Some of its representatives—Abduréhim Ötkür, Ahmad Ziya'i—were to reemerge in print decades later in post-Maoist Xinjiang; but by then, they found themselves working largely within the cultural framework successfully established by the Ili faction.

The permanent Ili imprint on Uyghur culture and identity can be clearly seen in the form of the modern Uyghur literary language—which, as noted above, was in the mid-1950s explicitly tied to the dialect of Ili's major city, Ghulja. As in other nations whose modern formation was inextricably tied to twentieth-century socialism, the unique conditions generated by a confluence of socialist policy and early print culture provided an opportunity for a small group of intellectuals to define their nation's identity and culture. Early print culture without a centralized socialist state had failed to produce a unified Uyghur linguistic standard under the Guomindang, though not for lack of trying. Attempts during the 1940s to create modern Uyghur linguistic and literary standards in Xinjiang had generated a good deal of confusion, and had significant detractors among the literati. In 1946, one such critic complained that young Uyghur poets made

a hash of case endings and suffixes, lamenting that "if we embark on a discussion of our literary language, we enter a dark wasteland."[191]

In the 1950s, however, despite Xinjiang's longstanding inter-oasis rivalries, Ili-dominated print culture, including an Ili-based form of the Uyghur language, was persuasively presented across the province as Uyghur official culture. This was possible in part because for many Uyghurs—not only schoolchildren, but adults as well—this was the first native-language print culture with which they had come in sustained contact. Another significant factor was the transmission of the new Ili-dominated culture through the regional capital, Ürümchi. Relatively few Uyghurs in southern Xinjiang would associate the standard dialect of Uyghur with Ili speech patterns, for in language as in other spheres, Ürümchi—center of Uyghur print culture—has come to be widely seen in Xinjiang as setting the standard for a neutral form of Uyghur culture and identity.

At first this may seem paradoxical. Until the twentieth century, Ürümchi was a Qing garrison town with only a small Turkic-speaking population; and while the city's Uyghur population increased manyfold over the course of the twentieth century, Ürümchi has never had a Uyghur majority. Many of the city's Uyghurs are recent arrivals who identify primarily with their ancestral oases.[192] The "neutral" Ürümchi culture was in fact molded to a great degree by the Ili writers, intellectuals, and officials who from the mid-1930s played such crucial roles in the provincial government's Ürümchi-based Uyghur cultural and educational organs. The lack of a strong local Uyghur identity in Ürümchi (at least until the formation of a vibrant youth culture in recent decades) arguably lent a sense of geographical neutrality to the Ili-centered Uyghur

[191] Bulbul, "Edebiyāt gulzārining ārālārida," *Shingjāng giziti* 1946 July 26: 4; Bulbul, "Edebiyāt gulzāri ārālirida," *Shingjāng giziti* 1946 July 27: 4. Despite Bulbul's concern about suffixes, the first installment of the piece uses a genitive suffix for "gulzāri" in the title, while the second leaves the suffix off. (Both variants are acceptable.)
[192] The 2000 census recorded that Uyghurs comprised less than 13% of the city's residents. Stanley Toops, *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang After 1949* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2004), 20.

mass culture developed in the mid-twentieth century. While an explicitly Ili-based mass culture could have been expected to encounter substantial resistance due to the fierce rivalries that persist between Uyghur communities, an Ürümchi culture—even one based on an Ili substrate—could be accepted as representing a neutral regional standard. In Xinjiang as elsewhere, elite cultural and linguistic forms derive much of their power from the seeming neutrality or obscurity of their origins.[193]

The staying power of Ili linguistic and cultural norms has been amply demonstrated in the decades since mid-century socialist bureaucracy spread Ili's influence throughout Xinjiang. In line with the observations and policy recommendations of the Xinjiang Language Research Committee in 1956, the Ili accent—and the Ili-based Ürümchi accent—has continued to dominate Xinjiang's Uyghur-language broadcast media and to form the basis for the written language, even while a large majority of Uyghurs speak with the accents of southern population centers like Kashgar and Khotan. These southern varieties of Uyghur have themselves been influenced by the Ili accent and its Ürümchi offshoot. Uyghur public figures and intellectuals from southern and eastern Xinjiang, when operating outside their hometown networks, tend to trim their accents and speech patterns to fit the Ili-Ürümchi standard.[194] Swedish Turkologist Gunnar Jarring, writing in 1991 on linguistic change in southern Xinjiang since his own fieldwork there in 1929 and 1930, sniffed that the southern dialects had since been "subject to the corrupting influence of modern Uyghur in its Urumchi-based *taranchi*-version."[195]

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[193] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, tr. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 65-80.

[194] The Khotan accent, most distant from Ili's, is widely ridiculed for its lack of a trilled "r." William Labov, in his 1972 study of accent in New York, famously suggested that the decline of British imperial power likely accounted for the fading prestige of dropped "r"s in American speech. William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Second Edition) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 296.

[195] G. Jarring, *Prints from Kashgar: The Printing-office of the Swedish Mission in Eastern Turkestan: History and Production with an Attempt at a Bibliography* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 1991): 6.

In his study of Uyghur historiography and national identity, Rian Thum notes the paucity of Uyghur book printing in Altishahr in the Republican and Maoist periods, and describes in detail the thriving manuscript culture that held sway there until the dislocations of the 1950s.[196] As we have seen in this chapter, it was precisely in this mid-century transitional period that cultural capital began to be redefined for Xinjiang's Uyghur community, as authorities used the power of the modern state to promote print culture over manuscript culture, secular knowledge over Islamic learning, and the products of the Ürümchi cultural bureaucracy over locally transmitted cultural expressions. Millions of textbooks printed in Ürümchi were introduced to students in compulsory state schools throughout Xinjiang, which gradually displaced Islamic schools. Periodicals were consumed in state-organized reading groups, which reached even those who could not read modern Uyghur. Poetry collections circulated widely, introducing writers like Téyipjan Éliev and Lutpulla Mutellip to young Uyghurs across Xinjiang.

All of this began to alter longstanding geographies of cultural power in Xinjiang. While relatively few books were printed in southern Xinjiang in the Republican and Maoist eras, Altishahr was nonetheless by the 1950s awash in Uyghur-language print matter. These books and periodicals were printed in mass quantity in an emerging center of Uyghur cultural power, Ürümchi, a city with no Turko-Persian manuscript tradition to speak of and only a limited historical Turkic Muslim presence. The Uyghur mass culture then being defined in Xinjiang's capital was overwhelmingly the product of writers and intellectuals from Ili and its environs, a region of Xinjiang that had only a few decades before been regarded by Altishahris as a cultural backwater. Ili intellectuals had managed to get in on the ground floor of socialist print culture in Xinjiang; and by mobilizing the newfound power of mass printing, they were rapidly reshaping the meaning and distribution of cultural power in their emerging nation.

[196] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 177-87.

4. UYGHUR ELITES UNDER HIGH SOCIALISM: XINJIANG, 1957-1976

As Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ili writers and officials in Xinjiang increasingly came under suspicion for Soviet associations and sympathies—not to mention the work many of them had done in the breakaway, Soviet-aligned Eastern Turkestan Republic. With CCP policy at the center radicalizing in fits and starts, a series of campaigns in the late 1950s was used by party leaders as an opportunity to remove much of the Ili old guard from positions of responsibility. By the time these campaigns began, the CCP had trained a new cohort of Uyghur cadres from scratch, and could afford to begin displacing pre-revolutionary elites whose personal prestige and independent power bases seemed to present a dangerous degree of autonomy. This chapter provides the first detailed account in English of the Maoist rectification campaigns of 1956-59—the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, and the Campaign Against Local Nationalism—as experienced by Uyghur intellectuals, and of the campaigns' impact on Uyghur official culture.[1]

The Sino-Soviet split, which set in by the beginning of the 1960s, worsened still further the position of the Ili network in Maoist Xinjiang, where connections to the USSR were now viewed as incriminating. The Great Leap Forward and the resulting famine, along with the hardening of CCP nationality policy in Xinjiang, precipitated the exodus to the USSR of tens of thousands of minority citizens from northern Xinjiang, including several of the Ili network's most prominent writers and intellectuals. By the mid-1960s, the Ili network's hold on Xinjiang's

[1] In this chapter's title and chronological framing, I have adopted the concept of "high socialism" as outlined in *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism*, ed. Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 6-7. My periodization differs slightly from Brown and Johnson's in that in keeping with the subject of this study, I have emphasized the radicalization of the cultural sphere. I have therefore used the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Anti-Rightist Campaign as a starting point, rather than the collectization of agriculture and nationalization of industry. James Millward likewise speaks of "twenty years of cultural revolution" in Xinjiang. James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 244-76.

cultural bureaucracy and civil service had been broken. Yet Ili's imprint on the form of the modern Uyghur nation proved indelible, having been deeply etched by the late 1950s into the new nation's identity, culture, and language. The persistence of Ili's cultural shadow demonstrates the unique opportunities presented by the emergence of print culture in a given language. A group which commands the printing presses in the fledgling years of print culture has an opportunity to give lasting form to a culture and a community—a form not easily altered even if the power of the group later diminishes.

As disruptive as the developments of the late 1950s and early 1960s were for the Ili network, there were still greater upheavals to come. The second section of this chapter recounts the shattering experience of the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang, with a focus on that radical decade's impact on state-aligned Uyghur intellectuals and the official culture they had created. The predominantly Han party officials who comprised the top echelon of Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy were among the Cultural Revolution's first targets in the province, and their fall from political grace deprived the Ili cohort of writers and intellectuals of their principal support and protection. Nearly all remaining prominent members of the Ili cohort, having played leading roles in constructing a cultural apparatus now deemed irrevocably tainted, were denounced along with their Han patrons. Stripped of rank and position, many were subjected to repeated struggle sessions and lengthy incarceration, with some losing their lives during the chaos that reigned from 1966 to 1976. Tapping contemporary primary sources, subsequent memoir literature, and an expanding secondary literature on the Cultural Revolution's political contours in Xinjiang, this chapter provides the first substantial exploration of Uyghur official culture during Maoism's most radical years.

Beginning in summer 1966, as the Cultural Revolution took hold in Xinjiang, nearly all of the region's literary heritage was burned as public squares were given over to bonfires and struggle sessions. The Ili-dominated literary and cultural canon was banned and burned almost in its entirety, along with those parts of the the region's premodern literary heritage that had made it through the early Maoist years intact. In place of these now anathematized cultural canons, Cultural Revolution authorities promulgated a series of real and imagined Uyghur and Kazakh heroes on the model of the Han martyr Lei Feng. Children and adults were encouraged to learn from and imitate these unlikely figures, whose stories were exhaustively reprinted in newspapers and journals. The creation and promulgation of this alternative Uyghur canon is the subject of the chapter's final section. This chapter's account of the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang, together with the dissertation's final chapter on the subsequent reform era, outline the vast destruction wreaked by Maoism's chaotic climax as well as its paradoxical long-term implications for Uyghur culture.

TWILIGHT OF THE ILI ELITES

In May 1958, the prominent writer and translator Abdukérim Khojaev published an odd little poem in the pages of Xinjiang's leading literary journal.[2]

> Late on a May night this past year
> as black clouds raced across the sky
> in a graveyard overgrown with weeds
> a band of cow ghosts and snake spirits arrived
>
> […]
>
> From the White House and from Istanbul

[2] Kelimu Hejieyefu 克里木•赫捷耶夫, "Meng 夢," *Tianshan* 6 (1958): 20. The same issue includes Khojaev's translation of a poem on similar themes by Kazakh writer Aisitiewu. 艾斯鉄吾, "Women shi Zhongguoren 我們是中國人," *Tianshan* 6 (1958): 19-20.

arrived their orders, signed and sealed
They built a “free kingdom," became "national heroes,"
reversed the direction of history’s wheel

[…]

"Long live the king, who is ever so wise!"
eulogized a white-haired “bard”
"We shall obey you, great glorious king!"
Beside him bowed and scraped Sattar

[…]

Then the east wind carried the battle horn’s call
and the people rose up in a furious wave
The devils’ beautiful dream was smashed
Revolution’s storm blew them into their grave

The “king” was Ziya Semedi, chair of the Xinjiang Writers’ Association. His white-haired court poet was Ibrahim Turdi, the Association’s vice chair and head of the Civil Affairs Bureau. “Sattar” was Abduréhim Eysa (1909-58), vice chair of the Ili region’s civil government. The revolutionary storm was the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957-58 and the subsequent Campaign Against Local Nationalism, and in some cases it blew its victims into their literal grave: amidst a torrent of public denunciation and abuse, Abduréhim Eysa slit his throat at the height of the campaign.[3]

In 1956, a confident Mao Zedong had called for China’s people to voice their opinions on the system he and his colleagues had constructed. “Let a hundred flowers bloom, and a hundred schools of thought contend!” he rhapsodized, urging everyday citizens and especially intellectuals to criticize the Chinese Communist Party and the state it ran.[4] Mao hoped thereby to

[3] "Memorandum of a Discussion held by USSR Consul-General in Ürümchi, G. S. Dobashin, with First Secretary of the Party Committee of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Comrade Wang Enmao, and Chair of the People’s Committee, Comrade S. Äzizov," January 17, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, fond 5, opis 49, delo 130, listy 54-56, tr. David Brophy, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175894 (accessed 9 Feb. 2019).
[4] An excellent summary is Merle Goldman, “The Party and the Intellectuals,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 14, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 218-58.

root out corruption and complacency in the bureaucracy, and to encourage China's intellectuals to take an active part in the nation's development. With successive party campaigns against outspoken intellectuals fresh in their memories, many of China's writers and thinkers were at first hesitant to offer public criticism; and when the first critics did speak, some elements in the party attempted to push back against the dissent. Mao forcefully reiterated his support, however, and when the first brave critics seemed not to pay a price for their statements, others found the resolve to speak out. In the months that followed, the critics grew more numerous and more daring, and the party apparatus began to organize formal sessions to elicit criticism. The Hundred Flowers Movement bloomed in spring 1957 as China's newspapers and journals opened their pages to public criticism of the party-state, its policies, and its officials.

In meetings and in the press, dissenting intellectuals criticized bureaucratism and the stifling atmosphere of conformity, with some even calling for an independent judiciary and a multiparty political system. As in the May Fourth movement decades earlier, institutions of higher learning became hotbeds of dissent, as instructors and students demanded freedom of speech and political reforms. At first, the movement unfolded in Xinjiang much as elsewhere in China, with predominantly Han officials and intellectuals offering criticisms of state incompetence and overly politicized workplaces. Soon, however, minority intellectuals began to participate actively in the campaign. At a major meeting in Ürümchi, Ziya Semedi, head of Xinjiang's Culture Bureau and Writers' Union, enthused that "the policy of 'let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend' is bound to make our country's literature and arts prosper as never before." He added that "so far in our autonomous region,

there hasn't been enough blooming, and the contending has lacked vigor. From now on, we must boldly bloom, we must boldly contend!"[5] Semedi would soon have reason to regret these words.

The Hundred Flowers Movement in Xinjiang kicked off at the highest levels of government. At a Xinjiang Party Committee meeting chaired by Secretary Wang Enmao and Chairman Seypidin Ezizi, high-ranking officials aired grievances about policy and implementation.[6] Memetjan Mekhsum, deputy head of the Xinjiang branch of the People's Political Consultative Conference, complained that top minority officials were mere figureheads, and called for the "minoritization" (*minzuhua* 民族化, literally "ethnicization") of the regional government—i.e., filling a majority of positions with minority cadres. Hüseyn Molatov, head of the Xinjiang Grain Bureau, effusively praised the party's leadership before noting that he had concerns about the low proportion of non-Han cadres at his bureau. He had long refrained from voicing those concerns, however, "for fear of wearing the hat of local nationalism." Related critiques were put forward at other high-level criticism meetings. Mamut Kérimhaji, deputy head of the Xinjiang Highway Bureau, complained that Han cadres and technicians in his bureau took a condescending attitude toward their Uyghur colleagues.[7] "In the native land of a nation," asked Abitjan, deputy head of the Mail and Telecom Bureau's telegraph section, "why are members of that nation required to speak Chinese in order to work?" Han and minority colleagues should each learn each other's languages, "but in this respect I think minority cadres are progressing more quickly than Han cadres."[8]

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[5] Xiao Bing 肖冰, "Zizhiqu wenxue yishu jie juxing shengda wanhui 自治區文學藝術界舉行盛大晚會," *Xinjiang ribao*, 23 May 1957: 1.
[6] "Minzhu renshi jiji dui dang tichu piping 民主人士積極對黨提出批評," *Xinjiang ribao*, 1 June 1957: 1.
[7] "Dui dangwei lingdao kexue jishu fangmian tichu piping he yijian 對黨委領導科學技術方面提出批評和意見," *Xinjiang ribao*, 5 June 1957: 3.
[8] "Kexue jishu jie renshi zuotanhui jixu juxing 科學技術界人士座談會繼續舉行," *Xinjiang ribao*, 6 June 1957: 3. Eysa Yüsüf, an editor at Xinjiang Broadcasting, likewise complained that while the autonomous region had clear regulations stipulating the dual use of Uyghur and Chinese as official languages, many materials in government

At "contention" sessions in workplaces and educational institutions across the province, some criticisms—notably those lodged by members of the region's Muslim communities—cut still deeper at the legitimacy of the party-state in Xinjiang. When students at Xinjiang Medical Institute in Ürümchi were divided into criticism groups and encouraged to speak their minds about the party and the government, discussion began with quotidian complaints about life under the CCP.[9] But as the sessions continued, emboldened students began to call for Han migrants to return to their home provinces and for Xinjiang to become a republic, with its own laws, flag, and national anthem. Those reluctant to offer criticism were subjected to criticism themselves, and caricatured in posters displayed across campus with locks fastened over their mouths. Elsewhere in Ürümchi, the head office of the Uyghur-language *Xinjiang Gazette* held its own criticism meetings, where reporters complained about the government's Sinicization policies and its distortions of Xinjiang history.[10] Nizamidin Hüseyin, a particularly outspoken journalist, reportedly complained that the Uyghur *Xinjiang Gazette* had become a mere "translation" of the Chinese edition. Mixing religious metaphors, he quipped that "The Chinese paper is the imam of the Uyghur paper," and that the Uyghur paper "worships the Chinese paper like an idol."[11]

Criticisms and proposals like these, previously expressed only around the dinner table and in whispered workplace conversations, were now aired publicly across Xinjiang in meetings and in the press (though the most radical proposals, such as independence for Xinjiang, rarely made it into print). The criticism movement was most intense in state work units and educational institutions, with their high concentrations of politically engaged intellectuals, but criticism

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offices were available only in Chinese, creating significant problems for Uyghur cadres. "Wenxue yishu jie dangwai renshi zuotanhui jixu juxing 文學藝術界黨外人士座談會繼續舉行," 15 June 1957: 3.

[9] Söyün'gül Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin* (Istanbul: Teklimakan Uyghur neshriyati, 2013), 37-38.

[10] Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (16)," *Yoruq sahillar* 8 Jan. 2019. https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/yoruq-sahillar/qaraqurum-burkiti-01082019152943.html (accessed 10 Feb. 2019).

[11] Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (20)," *Yoruq sahillar* 5 Feb. 2019. https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/yoruq-sahillar/qaraqurum-burkiti-02052019164019.html (accessed 10 Feb. 2019).

sessions were organized by county governments as well. At a typical meeting in Khotan, the county party committee invited farmers, urbanites, clerics, intellectuals, and party-state cadres to air their discontent.[12] Not since Zhang Zhizhong's liberal summer of a decade before had Xinjiang's people enjoyed such latitude to publicly express their own opinions, and particularly their dissatisfaction with the political situation in the region. As in 1946, pent-up discontent with the government spilled into the pages of the newspapers and journals, with much of it focusing on minority citizens' profound frustration with Communist Party rule as well as the haughty and sometimes abusive behavior of Han officials, cadres, and soldiers in the province. Once more, a set of Chinese rulers had promised Xinjiang's native peoples autonomy and prosperity; once more, the fine words were followed by a Han-dominated state that treated minority citizens as an afterthought at best.

In Xinjiang as across the country, the party leadership had been unprepared for this outpouring of dissent aimed at the very foundations of Communist rule. Mao had set the Hundred Flowers Movement in motion with the serene conviction that China's intellectuals were ready to join with the party in moving the country forward; the depth and intensity of the criticism convinced Mao and his associates that the country's intellectuals aimed instead to challenge the party's monopoly on power. The establishment struck back hard. Some intellectuals, it was announced, had cynically misinterpreted Mao's repeated calls to criticize the party as license to criticize the party. Mere months after the Hundred Flowers Movement had urged China's intellectuals to speak out, the party unleashed an Anti-Rightist Campaign to punish those who had done so. Whether intentional or not, the Hundred Flowers Campaign had served as a trap for China's most independent-minded and outspoken intellectuals.

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[12] Yu Jun 郁君, "中共和闐縣委放手發揚民主聽取群眾意見：為開展整風和正確處理人民內部矛盾作準備," *Xinjiang ribao*, 22 May 1957: 1.

In addition to targeting those who had been vocal during the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Anti-Rightist Campaign also provided a pretext for the party leadership at all levels to neutralize intellectuals they viewed as rivals or as potentially hostile to the regime. The party decreed that five percent of the individuals in each work unit must be classified as rightists; filling this quota inevitably involved a great deal of score settling and dueling accusations, and further damaged social trust and workplace relations throughout the country. Those fingered as rightists were subjected to denunciation by colleagues and humiliation at public struggle sessions, and were eventually packed off for reform through labor in the factories and villages. Hundreds of thousands of accused rightists were swept up in the campaign.[13]

The Anti-Rightist Campaign in Xinjiang initially proceeded along similar lines to its counterparts elsewhere in China, but soon began to take on a more local character.[14] The party-state had been deeply unsettled by the depth of native discontent with CCP rule revealed in Xinjiang during the Hundred Flowers Movement, and in December 1957, at the urging of the national CCP leadership, a regional party plenum on local nationalism was organized in Ürümchi, followed by local plenums in Ghulja and Kashgar. By the time the Ürümchi plenum finally concluded in May 1958, the Campaign Against Local Nationalism was in full swing throughout Xinjiang, absorbing the Anti-Rightist Campaign and turning the full force of the party-state against purportedly recalcitrant minority cadres and intellectuals. As during the Anti-Rightist Campaign, those who had spoken out during the Hundred Flowers Movement were early targets, but the campaign once more broadened quickly into an assault on individuals and groups the authorities saw as a threat.

[13] Goldman, "The Party and the Intellectuals," 253-58.
[14] Sheng Mao, "Frontier Politics," 106-08. Mao notes that the Anti-Rightist Campaign in Xinjiang designated over 3,000 individuals as rightists by the end of 1957.

The Campaign Against Local Nationalism saw hundreds of Uyghur officials and intellectuals purged from their government positions, publicly denounced, and humiliated at mass struggle sessions in their former workplaces.[15] The sessions could drag on for days, weeks, or months, with physical abuse not uncommon; some targeted individuals, like Abduréhim Eysa, chose suicide over continued persecution and likely imprisonment. Even death offered no end to the excoriation, however: when a medical student in Ürümchi took his own life following four days of humiliation and abuse at anti-rightist struggle sessions, a two-hour schoolwide meeting was immediately called in order to heap opprobrium on the deceased, and the medical institute was plastered with posters denouncing him as a class enemy and a rightist traitor.[16] Abduréhim Eysa remained a prime target of anti-rightist broadsides—with Abdukérim Khojaev's poem a typical example—long after his suicide. (Immediately after Abduréhim Eysa's death, his former colleagues denounced his suicide as "an anti-party act.")[17] Even for those who survived the campaign, the struggle sessions were often only the beginning; many accused rightists were sent for years-long detention in reeducation camps, where conditions were often poor.[18] Intellectuals and high-ranking officials were only the best known victims; civil servants at all levels were targeted, as were military officers with suspect backgrounds.

The CCP's decision to target Xinjiang's native intellectuals was due not only to increased suspicion of intellectuals and of individuals with Soviet ties, but also to the party's growing ability to rely on other minority cadres in the province. The CCP had expended considerable effort since the early 1950s to train a fresh cohort of native cadres in Xinjiang: young people

[15] Mao, "Frontier Politics," 107-10. More than 1,600 individuals were designated as local nationalists by the regional campaign, with still others implicated in campaigns at the local level. Following the formal end of the Campaign Against Local Nationalism in spring 1959, a flurry of smaller campaigns over the following year targeted a rogue's gallery of perceived CCP enemies: rightists and counterrevolutionaries in Tacheng, local nationalists and members of non-Communist parties in Ili.
[16] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 39.
[17] Dobashin, "Memorandum of a Discussion."
[18] Zunun Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1977), 134-35.

who had known no service to any other state, had undergone rigorous ideological training, and owed their careers to the party. The land reform campaign in particular had provided an important opportunity for the induction, training, and appraisal of local cadres.[19] By fall 1952, the CCP's Xinjiang Cadre School had trained several thousand minority cadres, most of whom promptly entered the fray of land reform and rent reduction campaigns. A significant proportion of graduates joined either the Communist Party or the Youth League.[20]

Once the CCP had found its footing in Xinjiang and trained this first cohort of cadres, it began to scale back its alliance of convenience with local elites it regarded as reactionary or potentially unreliable. Minority cadres of suspect background—Guomindang and ETR veterans, members of the clergy, individuals of "bourgeois" origin—were gradually squeezed out of the ranks or subjected to rigorous ideological training and assessment, while party leadership mandated that in the induction of new minority cadres, political considerations were to take precedence over ability.[21] Still, the Ili group, given its tremendous grassroots popularity and utility to the party-state bureaucracy, remained mostly untouchable through the mid-fifties. The Ili network also played an important role in maintaining and strengthening the Sino-Soviet nexus in Xinjiang. As late as May 1957, when a delegation of Soviet Central Asian writers (including the Uyghur writers Qadir Hesenov and Khizmet Abdullin) arrived in Ürümchi, the cream of the

[19] A. G. Iakovlev, "Agrarnye otnosheniia i agrarnaia reforma v provintsii Sin'tszian (1949-1953 gg.)," in *Uchenye zapiski instituta vostokovedeniia, 11: Kitaiskii sbornik*, ed. Akademiia nauk SSSR: Institut vostokovedeniia (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1955), 251.
[20] Wen Yuan 聞淵, "Zhonggong zhongyang Xinjiang fenju ganbu xuexiao di san qi jieye 中共中央新疆分局幹部學校第三期結業," *Xinjiang ribao*, 6 Oct. 1952: 1.
[21] Donald H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 88-89. Seypidin Ezizi reaffirmed this prioritization in a December 1957 speech attacking local nationalism. Ibid., 93-94.

CCP's ETR alumni were there to greet them at the airport: Ziya Semedi, Ibrahim Turdi, Zunun Qadiri, Nimshéhit Armiye Damolla, and Téyipjan Éliev.[22]

All this began to change following the Hundred Flowers Movement, as China's political atmosphere radicalized and Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated. By the end of the decade, the CCP had become deeply hostile to the very Ili elites that had helped establish Chinese Communist rule in the province. During the Campaign Against Local Nationalism, the factors that had previously made ETR alumni useful to the CCP—their unmatched prestige among the Uyghur population, their Soviet experience, and their dense network of personal connections—were now identified as threatening to Chinese Communist rule in Xinjiang. The trio of Uyghur officials who served as the prime propaganda targets for the Campaign Against Local Nationalism were all core members of the Ili network: Ziya Semedi, Ibrahim Turdi, and Abduréhim Eysa were prominent ETR veterans who had flourished in the early Maoist bureaucracy. Of all those punished for local nationalism during the campaign, a highly disproportionate amount hailed from Ili.[23] Between late 1957 and 1959, the alliance between the Ili network and the CCP gave way to a bloodbath.

The Campaign Against Local Nationalism in Xinjiang reserved its harshest fury for writers. This was in part a reflection of the broader Anti-Rightist Campaign, which throughout China focused on prominent writers as loci of anti-party sentiment. In part, though, it was due also to the preeminent position of writers and poets in the Uyghur community. As detailed in previous chapters, poets in particular have for centuries enjoyed unmatched prestige in Eastern Turkestani Muslim society; and throughout the twentieth century, writers played a central role in Uyghur communal life. While the majority of prominent Uyghur officials came in for criticism

[22] Xiao Bing 肖冰, "Sulian zuojia daibiaotuan daoda Wulumuqi 蘇聯作家代表團到達烏魯木齊," *Xinjiang ribao*, 22 May 1957: 1.
[23] Sheng Mao, "Frontier Politics and Sino-Soviet Relations: A Study of Northwestern Xinjiang, 1949-1963" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2017), 107-08.

during Xinjiang's Campaign Against Local Nationalism, it is little surprise that the apex targets of the campaign were Ziya Semedi, a novelist and screenwriter, and Ibrahim Turdi, a poet. Both of them had "exploited this [Uyghur] nationality's fine tradition of revering poets and writers" in order to promote their local nationalist ideology.[24]

The campaign's charges against Ziya Semidi and Ibrahim Turdi correspondingly centered around literary issues. Spurning cooperation with Han writers and artists, they had attempted to keep Uyghur literature aloof from the influence of other nations' literature, and had promoted classical Uyghur writers without regard to ideology.[25] They had "turned the arts and literature organs they ran into independent kingdoms," and like other writers who spoke out across China during the Hundred Flowers Movement, had complained that strict party control of literature was stifling creativity. In short, these "old bourgeois capitalists and rightists" had conspired against the party and the central government. Semedi was expelled from the party and dismissed from his posts; following lengthy denunciation in the press and humiliation at struggle sessions, he was imprisoned in labor camps in Ghulja for the next several years.[26] Ibrahim Turdi was likewise denounced in innumerable meetings and mocked in the press as a fake poet. He was removed from his position as head of the Xinjiang Civil Affairs Department and expelled from the party, and at least one source asserts that he served time in a reform through labor camp following his denunciation.[27]

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[24] "Shelun: huaqing jiexian, touru zhandou 社论：划清界限，投入战斗," *Tianshan* 6 (1958): 1-3.
[25] "Shelun"; Fataerjiang 法他爾江, "Chi youpaifenzi he difangminzuzhuyifenzi Ziya Saimaiti de fandong sixiang 斥右派份子和地方民族主義份子孜牙•賽買提的反動思想," *Tianshan* 6 (1958): 15-19.
[26] TsGARK 2115/1/97, l.4-5. A selection of materials denouncing Semedi is preserved in TsGARK 2115/1/63-64.
[27] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi • minzheng zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志•民政志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di ershisi juan: minzheng zhi* 新疆通志第二十四卷：民政志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), 281. Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and *Xinjiang tongzhi: zhengwu zhi: zhengfu* bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志 • 政务志 • 政府》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di shiwu juan: zhengwu zhi: zhengfu* 新疆通志第十五卷 • 政务志 • 政府 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin

All of this was threatening not only to the Uyghur intellectuals of the Ili network, but to their Han patrons as well. As the ceaseless campaigns crept ever closer to Liu Xiaowu's circle of Uyghur writers and poets, Liu worked to establish his own Maoist bona fides with fierce polemics against those who had already fallen from grace, including his own erstwhile colleagues. In a mid-1958 editorial, he crowed that the "unmasking of the clique of anti-party rightists" was a tremendous triumph of the recent party plenum.[28] Liu had to tread carefully; the supposed ringleaders of this anti-party conspiracy, Ziya Semedi and Ibrahim Turdi, had close ties to his writer protégés, and were not far removed from Liu himself. Semedi was chair of the Xinjiang Federation of Literary and Art Circles, while Liu served as secretary; Ibrahim Turdi, as vice chair of the Writers' Union, was Liu and Semedi's direct subordinate. Their colleagues in the Writers' Union leadership included Liu's close associates Wang Yuhu and Téyipjan Éliev.[29] It was understandable, though, if Liu had missed the signs; he noted that the two rightists had worn "the garments of socialism" as they carried out a secret struggle against the party, "using literature and arts as their weapon."

Semedi's fearsome crimes included changing the name of the organization he led from "Chinese Writers' Union: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Local Union" to the slightly shorter "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Writers' Union." "Why," Liu inquired darkly, "does Ziya so dislike the word 'China'?" Answering his own question, Liu wondered if perhaps Semedi intended this as a step toward establishing an independent Uyghuristan—the ultimate local nationalist sin. What was more, Semedi had taken the party's affirmative action and united

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chubanshe, 2006), 1127; Zunun Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1977), 134-35. Unlike Semedi, Ibrahim Turdi was eventually permitted to maintain some role in public life, as vice head of the department he had previously led.

[28] Liu Xiaowu 刘蕭無, "Zai wenxue yishu gongzuo zhong women yu difangminzuzhuyizhe de sixiang fenqi 在文學藝術工作中我們與地方民族主義者的思想分歧," *Tianshan* 6 (1958): 7-12.

[29] On the leadership of the Writers' Union, see Xiao Bing 肖冰, "Zhongguo zuojia xiehui zizhiqu fenhui chengli 中國作家協會自治區分會成立," *Xinjiang ribao*, 2 June 1957: 1.

front policies too literally, and as leader of key cultural organs had prioritized hiring minority cadres—even landlords and counterrevolutionaries. To make matters worse, while working on his screenplay *Banks of the Ili River* (*Ili deryasi boyida*), Semedi had rebuffed offers of help by Han writers, viewing such Hansplaining as beneath his dignity.[30]

Liu contrasted the local nationalists Ziya and Ibrahim with his favorite model minority writer, Lutpulla Mutellip, quoting approvingly the late poet's verses on the war of resistance against Japan. The ethnic balance of power in Xinjiang had shifted profoundly over the preceding decade, as the CCP had established a firmer grip on Xinjiang than any Chinese administration since the late Qing. From the mid-1930s, successive Han rulers of Xinjiang—from Sheng Shicai to Zhang Zhizhong to the early Maoist leadership—had played "good Han, bad Han," to use Uradyn Bulag's phrase, contrasting their own enlightened nationality policies favorably to the imperialists and chauvinists of yesteryear.[31] Now, as Liu sought to preserve some of the Uyghur official culture and bureaucratic networks that he had helped create, he found himself playing "good Uyghur, bad Uyghur." Liu noted in his article that due to rightist ringleaders like Ziya Semedi and Ibrahim Turdi, some young intellectuals (i.e., young minority intellectuals) had begun to display incorrect tendencies; but they could surely be reformed, once freed from the baleful influence of old rightists like Semedi. Presenting the local nationalist heresies of young Uyghur writers as the innocent deviations of misled youth, Liu managed to shield some of his protégés from the worst of the Anti-Rightist campaigns and the subsequent "corrections" of the next several years.

[30] Semedi's manuscript of this screenplay is held at TsGARK 2115/1/21.
[31] Uradyn E. Bulag, "Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China," in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. Thomas Mullaney, et al., 92-109 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Liu's protection, however, could not fully hold back the tide. Téyipjan Éliev was harshly criticized during the Campaign Against Local Nationalism and consigned to forced labor in a village near Turpan. When the writer Wang Gulin met him after his release a few years later, the previously voluble Éliev—still only in his early thirties—was visibly chastened and hesitant to make conversation.[32] Only in 1962 was he reinstated by the Xinjiang Writers' Union and once more permitted to publish his work. With his background in the ETR and his links to numerous blacklisted Ili intellectuals, Éliev knew that he labored under a cloud of suspicion, and once his publishing privileges were restored he rushed into print with a profusion of hyper-patriotic poems extolling the Chinese nation and its beloved party. The next year he left to study theory at the Central Party School in Beijing, where he enjoyed a degree of respite from the unending campaigns. The luckless Éliev returned to Xinjiang in 1964, just in time for another anti-rightist correction campaign. He spent the next year making self-criticisms, and in late 1965 was sent under close observation for socialist training work on a collective farm in southern Xinjiang.[33] Before he could once more purify himself through labor, the Cultural Revolution arrived in Xinjiang, and his sorrows, as we will see below, deepened still further.[34]

While many intellectuals in vulnerable positions suffered like Éliev, others successfully crossed to the opposing side of the battle lines. While the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Campaign Against Local Nationalism had been initiated by political cadres, some of the fiercest denunciations were leveled by writers and intellectuals. Some likely felt compelled to display

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[32] Wang Gulin 王谷林, "Yuan nin zai zuguo de turang li kaichu canlan de xianhua 愿您在祖国的土壤里开出灿烂的鲜花," *Shi kan* 4 (1989): 30; Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar ösmürler neshriyati, 2012), 3.

[33] One of Éliev's friends from his collective farm period, Tokhti Sabir, later published a memoir of their experiences together. Tuohuti Shabier 托乎提・沙比尔, "Nan wang de suiyue — huiyi zhuming shiren Tieyifujiang Ailiyefu 难忘的岁月——回忆著名诗人铁依甫江・艾力耶夫," tr. Tielaike 铁来克, *Xibu* 8 (2010): 144-63.

[34] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *Iz we ülge* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2002), 32-40; *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 501-06.

prosecutory zeal in order to avoid becoming targets themselves, while others may have hoped to advance their own careers with lusty demonstrations of Maoist fervor. Some, like Abdukérim Khojaev with his denunciatory doggerel, were merely piling on to the campaigns' most visible targets. Others aimed more intimate daggers at erstwhile colleagues and friends, often in office struggle sessions. For some prominent members of the Ili network, surviving the Campaign Against Local Nationalism meant joining the prosecution. With a cloud of suspicion hanging over any individual with an ETR background or Soviet associations, Ili intellectuals had to work harder than most to establish their party loyalty.

Abdulla Zakirov, chief of the Xinjiang Education Department and a former high-ranking ETR official, was criticized for local nationalist tendencies at the 1958 party plenum, but "admitted the error of [his] ways to an extent."[35] No doubt feeling he had something to prove, Zakirov thereafter participated vigorously in the Campaign Against Local Nationalism, notably presiding over an April 1959 mass meeting held at the Ürümchi office of the *Xinjiang Gazette* in which prominent "local nationalists" like poet Abduréhim Ötkür and *Gazette* reporter Nizamidin Hüseyin were officially sentenced.[36] Seypidin Ezizi, despite his prominent ETR background and reputation for heterodox views on the national question, escaped criticism at the party plenum and afterward.[37] A central reason for this was his continued utility to the party; the CCP was well aware that Ezizi, the most senior surviving member of the ETR leadership and now for several years the top-ranking Uyghur official in Maoist Xinjiang, remained the most effective spokesman for CCP policies among the province's Uyghur population.[38] And indeed, Ezizi

[35] "M. Zimianin to the Central Committee of the CPSU and to Comrade Iu. V. Andropov, 'On Manifestations of Local Nationalism in Xinjiang (PRC)'," 03 March 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, fond 5, opis 49, delo 130, listy 44-47, tr. David Brophy, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175900 (accessed 10 Feb. 2019).
[36] Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (16)."
[37] "M. Zimianin to the Department of the Central Committee," 18 Aug. 1958.
[38] Ezizi's key role in establishing CCP credibility with Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking communities was dramatically

distinguished himself with the vigor, thoroughness, and sheer volume of his attacks on local nationalism once the campaign began, with a number of Ili compatriots among his targets. Despite the internecine bloodletting, however, some ties within the Ili network persisted through the ceaseless campaigns of the late 1950s. Ezizi, for instance, attempted to protect his former ETR colleague Muhemmet'imin Iminov from denunciation, though he was ultimately unable to do so.[39]

Although the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Campaiagn Against Local Nationalism targeted the Ili network with particular intensity, some prominent Ili intellectuals seem to have remained largely aloof from the maelstrom, becoming neither victim nor leading perpetrator. Elqem Ekhtem enjoyed continued career success during the campaigns of the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s; indeed, the political misfortune of some of his superiors turned out to be his gain. In 1959, after Ziya Semedi's downfall, Elqem Ekhtem replaced him as chair of the Xinjiang Writers' Union, and in 1963 was appointed deputy chief of the Xinjiang Education Ministry.[40] Despite Elqem Ekhtem's energetic anti-Chinese propaganda work as a young ETR journalist in the late 1940s, by the end of the following decade he had gained the CCP's confidence. The party's trust was not misplaced. In 1962, while Elqem Ekhtem was convalescing from an illness, an emissary from an underground organization of Muslim students visited his

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underlined a few years later, when Ezizi was residing in Beijing. As mass emigration and unrest roiled northern Xinjiang in 1962-63, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai hurriedly dispatched Ezizi back to Xinjiang in order to dispel rumors that "Äzizi… has capitulated and only Wang Enmao is in charge." Following Ezizi's return to Xinjiang, a succession of major policy announcements was issued under his name. Charles Kraus, "Laying Blame for Flight and Fight: Sino-Soviet Relations and the 'Yi-Ta' Incident in Xinjiang, 1962," *The China Quarterly* (First View, Jan. 2019): 8-9.

[39] "M. Zimianin to the Department of the Central Committee," 18 Aug. 1958. In spring 1958 Iminov was denounced, stripped of his posts, and sent for retraining at the party school in Beijing. Liu Xianghui 刘向晖, ed., *Fubei huazhuan: xian gei jiefang jianshe Xinjiang de na dai ren* 父辈畫傳 ： 献给解放建设新疆的那代人 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe and Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2010), 76.

[40] Ailikanmu Aihetanmu 艾里坎木・艾合坦木 [Elqem Extem], "Ailikanmu Aihetanmu (Zizhuan) 艾里坎木・艾合坦木（自传）," in Wu Chongyang 吴重阳 and Tao Lifan 陶立璠 (eds.), *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiandai zuojia zhuanlüe* 中国少数民族现代作家传略 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 47.

hospital room to sound out his sympathy to the cause of resistance to Chinese rule.[41] Before the young student could finish, Elqem Ekhtem began shouting that the people of Xinjiang could not live without the Han, that Xinjiang without China would be gobbled up by American imperialists, and that if the students persisted in their revolutionary antics he would report them to their school authorities.

If Ili intellectuals and officials were heavily represented among targets of the Campaign Against Local Nationalism, it was in large part because the Ili network had so monopolized top posts in the Maoist cultural bureaucracy in Xinjiang. High-ranking Uyghur intellectuals from other geographical and ideological backgrounds were hit hard as well—primarily those whose careers in politics or official culture had begun before CCP rule in Xinjiang. Many intellectuals with genuinely right-wing backgrounds—former Guomindang allies, and in some cases pan-Turkist activists—enjoyed plum jobs in the civil and cultural bureaucracies in the early years of Maoist Xinjiang. While the campaigns of the early 1950s targeted landlords and other "feudal" remnants, intellectuals, and particularly minority intellectuals, remained useful to the state. The Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Campaign Against Local Nationalism largely put an end to the civil service careers of those Uyghur intellectuals with Guomindang, pan-Turkist, or clerical backgrounds, at least for the following two decades. (Ironically, the pan-Turkists had been anything but local nationalists; but such fine distinctions counted for little.)

A prominent example was Ibrahim Muti'i, former pan-Turkist Guomindang ally and a noted philologist. His career had continued to flourish after the Communist takeover with prestigious appointments in Beijing, including as deputy editor of Nationalities Publishers' Uyghur section (*Minzu chubanshe Weiwu'erwen bianjishi* 民族出版社維吾爾文編輯室).

[41] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 88-90.

During the Hundred Flowers Movement, Muti'i had complained publicly that Nationalities Publishers' top management treated minority employees arrogantly and neglectfully, and that the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (*Minzu shiwu weiyuanhui* 民族事務委員會) seemed little interested in minority-language publishing.[42] Given Muti'is bourgeois background, these complaints were more than enough to seal his fate once the Anti-Rightist Campaign kicked into gear. Despite powerful patrons, including Premier Zhou Enlai, Muti'i was imprisoned.[43] Abduréhim Ötkür, in the late 1940s a prominent poet and Guomindang supporter, had survived the early Mao years by keeping his head down, but was likewise denounced during the Campaign Against Local Nationalism.[44]

Targeting minority intellectuals of both the left and the right, the Campaign Against Local Nationalism was not—despite the protestations of the campaigners—a campaign against bourgeois or right-wing elements. Rather, the movement targeted perceived expressions of strong national or religious identity among Xinjiang's minorities, without regard for the left- or right-wing contour of that identity. In some ways, the Maoist state's increasing pressure on minority institutions in Xinjiang during this period echoed the Soviet experience of a generation before. The USSR in the 1920s, like the Maoist state in the 1950s, established its authority in Central Asia's Muslim communities via cooperation with the Islamic clergy and what it deemed progressive elements among local elites. As in Xinjiang, madrasahs came under some pressure and land holdings of Islamic institutions were gradually nationalized; but by and large, the practice of Islam was not curtailed, even as the clergy were forced into a position of increased

[42] Xinhua she 新華社, "各族幹部和教授繼續座談批評民委不重視民族文化工作 Minzu ganbu he jiaoshou jixu zuotan piping Minwei bu zhongshi minzu wenhua gongzuo," *Xinjiang ribao*, 21 May 1957: 1.
[43] William Clark, "Ibrahim's Story," *Asian Ethnicity* 12.2 (2011): 203-19. Muti'i later stated that his treatment following the Anti-Rightist Campaign was quite lenient compared to the subsequent nightmare of the Cultural Revolution.
[44] Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (16)."

reliance on the state. In the late 1920s, however, the Soviet state resolved to close the entire *maktab* schooling system, and its policy toward Islam shifted from cooperation with "progressive" clergy to all-out assault on Muslim institutions. Mosques and shrines were shut down and in some cases destroyed, while an unveiling campaign targeted Muslim women amidst substantial violence.[45] In Xinjiang, the radicalized atmosphere of the Great Leap Forward of 1958-62 signaled a similar turn against those elements of the clergy that had previously reached an accommodation with the state.[46] With the party and the army now in firm control of all parts of Xinjiang, the region's civil and military leadership now felt confident enough to discard the alliances with local elites on which they had relied during the first decade of their rule. Many mosques were closed, most clerics cashiered, and even unofficial Sufi groups brought under tremendous pressure.

Non-Uyghur Muslim intellectuals in Xinjiang were hit equally hard by the campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s, particularly if they were connected to the Ili group or the defunct ETR. Prominent Tatar intellectual Uyghur Sayrani, a writer and editor of note in 1940s Xinjiang and a leading figure in ETR publishing, had been one of the very first minority individuals in Xinjiang inducted into the CCP in late 1949. Sayrani's career in Maoist Xinjiang had flourished, even after his criticism of PLA soldiers' abusive behavior in southern Xinjiang cost him his job at the *Xinjiang Gazette*. He was sent by the CCP for studies in Soviet Kazakhstan, and returned to Xinjiang in 1956 to take up a high-ranking position at the regional Social Sciences Academy. Once the Campaign Against Local Nationalism kicked into gear, Sayrani lost it all; denounced as a local nationalist, he was expelled from the party in May 1959. Sayrani appealed the case, but to

[45] Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), ch. 11.
[46] Jianping Wang and Jan Hjärpe, "Islam in Kashghar in the 1950's," unpublished mss., 3-4, 9, 22-23.

no avail. His political exile would continue for more than two decades, including ten years in prison.[47]

The Anti-Rightist Campaign's silencing of independent-minded intellectuals throughout China was one factor enabling the catastrophe that followed hard on the heels of the campaign: the Great Leap Forward. With China increasingly isolated internationally, Mao became fixated on increasing industrial and agricultural production at a frantic pace so as to overtake the USSR and the capitalist countries. In the profoundly hierarchical party-state that the CCP had created, Mao's dream was quickly translated into policy for the entire country, with China's browbeaten intellectuals largely unwilling to point out obvious problems and risks. Agricultural cooperatives throughout China were reorganized into huge communes, with land, livestock, and property collectivized down to the cooking utensils. Mao's court agronomists insisted that a few simple yet radical techniques could produce unheard of crop yields, and the state implemented grain requisition quotas accordingly. In the atmosphere of rapturous anticipation, peasants were encouraged to eat even the seed grain stored for subsequent harvests; China would now be a land of perpetual plenty. At the same time, work units—from universities to government offices to hospitals—were commanded to produce iron and steel on site, with production quotas taking precedence over the work units' typical duties and Stakhanovite exhortation standing in for metallurgical training, experience, and tools.

With the CCP initially unsure of its footing in Xinjiang, the collectivization policies of the early and mid-1950s had been rolled out in the region more gingerly than in most of China, and the party-state had made efforts to respect the customs and preferences of Xinjiang's native communities. All of this changed in the final years of the decade, as the Anti-Rightist Campaign

[47] Uyghur Sayrani, "Uyghur Sayranining eslimisi," ed. Quddus Abdusemet, *Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 28 (1990): 131-34.

in Xinjiang evolved into an assault on independent-minded minority intellectuals and the homogenizing thrust of party policy brought the Great Leap Forward to China's northwest frontier. 1958 in Xinjiang began with a cascade of ebullient announcements by the region's local governments: Changji (Sanji) proclaimed that its production would soon surpass Ürümchi, Korla, and Qumul; Ürümchi, for its part, announced that the city would be free of mice and sparrows within the year; other locales insisted that their educational systems would rival Beijing's within three years. Xinjiang's new five-year plan called for supernatural increases in agricultural and industrial production, and the targets were revised upward multiple times over the course of the year. Allowances for Xinjiang's local particularities were jettisoned. In the predominantly Kazakh, largely pastoral Altay district of northern Xinjiang, land reform and cooperativization had for the most part been avoided since the beginning of CCP rule. Once the Great Leap began, however, Altay leapfrogged multiple putative stages of socialist development and was reorganized into a series of people's communes.[48]

Over a million residents of Xinjiang—around a fifth of the population—participated in the steel production movement during the Great Leap.[49] Xinjiang University halted classes so professors and students could help meet the impossible quotas for iron and steel production imposed on the university.[50] Physics and chemistry professors were well aware that the proposed makeshift smelting methods would not produce usable steel, but after the terror of the Anti-Rightist Campaign none dared voice their concerns. Male professors and students gathered ore in the mountains around Ürümchi, while a huge furnace was set up on campus to smelt iron. With the university's coal supply commandeered for the furnace, teachers and students shivered

[48] Zhu Peimin 朱培民, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang shi yanjiu* 二十世纪新疆史研究 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000), 280-83.
[49] Zhu, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang*, 282.
[50] Wei Cui-yi, "Wei Cui-yi (Oral History)," 3/7, interviewed by Lyn E. Smith, 6 Dec. 1993, Imperial War Museums, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80013365 (accessed 18 Feb. 2019).

through the winter as they worked day and night splitting stones and feeding the furnace. Yet all of this labor produced little but slag—a disappointing result repeated in most of China's community steel mills during the Great Leap Forward. When a professor in Xinjiang University's Language and Literature Department asked her dean in frustration what the purpose had been of all of their efforts, he replied, "The university has a quota, our department has a quota, we must do it! No matter if it's iron or not, we worked!"

The occult economic policies and manic steel smelting seriously disrupted the distribution of materials and personnel, a lack felt even by Xinjiang's elite. In 1960, Liu Xiaowu, Elqem Ekhtem, and Wang Yuhu worked hard to enable the founding of *Literary Translation* (*Edebiy terjimiler*), a Uyghur-language journal edited by Abdukérim Khojaev.[51] Amidst the labor shortages of the Great Leap, Khojaev was initially assigned only a single employee, Rekhim Qasim, who expressed alarm at the prospect of the two men publishing a sixty-some-page monthly journal on their own. "Don't worry," rejoined Khojaev with the dark humor he often employed in such situations. "When we smelted steel and iron, didn't we also work two to a furnace? Surely this couldn't be more grueling than that!" The shortages were such that the new journal's office was not provided with so much as paper or envelopes, but Khojaev worked all of his connections and shrewdly stewarded the journal's first issue to publication. At Khojaev's request, Seypidin Ezizi provided a dedication for the journal's inaugural issue, and Liu Xiaowu penned the foreword: the finest party pedigree a journal in Xinjiang could enjoy. Even with Khojaev's connections, however, paper shortages were such that the journal was forced at one point to temporarily halt publication.

The endless campaigns of the late 1950s blended one into another. In 1958, while investigations of accused local nationalists were still ongoing at the Medical Institute in Ürümchi,

[51] Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti toghrisida*, 116-19.

medical students spent their summer digging canals and laying railroad tracks.[52] In autumn, as the Great Leap gained momentum, they were bused out to the Xiaolongkou coal mines, where one group of students helped mine coal while the other searched for ore in the surrounding mountains. After a month, some of the students were assigned to construct makeshift furnaces in the desert, after which they spent weeks manually splitting rocks to extract ore and attempting to smelt it in the furnaces. On a daily basis, Medical Institute cadres arrived by car from Ürümchi to give speeches urging the students on to greater heights of productivity. Even the most eloquent speeches could not make up for a lack of training, experience, or adequate tools, however, and two months of backbreaking labor at the furnaces produced not a single kilo of usable iron, to the great dismay and disgruntlement of the students. The exhausted students returned to the Medical Institute shortly before New Year, just in time for a meeting announcing the successful conclusion of the rectification campaign at the Institute and the imprisonment of a number of their colleagues as rightists and local nationalists.

The steel production craze compounded the Great Leap Forward's disastrous agricultural policies, as farmers were forced to leave crops unharvested in order to participate in backyard steel production. The five-year plan had kicked off in 1958 with commune and district administrators competing to set fantastic production targets; now, with the harvest lagging behind even conventional standards, administrators were pressured to make good on their boasts by falsifying extravagant crop yield figures. Few were in a position to protest as the state then proceeded to requisiton grain in accordance with the stated harvest yields. Commune granaries were soon depleted, and food shortages began in the cities as well. In 1959-60, food became so scarce that some residents of Ürümchi were reduced to eating wild grass. Their bodies swollen from the indigestible greens, they staggered to the Medical Institute, where many of them

[52] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 40-47.

expired in the crowded wards. The medical residents themselves were subsisting on alfalfa and elm leaves they had gathered after instruction was halted for a week so students could forage. At Xinjiang University, a party secretary admonished skeptical university personnel to use more water than they cooked: adding eight bowls of water to one bowl of rice, he declared, would produce a more filling meal with the same amount of rice. Professors at the university began to develop swelling in their legs from malnutrition. In the countryside, now reorganized into vast communes, conditions were still more dire. Starving villagers turned to eating nettles, and death haunted the villages throughout spring 1959.[53]

While thousands died of hunger in Xinjiang during the Great Leap Forward, the famine was still more severe in much of China's heartland. Over a million predominantly Han citizens from other provinces fled to Xinjiang during the famine in search of food, and many stayed.[54] Yet many in Xinjiang's native communities perceived the Great Leap Forward as an imposition by a Han-dominated state, a perception strengthened by the radicalized CCP's increasing intolerance of ethnic difference. As the Great Leap progressed, some educational institutions in Xinjiang placed pressure on Muslim students to abandon their halal dietary strictures and eat at Han canteens,[55] while communes paid little heed to Muslim residents' communal traditions and accustomed gender roles.[56] Publishing houses in Xinjiang began to print Uyghur publications in a new Latin orthography (*yéngi yéziq*) based on the Chinese *pinyin* system and promoted the extensive use of untranslated Chinese words in Uyghur, even for concepts already widely known

[53] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 47-49, 59-64; Wei Cui-yi, "Oral History," 3/7.
[54] Zhu, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang*, 283-87; Kraus, "Laying Blame," 7; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, "The burden of the past: Uyghur peasants remember collectivisation in southern Xinjiang," in *Inside Xinjiang: Space, place and power in China's Muslim Far Northwest*, ed. Anna Hayes and Michael Clarke, 23 (London: Routledge, 2016).
[55] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 49-54.
[56] Bellér-Hann, "The burden of the past," 19-24. Bellér-Hann notes (p. 28) that Uyghur villagers interviewed in the 1990s "may have been aware that their suffering [during the collectivization era] was shared by millions of Han and other peoples," but nonetheless "emphasize[d] the externality of the Chinese state to Uyghur society when remembering collectivisation."

by Uyghur nomenclature.[57] Amidst deteriorating relations between the Han-dominated state and the Muslim communities it governed, it is unsurprising that a Tatar accountant would declare during the famine that "the Chinese government has ruthlessly taken food from the mouths of the people and sent it to the Han provinces."[58]

Relations between the Chinese government and Xinjiang's Turkic Muslim communities were further aggravated by the deterioration of relations between Beijing and Moscow. As the Sino-Soviet split deepened, state suspicion in Xinjiang fell most heavily on the region's Turkic peoples, who after decades of bidirectional migration were much more likely than Han citizens to have relatives across the Soviet border.[59] By the early 1960s, Uyghur intellectuals and writers in Xinjiang were dropping the Slavic "ov/ev" suffixes from their patronyms—Turghun Almas rather than Turghun Almasov—and playing down any prior Soviet connections. Even so, the charge of pro-Soviet "revisionism" was leveled much more often at minorities in Xinjiang than at Han—and not entirely without foundation.[60]

The economic dislocations of the Great Leap forward and the progressive breakdown of state-minority relations accelerated existing migration trends between Xinjiang and the USSR. Beginning in the early days of CCP rule in Xinjiang and intensifying in the mid-1950s, a steady trickle of Uyghurs and Kazakhs from Xinjiang, and particularly those with Soviet ties or citizenship, emigrated to Soviet Central Asia.[61] Even after the Chinese state began tightening

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[57] For some particularly advanced manifestations of this linguistic radicalism, see *Xinjiang yéziq özgertishi* 1 (1966), passim. This short-lived journal was devoted to instructing readers in *yéngi yéziq* (new script), the Latin-based alphabet for Uyghur that was promoted in Xinjiang from the mid-'60s until the beginning of the reform era.
[58] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 60. The Xinjiang state did contribute grain and meat to national coffers in 1960-62, reportedly because the famine in Xinjiang was less severe than in much of inner China. Zhu, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang*, 285.
[59] Wei Cui-yi, "Oral History," 3/7.
[60] The rector of Xinjiang Medical Institute complained in 1962 that some "revisionists" among the minority students had cut Chairman Mao out of his joint photo with Khrushchev and pinned a lone Khrushchev on their dormitory walls. Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 113.
[61] Sheng Mao, "Frontier Politics," 71-74, 109-11, 146-47, 160-61; Clark and Kamalov, "Uighur migration across

emigration controls in Xinjiang, the flow of Uyghur emigrants to the USSR continued, particularly after the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward made life increasingly precarious for Xinjiang's Uyghurs and Kazakhs. The political peril was particularly acute for individuals perceived to have ties to the USSR, and emigration was thus most widespread in the Ili and Tarbaghatay regions where Soviet influence had long been strongest. Large numbers of Uyghurs and Kazakhs from northern Xinjiang claimed Soviet ties—with varying degrees of justification—and sought "repatriation" to the USSR. Emigration was still an arduous process, however, and the outflow of people remained gradual even during the Great Leap Forward.

In spring 1962, however, the trickle of emigration swelled to a torrent as the Soviet Union, amidst worsening tensions with China, opened its border with Xinjiang to all Chinese citizens who wished to cross. Within weeks, whole counties in Ili and especially in Tarbaghatay were depopulated, with over 67,000 residents—predominantly Kazakh, Uyghur, and Hui, and including a substantial number of local officials, some of whom played a leading role in the migration—ultimately joining the exodus to the USSR. In addition to a large contingent of local intelligentsia from Ili and Tarbaghatay, the migrants included a number of Ili-born writer-officials with reputations extending across Xinjiang. Some of them, like Abdulhey Rozi (1923-1984), a poet and official in the Writers' Union, and Ziya Semedi, then only recently released from a labor camp following his denunciation in the Campaign Against Local Nationalism, would go on to successful careers in the Soviet Union.[62] The migration ended only in May, when the Chinese army took up positions along the border and the Soviet authorities—at the insistence of the PRC—began to refuse entry to further migrants. This massive migration came to be

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Central Asian frontiers," passim.

[62] Abdulhey Rozi became a member of the Soviet Writers' Union soon after his arrival, and published multiple volumes of poetry with Soviet presses. Abdulhey Rozi, "Sowét Uyghur sha'irliri shé'irliridin," ed. Jappar Emet, *Tarim* 2 (1989): 142. Ziya Semidi was likewise warmly received by Soviet authorities after his immigration, and quickly became one of the USSR's most prominent Uyghur novelists and cultural officials.

known in Chinese historiography as the Ili-Tarbaghatay Incident (*Yi-Ta shijian* 伊塔事件); in Uyghur, it is sometimes referred to as the "Great Move" (*köch-köch*).

The Great Move was caused not only by the "push" of China—the radicalism and chauvinism increasingly ascendant in the CCP—but also by the "pull" of the USSR. The evidentiary record is mixed on Chinese claims that the Soviet Union directly encouraged the exodus with radio broadcasts and material assistance.[63] There is no question, though, that many Muslim residents of northern Xinjiang had long seen the USSR as the vanguard of modernity and a protector of their people, and that a sizable number had familial links to Soviet Central Asia. Warm feelings toward the Soviet Union had been nurtured by decades of extensive cross-border engagement as well as pro-Soviet propaganda in the Sheng years, continuing through the ETR period, and subsequently through the first decade of Maoist Xinjiang. Zunun Téyipov, a general in the ETR army and subsequently the People's Liberation Army who left Xinjiang during the 1962 exodus, spoke for many when he wrote, "The Soviet people, who are always ready to lend a hand in the liberation of oppressed peoples, were infuriated by the Mao clique's oppression and devastation of the laboring people and particularly the minority laborers. Therefore the Soviet people received with open arms into its own family tens of thousands of the sons and daughters of the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other peoples who had been suppressed by the Mao regime."[64]

It was unsurprising that emigration to the USSR would be heaviest by far in the north of Xinjiang. Well into the late 1950s, many Uyghurs and Kazakhs in Ili and Tarbaghatay—including a remarkably high proportion of PRC party-state officials—kept Soviet passports.[65] Individuals from those areas were heavily targeted by successive Maoist campaigns as Sino-

[63] Kraus, "Laying Blame for Flight and Fight," 9-12.
[64] Zunun Téyipov, *Sherqiy Türkstan yéride*, 136.
[65] Mao, "Frontier Politics," 158-66.

Soviet tensions mounted in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As we have seen above, the Campaign Against Local Nationalism in particular had provided the party-state an opportunity to remove much of the Ili old guard from the civil bureaucracy and the military in Xinjiang, thus weakening the strongest nucleus of minority political power and potential Soviet influence remaining in the region. Given that the rectification campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s in Xinjiang had focused primarily on minority officials, intellectuals, and writers, these groups were especially well represented among those who made a beeline for the border when the chance presented itself.

As Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, the emigration of Uyghur intellectuals was also furtively encouraged by the USSR's diplomats and agents in Xinjiang, who promised noted Uyghur cutural figures a better life in the Soviet Union.[66] Even before the Great Move of 1962, prominent Uyghur intellectuals, officials, and military officers like Batur Ershidinov and Mesumjan Zulpiqarov made their way across the border. As we will see in the following chapter, the heavy representation of Ili and Chöchek intellectuals among these migrants had profound implications for Soviet Uyghur culture in subsequent decades; but the massive outflow of intellectuals and officials from the Ili network also reduced the ranks of the network in the civil bureaucracy and cultural realm of Maoist Xinjiang, while simultaneously heightening party-state suspicions about Uyghur intellectuals. Throughout Xinjiang, minority cadres were increasingly excluded from positions of genuine power; and even in the former ETR lands, the political power of Muslim elites had by the early 1960s greatly diminished.[67]

Yet despite the partial eclipse of the Ili elites, Ili largely maintained its hold on Uyghur official culture in the years that followed. The Ili dialect remained the foundation for the Uyghur

[66] Rachel Harris, *The Making of a Musical Canon in Chinese Central Asia: The Uyghur Twelve Muqam* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 36.
[67] Mao, "Frontier Politics," 108-10.

language used in publications and broadcasts. Admidst increasing pressure on minority cultures in the 1960s, Uyghur periodicals and school textbooks were increasingly filled with party propaganda translated from Chinese; but of original Uyghur works that made it into print, the lion's share were still by Ili authors. A typical junior high language and literature textbook from 1963, amidst translations from Mao Zedong and Lu Xun, carried work by four Uyghur authors, of whom three were from Ili: Lutpulla Mutellip, Nur Bosaqov, and Téyipjan Éliev, who had only recently seen his right to publish restored.[68] The fourth author was Abdukérim Khojaev, now writing as Abdukérim Khoja—the suspect Russian "-ev" suffix having been unceremoniously dropped from his patronym following the Sino-Soviet split.[69] In a representative literature textbook published in 1964, every Uyghur author—Seypidin Ezizi, Nur Bosaqov, Lutpulla Mutellip, Téyipjan Éliev—was from Ili.[70] By 1965, only a single, safely dead, endlessly malleable Uyghur author could jostle his way into a high school language and literature textbook bristling with works by Mao, Liu Shaoqi, and Lenin: Ili's favorite son, Lutpulla Mutellip.[71]

The dimming of the Ili network's political power thus failed to dislodge Ili from its cultural preeminence. As we have seen above, the emergence of mass print in a language provides a unique opportunity for a group to leave a lasting imprint on a culture and a nation; and in the Uyghur community, it was more often than not Ili writers and intellectuals who controlled the printing presses during this critical period. By the 1960s, young Uyghur writers and intellectuals from across Xinjiang had been trained in an Ili-inflected Uyghur literary idiom; reared on a canon of modern Uyghur literature dominated by Ili authors; and accustomed to

[68] Shinjang Uyghur awtonom rayonluq ma'arip nazariti derslik tüzüsh gruppisi, eds., *Toluqsiz ottura mektepler üchün derslik: til-edibiyat dersligi: 6- qisim* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1963).
[69] His friends, however, continued to call him "Khojaev." Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide*, 117, 131.
[70] Shinjang Uyghur awtonom rayonluq ma'arip nazariti derslik tüzüsh guruppisi, eds., *Toluqsiz ottura mektepler üchün derslik: til-edibiyat dersligi: 6- qisim* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1964).
[71] Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq ma'arip nazariti derslik tüzüsh guruppisi, eds., *Ottura mektepler üchün derslik: til-edibiyat dersligi: 2- qisim* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati: 1965).

cultural and ideological norms largely based on the overlapping preferences of Ili intellectuals and the CCP. Officials and literati from Kashgar and Aqsu were now reproducing and further elaborating an Ili-based Uyghur culture that could not be rebuilt from the ground up.

The end of the CCP's alliance with the Ili network and the hardening of Chinese nationality policy did not augur a decline in the party-state's commitment to Uyghur literacy and print culture. The CCP was still deeply invested in bringing Uyghurs into the Maoist tent, and Soviet-style indigenization had not been abandoned entirely. With China's Uyghur citizens still overwhelmingly monolingual and broadcast facilities in Xinjiang underdeveloped, print remained the primary means for this sustained project of persuasion. State-sponsored literacy campaigns therefore continued, and mass printing in Uyghur continued to expand. A 1965 primer, which taugh students the new Latin-based Uyghur alphabet from sentences like "Mao Zedong thought is the most glorious banner of Marxism-Leninism of our time," was printed in 600 thousand copies—one for every ten Uyghurs in Xinjiang.[72] Even amidst the homogenizing drive of the 1960s, the party-state remained publicly committed to promoting the Uyghur language, with regular declarations in Xinjiang's press of Han citizens' dedication to learning Uyghur.[73]

Xinjiang's Ili intellectuals, while much reduced in numbers and cohesion, continued to play a prominent role in this undertaking. Some, like Abdulla Zakirov, had successfully ridden out the storms of the previous few years. Others, like Elqem Ekhtem, had only been bolstered by the fall of their former comrades, whose posts they could now assume. Still others did their best to dispel the clouds of suspicion under which they labored. Perhaps most notably, Téyipjan Éliev remained a prolific panegyrist for the party in these years, which happily reprinted his works

[72] Xinjiang Uyghur awtonom rayonluq maarip nazariti, eds., *Dihan-charwichilar üchün derslik* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1965): 29.
[73] E.g., Kang Jiennien [Jiannian], "Uyghur tilini choqum üginiwalimen," *Xinjiang yéziq özgertishi* 1 (1966): 39-40.

while periodically denouncing and expelling him.[74] These Ili remnants' survival in the cultural bureaucracy likely owed much to the shrewd maneuvering of their Han patrons. As always, Liu Xiaowu was the most influential of these; and by the mid-1960s, he had reached the height of his power. In 1965 he was made Deputy Director of the Propaganda Department, in addition to his posts as Secretary and Vice Chairman of the Autonomous Region Federation of Literary and Art Circles. He wielded substantial influence in Xinjiang's cultural affairs, and his favored artists and writers were afforded prominence and some measure of protection. Lutpulla Mutellip, whose reputation Liu had worked so diligently to promote, seemed to be more firmly enshrined in Xinjiang's revolutionary pantheon than perhaps any other Uyghur figure. Over the next few years, however, all that Liu and his comrades had built would go up in smoke.

BURNING THE PAST

On a sweltering August day in 1966, fourteen-year-old Tursun Ershidin attended a mass rally at the Ghulja People's Cinema, where throngs of local youth prepared to swear eternal allegiance to Mao Zedong.[75] City dwellers watched nervously as packs of Red Guards stalked the streets of Ghulja. While the youth gathered at the Cinema faced the huge portrait of Chairman Mao and repeated the loyalty oath, a huddle of Red Guards began arguing as they bent over a copy of the day's newspaper. When Tursun rebuked them for spoiling the mood of the meeting, they gathered up the paper and handed it to him. Opening the newspaper, Tursun could barely believe his eyes: Lutpulla Mutellip, the beloved Uyghur poet, had been denounced. Calling Lutpulla a pan-Turkist and a Guomindang agent, a front-page editorial thundered that treasonous elements

[74] 1963 saw the publication of Éliev's collection "I Eulogize My Fatherland." Téyipjan Éliyéw, *Wetinimni küyleymen: shé'irlar toplimi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1963).
[75] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip: hayati, pa'aliyiti we ijadiy emgekliri toghrisida* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2007), 2-13, 15.

within the party had reanimated this "stinking corpse" with the aim of abetting splittists and bourgeois local nationalists.

As the newspaper passed from hand to hand, those assembled lost interest in the meeting. Heated arguments broke out, and some wiped away tears. Lutpulla Mutellip, executed twenty-one years before by Guomindang police, had by 1966 become a hero to Uyghurs across Xinjiang. In his life and works, Lutpulla symbolized the fusion of Uyghur identity with Communist ideals and Chinese patriotism. To Tursun and many of the people around him, it was inconceivable that this revered figure could be denounced; but in 1966, the unthinkable had become commonplace in China.[76] In short order, Lutpulla's works were pulled from homes and library shelves, and burned on People's Square and the city parade grounds along with countless other volumes. As this latest and fiercest moment in Maoist radicalism developed into a generalized attack on learning and knowledge, the destruction became so indiscriminate that even the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin were piled up to be burned.[77] Each day, though, after the bonfires had died out, Tursun would sift the ashes with a long stick to find books that had escaped the flames. Along with works by various other authors, he collected anything he could find by Lutpulla Mutellip, which he hid in a cattle trough alongside his own copies of the poet's works as well as the newspaper article denouncing Lutpulla. But as Tursun Ershidin tried to rescue Lutpulla's memory from the ashes, everything around him was in flames.

Throughout summer 1966, internecine struggle gripped China's power centers and institutions of learning. In a bid to reassert his supreme power and rekindle what he saw as the

[76] Upon seeing the 1966 newspaper denunciation of Lutpulla and others, Ghulja-born Zordun Sabir likewise exclaimed to his friends that "our literature is finished! Life without literature is life without flavor!" Zordun Sabir later became the most successful novelist in the Uyghur language. Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1999), 201-02.

[77] Aidar Bazil'baev, who witnessed the beginning of the Cultural Revolution as a student in Ürümchi, confirmed that "classics of Marxism-Leninism" were among the works burned. *Chetyre goda v khaose: o tak nazyvaemoi "kul'turnoi revoliutsii" v Sin'tsziane* (Almaty: Izdatel'stvo "Kazakhstan," 1978), 19-20.

waning fires of Chinese revolutionary spirit, Mao Zedong and his supporters launched an escalating press campaign against supposed counterrevolutionary forces, and encouraged the formation of radical youth groups which came to be known as Red Guards. As Mao called on the people to "bombard the headquarters," attacks on intellectuals and party officials spread across the country. The Cultural Revolution was to be Mao's last campaign, and it tore apart the very party-state he had helped build. The movement went far beyond the Anti-Rightist Campaign in scope, ultimately targeting nearly the entire intellectual class and civil service of the People's Republic. It drew on the paranoid rhetoric and persecutory logic that figured in the Anti-Rightist Campaign, but refracted them through a hallucinatory mindset that saw all existing structures of authority and tradition as worthy of destruction.

The Cultural Revolution got off to a relatively slow start in Xinjiang.[78] Regional party secretary Wang Enmao, deeply entrenched in the party-state hierarchy and enjoying the full support of People's Liberation Army troops in the region, proved a nimble operator as the first stirrings of Red Guard radicalism appeared in Ürümchi. Even after Red Guard activists arrived by train from Beijing to stir the pot, Wang managed to circle the wagons and organize his own Red Guard groups into what became known as the First Red Headquarters (*Hongyisi* 红一司).[79] His opponents were not far behind, however, and a coalition of anti-establishment Red Guard groups soon formed the Second Red Headquarters (*Hongersi* 红二司) with the stated mission of removing Wang and his allies from power. Both organizations quickly established affiliates throughout Xinjiang, and in early 1967, emulating Red Guard groups across China, the Second Red Headquarters took up arms in an effort to remove Wang and seize power in the region. The

[78] McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 182-221; Sandrine Emmanuelle Catris, "The Cultural Revolution from the Edge: Violence and Revolutionary Spirit in Xinjiang, 1966-1976" (Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University, 2015), 123-42.
[79] For an account of Beijing Red Guard activists in Xinjiang and the regional authorities' efforts to corral their activities, see Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose*, 21-22.

factional fighting in Ürümchi soon rippled across Xinjiang and grew ever more deadly over the course of 1967, especially once Mao encouraged People's Liberation Army units to take part in the Cultural Revolution.

As elsewhere in China, the Red Guards did not confine themselves to high-level power struggles. The Cultural Revolution sought the complete destruction of the "four olds": old thinking, old culture, old customs, and old habits. For months, bonfires blazed in public squares across Xinjiang as Red Guards ransacked libraries and even archives for any books, periodicals, or manuscripts that did not promote Mao's thought, while terrified citizens turned in their own book collections.[80] When some individuals at Xinjiang University attempted to hide a few books to preserve them from the flames, activists at the university ferreted out the reactionary bibliophiles and forced them onto the university square with their most cherished books hung round their necks. They were then forced to hurl the volumes into the bonfire with their own hands.[81] Following the mass public book burnings across Xinjiang, what print matter remained—with the exception of Mao's works and a few other publications—was largely swept up in endless Red Guard raids on the homes of intellectuals, cadres, and "counterrevolutionaries," during which anything of value was confiscated and anything redolent of the "four olds"—traditional clothing, art, and so on—was destroyed.[82] In a thickening atmosphere of fear, sadism, and youthful exhileration, students and Red Guards dragged former authority figures—teachers, workplace leaders, party cadres—out of their offices and submitted them to humiliating public struggle sessions. High rank and powerful connections became liabilities overnight. Activists at the regional Medical Institute drove Provost Ayim Ezizi, wife of Xinjiang Chairman Seypidin

[80] Abduréshit Haji Kérimi, *Qarajüldiki jeng: musteqilliq yolida küresh* (Stockholm: Uyghur qelemkeshliri merkizi, 2012), 104-06.
[81] Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose*, 19-20.
[82] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 425-41; Kérimi, *Qarajüldiki jeng*, 109-10.

Ezizi, out onto the street, where they forced her to crouch in the cramped and humiliating "jet plane" position and commenced a struggle session against her.[83]

The power struggles in Xinjiang between party elites and Red Guard factions largely echoed the factional battles then taking place across China, and the Red Guards' reign of terror in the region was in many respects similar to the havoc wreaked by their comrades nationwide. Many of the implications for everyday life differed little from the remainder of China: the school system ceased functioning for years, and was only slowly restored; daily life was politicized to an unparalleled extent; agriculture, industry, and state services were all deeply disrupted by the careening campaigns and factionalism. Yet while the Cultural Revolution comprised a violent assault on authority, custom, and the established order across China, the movement took distinct forms in minority regions.[84] In Xinjiang, this meant in part an intensification of the Han-minority political dynamics that had obtained in the region since the early days of the Mao era. Power politics in Xinjiang had been a Han-dominated affair since the CCP takeover of the region and the dissolution of the ETR; the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang was in this regard no revolution at all, and if anything enhanced Han domination of the political sphere.[85] Particularly as longstanding Xinjiang cadres—both Han and minority—were replaced with new recruits from inner China, minority representation in the Xinjiang party-state dropped precipitously.

Xinjiang's authorities did deem it valuable to retain some minority cadres in prominent positions. Most notably, Seypidin Ezizi was once more preserved; he had repeatedly

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[83] Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose*, 27. Red Guard groups also raided the homes of Seypidin Ezizi and of Burhan Shehidi's son Nusret. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 225-26; Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 432-33.

[84] On the Cultural Revolution in urban and rural Tibet, respectively, see Weise 唯色, *Sha jie: sishi nian de jiyi jinqu, jingtou xia de Xizang wen'ge* 殺劫:四十年的記憶禁區, 鏡頭下的西藏文革 (Taipei: Dakuai wenhua chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 2006) and Melvyn C. Goldstein, Ben Jiao, and Tanzen Lhundrup, *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: The Nyemo incident of 1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[85] McMillen writes that the Cultural Revolution "in Xinjiang came to basically constitute a power struggle between the long-dominant regional leadership of Wang Enmao and the Mao-Lin Biao faction in Peking that was largely played out by Han actors." *Chinese Communist Power*, 181.

demonstrated his utility to the party as a spokesman to Xinjiang's Uyghur population, and distinguished himself during the Cultural Revolution by attacking his own former comrades. In 1971, for instance, he publicly denounced as "counterrevolutionary" the ETR veteran and former PRC official Muhemmet'imin Iminov, whom Ezizi had more than a decade earlier attempted to protect during the Campaign Against Local Nationalism.[86] In addition to the unsinkable Ezizi, a small number of other minority officials in Xinjiang saw their stature rise during the Cultural Revolution; some were previously obscure individuals likely elevated as figureheads, while others went on to distinguished party careers. By and large, though, minority representation in the Xinjiang party-state—and in the multiple factions fighting for control of the party-state—was minimal during Maoism's terminal decade.[87] This had profound consequences for the cultural and social life of Xinjiang's non-Han communities, as the coercive homogenization implemented across China took on a harshly assimilative tone in this Muslim-majority region.

The predominantly Han, predominantly young people who formed the Cultural Revolution's vanguard in Xinjiang delighted in pushing individuals of Muslim background to violate communal taboos and traditions.[88] In the mountains around Ürümchi, People's Liberation Army soldiers pressured reluctant young Kazakh girls to smoke, violating the strongly gendered norms surrounding tobacco consumption among Xinjiang's Muslims. "The Cultural Revolution," they insisted threateningly, "is a revolution teaching us culture; those who don't smoke will later be struggled against and forced to wear dunce caps." In cities across Xinjiang, Red Guards forcibly clipped old men's beards and young women's hair, which unmarried Uyghur women

[86] For Ezizi's denunciation of Iminov and others, see McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 260.
[87] McMillen, 229-32. This trend was not unique to Xinjiang. On the decline in minority representation at the top ranks of regional governments across China during the Cultural Revolution, see also Chu Wen-lin, "Peiping's Nationality Policy in the 'Cultural Revolution': Part II," *Issues and Studies* 9 (1969): 39.
[88] Sources for this and the following two paragraphs, except where otherwise noted, are Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 419-41, Kérimi, *Qarajüldiki jeng*, 104-15, and Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose*, 22-26. These memoir accounts are largely confirmed by the contemporary radio and periodical reports cited in McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 196.

traditionally wore long, and confiscated traditional Uyghur and Kazakh clothing. Individuals with "religious" names like Muhammad and Eysa (Jesus) were pressed to adopt revolutionary names like "Küresh" (struggle) and "Uchqun" (spark). The soundscape of Uyghur Xinjiang changed radically, as Uyghur classical music and folk songs, now branded as reactionary, were torn from the fabric of everyday life. In their place, paeans to Chairman Mao and the Eighth Field Army blared from loudspeakers and were widely sung by everyday citizens.[89]

The red songs were only the beginning of the idolization of Mao that crested during the Cultural Revolution. As elsewhere in China, the Mao cult became a mandatory component of everyday life: memorizing the Chairman's sayings as catechism, treating his portrait as a living icon, and honoring him with loyalty oaths and dances. The Mao cult was monotheistic, and its evangelists would not tolerate the worship of other gods. In Kashgar, copies of the Koran and other Islamic holy books were piled up in front of Héyt Gah Mosque, in the heart of the ancient city, and burned in a giant bonfire. Defiling and burning Korans soon became a fixture of Red Guard rampages across Xinjiang. Mosques were defaced and closed, with many converted into warehouses, factories, and livestock pens; in a particularly cruel touch, some were used for raising pigs, with Muslim "counterrevolutionaries" forced to tend the swine.[90] Even the most intimate life cycle events were twisted into revolutionary forms, as Islamic burial rites and wedding vows were replaced with sayings of Chairman Mao.

While the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang was largely led by young Han, many of them recently arrived from inner China, numerous young Uyghurs took an active part as well, with Uyghur Red Guards attacking mosques, burning books, and otherwise joining in the carnival of

[89] As throughout China, many Uyghurs who grew up in the Cultural Revolution period can still sing snatches from these songs, though there has been little of the reform-era Mao nostalgia sometimes found in inner China.
[90] On Muslims being forced to raise pigs, see also Thwaites, *Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity*, vol. 2, 7.

cultural destruction.[91] Still, many Uyghurs perceived the Cultural Revolution as an outside imposition, much as the Campaign Against Local Nationalism and the Great Leap Forward had been widely understood in Xinjiang's native communities. This impression was further confirmed when the national party leadership signaled that amidst the tempest of wild accusations and factionalism, there was one type of attack that still lay outside the pale. When an offshoot of the Second Red Headquarters, led by an activist named Aydan, prepared to hold a mass meeting in Ürümchi in May 1968 to attack Xinjiang party secretary Wang Enmao's "Han chauvinism," Zhou Enlai himself intervened from Beijing to prevent the meeting.[92] Zhou's representatives had previously warned Red Guard leaders in Xinjiang that local nationalists and Soviet revisionists in the region were "wolves in sheep's clothing" who should be prevented from exploiting the Cultural Revolution.[93] If those leading the Cultural Revolution had little tolerance for charges of Han chauvinism, they displayed no such compunction toward allegations of local nationalism. In a series of Red Guard circulars in Xinjiang attacking Lü Jianren, Secretary of the Regional Party Standing Committee, some of the most potent charges involved Lü's alleged soft treatment of local nationalists and tolerant attitude toward Islamic practice.[94]

While everyday life for most people in Xinjiang was most profoundly affected by the Red Guard depredations, the closing of the schools, and the general radicalization of policy, the Cultural Revolution's primary target, as throughout China, was the political and cultural elite of the region. The movement's epicenter in Xinjiang was therefore the regional capital, Ürümchi; and in autumn 1966, the city's streets became nearly impassable for all of the processions.

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[91] Catris, reviewing contemporary reports in the *Xinjiang Gazette*, notes that as of autumn 1966, most Red Guards were Han, with a smaller number of Uyghurs. "The Cultural Revolution from the Edge," 135-36. The Uyghur proportion of Red Guards would have increased as the movement continued taking root beyond Ürümchi, then as now a predominantly Han city.
[92] Zhu Peimin, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang shi*, 323.
[93] McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 193.
[94] Catris, "The Cultural Revolution from the Edge," 154-56. See also McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 267.

Revolutionary activists led the way, carrying banners and portraits of Chairman Mao. They were followed by their victims: "capitalist roaders" from the city's various offices, each with a dunce hat on their head and a board hung round their neck listing name and crime.[95] Similar processions were held in Kashgar and other cities.[96] The Cultural Revolution was aimed primarily at individuals with leadership positions in the party-state, from the highest rank to the lowest, and the fiercest attacks were often leveled by former subordinates, as well as by other colleagues, neighbors, and friends.[97] Likewise echoing the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Campaign Against Local Nationalism, the top targets of the Cultural Revolution were attacked not only in the streets, but in the pages of the region's periodicals as well, now firmly in the hands of "revolutionaries" at the newspaper and journal offices who had denounced and displaced their former superiors. Thus it was that the very print organs that had established and enhanced the power of Xinjiang's cultural elite now became the instruments of their destruction.

On August 8, 1966, Liu Xiaowu was dismissed from his various posts and savagely denounced in a front-page editorial in the *Xinjiang Gazette*.[98] The denunciation, which appeared under the byline "Wen Xianfeng" (文先锋), leveled against Liu many of the charges Liu had aimed at Ziya Semedi eight years earlier. This parallelism with earlier campaigns was typical of such attacks throughout the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang, a fact which belies interpretations of this radical decade as a wholesale deviation from the history of socialism in China. In

[95] Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 426-30. Victims included numerous doctors and other professionals.
[96] Kérimi, *Qarajüldiki jeng*, 111.
[97] In a typical "Et tu, Brute?" moment, Salikh Weliev, chief accountant of his commune, asked his family wonderingly how the deputy accountant he had attentively trained could become one of his chief tormentors during the Cultural Revolution. Weliev quoted a proverb: "I raised and fed a puppy; he became a dog and bit me. I gave a man a gun, he became a marksman and shot me." Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 434-39.
[98] Liu Xiaowu's dismissal from his posts was announced in "Junggo gungchendang Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq wéyyuenkhuyi partiyige qarshi unsur Lyushyawwuni barliq wezipiliridin élip tashlashni qarar qildi," *Shinjang géziti* 8 August 1966: 1. The lengthy denunciation was Wen Xianfeng 文先锋, "Hemmimiz qozghilip, Lyushyawwu qatarliq gézendilerning partiyige qarshi, sotsiyalizimgha qarshi, Mawzédung sishyangigha qarshi jinayi herketlirige qarshi qet'iy küresh qilayli," *Shinjang géziti* 8 August 1966: 1-3. The name Wen Xianfeng, meaning "cultural vanguard," was presumably a pseudonym, and may have stood for a collective of writers.

comparison to the preceding campaigns, the range of targets had dramatically expanded and the rhetoric had grown still more extravagant; yet the Cultural Revolutionaries drew in significant part from a palate of accusations and locutions popularized in the late 1950s during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Campaign Against Local Nationalism. The similarities extended beyond the rhetorical, and were emblematic of a continuity in policy and rhetoric throughout the high Maoist period—a continuity which is increasingly recognized by historians, and is fully instantiated by a close reading of Cultural Revolution texts in Xinjiang.[99] The denunciations of Liu Xiaowu will furnish a suitable starting point.

Contradicting the humble origins depicted in Liu's official biography, Wen Xianfeng's denunciation claims instead that Liu was born to a family of bourgeois landowners.[100] According to Wen's piece, Liu studied business and worked as an accountant for the rich, while also finding time to write for various newspapers in the Japanese puppet-state Manchukuo. Liu then hid his reactionary past, wormed his way into the party, and used the power of his party office to "gather around himself a gang of class enemy fiends, lunatic fiends, local nationalists, and fiends with foreign ties; train them and take them under his wing; and thereby create a group of anti-Party, anti-socialist scumbags."[101] Liu and his cronies then used every literary means available—poems, articles, speeches, stories—to promote the ancient and deride the new (an inversion of the Cultural Revolution credo "destroy the old and create the new"), to attack the party, Chairman Mao, and Mao Zedong Thought, and to promote revisionism (the supposed Soviet line) and resurrect capitalism. Raving that "there must be freedom to think freely in literature and the arts, creative freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom to maintain one's own views," Liu

[99] A pithy formulation of this argument can be found in Brown and Johnson, *Maoism at the Grassroots*, 6-7.
[100] Wen Xianfeng, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 1-3.
[101] The Cultural Revolution saw the vigorous revival of the "local nationalist" charge in Inner Mongolia as well. Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 257-58.

encouraged the Party to tolerate all manner of "ghosts and demons" and the "poisonous weeds" they spread. Liu's depictions of Xinjiang in his poems as a desert region—the Taklamakan, which dominates southern Xinjiang, is one of the largest and most arid deserts in the world—were in fact thinly veiled claims that the Great Leap Forward had failed.

Liu's interest in minority culture seems to have particularly rankled. Beginning with Wen Xianfeng's four-page broadside, one critic after another attacked Liu for promoting "nationalization" (*milliyleshtürüsh*, equivalent to Ch. *minzuhua* 民族化) of art and literature, and for insisting that minority writers and regions with large minority populations possessed special characteristics—that is, characteristics beyond the class consciousness and Party-mindedness which were the only proper considerations in literary creation.[102] Liu's efforts to "train and enlarge the corps of minority writers" were in fact a cover for training "minority scum" like the national traitor Zunun Qadiri, as well as Téyipjan Éliev with his foreign entanglements.[103] What was more, Liu's advocacy for suspect minority culture extended beyond contemporary writers; masking his true intentions behind slogans like "all heritage must be preserved," Liu had the temerity to suggest that the folk literature of pre-revolutionary Xinjiang could be beneficial in constructing socialism. He worked to collect these "dregs of feudalism" and allowed them to dominate Xinjiang's literary and artistic life, thereby weakening the people's revolutionary resolve and preparing the ground for capitalism's resurrection.[104]

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[102] Qi Faxiu, "Lyushyawwuning shyujingjuyiliq edebiyat-sen'et lushyenidin uzul-késel hésap alimiz," *Shinjang géziti* 6 September 1966: 4; Wen Xianfeng, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 2.
[103] Qi, "Lyushyawwuning," 4. As mentioned in the previous section, familial connections with the USSR were a cause for state suspicion of minority citizens in Xinjiang following the Sino-Soviet split. These suspicions became the pretext for still harsher treatment during the Cultural Revolution, ensnaring prominent intellectuals like Éliev as well as everyday citizens. Janishéf, *Köz yéshida nemlen'gen zémin*, 446-48.
[104] Wen, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 2-3.

Liu's exploits in literary preservation were detailed in a collection of big-character posters (*dazibao*) published in *Xinjiang Gazette* later that month.[105] Ignoring Mao's exhortation to "critically inherit" pre-revolutionary literature by "discarding the shell and keeping the kernel," Liu called for all folk literature to be collected, regardless of ideological implications. From 1961 to 1966, he initiated five large-scale folk literature collection missions, which together gathered more than 900 stories and several dozen epic poems, totaling upwards of 600,000 lines. "And what were those things that had been collected?" one of the big-character posters inquired ominously. "A few examples will suffice to show Liu Xiaowu's plot against the Party." The Kyrgyz epic *Manas,* transcribed over the course of two collection trips, "consists of biographies for kings, military commanders, and viziers, whitewashes the feudal ruling class, and promotes pan-Islamism, ethnic splittism, and genocide... Each of *Manas*'s 200,000 lines is permeated with reactionary feudal class poisons, and constitutes a poisonous bullet shot directly at the great revolutionary works of our great party, our great homeland and country." Uyghur and Kazakh epic folk poems like *Ghérib-Senem* and *Yüsüp Ekhmet* were feudal works praising slave masters and class compromise, not to mention "romantic love, genocide, and religious superstition." Even worse were collections of humorous folk anecdotes (*letipe*) like *Nesirdin Ependi* and *Molla Zeydin*. Liu Xiaowu's efforts to collect and canonize the folklore of Xinjiang's peoples were thus stigmatized: the permissible scope for canon formation, having narrowed progressively for a decade, had now excluded nearly everything which did not emanate directly from the party-state. And now, for Mao's revolution within the party to succeed, the pantheon had to be cleansed even of the party's own idols.

Ten years to the day after Mao had awarded Lutpulla Mutellip's family a Certificate of Honor, Wen Xianfeng blasted Lutpulla in the pages of the *Xinjiang Gazette* as a vile reactionary

[105] "Lyushyawwuning Shinjangning milli khelq edebiyatidiki qara yipini yoqitayli," *Shinjang géziti* 30 Aug. 1966: 5.

and a Guomindang collaborator.[106] The denunciation carried the full force of the Xinjiang party-state, which in summer 1966 was still largely in control of the Cultural Revolution in the region. In the weeks leading up the denunciation, Lutpulla had been chosen as a primary target by a group of activists from Xinjiang University tasked by the regional authorities with identifying "black threads" in Xinjiang's arts and literature.[107] In addition to the ideological impetus for anathematizing Lutpulla, targeting the long-dead poet provided further ammunition against those who had worked so hard to promote his posthumous reputation. Wen Xianfeng charged Liu Xiaowu with fabricating a glowing biography for Lutpulla (as Liu in fact had), a man who had written poems praising Sheng Shicai and Chiang Kai-shek (as Lutpulla in fact had).[108] Acclaiming this treasonous writer as a "patriotic poet" and a "faithful son of the homeland," Liu had revised and republished Lutpulla's poems, prepared his works for the stage, and caused a memorial tower to be erected in his honor.[109] By working to have Lutpulla's poems included in *Selected Poems by Revolutionary Martyrs*, Liu had "splashed this poison across the whole country." To cap it all off, Liu and his sidekicks had produced *Sparks in the Distance*, the 1961 film based on Lutpulla's life, with the intention of "inciting local nationalists to split the homeland and damage interethnic harmony."

Wen's attack on Lutpulla was part of a larger section detailing Liu Xiaowu's alleged support for Nikita Khrushchev and his "revisionist" policies. Tenuous though the connection may seem between a Uyghur poet killed in 1945 and the policies of a Soviet leader who assumed

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[106] Wen, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 4.
[107] Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose*, 15-17.
[108] Lutpulla's paeans to disgraced Xinjiang warlord Sheng Shicai and Guomindang Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, written in the early '40s, were tactfully excluded from the numerous posthumous collections of his work. In his generally uncritical 2007 biography of Lutpulla, Tursun Ershidin reprints the text of these poems, though he does his best to explain how they can be reconciled with his portrayal of Lutpulla as a lion-hearted revolutionary poet. Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 286-99.
[109] This last charge was untrue. In fact, though proposals for commemorating Lutpulla with an obelisk or some other form of monument have been put forward many times since the poet's death, construction has never actually begun. Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 455-56.

power in the 1950s, Liu's involvement with minority literature was all the evidence his accusers needed to link him to the "revisionist" Soviet Union. It was then de rigueur for Cultural Revolutionaries to charge their victims with a soft spot for Khrushchev's mildly reformist policies, a grave charge given the dire state of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s. In Xinjiang, these charges often centered around real and imagined Soviet influence among the region's minority peoples; typical was Wen Xianfeng's claim that Liu Xiaowu had ordered journals and newspapers in Xinjiang to follow the Soviet Union's lead in its 1962 commemorations of Lutpulla Mutellip's fortieth birthday.[110] This treachery transpired only months after Liu had supposedly encouraged local nationalist subordinates at the Federation of Literary and Art Circles to flee to the USSR during the mass migration from Ili and Tarbaghatay in April-May 1962.[111] As noted above, this incident had exacerbated the already significant anxieties within the CCP about potential pro-Soviet leanings among Xinjiang's minorities.

The final section of Wen Xianfeng's article concerns Liu Xiaowu's patronage of "ghosts and demons" in Xinjiang literature and arts, and focuses especially on his relationships with four writers: Téyipjan Éliev, Abdukérim Khojaev, Wang Yuhu (王玉胡, 1924-2008), and Wang

[110] Liu had indeed likely had a hand in the 1962 commemorations of Lutpulla in Xinjiang, though there seems little reason to believe that in doing so he was executing a Soviet plan. Prominent among these commemorations was a thirty-page spread in the December issue of the Chinese-language edition of *Xinjiang Literature* (*Xinjiang wenxue*), a journal then edited by Wang Gulin. No Soviet conspiracy is evident in the section, which consists of a hagiographic article about Lutpulla by the journal's editorial board, poems in Lutpulla's memory by writers prominent and obscure, a lengthy selection of Lutpulla's works in Chinese translation, and calligraphed quotations from the Chinese renderings of his poems. Xinjiang wenxue bianjibu, "Shiren, zhanshi, zuguo zhongcheng de erzi — jinian Li Mutalifu dansheng sishi zhounian 詩人•戰士•祖國忠誠的兒子 — 紀念黎・穆塔里甫誕生四十周年," *Xinjiang wenxue* 12 (1962): 4-34. But Lutpulla's Soviet connections—his birth in Kazakhstan, his many poems praising Soviet leaders and the USSR, his connections to the Soviet-backed ETR—likely made him more suspicious to those carrying out the Cultural Revolution, just as in an earlier day those ties had attracted the attention of Guomindang authorities.

[111] This was likely a reference to Zunun Qadiri, Liu's colleague at the Federation, who may indeed have attempted to flee to the USSR. There is, of course, no reason to suspect Liu's involvement. See Zunun and his wife's oral memoirs in Thwaites, *Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity*, vol. 2, 5.

Gulin (王谷林, 1926-2003).[112] After enumerating one by one their suspect class backgrounds and political sins, the article mixes fact and fantasy to demonstrate how each was promoted and preserved by Liu Xiaowu. When Wang Yuhu published his "poisonous weed" *Spring Flowers Opening in Late Fall*, Liu suppressed all criticism; Wang responded by calling Liu "in every way our model, our Class President." After Wang Gulin committed "numerous bad acts against the Party and socialism," Liu Xiaowu and Wang Yuhu protected him, with Liu lauding Wang Gulin as "a piece of gold." Wiping away tears of gratitude, Wang Gulin "carried out Liu's assignments to the utmost of his ability." Liu defended Téyipjan Éliev when others criticized him as a local nationalist; Liu "called him 'our man' and praised him to the skies." And when one of Abdukérim Khojaev's poems was accused of harboring an anti-Party message, Liu Xiaowu insisted that the poem "is as pure as the *aq saywa* grapes of Turpan, and emits a pleasing fragrance."

Liu appointed Éliev and Khojaev senior editors of the Uyghur and Kazakh editions of *Xinjiang Literature*; according to Wen Xianfeng, they expressed their appreciation by transforming the journals into nests of local nationalists, Soviet revisionists, and bourgeois scribblers. Liu's machinations also succeeded in making the Autonomous Region Federation of Literary and Art Circles a hotbed of anti-party, anti-socialist activity. All of these misdeeds, however, went unpunished, as Liu and his cronies praised, protected, and supported each other. When challenged during the 1964 rectification campaign, they managed to squeak by via crafty manipulation of the system; of their many criminal works, they presented only a 1962 novella for criticism, and in a meeting chaired by Liu, with the two Wangs aiding him, produced a document

[112] Wang Gulin's troubles had begun even before Liu was denounced. In mid-June, a lengthy Wen Xianfeng article had helped inaugurate the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang by attacking Wang as anti-Party and anti-socialist. "Chedi jielu he pipan Wang Gulin de fandang fanshehuizhuyi zuixing 彻底揭露和批判王谷林的反党反社会主义罪行," *Xinjang ribao* 15 June 1966: 1.

promising to "fix any errors and do better in the future."[113] Liu and his circle of writers had worked together to build official culture in Xinjiang; their shared labor now portended a shared political fate. The denunciation of Lutpulla Mutellip was thus an attack not only on Liu Xiaowu, but also on the writers grouped around him; Téyipjan Éliev, Abdukérim Khojaev, Wang Yuhu, and Wang Gulin had each participated in the project of canonizing Lutpulla.

Yet while Liu's patronage had shielded these writers in previous campaigns, it now became a liability, as the Cultural Revolution's strange calculus transformed status in the Party hierarchy into a cause for suspicion. Denunciations of Liu's circle of writers could now serve as proxy attacks against Liu, even as it was his very downfall that made them vulnerable. This mirrored the situation at the national level, where the earliest attacks on some of the Cultural Revolution's foremost targets—Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, and Zhou Yang—had taken the form of criticism directed at writers they were seen as having patronized.[114] There were echoes, too, of Stalin-era purges in the USSR, where a similar dynamic had obtained for high-ranking officials who patronized writers and artists. While the support of a party patron was a prerequisite for a successful artistic or literary career, the political ruination of that patron—particularly during the

[113] Wen, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 4. The document was "Jiuzheng cuowu, genghao qianjin 纠正错误，更好前进," from *Xinjiang wenxue* 11-12 (1964), and the novella in question was "The Driver's Wife" ("Siji de qizi 司机的妻子") by the young writer Wu Lianzeng (吴连增). Published in the January 1962 issue of *Xinjiang Literature*'s Chinese edition, "The Driver's Wife" was the subject of spirited debate throughout 1962 concerning the author's insufficiently heroic depiction of workers. The main characters in Wu's story, possessing positive, revolutionary attributes as well as flaws, represented the kind of morally complex "middle character" (*zhongjian renwu* 中间人物) targeted in the 1964 rectification campaign following Mao's remarks on art and literature in June of that year. In the early months of the Cultural Revolution, the hapless novella was once again revived as a subject of contention and was used as ammunition against Wang Gulin (e.g., Wen Xianfeng, "Chedi jielu he pipan Wang Gulin"), who had presided over *Xinjiang Literature* when the novella was printed.

[114] Douwe Fokkema, "Creativity and Politics," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 15: *The People's Republic, Part 2: Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution: 1966-1982*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 596.

Great Purge—often proved infectious, with many writers and artists following their former patrons into the penal system.[115]

For Liu Xiaowu, the contamination moved in both directions; Zhou Yang, as deputy director of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department, was one of his immediate superiors, and the mutual incrimination implied by their association ensured a constant drumbeat of references to Zhou in polemics targeting Liu. With guilt by association traveling up and down the chain of command, anyone in Xinjiang's arts and literature scene who hoped to avoid persecution was under tremendous pressure to join in the denunciations. Thus did a group of performing artists affiliated with the Xinjiang Transportation Bureau rush to declare that "Liu Xiaowu's anti-Party crimes share a single pulse with literature and art's 'old master' Zhou Yang and others."[116] And as in offices and bureaus and associations across China, many of the harshest attacks were leveled by Liu's own former subordinates, including writers he had patronized, with careerist opportunism inseparable from attackers' desperate desire to avoid censure by proving their own loyalty. The writer He Yongao (何永鰲), for example, repaid Liu Xiaowu and Wang Yuhu's decision to appoint him to the Writers' Federation in the early '60s by denouncing them both with special fervor during the Cultural Revolution.[117] A similar dynamic multiplied the denunciations faced by the leading lights of Uyghur official culture in Xinjiang, with Téyipjan Éliev, Abdukérim Khojaev, and Zunun Qadiri coming in for particular abuse.

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[115] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 114.

[116] Aptonom rayonluq qatnash nazaritining ishtin tashqiri oyun qoyush duyi, "Lyushyawwu Mawjushining edebiyat-sen'et lushyenige ochuqtin-ochuq qarshi chiqti," *Shinjang géziti* 16 Sep. 1966: 5. Wen Xianfeng was also on the case: "Liu Xiaowu is a fitting loyal manservant for the 'old master' of all anti-Party elements in literature and the arts throughout the country: Zhou Yang." "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 3.

[117] See Zheng Xingfu 郑兴富, "Yongyuan huainian Wang Yuhu tongzhi/Yi zhuming zuojia Wang Yuhu 永远怀念王玉胡同志/忆著名作家王玉胡," *Xibu xin shiji wenxue* 3 (2009): 19. Chen Bozhong, Liu's former subordinate at the Federation, also admitted to denouncing Liu during the Cultural Revolution, though he noted that his old boss harbored no hard feelings once the troubles were over. Chen Bozhong, "Huiyi Liu Xiaowu."

With no opportunity to defend themselves, Liu and his protégés lost their privileged positions, and as the Cultural Revolution progressed many of them suffered grievously. After enduring more than a year of incessant struggle sessions, Liu and some of his closest associates were sent to reform themselves through labor in Ulanbay (Wulabo), an area outside Ürümchi. They were tasked with preparing for the construction of a May 7 Cadre School, a type of reeducation institution then being established across China on the basis of Mao's May 7, 1966 directive that cadres should simultaneously be workers, farmers, and soldiers. At Ulanbay, Téyipjan Éliev distinguished himself making mud bricks, while Abdukérim Khojaev became skilled at watering plants and baking *nan*, the traditional Uyghur flatbread. Wang Gulin specialized in building stoves and heating flues, and Wang Yuhu worked as a carpenter before being reassigned to the kitchen. Liu Xiaowu, the oldest, was put to work raising pigs.[118]

In January 1967, inspired by their comrades in Shanghai and elsewhere, radical Red Guards in Xinjiang attempted to seize power in the region. While Wang Enmao was able to retain his hold on most of the province, the rebels did occupy some parts of Ürümchi—including, crucially, the regional newspaper. Radicals inside the newspaper office, allied with Second Red Headquarters groups on the outside, began publishing the *Xinjiang Gazette*'s "Rebel Edition" (*zaozihao* 造字号). The insurgent newspaper was only the beginning, as factional fighting spread across a region over which the CCP had painstakingly established Chinese authority over the previous seventeen years. After looking on nervously for a few weeks, the central government in Beijing, wary of Soviet designs on the increasingly destabilized border region, decided to act. In February, Zhou Enlai decreed that conditions in Xinjiang were "not yet ripe" for a full

[118] Chen Bozhong, "Ta shi yi zuo wenxue de fengluan—Zhuisi qianbei zuojia Wang Yuhu 他是一座文学的峰峦——追思前辈作家王玉胡," *Xibu xin shiji wenxue* 3 (2009): 10; Chen Bozhong, "Wo jiyi zhong de 'Lao Tie.'" For more on the May 7 Cadre Schools, see Harry Harding, *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), 280-84.

revolutionary seizure of power, and ordered Xinjiang's military to reestablish the party-state's control.[119]

In a testament to mass media's emergence as the key mobilizing tool in Xinjiang over the previous decades, the military moved first to establish control over the offices of the *Xinjiang Gazette* and the Xinjiang Radio Station. Early March saw the publication of the newspaper's first "Military Edition" (*junzihao* 军字号). In May, however, rebels once more attacked the newspaper office, and a pitched battle broke out as thousands of volunteers and Red Guards wielded stones and tiles in a battle for control of the *Xinjiang Gazette*. The Rebels gained the upper hand and once more set up shop in the newspaper office, where they began publishing *Xinjiang Gazette: Red Telegraph* (*Xinjiang ribao: hongse dianxun* 新疆日报：红色电讯) before moving their operations to Xinjiang University, a rebel stronghold. The military meanwhile continued publication of its own edition.

The newspaper battles took place against a backdrop of frequent armed struggle in Ürümchi and then across Xinjiang from early 1967 through autumn 1968, as Wang Enmao's allies sought to preserve the existing party-state hierarchy and the radicals of the Second Red Headquarters worked to seize power for their own faction. The central government repeatedly ordered military units in Xinjiang to put down fighting in Kashgar, Khotan, and elsewhere; these interventions sometimes led to serious armed clashes with other military units sympathetic to the rebels. It was not until September 1968, when Xinjiang followed the rest of China in uniting the major factions under a regional Revolutionary Committee, that fighting decreased and some

[119] Zhu, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang shi*, 310-16; Catris, "The Cultural Revolution from the Edge," 141; Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区地方志编纂委员会 and "Xinjiang tongzhi: baoye zhi" bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆通志第七十八卷•报业志》编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang tongzhi di qishiba juan: Baoye zhi* 新疆通志第七十八卷：报业志 (Ürümchi: Xinjang renmin chubanshe, 2009) 58-59.

semblance of order was restored to the region.[120] Sporadic violence did continue for some time between Wang Enmao stalwarts and splinter groups of radical Red Guards, but gradually abated as Wang was increasingly sidelined by the new Revolutionary Committee.[121] The ebbing of factional violence was reflected in the press, as the regional newspaper's dueling versions—the military edition and the rebel *Red Telegraph*—were finally reunited under the *Xinjiang Gazette* masthead the same month the Revolutionary Committee was established.[122]

Even in the relative remoteness of Ulanbay, where Xinjiang's dethroned cultural elite labored in exile in the outskirts of Ürümchi, gunshots could sometimes be heard from the capital throughout 1967. In early autumn, an armed band of Red Guards arrived in Ulanbay and surrounded Téyipjan Éliev, Abdukérim Khojaev, and Wang Gulin at the shack where they were staying.[123] Where, they demanded, was Liu Xiaowu? When Éliev, Khojaev, and Wang responded that Liu was still at the construction site, the Red Guards strode off to arrest him. In winter 1970, Téyipjan Éliev was singled out for further punishment when the Campaign to Cleanse the Class Ranks, a vast and bloody purge orchestrated across China by the new Revolutionary Committees, identified Éliev as embodying a "contradiction between the people and its enemies" (*diwo maodun* 敵我矛盾). Expelled from the Ulanbay cadre school he had helped build, Éliev was exiled to Guchung County, where he worked in the fields 200 kilometers east of Ürümchi. Amidst the blanket denunciations of the campaign, his family was likewise sent to the countryside.[124]

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[120] Zhu, *Ershi shiji Xinjiang shi*, 315-16.
[121] McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 227-37. Wang, after a decade of dominating Xinjiang's party, civil, and military bureaucracies, was first demoted to vice chair and then finally squeezed out of Xinjiang's government altogether.
[122] *Baoye zhi*, 59.
[123] Wang Gulin 王谷林, "Zhengshi jie huang cheng lü shi—he Tieyifujiang tongyou Guangdong 正是桔黄橙绿时—和铁依甫江同游广东," *Zhongguo xibu wenxue* 3 (1989): 81; Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 3.
[124] Wang Gulin, "Yuan nin zai zuguo," 30. On the Campaign to Cleanse the Class Ranks (*qingli jieji duiwu* 清理階

Hundreds of miles away, in a penal camp on the edge of the Tarim Desert, Zunun Qadiri was tasked with raising pigs—a purposely degrading task for a Muslim—and collecting manure door-to-door. He had been imprisoned since 1962 on suspicion of attempted defection to the USSR during the mass emigration from Ili and Tarbaghatay, and with the onset of the Cultural Revolution his treatment grew still harsher. Paraded around as a pro-Soviet "revisionist," Qadiri was beaten, his teeth broken, his face covered in blue paint that blinded him in one eye, and his works hung around his neck. Like many intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution, he was forced to live in a filthy "cowshed," and he grew emaciated after years of hard labor.[125] Ibrahim Turdi, denounced in 1958 as a rightist, had spent nearly a decade in the political wilderness by the time the Cultural Revolution began; his suffering likewise deepened as the country descended into chaos, and he died in custody in 1971.[126] Nim Shéhit, after years penning odes to the People's Liberation Army and otherwise faithfully serving the party, was stripped of his titles once the Cultural Revolution began. Despite his fragile health, the sixty-year-old poet was sent to perform heavy labor in a commune near his hometown in Bay County, where he died in 1972 after six years of humiliation and abuse.[127]

Yet amidst all this, with the Ili network in tatters and Ili elites reeling from the violence and bureaucratic disintegration, the two Uyghur members of the new CCP Xinjiang Standing Committee established in 1971 were both ETR veterans from Ili.[128] Such was the residual overrepresentation of Ili in the Xinjiang party-state, even after a decade and a half of ceaseless campaigns. Amidst the atmosphere of suspicion and mutual accusations, some Ili intellectuals

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級隊伍), see MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 253-62.
[125] Aihaiti Tuerdi 艾海提•吐尔迪, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian 丁香花小院里的怀念," tr. Zhang Shirong 张世荣 *Minzu wenxue* 5 (1999): 66-67; Thwaites, *Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity*, vol. 2, 4-8.
[126] Sultan Mahmut Kaşgarlı, *Çağdaş Uygur Türkleri'nin edebiyatı* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998), 175-85.
[127] Shérip Niyaz Khushtar, *Shinjang yéqinqi zaman tarikhida ötken shekhsler*, 296; Sultan Mahmut, "Nimxeḫit we uning ədibiy ijadiyiti tooɣrisida," *Xinjiang ədibiyat-sən'iti* 9 (1979): 89.
[128] The two officials were Seypidin Ezizi and Zahir Sawdanov. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power*, 261.

still sought to maintain their personal ties with other members of the Ili network. Even in his desert exile, Zunun Qadiri maintained a correspondence with Téyipjan Éliev. By 1973, Éliev had managed to return to Ili, and Qadiri poured out his sorrows to the younger poet via letters on crumpled scrap paper. Perhaps Éliev say a few words to the authorities on Qadiri's behalf, the old playwright hesitantly suggested.[129]

Éliev had by then proven himself something of an expert at writing his way back into the authorities' good graces, and by the following year was busy editing the musical spectacular *Long Live the People's Commune* (*Yashisun khelq gongshési*).[130] In these later, less frenzied years of the Cultural Revolution, a number of other denounced Uyghur intellectuals likewise found ways to make themselves useful to the party. Abdukérim Khojaev, with his trademark dark humor, complained in an autumn 1973 letter to a friend that "it's hard for me now to redirect my energies to creative work; as soon as I take pen to hand my pen involuntarily starts writing self-criticisms [Uy. *jentaw*, from Ch. *jiantao* 检讨], annoying me to no end." By the end of the next year, though, he was hard at work on a state-sponsored project to translate *Dream of the Red Chamber* into Uyghur.[131]

The political and cultural elite were not the Cultural Revolution's only targets in Xinjiang; indeed, the movement was perfectly capable of devouring its own participants if their ideological devotion was suspect. Fifteen-year-old Tursun Ershidin, Lutpulla Mutellip's future biographer, arrived at school one day to find the main hall draped with a big-character poster denouncing him for preserving books designated for destruction. Soon afterward, another poster pronounced him "summoner of the ghost of that stinking corpse, L. Mutellip," and alleged that he was

[129] Aihaiti Tuerdi, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian," 64-65.
[130] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 284.
[131] Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1999), 74-75.

collecting Lutpulla's works in order to obstruct the revolution. At a Red Guard meeting several days later, Tursun was deprived of his red armband and expelled from the Red Guards; his classmates and friends began turning a cold shoulder to him. A delegation of Red Guards arrived at Tursun's house and confiscated the books he had painstakingly rescued, and at the crossroads of his neighborhood, consigned them to the flames they had originally been destined for.[132]

While the campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s had thinned the ranks of Uyghur public figures acceptable to the CCP, the party-state had promoted its remaining Uyghur role models all the more vigorously. Once the Cultural Revolution began, however, the level of ideological purity and malleability demanded by the state—or rather, by the Cultural Revolutionaries who were supplanting the state—grew so high that even Lutpulla Mutellip, long the party's paragon of Uyghur socialist virtue, no longer met the standard. As the old cultural elites were banished and their patronage networks unraveled, the socialist Uyghur canon they had helped create was driven underground. With the denunciation of Lutpulla and the few remaining state-endorsed Uyghur cultural figures figures, the dwindling canon of CCP-approved Uyghur role models had finally been exhausted. Xinjiang's rulers were thus left without a Uyghur hero who might exhort his people to meet the ideological demands of the moment; so they invented one.

[132] Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip*, 12-15. The destruction of print materials during this period was so complete that copies of Lutpulla's popular 1956 collection *Love and Loathing*, printed ten years before the Cultural Revolution in a run of 20,000 (a large print run for Uyghur literature), are exceedingly difficult to find in Xinjiang today; copies are unavailable even in the regional library. L. Mutellip, *Muhebbet hem nepret*, ed. Muhemmet Sidiq Noruzow (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956). As with many of the volumes mentioned in these pages, I was able to locate this book only through perusal of private collections in China and abroad, as well as library collections in multiple countries, notably Kazakhstan.

THE UYGHUR LEI FENG

As Maoist radicalism spiralled toward its zenith in the years before the Cultural Revolution, pressure increased on the central and local propaganda bureaus to promote Mao's cult of personality via a series of saintly Maoist martyrs. The ur-martyr was the semi-mythical Chinese soldier Lei Feng (雷锋, 1940-62), a selfless figure who died tragically after a brief life devoted to public service and the study of Mao's works. Lei was the posthumous focus of an intense nation-wide propaganda campaign, incorporating posters, literary works, study sessions, and more. A central artifact in the campaign was Lei's massively reprinted diary, a heavily doctored document that one scholar of Chinese literature describes as "a semi-literary work featuring a fictional protagonist constructed from abstract concepts."[133] Lei's early death made him a perfect and perfectly malleable martyr-hero for Chinese youth. In Xinjiang, however, Cultural Revolution propagandists faced a problem. Lei Feng, and the various other super-revolutionary martyrs then being promoted throughout most of China, were Han.[134] Efforts to promote Lei Feng among Xinjiang's native communities had limited impact, even as the party-state employed its most skilled cultural personnel, with Abdukérim Khojaev preparing a Uyghur translation of He Jing's epic poem *Song of Lei Feng* (*Lei Feng zhi ge* 雷锋之歌).[135] Xinjiang's Uyghur population remained overwhelmingly monolingual and unconnected to Han culture; despite official propaganda to the contrary, genuine integration between Uyghurs and Han was minimal. As in the early 1950s, Xinjiang's rulers needed a Uyghur face to promote their policies. Those

[133] Xian Wang, "The Construction of the Image/Myth of a Martyr in the Cultural Revolution: An Interpretation/Demythicization of the Song of Ouyang Hai," *Comparative Literature Studies* 52.1 (2015): 155.
[134] On Mongol martyrs in Mao-era Inner Mongolia, see Uradyn E. Bulag, "Models and Moralities: The Parable of the Two 'Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland,'" *The China Journal* 42 (1999): 21-41.
[135] Tehrir bölümi, "Sha'ir Abdukérim Khoja wapatigha teziyiler," *Tarim* 5 (1988): 39; Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide*, 26.

policies were in many ways hostile to local particularity, and increasingly revolved around the deification of Mao; but every deity needs saints.

Tall and brawny, invariably depicted with jaw firmly clenched, Qadir Hézim looked every inch the sort of unflinching, unhesitating man of action so valorized during the Cultural Revolution. According to the countless articles eulogizing him in Xinjiang publications of that era, Qadir Hézim was born in Peyziwat County to a family which "from his father and grandfather's time had always been poor"—an impeccable class pedigree. Cruelly exploited by the landlords whose fields they worked, Qadir's family was eventually forced to split up to survive. His mother and two older brothers moved elsewhere to make ends meet, while Qadir and his father became indentured servants for a landowner who took pleasure in beating them at every opportunity. After Xinjiang was liberated by the CCP in 1949, Qadir's family was reunited, and soon, through land reform, received their own plot of land to farm. Filled with gratitude to the party and seeking to ensure that the people of Xinjiang would never again fall victim to oppression, Qadir joined the army in 1950. His subsequent career, as retold in Uyghur publications beginning in the mid-1960s, consisted essentially of the reification of party directives and Maoist morality. While an individual named Qadir Hézim does seem to have lived, the details of his life are now difficult to recover amidst his elaborate mythos; and it is the Qadir Hézim myth—its genesis, purpose, reception—that will be our concern here. A few anecdotes will serve to give a sense of Qadir's legend, and of the ways in which it connected with the authorities' propaganda needs of the moment.[136]

[136] Shinjang jama'et khewpsizligi zungduyining ikhtiyariy mukhbirlar punkiti and Qeshqer jama'et khewpsizligi daduyining ikhtiyariy mukhbirlar punkiti, "Qaynam örkishidiki sadiq yürek: Maralwéshi nahiyilik jama'et khewpsizligi duyining duyjangi gungchendang ezasi yoldash Qadir Hézim toghrisida," *Shinjang yashliri* 2 (1966): 15-25, 28; Turghun Semer, "Qadir Hézimning qoralini menggü ching tutup, uning qehriman rohigha warisliq qilimiz," *Shinjang yashliri* 4 (1966): 32.

In the army, Qadir persuaded his comrades to burn cow dung for heat and return their unused coal money to the treasury, thereby beautifully illustrating the CCP's ongoing exhortations to economize state resources. In 1955, Qadir's zeal for conserving state property took on heroic proportions. On learning that a commune in Peyziwat had caught fire, Qadir rushed to the scene and threw himself into a burning building. Ignoring the flames lapping at his clothing and his comrades' calls for him to save himself, he managed to rescue three state-owned barrels of alcohol from the fire. Qadir similarly instantiated the party's injunction to put service to the state before family ties. On leave from the army to visit his mother, who had fallen seriously ill, Qadir heard that a criminal had escaped from the commune where his mother lived. He sprang immediately into action, successfully catching and turning in the fugitive. Busy fighting crime, Qadir was unable to see his ailing mother before his leave time ended; but he returned uncomplainingly to base. Conversely, in 1959, during a "love the people" campaign in his brigade, Qadir met an ailing, childless seventy-year-old woman, and "treated her as if she were his own mother, washing her head, brushing her hair, fixing her home, and giving her eight yuan from his modest funds so she could buy firewood." Having placed state duty before visiting his own sick mother, Qadir spared no effort in fulfilling the filial imperatives of this state campaign. A couple years later, after his unit had relocated to Maralwéshi, he showed similar kindness to a local eighty-six-year-old woman, who dubbed him "Chairman Mao's good fighter."

While much of Qadir Hézim's biography consisted of generic saintly works like these, differing little from the exploits attributed to Lei Feng and other Maoist martyrs in inner China, elements of Qadir's legend were particular to the propaganda needs of Xinjiang's authorities. In the mess hall, Qadir supervised the cooking to ensure it conformed to minority soldiers' eating habits while also being tasty to Han soldiers: the very model of a Chinese Uyghur patriot. The

gauzy biographies of Qadir that appeared in Xinjiang's periodicals during the Cultural Revolution carefully surrounded him with comrades of multiple ethnic groups, proudly telegraphing ethnic unity under a homogenizing Maoist banner. In general, however, Qadir Hézim's story, which like Lei Feng's can be analyzed as a semi-literary amalgamation of fact and fiction, exemplified the literary principle promoted in China's minority regions from the early days of CCP rule: national in form, socialist in content. Mao Zedong's works were thus Qadir's constant companions, and Qadir spent considerable time helping less educated soldiers read them. Conveniently, he regularly recorded his reflections on the Chairman's works in his diary. Heeding Mao's advice to learn from Lei Feng and other martyrs, Qadir Hézim declared to the men in his unit, "Everyone dies sooner or later... If the people should ever need me to fight for them, I shall be a hero."

In July 1965, following several days of heavy rain, Maralwéshi County's Keldiweg Reservoir sprang a leak and threatened to flood the surrounding countryside. Qadir Hézim mobilized as soon as he heard the news, ignoring the recent flaring up of his chronic stomach ailment. (Ill health seems to have been a nearly ubiquitous condition for young role models in Maoist China.) Half the agricultural land in Maralwéshi (now Maralbéshi) was irrigated with water from Keldiweg, and nearby communes would be threatened with flooding if the reservoir collapsed. Qadir organized his work unit for rapid response, and the following day they joined more than a thousand people—of all ethnicities, contemporary sources repeatedly stress—in working to stem the leak. A deep pool had formed from the water gushing out of the reservoir, and a whirlpool swirled dangerously where the water hit the pool. When the young student Ablet Khojapiz fell into the pool and cried out for help, Qadir Hézim flung off his jacket and plunged into the foaming water, calling, "Do not fear, little brother, I'll save you!"

Qadir managed to get hold of Ablet and push his head above water, allowing him to breathe. Just then, though, another wave crashed into the pair, pushing them apart. Qadir once again swam toward Ablet, and pushed the now unconscious boy out of the whirlpool; a Han comrade named Xue Pingchang then pulled Ablet to shore. Qadir Hézim, though, was exhausted, and his stomach was hurting. The model (*beshte yakhshi*) worker Dang Zhongxiao, as well as several Uyghur boys from a local elementary school, jumped into the water in an effort to save Qadir. (Each stage of Ablet Khojapiz's rescue fortuitously involved a careful balance of Uyghur and Han rescuers.) The waves were fierce, though, and Qadir shouted at them to forget about him and swim away from the whirlpool. Before Qadir could finish speaking, a huge wave crashed over the student Naman Aman, knocking him off balance and threatening to sweep him into the whirlpool. With the last of his strength, Qadir managed to push a plank toward Naman, allowing him to swim safely out of harm's way. But Qadir had no strength left to save himself, and slipped to a martyr's death beneath the waves.[137]

While Qadir Hézim had lived his life in virtuous obscurity, his death in 1965 marked the beginning of his canonization, in both the literary and the saintly senses of the word. The first commemorations of Qadir appeared in the months leading up to the Cultural Revolution, as propaganda on Maoist martyrs proliferated across China. Once the book burnings began and Uyghur figures like Lutpulla Mutellip disappeared from the pages of Xinjiang's publications, Qadir Hézim was celebrated in every available venue. Eulogies, articles, paintings, songs, and poems extolled his deeds; his story blared from the loudspeakers set up across Xinjiang's cities and villages; the two leaders of Xinjiang's party-state, Wang Enmao and Seypidin Ezizi, honored

[137] Shinjang jama'et khewpsizligi zungduyining ikhtiyari mukhbirlar punkiti, "Qaynam örkishidiki sadiq yürek," 12-15. See also Ablet Khojapiz's account of being saved by Qadir Hézim. Ablet Khojapiz, "Uninggha okhshash yashaymen, uninggha okhshash ishleymen, uninggha okhshash küresh qilimen," *Shinjang yashliri* 3 (1966): 3-5.

him with handwritten dedications.[138] *Xinjiang Youth* (*Shinjang yashliri*), then and for decades after a key publication in the presentation of role models to Uyghur youth, devoted space to Qadir Hézim in at least five issues in the first half of 1966, including excerpts from his (likely forged) diary, which closely echoed Lei Feng's (certainly reworked) diary. Other revolutionary

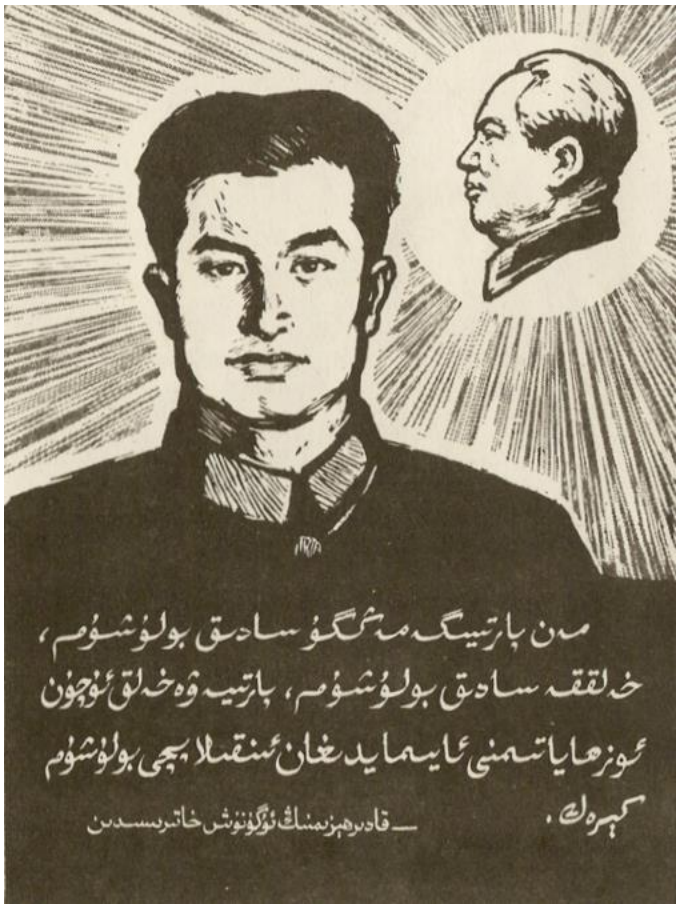


Figure 7: "I must always be loyal to the party, I must be loyal to the people, and I must be a revolutionary unafraid to give his life for the party and the people. —Qadir Hézim's study diary"
Shinjang edibiyati*, April 1966, inside cover*

martyrs were celebrated as well, most prominently Bulbulqan, a Kazakh herder girl who overcame severe rheumatism to die a glorious death saving state-owned cows and horses from an

[138] Seypidin Ezizi and Wang Enmao's dedications can be found, among other places, in *Shinjang yéziq özgertishi* 2 (1966): 2.

avalanche. Like Qadir Hézim substituting cow dung for coal, Bulbulqan poignantly exemplified the CCP's oft-repeated directive to save state resources. Like Qadir Hézim, she was honored with cartoons, poems, articles, and handwritten dedications from Xinjiang's top party leadership.[139]

Much effort was placed into assuring these martyrs' rightful—and exclusive—place in the canon. In the same article that denounced Lutpulla Mutellip and revoked his role model status, Wen Xianfeng accused Liu Xiaowu of disparaging the party's new role models. "It's not worth dying for a few cows and sheep!" Liu is said to have exclaimed when presented with a young writer's play about Bulbulqan. Having viewed a play based on Lei Feng's life, Liu incredulously remarked, "Each person has their own occupation. If everyone runs around doing good deeds all the time, won't there be chaos?"[140] Model worker Chen Quanwen declared in the pages of the *Xinjiang Gazette* that Liu's derisive comments about Bulbulqan constituted "an insult snarled against us workers, farmers, and soldiers," and expressed confidence that "the forward-turning wheel of the era will grind the poisonous reptile Liu Xiaowu into powder."[141] The sense of a new canon displacing the old was palpable; Qadir Hézim was regularly referred to in publications as "the eagle in the whirlpool waves" or "the loyal heart in the whirlpool waves," calling immediately to mind Lutpulla Mutellip's well-known pseudonym Whirlpool Wave (*Qaynam Örkishi*).

The new pantheon of super-revolutionary Uyghur martyrs does seem to have found some purchase among young Uyghurs. "While I used to imagine admiringly the heroes they read us about from the newspapers," one Uyghur author wrote later in an autobiographical novel, "the

[139] *Shinjang edebiyati* 4 (1966), passim. Wang Enmao's dedication is on p. 12. Also *Shinjang yashliri* 6 (1966): 2-15 (Arabic-script section) and 4-5 (y*éngi yéziq* section).
[140] Wen Xianfeng, "Hemmimiz qozghilip," 2.
[141] Chen Quanwen, "Qehrimanlarni qarilashqa yol qoymaymiz," *Shinjang géziti* 25 Aug. 1966: 5.

heroes were far away, in the lands of the Han." In school, though, he learned songs about Qadir Hézim and other martyrs from Xinjiang. "From Uyghurs, too, there were heroes."[142] A Uyghur man who grew up in Kashgar during the Cultural Revolution, when "learning from Qadir Hézim" sessions were routine in school, recalled in an interview that during that period he took the initiative to visit Qadir Hézim's grave while on a family trip to Qadir's hometown of Maralwéshi.[143]

Xinjiang's print organs, then, did not retreat from the realm of Uyghur official culture during Maoism's last decade; to the contrary, they were deeply involved in creating, promoting, and defending a new Maoist Uyghur pantheon. To some degree, print was employed to replace a tradition that had been transmitted by manuscript and word of mouth; namely, the pantheon of saints and martyrs that has historically occupied a central place in the folkways and beliefs of Xinjiang's Uyghur community. Pilgrimage to saints' shrines has for centuries been a key element of communal belonging and self-definition among the people now known as Uyghurs, and hagiographies were a cornerstone of Turkic-language literary production in Xinjiang into the early decades of the twentieth century.[144] As outlined in chapters two and three, Islamic saints were supplemented and in some circles partially supplanted between the 1930s and the 1950s by a new canon of secular Uyghur heroes, worked out largely by Ili intellectuals drawing on nationalist and socialist ideologies. During the Cultural Revolution, this secular canon was in turn displaced in the public sphere by a roster of Uyghur martyrs to a new faith, the Mao cult. Yet while the Cultural Revolutionaries called for the destruction of old customs and culture, they sometimes drew heavily on them in their efforts to remake the world.

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[142] Ghulam Osman Zulpiqar, *Qehrimanliq dewri (roman)* (unpublished mss., 2012), 24-25. The song's chorus went, "Qadir Hézim, may you live forever, your name becoming legend/ It is set deep in our hearts, our hope is to live like you."
[143] Personal communication, Ürümchi, July 2013.
[144] Rian Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), passim.

We have seen that the rise of the ultra-Maoist Uyghur pantheon in the mid-1960s was directly linked to the official anathematization of the preexisting secular, socialist Uyghur pantheon. Less apparent but no less important was the ideological space emptied by the CCP's pressure on the Islamic pantheon in Xinjiang. Maoist policy had even in the early 1950s begun to disrupt the transmission of the Islamic manuscript literature in which hagiography played such a central role; the Cultural Revolution meant the wholesale burning of these manuscripts, of which only a small portion survived, buried underground or preserved in foreign libraries and archives. Yet the avowedly atheistic Maoist martyrs who replaced this canon in Xinjiang seemed to borrow in more ways than one from the realm of the sacred. The Islamically-inflected word *qurban* (martyr) was widely used, as it had been for earlier socialist heroes like Lutpulla Mutellip. Qadir Hézim's purported study diary notes his intention to make Mao Zedong thought the *qibliname* of all his actions, making reference to the direction (*qibla*) in which Muslims pray in order to face Mecca.[145] If Mao was the central deity of his own cult, and his writings its scripture, Qadir Hézim and Bulbulqan were local saints and emanations of Maoist virtue.

Other hints of the numinous drew not from Xinjiang's Islamic tradition, but from imagery then used throughout China in connection with the Mao cult. Qadir Hézim and Bulbulan's faces often emanate a powerful glow, especially in the many drawings which depict them as posthumously present in spirit among the living. "The Song of the Eagle of the Waves," a hymn to Qadir Hézim written for two voices and printed in *Xinjiang Youth*, eulogizes its subject with decidedly otherworldly imagery. "Qadir was an eagle with diamond swords for wings/ His life scattered light like the sun risen at dawn."[146] In some ways, these suggestions of the supernatural would seem at odds with Xinjiang's Islamic tradition. Whereas Bolshevik posters of Lenin drew

[145] "Qadir Hézimning ögünüsh khatirisidin," *Shinjang yashliri* 4 (1966): 36.
[146] Shinjang yashliri editors, "Dolqun bürküti toghrisida nakhsha (ikki kishilik kueyber)," *Shinjang yashliri* 5 (1966): 57-60.

heavily on pre-revolutionary Russian iconography,[147] Islamic tradition in Xinjiang had long proscribed the pictoral representation of human form. Furthermore, the cult of revolutionary martyrs was above all a cult of youth. Bulbulqan seems to have died before reaching adulthood, and Qadir Hézim, though his official biography would seem to place him at middle age, is nearly always portrayed visually as a young man. Twentieth-century mass movements often placed special emphasis on the mobilization and indoctrination of youth, and their chosen role models reflected this, from Pavlik Morozov in the USSR to Horst Wessel in Nazi Germany. Cultural Revolution martyrs in Xinjiang and throughout China fit squarely in this tradition, as indeed did prior Maoist heroes like Lutpulla Mutellip. Conversely, there was no tendency in Xinjiang's premodern Islamic tradition to portray saints as youthful.

Qadir Hézim, Bulbulqan, and other comparable Maoist martyrs in Xinjiang can be understood as heirs both to the secular socialist canon that immediately preceded them and, via that canon, to the earlier Islamic saints of the region. This inheritance of religious precedent was nothing new among totalizing secular ideologies. The French Revolution brought with it the Cult of Reason, complete with temples and festivals dedicated to philosophical truth; the Soviet Union endeavored to replace Christmas with New Year and Orthodox icons with Lenin Corners. Marxism was from the beginning a millenarian ideology, heir to the monotheistic traditions it sought to replace; so too were its Leninist and Maoist offshoots. As we have seen in the preceding two chapters, religious discourses are open to appropriation and reinterpretation by nationalist movements, just as the cultural resources of nationalism can be repurposed in the creation of socialist culture. The Cultural Revolution, despite its avowed opposition to prior traditions, was nonetheless accompanied by the invention of new traditions that in some ways

[147] Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*, Enlarged Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 69-70.

closely echoed their predecessors. In Xinjiang, this process comprised a local variation on a national theme.

Yet despite these gestures at localization, this new Maoist pantheon ultimately proved limited in its plausibility and appeal. Aside from their names and certain minor biographical details, there was relatively little in the portrayal of Uyghur Cultural Revolution martyrs to differentiate them from their Han counterparts. Those biographical details which were particular to Xinjiang clustered around the authorities' propaganda needs vis-à-vis the region's native populations: interethnic solidarity under the Maoist banner, the protection by herders of state-owned livestock, and other similar concerns. Whereas the CCP's preferred Uyghur heroes in the 1950s were deeply rooted in Uyghur culture and in some cases preceded CCP rule, by the mid-1960s any such hybridity was regarded as suspect by the state. As Maoist policy began radicalizing in the late 1950s, the party-state's assimilationist drive in Xinjiang accelerated, and Uyghur official culture and literature were ever more closely bound to trends emanating from Beijing.[148] The Cultural Revolution's Uyghur heroes were the apotheosis of this trend, with only the occasional nod to Uyghur culture or identity. This lack of purchase in Uyghur particularity explains to some degree the rapid disappearance of these heroes from Uyghur public life once the state lost interest in promoting them following the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Despite a decade of vigorous state promotion of these new martyrs, they exhibited little staying power after the Cultural Revolutionaries lost power in 1976. References to Qadir Hézim and Bulbulqan are almost completely absent from post-1970s Uyghur publications; Uyghurs and Kazakhs who grew up after the Cultural Revolution rarely know their names. Once the Chinese

[148] As Michael Friederich puts it, "It was only after the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s that… for the first time in history East Turkestan, or the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as it was called now, was physically and culturally cut off from its West and annexed to the Chinese sphere." Michael Friederich, "Literary Representations of Xinjiang Realities," in *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*, ed. Ildikó Bellér-Hann, et al. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 102.

party-state abandoned the Mao cult along with Mao-style socialism, characters like Qadir Hézim and Bulbulqan lost their propaganda value and faded rapidly from the state-sponsored canon. Uyghur writers and readers, for their part, seem to have made no attempt to retain or repurpose these characters. Saintly Maoist martyrs like Qadir Hézim and Bulbulqan lacked plausibility or appeal for many Uyghurs, and offered little in the way of inspiration or instruction in the dawning reform era. While figures like Lei Feng continue to hold some attraction for Han populations for purposes of nostalgia, irony, or even advertising,[149] the strange canon of the Cultural Revolution is a fading memory for Uyghurs. Instead, as we will see in the final chapter, Uyghur writers and intellectuals in the reform era reached for another Communist martyr in their efforts to recover a usable Uyghur canon.

[149] Cf. Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

5. REMAKING UYGHUR CULTURE IN REFORM-ERA CHINA

This final chapter analyzes Uyghur national culture in the reform era, and considers the ways in which Uyghur cultural actors have since the end of the Cultural Revolution both recovered and repurposed the Ili canon. Soon after Deng Xiaoping's reform program got off the ground in the late 1970s, most of the Uyghur intellectuals, writers, and officials denounced during the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated and once more permitted to publish and to hold official posts—some of them for the first time in two or even three decades. Surviving Ili intellectuals reemerged and contributed significantly to resurrecting the Ili canon; but an even larger role in the resuscitation of Ili-based official culture was played by Uyghur writers and intellectuals from other parts of Xinjiang. A key focus of their efforts was Lutpulla Mutellip, whose starring role in Uyghur culture during the reform era grew to eclipse even the extensive attention he had been accorded in the two decades after his 1945 death. Lutpulla's reputation provides an organizing theme for this chapter, and a means of exploring how the trends analyzed in previous chapters were rearticulated and redirected in the reform era.

The first section of the chapter outlines the return to dominance of Xinjiang's old party-state elite following the end of the Cultural Revolution. The section focuses in particular on poetry and debates around poetry, a genre which in the 1980s as in previous decades proved central to the negotiation of modern Uyghur identity. It will be shown that from the beginning of the reform era, the unprecedented destruction of the Cultural Revolution lent a sense of chronological depth, classic status, and even timelessness to an Ili-dominated Uyghur culture that was in fact quite recent in origin, and which just decades before had been presented by its own exponents as aggressively modern and a conscious displacement of tradition. By the 1980s,

writers and intellectuals from southern and eastern Xinjiang—where Ili intellectuals might have been viewed as competitors several decades before, and with disdain several decades before that—had come to accept the Ili canon as Uyghur culture. Looking back across the void of 1966-1976, the cultural innovations of the mid-twentieth century seemed by the 1980s the most authentic Uyghur legacy available, one that any attempt to revive Uyghur national culture must build on.

The second section traces the recovery and redefinition of Lutpulla Mutellip's legacy in the early reform era. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, nation-building Uyghur writers, working within the limits of free expression in reform-era China, successfully reclaimed heroes like Lutpulla Mutellip—promoted in the 1950s as Chinese patriots and socialist internationalists—for a specifically Uyghur literary pantheon. The party-state, while no longer much interested in Lutpulla, considered him unthreatening; and Lutpulla already enjoyed canonical status with the Uyghur populace. All that remained was to redefine the meaning of this cherished figure.[1] Poems, stories, songs, and ceremonies all played a role in this redefinition; of particular importance was a genre that was new to Xinjiang Uyghur literature in the 1980s: the novel. Particular attention will be paid in this section to Abdulla Talip's *Whirlpool Wave*, a 1982 novel that helped shape a major Uyghur literary genre as well as the reform-era reputation of Lutpulla Mutellip. A close reading of this novel will demonstrate the ends to which historical fiction was employed by Uyghur writers in reform-era Xinjiang, and will likewise illustrate how authors beyond the Ili network—like Aqsu-born Abdulla Talip—worked to claim Lutpulla as a pan-Uyghur hero.

[1] An interesting comparison can be made to the Mongol communist figure Ulanhu. Bulag argues that Ulanhu, while recognized by many Mongols as an imperfect national hero, is nonetheless a hero which the Chinese state allows them to have; thus Mongols choose to canonize him. Uradyn Erden Bulag, "The cult of Ulanhu in Inner Mongolia: History, memory, and the making of national heroes," *Central Asian Survey* 17.1 (1998): 11-33.

These authors, and many more like them, took the Ili-centric official culture of the mid-twentieth century as the standard on which Uyghur national culture would continue to be built.

The third section, by following the thread of Lutpulla's reputation from the Republican era through the Mao era to the reform era, brings to light important historical continuities across what this study terms the 1978 divide. This bifurcation in narratives of modern Chinese history is brought into relief by a consideration of Uyghur literary history as conceptualized in the reform era. While the Uyghur poetic styles developed in the mid-twentieth century were regularly portrayed in the 1980s as timeless Uyghur tradition, Uyghur prose fiction was depicted as an unprecedented reform-era phenomenon. This was entirely in keeping with the party-state's efforts to present China's history as starting afresh with the reform era, echoing the party's successful earlier efforts to establish 1949 as a dividing line in Chinese historiography. While the scale and success of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms seemed to support the narrative of a clean break with the Mao era, this section will demonstrate that cultural and literary history can bridge the 1978 divide and locate precursors of reform-era Chinese culture and literature in the middle decades of the twentieth century. In particular, the section works to bridge this divide by considering the origins of historical and biographical fiction in Xinjiang, a genre that scholars like Gardner Bovingdon and Rian Thum have identified as highly significant in reform-era efforts to define a modern Uyghur identity and communal narrative. This section traces the genre's literary lineage from its Soviet antecedents to its adoption in the Eastern Turkestan Republic, and from its refashioning in Maoist Xinjiang to its ultimate flowering in the reform era. This exploration of the genre's genealogy suggests that existing scholarship on the pre-socialist and reform-era origins of contemporary Uyghur culture and communal self-definition can be profitably synthesized with a closer focus on the precedents of the late Republican and Mao eras.

The chapter's brief concluding section uses several vignettes to examine the changing meaning of Lutpulla Mutellip's reputation from the early 1990s through the mid-2010s, and to thereby offer a preliminary perspective on the development of Uyghur official culture and national identity in the latter decades of the reform era. Two signal events at the turn of the 1990s augured a shift in relations between the Chinese state and its Uyghur population: the June 1989 Tiananmen Square events and the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. Spooked by the collapse of the world's first socialist state as well as unrest at home, the party-state has from the 1990s turned increasingly to a Chinese nationalism closely linked to the country's Han majority. As the Uyghur community has been progressively excluded from this overarching narrative, Uyghur writers and intellectuals have busied themselves with developing their own nationalist ideologies. Lutpulla Mutellip, even with his socialist, Chinese, and Soviet baggage, proved too potent a cultural resource for these nation builders to ignore. As the mid-century socialist zeitgeist that defined Lutpulla's career was gradually read out of the narrative, representations of the late poet became increasingly empty of content even as Lutpulla's symbolic stature grew. By the turn of the twenty-first century, Lutpulla's transformation was complete: from a historically specific socialist Ili poet, he had become a neutral symbol for the entire Uyghur nation. This was connected to a broader shift, demonstrated over the course of the chapter; namely, the Ili elite's reform-era replacement by a more geographically distributed set of literati—and this new elite's ready acceptance and promulgation of the Ili-based official culture developed in previous decades. By the end of the twentieth century, this official culture was no longer Ili culture: it was Uyghur culture. The Ili network's bureaucratic dominance at the dawn of Uyghur print culture had left an indelible imprint on the culture and identity of the modern Uyghur nation.

AFTER UTOPIA: REVOLUTION AS TRADITION

In 1976, Mao Zedong, Great Helmsman of the Chinese Communist Party and the central political figure for three decades of Chinese history, did something that left his legions of followers shocked and confused: he died. Without the transcendent authority of Mao, whose personality cult had been constructed through decades of ceaseless propaganda, the radicals directing the Cultural Revolution in Beijing—most notably the so-called Gang of Four—were quickly removed from power, and a more moderate tone began to prevail in the party leadership. By the end of the decade, as Deng Xiaoping—one of the Revolutionary old guard, now reborn as a reformist—consolidated his hold on power, a pragmatic agenda began to gather steam, and the chaos of 1966-76 gradually became a bitter memory.

For Xinjiang's beleaguered cultural elite, the improvement was gradual at first, beginning with reversal of some of the more egregious abuses. Téyipjan Éliev's initially piecemeal rehabilitation was typical. In 1975, as the Cultural Revolution was winding down, Éliev's conviction as a "contradiction between the people and its enemies" was overturned.[2] Soon after, he met Wang Gulin in Karamay, the first time they had seen each other since Éliev was expelled from the May 7 Cadre School five years earlier. Éliev took Wang's hand and cried. "Old Wang," he exclaimed, "I thought we'd never live to see this day!" After the Cultural Revolution ended the following year, things improved more quickly for surviving members of Xinjiang's cultural elite. In 1976, Abdukérim Khojaev took up a post in Beijing at the Central Translation Office for Minority Languages (Zhongyang minzu yuwen fanyi ju 中央民族语文翻译居), where he worked on a number of major translation initiatives. By the following year, Téyipjan Éliev had also taken up a role at a state-sponsored translation project, helping render the late premier Zhou

[2] Wang Gulin 王谷林, "Yuan nin zai zuguo de turang li kaichu canlan de xianhua 愿您在祖国的土壤里开出灿烂的鲜花," *Shi kan* 4 (1989): 30.

Enlai's youthful poetry into Uyghur. Khojaev and Éliev both took part in the Uyghur translation of the *Tiananmen Verses*, a widely distributed collection eulogizing Zhou and denouncing the Gang of Four.[3]

In the late 1970s, as residual Maoist hardliners were discredited and outmaneuvered in Beijing, the displaced party-state elite mounted a bureaucratic resurgence across China. Xinjiang's cultural sphere was no exception, although Uyghur-language print organs tended to move more cautiously at first than their Chinese-language counterparts, doubtless in recognition of the intersecting political perils faced by minority citizens. Abdukérim Khojaev, then working in the comparatively liberal atmosphere of Beijing, complained in a summer 1978 letter to a colleague back in Xinjiang about the pusillanimity of Uyghur newspaper editors. "Is it a sin to praise the Party Central Committee and the Eleventh Party Congress, or to criticize the Gang of Four?!... Last year when I was in Xinjiang, I wrote eight quatrains [on these subjects] at the invitation of the Chinese-language *Xinjiang Gazette* editorial board, which then printed them. But the Uyghur-language *Gazette* wouldn't even think of publishing them… I guess out of twenty quatrains, not a single one was acceptably written?"[4] Early the next year, when Khojaev and others invited Éliev to a poetry conference in Beijing, they encountered resistance in Xinjiang, with some publicly stating that a "congenital counterrevolutionary" like Éliev should not be permitted such an honor. Only when Khojaev and his colleagues in Beijing repeatedly petitioned the Central Propaganda Bureau was Éliev allowed to attend the meeting, where he was

[3] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar ösmürler neshriyati, 2012), 247-48; Aihaiti Tuerdi 艾海提•吐尔迪, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian 丁香花小院里的怀念," tr. Zhang Shirong 张世荣 *Minzu wenxue* 5 (1999), 73-75. On the *Tiananmen Verses*, see Xu Qingquan 徐庆全, " 'Tiananmen shichao' chuban qianhou 《天安门诗抄》出版前后," *Zhonghua dushu bao*, 16 May 2009. Zhou Enlai, not typically known as a poet, nonetheless produced enough verse in his youth to fill a slim chapbook. Zhou Enlai 周恩来, *Zhou Enlai qingnian shidai shixuan* 周恩来青年时代诗选 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1978).

[4] Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1999), 244-46.

warmly welcomed. “The winds of spring aren’t passing through the Jade Gate,” Khojaev constantly complained, referring to the pass in the Great Wall traditionally separating China from Central Asia.[5]

If the thaw was slow to reach Xinjiang at first, doubts about the persistence of post-Mao liberalization were gradually put to rest after Deng Xiaoping’s emergence as China’s paramount leader in late 1978. The following spring, the Xinjiang CCP Central Committee officially overturned all charges against the “dark anti-party gang” that had been cast out of the Federation of Literary and Art Circles more than a decade before: Liu Xiaowu, Téyipjan Éliev, Abdukérim Khojaev, Wang Yuhu, and Wang Gulin.[6] Similar amnesty was extended to nearly all of the writers and intellectuals who had fallen afoul of the innumerable campaigns beginning in 1957; those who had been tortured or killed had their names posthumously cleared. (The exceptions, living or dead, were primarily those like Ziya Semidi or Polat Qadiri who had fled into exile.) The new tolerance even extended to writers whose Guomindang links had essentially excluded them from the literary world for the entirety of the Mao era. Thus Abduréhim Ötkür, in the late Republican period a poet of some note and a staunch Guomindang ally, reemerged in the 1980s after thirty years of print silence. By the end of the decade Ötkür had once more established himself as one of the Uyghur language’s foremost poets, and achieved still greater fame and influence as a novelist.

Yet despite the reversal of Maoist policies, it was not primarily the pre-revolutionary elite that emerged as dominant in reform-era Uyghur culture. Rather, it was first and foremost the literary elite of pre-1966 Maoist Xinjiang that reasserted itself. The reversal of fortune was perhaps most striking in the case of Téyipjan Éliev, who had suffered grievously over the

[5] Téyipjan Éliyop, “Qayghuluq künlerdiki eslimiler,” *Tarim* 5 (1988): 43-45.
[6] Zhong Min 钟敏, “Cong ‘Tianshan’ de liubian kan Xinjiang dangdai wenxue de fazhan 从《天山》的流变看新疆当代文学的发展” (M.A. thesis, Xinjiang daxue, 2009), 27.

previous two decades of campaigns. Within months of the official clearing of his name, Téyipjan was appointed vice chair of both the Xinjiang Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the regional Writers' Union. By the end of 1979, his new portfolio also included a number of more ceremonial postings, including a vice chairmanship of the China Writers' Union and a seat on the standing committee of the Xinjiang People's Political Consultative Conference.[7] In the 1980s, Éliev enjoyed tremendous popular esteem and party-state perquisites as an elder statesman of Uyghur literature, and combined his numerous high postings and indefatigable poetic productivity with quiet hours tending the flowers in the courtyard of his apartment complex.[8] Liu Xiaowu likewise resurfaced in 1976 to serve once more in a string of leadership positions in the region's cultural bureaucracy, before finally moving in the 1980s into a long and productive semi-retirement.[9] Abdukérim Khojaev, Zunun Qadiri, and numerous other leading members of Xinjiang's pre-1966 literary world made similarly impressive professional comebacks in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

For those Ili intellectuals and members of the Liu Xiaowu cohort who survived high Maoism in Xinjiang, the reform period saw the rapid reestablishment of personal and professional ties. Zunun Qadiri and Téyipjan Éliev, having maintained a degree of contact even during the Cultural Revolution, were by 1980 collaborating with the writer Éli Éziz on a screenplay for "Ghérip-Senem," a classic story previously adapted for stage by Ziya Semedi nearly half a century earlier.[10] Abdukérim Khojaev worked extensively in the early reform era to

[7] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 5-6.
[8] On Éliev's life in the 1980s, see Aihaiti Tuerdi, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian," 70. For a summary of the honors and benefits visited upon Éliev by the reform-era party-state, see *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 252-57.
[9] For Liu's titles and posts, see Tianshan wang, "'Tianshan wenyijiang'." On Liu in retirement, see Zhong Yuan 中原, "Zai huishou wo xin yijiu—Liu Xiaowu tongzhi yinxiang ji 再回首我心依旧—刘萧无同志印象记," *Zhongguo xibu wenxue* 5 (1992): 95-101.
[10] Zunun Qadir, Téyipjan Éliyop, and Éli Éziz, *Ghérip-senem (kino sinariyisi)* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1980).

translate Téyipjan Éliev's work into Chinese.[11] The reestablishment of personal and cultural connections even extended across the border. With Sino-Soviet relations thawing, Ili writers like Zunun Qadiri were able to visit friends and relatives in the Soviet Union, while Xinjiang literary journals like *Tarim* reprinted the work of Ili poets who had left for the USSR decades earlier.[12]

If the second half of the 1970s had seen some Uyghur cultural elites resume work on state-directed projects with heavy ideological overtones, it was in the early 1980s that the cultural efflorescence of reform-era Xinjiang began in earnest. The first decade of the reform era in Xinjiang, as in all of China, was accompanied by a flowering of cultural and artistic energy suddenly set free by the end of the Mao-era campaigns. Many Uyghur writers had been deprived of the opportunity to publish for a decade, and some twice that long; even private writings carried considerable risk during the Cultural Revolution, when unannounced house searches were commonplace. Turghun Almas's son later wrote that upon his father's release from seven years in prison, "he despaired that the black political tempests of the 1940s, '50s and '60s had swallowed so much of the time he had hoped to devote to poetry, drama, stories, novellas, novels, historical research… He treasured every moment of the relative peace [of the reform era], and in order to awaken the soul and spirit of his people, took pen to hand and from 1980 resumed with special dedication the historical research he had begun in the 1950s."[13]

Xinjiang's Uyghur-language cultural bureaucracy and publishing infrastructure, damaged during the Cultural Revolution, were restored and expanded in the reform era. Moving tentatively at first but soon with increasing boldness, the region's rapidly proliferating Uyghur-language periodicals opened their pages in the 1980s to a range of styles, genres, and voices unseen in Xinjiang's public sphere since Zhang Zhizhong's liberal press policy in the mid-1940s.

[11] Qawsilqan Qamijan, *El qelbidiki Téyipjan Éliyéf*, 227.
[12] E.g., Abdulhey Rozi, "Sowét Uyghur sha'irliri shé'irliridin," ed. Jappar Emet, *Tarim* 2 (1989): 142.
[13] Qutluq Almas, "Dadam Turghun Almasning terjimihali," *Algha tor zhornili* 1 (2010): 129-30.

As original poetry, fiction, and nonfiction poured off the presses, the cultural ferment transcended even the fruitful early years of cooperation between the Maoist state and Uyghur elites in the 1950s. While the first decade of Chinese Communist rule in Xinjiang had witnessed the massive expansion of Uyghur-language literacy and print culture, the voices represented in the Uyghur literature of that period largely represented the tight-knit network of literati who had obtained state patronage. While the scope of debate on social and especially political topics was still highly circumscribed in the 1980s, the literary realm, and poetry in particular, emerged once more as a central site for the negotiation of modern Uyghur identity. To take one notable instance, a wide-ranging public debate on modernist poetry provided an occasion for extensively addressing questions of modernity, tradition, and identity in Uyghur society. Considering the terms of this debate will shed light not only on the increasing scope for public debate in reform-era Xinjiang, but also on profound transformations in perceptions of Uyghur cultural heritage over the course of the preceding few decades.

As the reform era ushered in a renaissance in Uyghur-language publishing, global trends in literary modernism filtered into Xinjiang from Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and inner China. Uyghur-language translations of foreign and Chinese literature appeared in journals like Abdukérim Khojaev's *Literary Translations* as well as the influential *World Literature* (*Dunya edebiyati*), and some younger Uyghur intellectuals began reading work in Chinese. Beginning in the early 1980s, a small number of Uyghur students from Xinjiang were permitted to study abroad, the first such cohort since the mid-1960s. One of the first Uyghur students to take advantage of this opportunity was Ekhmetjan Osman (1964-), a young poet who had grown up in Ürümchi.[14] (His father, an Ili native, had named Ekhmetjan after martyred Eastern Turkestan Republic leader Ahmadjan Qasimi—Ekhemetjan Qasimi in contemporary Uyghur

[14] Interview with Ekhmetjan Osman, October 2010.

orthography.) Quickly mastering Arabic, Ekhmetjan read widely in Arabic literature, translated literature, and literary theory, and made important contacts with the Arab literary world. In the mid-1980s, returning to China during school vacations, Ekhmetjan began to gather around himself a group of young poets and literature enthusiasts.

In 1986, the inaugural issue of *Tengritagh*, one of Xinjiang's new literary journals, printed several poems by young writers in Ekhmetjan's circle. The most striking of these was Ekhmetjan's own "Traitor Mountains," a poem which in its four short words helped inaugurate a new era in Uyghur verse:

"Where…
is…
my…
echo…"[15]

With its very form, this poem represented a challenge to the conventions that then dominated Uyghur poetry, and Ekhmetjan Osman quickly emerged as the leading figure of a modernist literary movement, with poetry at its center. As in other times and places, the emergence of Uyghur modernism occasioned significant controversy, with a strongly generational contour. The predominantly young writers grouped around Ekhmetjan Osman soon became known as the murky (*gungga*, after Ch. *menglong* 朦胧) poets; their opponents, typically of an older generation, saw themselves as "traditionalists" and as guardians of Uyghur culture and morality.[16] With direct social and political commentary largely excluded from the pages of Xinjiang's Uyghur-language press, the debate over *gungga* poetry quickly evolved into a proxy battle over questions of Uyghur tradition and identity.

[15] Ekhmetjan Osman, "Kha'in taghlar," *Tengritagh* 1 (1986): 111.
[16] For more on Ekhmetjan Osman and *gungga* poetry, see Joshua L. Freeman, "Uyghur gungga shé'iriyitining kélip chiqishi, tereqqiyati we ikki yönilishi" (M.A. thesis, Xinjiang shifan daxue, 2012).

A typical criticism of "murky" poems was leveled by the gifted poet Qurban Barat (1946-2016), standard-bearer of the self-styled classicists opposed to the newfangled modernist movement. If a child "doesn't resemble his parents in any way," he declared, "if he shares no ethnic or national connection with them, one begins to wonder whether he was really born to those parents." Modernist poetry, insisted Qurban Barat, lacked an authentic Uyghur genealogy.[17] The murky poets, meanwhile, were eager to challenge the dominance of the literary elites who had reemerged in the 1980s. A quintessential provocation was Ekhmetjan Osman's mocking analysis of "Unending Song" ("Tügimes nakhsha"), one of Téyipjan Éliev's most beloved works. After reducing the charming eighteen-line poem to a pitiful thirteen-word sentence he claimed was its essential structure, Ekhmetjan Osman concluded that "Unending Song" was not poetry at all: it was prose.[18] Qurban Barat shot back that "we ought not to evaluate a poem created in the national psychic environment of Central Asia—namely, with the realist creative method—according to the formal standards belonging to modernist doctrines… To do so would be as manifestly incorrect as using a pig's standard to judge a horse."[19] Éliev, for his part, sighed that many young Uyghur writers were failing to adequately inherit the traditions of Uyghur literature.[20]

Yet the literary conventions defended by the self-styled conservatives were in fact anything but traditional. Indeed, three decades before, poets like Éliev had proudly presented their work as an innovative reproach to the stifling bourgeois conventions of pre-socialist Uyghur poetry. The same Qurban Barat who insisted in the 1990s that realism was inherent to

[17] Yalqun Jüme, "Izdinish we ghulghula," *Tarim* 8 (1988): 142.
[18] Ekhmetjan Osman, "Tügimes nakhsha heqqide tehlil," *Tengritagh* 4 (1992): 94-96.
[19] Qurban Barat, *Qurban Barat eserliridin tallanma: 5- tom: shé'iriyet nezeriyisige da'ir tetqiqat, klassik shé'irlardin nesriy yeshme* (Ürümchi: Shinjang Unéwirsititi Neshriyati, 1998), 172-73.
[20] Téyipjan Éliyéw, *Eserler (maqaliler, khet-chekler, eslimiler we hékayiler)* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1992), 115-16.

Central Asia's "psychic environment" had in the 1960s extolled the virtues of "revolutionary realism" (*inqilawiy ré'alizm*), as socialist realism was often known in Maoist Xinjiang.[21] Some murky poets took the bait and endeavored to establish an authentic Uyghur genealogy for their work: experimenting with modernist poetry in classical Persianate meters; claiming literary descent from medieval Turkic poets like Mashrab; or even positing an unlikely Uyghur lineage for Western modernist poetry.[22] But few of the young murky poets challenged the traditionalist credentials of the literary standards that conservatives like Qurban Barat presented as timeless Uyghur heritage. The consensus surrounding the classic status of these recent conventions is highly revealing.

The terms of this debate laid bare a set of remarkable transformations that had occurred in Uyghur communal self-perceptions over the course of the preceding decades. By the mid-1960s, the transmission of Xinjiang's premodern Turkic high culture had been significantly disrupted by decades of state-sponsored reform aimed at creating a new Uyghur culture; the Cultural Revolution had then sundered many remaining links with classical Turko-Persian culture while also suppressing much of the new Uyghur canon. Yet even during the Cultural Revolution, printing in modern Uyghur continued apace, and by the early 1970s schools were once more operating in the language. By the beginning of the reform era in the late 1970s, two generations had been educated in state-run schools which used printed Uyghur-language textbooks rather than Persian and Chaghatay manuscripts, and which promoted fluency in Mandarin and mastery of secular subjects as the avenue to career advancement and national

[21] Bekhti Rozi and Qurban Barat, "Réalliq we yakhshi maslishish," *Shinjang edebiyati* 2 (1964): 85-88.
[22] Ekhmetjan Osman demonstrated his facility with classical meters via "murky" *ghazal*s like "Dilber," *Tarim* 8 (1991): 41-42. He likewise insists that "modern Uyghur murky poetry cannot be considered separately from Mashrab and other Sufi poets." Interview with Ekhmetjan Osman, October 2010. Murky poet Batur Rozi claimed a Uyghur genealogy for Western modernist poetry via the Tang verses that inspired Ezra Pound. Batur Rozi, "Simwol éngi we medeniyitimizdiki böhran," *Tengritagh* 3 (1998): 93-94.

rebirth. Turkic folk culture in Xinjiang survived the Mao era in large part, and significant portions of the manuscript canon were printed and distributed in large quantity in the reform era. Still, by the 1980s the high culture of the pre-socialist era was a foreign country for many young and middle-aged Uyghurs, particularly in the emerging urban elite—the group with primary access to the printing presses and state cultural organs.

The new Uyghur literature that had emerged in the mid-twentieth century was thus seen in the late twentieth century across a vast cultural chasm, thereby lending a sense of historical distance to a body of literature whose origins were in fact quite recent. Reform-era collections by poets like Khojaev and Éliev reprinted their work from the Mao era and Republican era, but largely stripped of historical context. By 1987, even a critic writing in support of modernist literary trends could refer to realism as "Uyghur literature's traditional form of expression, [which] retains a strong life force." Enwer Abduréhim, in an article published in the second issue of *Tengritagh*, celebrated the new journal's willingness to provide a forum for literary works which more conservative publications found too radical. As one of the editors of *Tarim*, Xinjiang's most prestigious Uyghur-language literary journal and a publication perceived as more closely associated with the self-styled conservatives, his words carried considerable weight. In commending Ekhmetjan Osman's modernist poetic stylings as well as the numerous prose fiction offerings from *Tengritagh*'s maiden issue, Enwer Abduréhim made special note of Muhemmed Baghrash's (1952-2013) novella *I am the Image Fixed in the Dead Man's Pupil* (*Men ölgen ademning qarchuqida qétip qalghan süret*) as a work that "breaks free of the constraints of traditional realist literary expression."[23]

Debates like these were possible because Uyghur writers and cadres had once more been granted control over these state organs, and in comparison to the 1950s enjoyed substantial

[23] Enwer Abduréhim, "Dadilliq we yéngiliq," *Tengritagh* 1 (1987): 71-72.

latitude in determining the content of their own cultural production.[24] As long as minority individuals working in these institutions were not perceived as a threat to the party's power, they were of little interest to a CCP leadership focused intently on economic growth and increasingly unconcerned about ideology. Even as much of the Chinese state was privatized, however, the CCP maintained its cultural organs relatively intact, calculating that continued state control of China's broadcast and print media would suffice to prevent economic liberalization from sparking political liberalization. In post-Mao Xinjiang, more than in many parts of China, organs like the Propaganda Bureau and the Federation of Literary and Art Circles have retained considerable importance right up to the present day. In Xinjiang, at least until the spread of the Internet, these state cultural offices remained the primary site for the definition and promulgation of Uyghur mass culture; and it was precisely these institutions that breathed new life into the Ili canon in Xinjiang.

The CCP's willingness to entrust its cultural organs in Xinjiang to Uyghur intellectuals was due only in part to a generally liberalizing environment in China. Beginning in the early reform era, the Chinese party-state largely abandoned efforts to win Uyghurs' loyalty by persuasion, a shift that represented a broader trend in CCP policy. The reformist Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping was rapidly jettisoning socialism in favor of free-market experimentation; deprived of the legitimating ideology of socialism, the party increasingly worked to justify its rule by stoking nationalist feeling among China's Han majority.[25] Bringing Uyghurs and other minorities into the tent was therefore a diminishing priority for the party-

[24] Control over relevant state cultural organs and projects was likewise enjoyed by members of other minority communities in early reform-era Xinjiang. Michael Long, for example, notes that the state-sponsored collection of the Mongolian oral epic *Jangar* in Xinjiang, a complex and multi-year project, "was articulated almost exclusively through local Mongol *minzu* themselves at all levels of government." Michael D. R. Long, "Discovering 'Epic,'" paper presented at "Present Tense, Past Perfect? Narrative constructions of social representations in Central Eurasia" workshop (Copenhagen, March 2019), 11.

[25] Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), ch. 6.

state—though its leadership hoped that the blandishments of economic development would dampen any discontent among minority populations. The Chinese state, thus lost interest in promoting and exploiting the socialist Uyghur canon it had championed in the early Maoist era. But as Han nationalism took hold in China, Uyghur nationalism, long suppressed in its explicit forms under the watchful eye of the Maoist cultural bureaucracy, began to reemerge in the cultural space left open by the party-state. The Uyghur nation, though, needed a Uyghur canon; and canon, as has been argued above, is more easily appropriated than replaced.

The Uyghur literary and intellectual elite in the 1980s demonstrated little interest in the canon of the high Maoist era. Much as paeans to Chiang Kai-shek and Sheng Shicai have been excluded since 1949 from collections of work by poets like Lutpulla Mutellip, panegyrics to Mao and other relics of the Cultural Revolution era were rarely reprinted after the reform era began. Abdukérim Khojaev, while instructing his protégé Rekhim Qasim on the preparation of his collected works, asked that all poems from the Mao era expressing "blind worship" of leaders be excluded. When he also requested the omission of all of his work from the Great Leap Forward period, Rekhim Qasim, who had worked closely with Khojaev during the Great Leap years, couldn't resist teasing Khojaev about his hymns to ears of corn that barely fit in wagons and stalks of wheat so thick they could only be cut with a saw. Everyone back then was writing poems like that, Khojaev responded sheepishly, quoting a Uyghur proverb: "If a donkey falls behind the other donkeys, cut his ear!"[26] Super-revolutionary heroes like Qadir Hézim and Bulbulqan likewise faded quickly from public view.[27] People who were children when the Cultural Revolution concluded often have no recollection of them. Despite media saturation

[26] Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide*, 126-27.
[27] The last published reference to Qadir Hézim that I have been able to find is in the internal-circulation military publication Wulumuqi junqu bianxie zu 乌鲁木齐军区编写组, eds., *Renmin jundui zai Xinjiang* 人民军队在新疆 (1985), "Ai min mofan cailiao 爱民模范材料," 4-10.

during that radical decade, heroes who appeared to lack any historical facticity, and whose lives were essentially the reification of revolutionary slogans, in the end had little lasting hold on the imaginations of the Uyghur populace. As the Maoist era gave way to a reformist ethos, a different set of role models was needed.

FROM SOCIALIST HERO TO NATIONAL HERO

> "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors."
>
> —Samuel Johnson, preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755

As Xinjiang's intellectuals regained their voices, they quickly set about restoring their literary patrimony. The Cultural Revolution had produced a generation with little exposure to literary or historical ideas beyond Maoist slogans and their thinly veiled literary expressions, and the Red Guards' energetic book burning had turned much of Uyghur culture's written record to ash. But in tragedy lay opportunity. For many Uyghur intellectuals, the post-Mao era was a chance to retake and remake their culture.With the old elite back in charge, radical condemnations of long-dead authors were rescinded, and bans were overturned on works that a decade before had been consigned to the bonfires.

Unsurprisingly, Lutpulla Mutellip's works were among the first to see daylight again. In 1978, the nationally-distributed, unimpeachably establishment journal *People's Army Literature and Arts* printed a Chinese translation of Lutpulla Mutellip's well-known poem, "This Young Bud of Mine Would Open" ("Bu méning yash ghunche gülüm échilatti"), with a biographical

blurb describing Lutpulla as a revolutionary martyr.[28] In Xinjiang's Uyghur-language schools, Lutpulla's poems were incorporated once more into literature textbooks, and students learned about his life alongside his works.[29] Decades after his death, Lutpulla was once more a hot commodity; and by the beginning of the 1980s, his place in the official pantheon of Uyghur writers had been firmly restored.

But in the popular, unofficial Uyghur pantheon, Lutpulla's exalted status had never really been in question. While the promotional efforts of the state cultural apparatus before 1966 had played a major role in cementing Lutpulla's canonical status among Uyghurs, it would prove much more difficult for the same state organs to dethrone him, or to replace him with super-revolutionaries like Bulbulqan and Qadir Hézim. A Uyghur man who described visiting Qadir Hézim's grave as a youth in Kashgar during the Cultural Revolution also recalled that in those days, he and his friends read Lutpulla's poems secretly and avidly. He first encountered them around 1970, when a friend lent him *Love and Loathing*, a 1956 collection of Lutpulla's works, its cover torn off for safety. His friend's older brother had been through high school before the Cultural Revolution began, and much as Tursun Ershidin had done in Ghulja, he hid the volume from the Red Guards. Other students at their school copied out Lutpulla's poems in secret. The man noted that with no access to literature beyond Mao's poems and a single volume of translations from classical Chinese verse, Lutpulla was the first Uyghur poet whose works he read. Though today he sees no special literary value in Lutpulla's poems, at the time they were a breath of fresh air. Moreover, children of his generation had received no education in classical

[28] Lutefula Mutalifu 鲁特夫拉•木塔里甫, "Wo zhe qingchun de huaduo jiu hui kaifang 我这青春的花朵就会开放,"
Jiefangjun wenyi 11 (1978): 46.
[29] School literature instructors were provided with extensive material on Lutpulla's life to accompany lessons on his work. Abduweli Kérim, ed., *Ottura mektep til-edebiyat dersliki tékistliri üstide tehlil: 1: toluqsiz ottura mektepler üchün* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1992) 159-74.

literary style, which made Lutpulla's works, written in a self-consciously popular idiom, both accessible and appealing.[30]

It is notable that in a Kashgar high school in 1970, a mid-century Ili poet's works were the only Uyghur poetry available to students, if only in samizdat form. Two decades into the Mao era and four decades into the spread of mass print in Xinjiang, the Ili-based modern Uyghur culture had sunk deep into popular consciousness even in Kashgar, where locals a century before would have disdained Ili poets. While the ascent of Ili-accented Uyghur culture was intimately linked to the Ili network's alliance with state patrons, the Ili canon demonstrated considerable staying power even after that alliance had crumbled in the late 1950s and 1960s. Ili culture had been closely woven into Uyghur print culture from the beginning; no amount of subsequent political or social change could pull the Ili threads from the fabric. The same was true of the relatively small number of non-Ili writers whose works were printed in quantity by Uyghur presses in the middle decades of the century—even writers whose works had been anathema since 1949. Qumul poet and erstwhile Guomindang ally Abduréhim Ötkür had been deprived of the right to publish since Communist rule began in Xinjiang; but when the Cultural Revolution began, Osman Isma'il Shahyari's father buried Ötkür's 1948 collection *Banks of the Tarim* (*Tarim boylāri*) in their courtyard before the Red Guards arrived. In the difficult years that followed, the family would sometimes read the book aloud late at night, an experience that Shahyari later described in almost religious terms.[31] Even in times of massive cultural change, canonical individuals and works cannot be easily erased from the popular imagination. Thus did the cultural resonance of figures like Lutpulla Mutellip survive a decade of denunciation and

[30] Personal communication, Ürümchi, July 2013. The book in question is L. Mutellip, *Muhebbet hem nepret*, ed. Muhemmet Sidiq Noruzow (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1956).
[31] Osman Isma'il Shahyari, "Khantengridiki meghrur qebre téshi," in Abdul'eziz Ismayil and Ghupur Ömer, eds., *Abduréhim Ötkür abidisi*, 144-47 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2008). The volume was '. Ötkür, *Tārim boylāri* (Nanjing: Tyānshān neshriyāti, 1948).

book-burning; and thus did much of the pre-socialist pilgrimage and manuscript tradition survive multiple decades of state suppression to flourish once more in the reform era.[32]

In the 1980s, then, when the historic rupture of the Cultural Revolution offered an opportunity to rebuild Uyghur official culture from the ground up, the pre-1966 canon remained a powerful resource, waiting to be unearthed. At the same time, the canon could be profoundly reinterpreted in the new political and cultural circumstances of the 1980s, in which increased freedom of expression was accompanied by a renewed interest throughout China in national particularity and identity. It was in these unprecedented circumstances that reform-era Uyghur intellectuals began shaping Lutpulla Mutellip's reputation into its present form. This reimagination nevertheless began tentatively; in the earliest years of the reform era, with decades of fierce repression fresh in their minds, Lutpulla's champions moved only gradually toward a new interpretation of the long-dead poet. First, his rehabilitation had to be solidified; and no ground was more solid than the Chinese Communist revolution, with its hallowed pantheon of martyrs.

The widely-distributed journal *Xinjiang Youth* (*Xinjiang Yaxliri*), a periodical with impeccably establishment credentials, had been shuttered in 1967, but was reopened in 1975 in the waning days of the Cultural Revolution.[33] In 1979, the journal reprinted one of Lutpulla's best-known poems,[34] but devoted far more space to three other martyrs, whom it commemorated in nearly every issue that year. Lin Jilu (林基路, 1916-43), Chen Tanqiu (陈潭秋, 1896-1943), and Mao Zemin (毛泽民, 1896-1943) had been sent by the CCP to serve Sheng Shicai's regime

[32] Rahile Dawut, *Uyghur mazarliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 2001), passim; Rian Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 96-122.
[33] Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆维吾尔自治区编纂委员会 and Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 《新疆同志•著述出版志》编纂委员会 (eds.), *Xinjiang tongzhi: zhushu chuban zhi* 新疆同志•著述出版志 (Ürümchi: Xinjiang kexue jishu chubanshe, 2006), 259-60.
[34] L. Mutəllip, "Yaxliқ—Ügən," *Xinjiang Yaxliri* 1 (1979): 50.

in Xinjiang while the warlord pursued a socialist, pro-Soviet tilt, and were killed in 1943 once Sheng turned against the USSR and joined up with the Chinese Nationalist Party.[35] Tying neatly into this martyrology, Abdulla Talip's (1926-2005) biographical essay "Lutpulla Mutellip and the Young Generation," sprawling across five of the magazine's 1980 issues, carefully connected Lutpulla to the revolutionary lineage of Lin Jilu and other CCP heroes.[36] Drawing on his own youthful acquaintance with Lutpulla, Abdulla Talip painted a heroic, revolutionary portrait of the poet, focusing on his contributions as an educator and role model for the youth of Aqsu in the 1940s—precisely the role Abdulla Talip hoped Lutpulla could serve for all Uyghur youth in the 1980s.

Abdulla Talip's piece had a substantial impact, with middle school teachers assigning it as homework to students learning Lutpulla's poetry.[37] Abdulla Talip had struck some of the first notes in a commemorative crescendo that built throughout the early 1980s, as memoirs, academic papers, and public ceremonies celebrated Lutpulla's life and works. Typical was a lengthy article about Lutpulla's poetry by Elqem Ekhtem, carried by *Xinjiang Youth* a few months after Abdulla Talip's series concluded. Elqem Ekhtem, who from his days as a journalist in the Eastern Turkestan Republic had played a major role in commemorating Lutpulla, here followed Abdulla Talip in carefully linking the late poet to the CCP martyrs Lin, Chen, and Mao.[38] In the early reform era, works like this furnished Lutpulla with an immaculate revolutionary pedigree, thereby ensuring his status as a politically safe icon. Through him,

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[35] Lin, Chen, and Mao arrived in Xinjiang in 1938-39, part of a large contingent of CCP members whose service to Sheng's administration had been approved by both Mao and Stalin. The revolutionary credentials of this trio have been burnished still further by the fact that Mao Zemin was Mao Zedong's younger brother. On the deployment of CCP cadres in Xinjiang as well as the bloody denouement of this honeymoon between Sheng and the CCP, see Jacobs, *Empire Besieged*, 314-27, 334-36.

[36] Abdulla Talip, "L. Mutəllip Wə Yax Əwlatlar," *Xinjiang Yaxliri* 2 (1980): 38-42; 3 (1980): 18-21; 4 (1980): 14-17; 5 (1980): 28-32; 6 (1980): 33-36. The CCP lineage is particularly stressed in 2 (1980): 41-42.

[37] Zulpiyə, "L. Mutəllip Wə Yash Əwlatlarni Oқuoɣandin Keyin," *Xinjiang Yaxliri* 9 (1980): 39-40.

[38] Əlқəm Əhtəm, "L. Mutəllipning Ədibiy Paaliyiti Wə Uning Yengi Uyoɣur Ədibiyatida Tutқan Orni," *Xinjiang Yaxliri* 9 (1980): 5-10.

Uyghur intellectuals could promote their preferred concepts of identity and community, particularly to younger generations growing up without memories of Uyghur society before the radical reorderings of the previous two decades. As the *Xinjiang Youth* editors put it in their introduction to the issue containing Elqem Ekhtem's article, "We believe these articles will provide our young friends with some answers as they ponder how to approach life."[39]

The rebuilding of Lutpulla's reputation was well underway by the time his works were republished in 1981, the new collection finally replacing earlier editions which had been largely incinerated by the Red Guards.[40] The physical dissemination of this new volume, edited by Elqem Ekhtem, was crucial in lending tangibility to Lutpulla's reputation as a poet. Still, it was not primarily through his poems that Lutpulla's reputation was built in these years. Much as in the decades before the Cultural Revolution, Lutpulla's stature in the reform era was established primarily by his representation in the works of others—articles, songs, poetry, fiction—and by mechanisms of commemoration that achieved new levels of sophistication in post-socialist Xinjiang. Some of this took place within the framework of state cultural activities, like the large ceremonies held periodically on the anniversaries of Lutpulla's birth or death. These served to confirm Lutpulla's canonical status and his continued enjoyment of the party-state's imprimatur. In 1982, for example, Liu Xiaowu served as master of ceremonies at a major assembly commemorating Lutpulla's sixtieth birthday.[41] Nearly 800 people attended, including Uyghur literary figures and contemporaries of Lutpulla, as well as members of the party, government, and army leadership. But with the cultural power of the Chinese state substantially compromised among Uyghurs and the influence of the nonstate cultural sphere growing by the day, it was the

[39] *Xinjiang Yaxliri* 9 (1980): 5.
[40] Lutpulla Mutellip, *L. Mutellip eserliri*, ed. Elqem Ekhtem (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1981).
[41] Imin Өмәр, "Ürümqide Inқilawiy Wətənpərwər Xa'ir Lutpulla Mutəllip Tuoɻuloɻanlioɻining 60 Yillioɻini Hatiririləsh Yioɻini Өtküzüldi," *Xinjiang geziti* 19 November 1982: 1.

literary interventions of Uyghur writers that did most to reinvigorate and reshape Lutpulla's legend.

In the reform era, as the range of acceptable expression in Uyghur literature widened dramatically, authors began using prose fiction to present historical narratives that diverged from the emphases or conclusions of state historiography. The earliest group of these reform-era authors tiptoed only slowly away from the party line. From 1980, Téyipjan Hadi's (1925-89) earnestly written stories about Ili history, bursting with minute historical detail, began to make an impression on the reading public. His stories typically concern the great men of Uyghur history, a heroic sub-genre which—as we will see below—was at the center of Uyghur prose fiction in Xinjiang from its origins in the 1940s. "The Hero Has Come," his fictional account of the nineteenth-century Uyghur hero Sadir Palwan, was made into a radio play and included in middle school literature textbooks.[42] Téyipjan Hadi's works, however, were as much historical interventions as they were literary works. While their protagonists' rousing exploits propel the story along, works in this genre marinate the reader in the details—names, dates, places, scenes—of an uplifting narrative of Uyghur history. Although the broad historical narratives of most such works do not directly contradict the party-state's historical pronouncements, these fictionalized works of indigenous history emphasize the agency of Uyghur historical actors, and many Uyghur readers still regard historical fiction by Uyghur authors as more trustworthy than official historical sources.[43] In the early 1980s, as historical fiction gained a wide audience in Xinjiang, authors like Téyipjan Hadi began to have a substantial impact on Uyghurs' understanding of their history. And where historical stories by writers like Téyipjan Hadi had

[42] Abdushükür Turdi and Azad Rehmitulla Sultan, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 438-45; Téyipjan Hadi, "Palwan keldi (hikaye)," in *Toluq ottura mektepler üchün derslik: edibiyat: 2- qisim: (1- yilliqlar üchün)*, ed. Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq ma'arip nazariti til-edibiyat dersliklirini tüzüsh guruppisi, 135-57 (Ürümchi: Shinjang ma'arip neshriyati, 1985 [first ed. 1984]).
[43] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 206-07.

begun adding texture to that history, other authors would now begin to give it weight, transforming it into that hefty cornerstone of literary nation-building: the historical novel.[44]

Having served in the early 1960s as the subject of Xinjiang's first biographical film, it was only fitting that in the early 1980s Lutpulla Mutellip was likewise the subject of the region's first biographical novel. Thus it was that in 1982, Abdulla Talip's *Whirlpool Wave* (*Qaynam örkishi*) burst onto the Uyghur literary scene.[45] This novelization of Lutpulla Mutellip's life, running to well over 600 pages, was in essence a fictionalized and vastly expanded version of the author's popular *Xinjiang Youth* series of 1980. The novel recounts Lutpulla's life from auspicious birth till valiant death, with about two-thirds of the text devoted to the poet's literary and revolutionary deeds in Aqsu during the last two years of his life. *Whirlpool Wave* was one of the first Uyghur-language novels published in Xinjiang, and as such was eagerly and widely read, especially by the students who were likely this didactic novel's primary intended audience. Many people who were students in the early 1980s vividly recall reading *Whirlpool Wave* when it was first published, and excerpts from the novel were included in middle and high school textbooks.[46] The novel's initial print run of 31,000 was quite large for a Uyghur-language book, then or now, particularly given that official statistics placed Xinjiang's Uyghur population at six million that year. A 1996 hard-back printing of the novel, listed as the third impression, is detailed on the copyright page as bringing the total number of copies to 51,030, or approximately one copy per 150 Uyghurs in the region.[47] Mehemmet Shawudun wrote the following year that the total

[44] The role of historical novels in cultivating national feeling and a common national narrative has long been noted by students of literature and society; e.g., René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), 98.
[45] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi: biograpik roman* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar neshriyati, 1982).
[46] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi (bi'ografiyilik roman)* (1996 [1982]), unpaginated introduction.
[47] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi (bi'ografiyilik roman)* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1996 [1982]).

number of copies exceeded 100,000—a staggering figure if true, given that the Uyghur population of Xinjiang was officially estimated at about eight million that year.[48]

Whirlpool Wave, as one of the very first Uyghur novels published in Xinjiang, was a foundational work in Uyghur long-form prose fiction, and introduced the biographical novel to Uyghur literature in Xinjiang. Beyond its literary impact, Abdulla Talip's novel was crucial in reconfiguring Lutpulla Mutellip as a specifically Uyghur martyr—a development which would soon leave traces throughout Uyghur culture. Historical fiction, as we will see, can have a major impact not only on the way history is perceived by the public, but even on the way it is retold by historians. Yet even considering that there were few Uyghur novels available in Xinjiang in 1982, readers today who plow through its 639 pages might be forgiven for wondering why *Whirlpool Wave* made such a splash. Whether taken chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph, or sentence by sentence, *Whirlpool Wave* is, from most literary perspectives, unquestionably a bad novel. Contemporary critics, even while hailing the book's seminal importance in the development of Uyghur biographical and historical fiction, nonetheless complained about its digressions and two-dimensional characters.[49]

The novel's schematic plot is populated by archetypes divisible into two broad but remarkably consistent categories. The good guys, led by Lutpulla, have a virtual monopoly on positive qualities: endlessly talented and energetic, unfailingly heroic, morally flawless, they stride confidently through the novel, imparting life lessons both in their deeds and their speeches, the latter delivered frequently and at substantial length. Qadir Hézim would have been at home among such individuals. And the novel's villains are their perfect mirror images, as personally

[48] Mehemmet Shawudun, "Lutpulla Mutellip khelqning qelbidiki sha'ir," *Tarim* 12 (1997): 118-31. (Mehemmet Shawudun's figures may have included off-label copies.) For population figures, see Colin Mackerras, "Xinjiang at the turn of the century: the causes of separatism," *Central Asian Survey* 20.3 (2001): 293.
[49] Abduweli Kérim, "Yéngi zaman Uyghur romanchiliqining tereqqiyati toghrisida deslepki mulahize," in *Uyghur romanchiliqi toghrisida*, ed. Makhmutjan Islam (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati), 220-25.

unappealing as they are morally compromised. Dripping with malevolence, they are compromised by such incompetence and infighting that the reader is left to ponder how exactly they manage to prevail in the novel's tragic final act.[50] Unsurprisingly, the voices of these characters, so uniform in their goodness or vileness, are little distinguished from each other. Abdulla Talip's narrative choices are also at times perplexing; chapters groan under the weight of exhaustively detailed descriptions of scenery, travel itineraries, clothing. The novel's momentum is periodically derailed by expositions, digressions, and orphaned wisps of narrative. Simple actions and events sprawl across endless paragraphs, and the novel's repetitiveness sometimes gives the impression Abdulla Talip was paid by the word.

Some of these are genuine stylistic flaws, attributable in part to the newness of the novel as a genre in Uyghur literature and the state of Xinjiang literary life after decades of political tumult and cultural repression. A purely literary approach, however, is not sufficient to explain the choices made by reform-era Uyghur authors in works like *Whirlpool Wave*, or to understand the appeal of these works to readers when they were published. As we have seen above in regard to Téyipjan Hadi's stories, promoting common notions of history and community may be a more salient factor in the writing and reception of such works than considerations of literary merit. *Whirlpool Wave* is not purely art for art's sake; to a significant degree, it is art for history's sake. The historical events in question are fictionalized here not so much to circumvent censors as to wrap history in a narrative form easily digestible by readers.

[50] A typical speech by Lutpulla on p. 188, dressing down an opera director for deriding farmers as yokels, recalls in its pious rectitude nothing so much as the earnest, sermonizing mid-century film heroes that were the specialty of actors like Jimmy Stewart and Gregory Peck. And if Abdulla Talip's heroes evoke black-and-white movies, his villains call for Disney analogies. The miscreants' unmitigated unsavoriness is well captured in the cartoonishly diabolical banquet thrown by the brutal, opium-addicted Aqsu police chief Wu Shaobing on pp. 484-87.

An instructive parallel can be made with the novels analyzed by Jane Tompkins in her important study of nineteenth-century American fiction, referenced above in Chapter Two.[51] Tompkins demonstrates that what modern American readers tend to perceive as stylistic howlers were in fact stylistic decisions, made consciously by nineteenth-century authors who understood the purpose of fiction differently from their modern counterparts.[52] Abdulla Talip's extensive digressions into historical events and personages, as well as his minute descriptions of lifestyles and scenery, can likewise be understood in part as an attempt to convey the specifics of a vanishing history to younger readers. An exhaustively detailed description of a living room in an Aqsu village home, therefore, can be seen not as needless elaboration, but rather as an attempt to acquaint readers with the human geography of mid-century Xinjiang. While this might not pass muster in a novel aiming at stylistic perfection and universal relevance, it is entirely reasonable in a work whose purpose is to transmit a very particular history and message. After years of book-burning, setting this history down in print and ensuring it a wide readership may have seemed more urgent than any artistic imperatives.

The narrative meandering and plodding tempo of *Whirlpool Wave* can likewise be interpreted as an attempt to achieve epic length for the novel, and thereby to confer epic stature on its hero. The sheer weighty physicality of such a tome adds gravitas to a life that lasted less than twenty-three years—especially given that Lutpulla's own surviving works fill only a slim volume. Moreover, the long-form novel (Uy. *roman*, via Russian) is by far the most prestigious prose genre in modern Uyghur literature, easily beating out the *hékaye* (short story, from

[51] Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[52] Tompkins writes of nineteenth-century author Charles Brockden Brown and his novel Wieland that "Brown identified the value of [his novel] Wieland with its usefulness… Modern critics of Wieland, however, do not agree at all on what Wieland means and hardly any have thought of the novel as intended to have a practical use… [This] can be explained by our loss of the context within which the novel was written." Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, 40-41.

Arabic/Persian *hikāyat*) and *powést* (novella, from Russian *povest'*). Uyghur literati are in general agreement that when it comes to prose fiction, size does matter. As in numerous other literatures, the novel is widely understood in Uyghur literary circles as the ultimate nation-building genre—a dramatic shift from poetry's previously dominant position, and one directly linked to the renewed circulation of world literature in reform-era Xinjiang. "In evaluating the maturity of a nation's literature, world literary scholars have established that one must first look to the development of prose," declared literary critic Abduweli Kérimi in 1986. "Naturally, the level of prose's development is linked to the development of its most voluminous genre, the novel."[53] A couple years later, playwright Zunun Qadiri stressed to the younger writer Ekhet Turdi (1940-) the national urgency of writing novels. "Without monumental works of fiction," insisted Qadiri, "we can't raise the status of our people's literature."[54] Such sentiments were still in evidence at a literature conference two decades later, where I heard the esteemed short story and novella writer Muhemmet Baghrash being gently ribbed by other authors for never writing a novel.[55]

Abdulla Talip's heroes—immaculately virtuous and endlessly talented—were also not intended to achieve aesthetic purity or historical veracity. These are not realistic characters; they are role models. Role models need not be complex or true to life in order to serve their educational purpose; figures that transcend reality can function equally well for didactic purposes. Rian Thum, noting the presence of characters with "monumental stature" in Uyghur biographical novels, has proposed the Altishahri hagiographic tradition as one source for the

[53] Abduweli Kérim, "Yéngi zaman Uyghur romanchiliqining tereqqiyati," 215.
[54] Aihaiti Tuerdi, "Ding xianghua xiao yuan li de huainian," 69.
[55] Personal communication, Ürümchi, Dec. 2010. The Canadian short story writer Alice Munro, upon winning the Nobel Prize, opined that "I would really hope this would make people see the short story as an important art, not just something you played around with until you got a novel." Julie Bosman, "Alice Munro Wins Nobel Prize in Literature," *The New York Times,* 10 Oct. 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/11/books/alice-munro-wins-nobel-prize-in-literature.html (accessed July 30, 2014).

genre, as will be discussed in the following section. And indeed, there are whispers of the supernatural in *Whirlpool Wave*. Signs of a higher power are present at the beginning, when Lutpulla is born under auspicious moonlight and good weather,[56] and at the end, when nature itself seems to rally around the embattled poet. When Lutpulla returns from a village safe house to his home in Aqsu, beautiful and melodious birds attempt to slow his progress, as if aware of the trap lying in wait for him in the city. Realizing that "an amazing miraculous secret" lies in the birds' intervention, Lutpulla nonetheless decides to continue on his way.[57] A few pages later, as Aqsu policemen escort Lutpulla to meet his fate in the prefectural police office, "the world suddenly darkens" as candles go out and the very stars dim. Days later, at the very moment when Lutpulla and his comrades are killed—stabbed, shot, and pushed into a pit—the moon and stars are covered suddenly by rain clouds, and the whole sky goes dark.[58] A wind from the Tianshan Mountains gathers up flowers and seeds from around the city, and deposits them atop the pit. Then the rain comes, and waters the flowers, and there the novel ends.[59]

For readers in early 1980s China, a dramatic natural backdrop would have seemed entirely fitting for a martyr's death. Xian Wang writes that in the Mao era, "when describing the death of a martyr, authors typically incorporate depictions of sublime natural surroundings that serve as a foil to the heroic deaths. This attention to the natural sublime creates a powerful visual context for the martyrs' heroic death."[60] A deeper and more local precedent may be found in the martyrologies long transmitted in Xinjiang's Muslim communities. Rian Thum describes how the martyrdom of heroes in the *Tazkirat al-Bughra-khan*—one of the most influential texts in

[56] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi* (1982), 5-6.
[57] Ibid., 477-78.
[58] Ibid., 484.
[59] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi* (1982), 638-49.
[60] Xian Wang, "The Construction of the Image/Myth of a Martyr in the Cultural Revolution: An Interpretation/Demythicization of the Song of Ouyang Hai," *Comparative Literature Studies* 52.1 (2015): 155.

Altishahr into the twentieth century—is accompanied by reverberations in the natural world, as "the sky blackens, the earth shakes, and the Muslims lose consciousness in their grief."[61] Given that Uyghur authors in the reform era could draw on these local Muslim conceptions of martyrdom as well as intersecting traditions in China and the socialist world more broadly, it is unsurprising that heroic deaths in reform-era Uyghur literature are often mourned by nature itself. At the conclusion of Zordun Sabir's seminal trilogy *Motherland* (*Ana yurt*), to take a well-known example, the Ili River "churn[s] furiously" in mourning for the Eastern Turkestan Republic's top leadership once news is received of their death en route to Beijing.[62]

Granting Lutpulla Mutellip mythical status was not incidental to the "cultural work" performed by the novel, to use Jane Tompkins' term. If part of the cultural work performed by *Whirlpool Wave* was the transmission of the Uyghur past to future generations, the other part was the transformation of Lutpulla Mutellip from a Chinese socialist hero—as he had been in the 1950s and 1960s—into a Uyghur national hero. The first step in doing so was to establish the community of readers which Abdulla Talip sought to embrace with his work, and to which—he intended to prove—Lutpulla belonged as well. In the tentative literary stirrings of the early reform era, too bold an assertion of Uyghur identity was off the table. Indeed, the word "Uyghur" appears only infrequently in the novel—and never in Lutpulla's own work. Over the course of his lengthy novel, however, Abdulla Talip found a number of ways to clearly but implicitly demarcate the community to which he considered himself and Lutpulla to belong.

Early in *Whirlpool Wave*, while enjoying some fruit from an orchard in Qoshawat, Lutpulla asks the gardener where the town's water comes from. Upon learning that it derives largely from a stream running through a valley to the north, Lutpulla observes that "it's still the

[61] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 45.
[62] Zordun Sabir, *Ana yurt: tarikhiy roman* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 2000), 1758.

waters of the Tianshan," a mountain range in central Xinjiang. Once more, Lutpulla is confirmed in the knowledge that "the great Tianshan is the source of *our* life resources."[63] The Tianshan, which Abdulla Talip uses throughout the novel to symbolize his homeland and his people, are a favorite geographical trope of Uyghur national discourse. (*Tengritagh*, the primary literary organ of the "murky" poets, is named after these mountains.) Such symbols, often drawn from nature, are scattered throughout the novel, and serve to situate both the novel's hero and its audience in a specific, bounded context. This subtle but persistent undercurrent running through *Whirlpool Wave* identifies Lutpulla as sharing a community with his readers, a community whose borders are defined with increasing clarity as the novel progresses. The signposts are implicit, but their accumulated meaning is nonetheless clear. Speaking with Lutpulla during an extended journey by wagon, the history teacher Abdulla Dawut explains at length that the Ili skylark and the Kuchar skylark are all one family, as evidenced by their songs[64]—most likely an allegorical allusion to the need for unity among Uyghurs from northern and southern Xinjiang, where Ili and Kuchar are respectively located.

References to Lutpulla's Communist convictions and his concern for China are not absent in the novel; Chinese Communist Party members, predominantly Han, play crucial and positive roles, and augur the eventual Maoist dawn. As in his 1980 series, Abdulla Talip works painstakingly in *Whirlpool Wave* to connect Lutpulla to Chinese Communist martyrs, notably Lin Jilu.[65] These nods to the CCP, however, come across as somewhat strained, especially to jaded Uyghur readers accustomed to such pro forma protestations as the price of publishing in

[63] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi* (1982), 125. Italics mine.
[64] Ibid., 141-45.
[65] Abdulla Talip describes Lutpulla as substantially influenced by leftist Han figures like Lu Xun, Lin Jilu, and Mao Dun. In one improbable scene, Lutpulla, having just taught some students how to sing their school song, is approached by a man who turns out to be Mao Dun. Mao Dun tells Lutpulla how impressed he is with his work; Lutpulla replies that he learned everything he knows from Mao Dun and his comrades. Ibid., 49-53; also 36, 100, 103-04, 138, 154.

the PRC. There is nothing perfunctory, however, about the socialist-tinged conceptions of class difference that permeate the novel: cruel, venal officials and rich fat cats; beleaguered farmers and honest workers. In general, whole social classes of characters—revolutionaries, the poor—are described in a purely positive way and liberally apportioned positive traits, while other groups of dramatis personae—soldiers, state employees of all types except for CCP members—are presented in an unrelentingly negative light.[66] Given the novel's likely sources of literary inspiration, discussed in detail below, it is unsurprising that good and evil is presented here as linked to class struggle. Yet while Abdulla Talip clearly saw the world through the lens of class, this perspective was due more to the zeitgeist in which the author was raised than with his own apparent ideological goals. Abdulla Talip spends little time defining and demarcating classes in *Whirlpool Wave*; his Manichaean depictions of the exploiting powerful and the noble oppressed are more habits of his era than ideological interventions. Throughout the novel, the author is more concerned with drawing an entirely different set of borders.

Following decades of homogenizing policies and a concerted campaign to cut the Chinese people off from their past, the 1980s in China were a time of rediscovering roots and traditions. This was the era of the root-seeking (*xungen* 寻根) movement in Chinese literature, through which authors sought to recover an authentically Chinese tradition and to reestablish local literatures: "literature of western Hunan"; "literature of Jiangsu and Zhejiang."[67] Uyghurs, having been subjected to a fierce campaign of assimilation from the late 1950s, were especially keen to reclaim their heritage and to differentiate themselves from China's Han majority,

[66] A veritable bestiary of unsavory office-holders is provided by Abdulla Talip's description of a gaggle of officials ("her qaysi yéza-kentlerdin kelgen shangyu, ming bégi, mirap, yüz bégi, bojang, topwéshi, jisa, qurwéshi, dogha, onwéshi, qorchaq 'qoghdinish etriti'ning lalma chirikwéshi qatarliqlar") as corpulent men strutting swinishly through the yamen gates. Ibid., 397.
[67] Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 82.

particularly given increasing Han migration into Xinjiang. Yet even in the relatively permissive atmosphere of 1980s Xinjiang, openly expressing concerns about assimilation could have brought official repercussions for an author, if a work even made it into print. These concerns are thus submerged in *Whirlpool Wave*, and expressed largely through a fastidious concern with personal names and their connection to romantic and familial relations—and in particular, the remarkably convoluted love lives of Tajnisakhan and Mijit Molla's children.

This kindly Uyghur couple had adopted two Han children left in their town by parents from Tianjin and Shandong: Li Keymin, whom they call "Létip," and Go Meihua, whom they call "Gülendem."[68] The fully bilingual Li Keymin is a model of interethnic friendship: the protégé of Lin Jilu, he is a good friend of Lutpulla, and in every way an upstanding citizen.[69] His friendship with Lutpulla Mutellip, who did not speak Chinese, allows Abdulla Talip to portray Lutpulla as having a thoroughly ahistorical Han friend. Yet Li Keymin is at the same time emblematic of the author's approach to ethnic borders. Abdulla Talip repeatedly refers to Li as "the Han lad" (*khenzu yigit*), in place of his name; and when he does use Li's name, he generally uses the Chinese variant rather than the Uyghur "Létip." Conversely, the identity of Li's adoptive sister, Gülendem (Go Meihua), seems to have coalesced on the other side of the ethnic boundary. Abdulla Talip generally refers to her by her Uyghur name, and is much exercised by the unwanted affection visited upon her by Zhang Weibi, a Han police officer. The ensuing romantic comedy of errors points clearly to the connection between Abdulla Talip's concern with names and his concern with communal boundaries in general.

[68] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi* (1982), 342-46. I have adopted here Abdulla Talip's spelling of their Chinese names, since it is not possible to clarify what Chinese pronunciations he may have had in mind. (Li Kaimin and Guo Meihua seem the most likely options.)
[69] Ibid., 300-05, and passim.

Smitten by Gülendem, Officer Zhang's attentions threaten to blur the ethnic boundary in multiple ways. In the course of his courtship, the officer manages to unearth Gülendem's Chinese name; his insistence on calling her Go Meihua is deeply uncomfortable for her. Gülendem spits whenever Zhang comes near, but the officer is not easily deterred. He begins calling her by her "Muslim" (*Musulmanche*) name, and goes so far as to pay the neighborhood kids to start calling him "Zhang Memet," affixing to his own family name the variant of "Muhammad" commonly used as a suffix in Uyghur male names. Tajnisakhan, unimpressed, refers to the hapless officer as "Zhang panaq," *panaq* being a derogatory Uyghur term for people with flat noses—usually used in reference to Han.[70] In *Whirlpool Wave*, then, ethnic borders can be crossed in some situations—but they are still borders, which only fate can permit one to cross. Thus Gülendem is referred to by Abdulla Talip using her Uyghur name, while Zhang Weibi is ridiculed for assuming a faux Uyghur name in order to win Gülendem's affections. Even the incest taboo is less concerning to Abdulla Talip than the unauthorized traversal of ethnic borders. The novelist is quite positive about another of Gülendem's suitors: her own half-brother, Li Keymin, who despite his Uyghur fluency and alternate name unambiguously occupies the Han side of the ethnic divide. The two siblings' mirror-image ethnic ambiguity perhaps helped consecrate their courtship in Abdulla Talip's eyes.

The proprietresses of two pubs in Aqsu also provide an opportunity for Abdulla Talip to sort out the messy borders between ethnicities. These taverns, each run by an ethnically ambiguous woman, are some of the few places depicted in the novel as scenes of voluntary social interaction between Han and Muslims. The first pub is run by a woman named Song Zorikhan. Daughter of a poor Han family from Gansu, Sung had been second wife to the ranking Chinese official in the central Xinjiang town of Bügür. When her husband was killed by the

[70] Ibid., 463, 569-70.

Elder Brothers (*gelaohui* 哥老會) secret society in 1915, she went into hiding among the Uyghurs of Bügür and took the Uyghur name "Zorikhan." Eventually she relocated to Aqsu and opened a pub. Abdulla Talip writes that the name "Sung Zorikhan" fits her, since she gets along well with her Uyghur neighbors and dresses as they do. Even so, Abdulla Talip always surrounds her Uyghur name in quotation marks, the punctuation indicating an enduring ethnic otherness.[71]

Wang Saozi, proprietor of another pub near Aqsu, pleads unsuccessfully for people to call her Ayshemkhan. Her father was a Qipchaq (perhaps meaning Kyrgyz) who died when she was five, and her Uyghur mother moved with her to the Geyshang market in Yarkand. After a couple brief and unhappy marriages to local Uyghur men, she married a Han convert to Islam who ran a small store in town. Her husband, Wang, was away from home for months and even years at a time, leaving her to run the store, which sold alcohol and attracted the business of local gamblers. The gamblers called her "Wang Taitai" (Lady Wang), a name she despised; but she could do nothing as "Wang Taitai" gossip became the talk of the bazaar. Finally, to escape the whispers and the name she hated, she headed for her husband's hometown in Shaanxi—only to find that the locals there called her "Wang Saozi" (sister-in-law Wang). This was ultimately the name that stuck with her, even after she left Shaanxi and settled in Aqsu.[72]

The association of ethnically ambivalent names with alcohol and unsavoriness is underlined as well by an alcoholic trickster figure known (among other monikers) as Sadir, who offers versions of his name in many different languages; he keeps changing it, he notes, to keep up with the times.[73] And this, indeed, is precisely what Abdulla Talip accomplished with his fastidious focus on the creation and maintenance of ethnic and linguistic boundaries: keeping up with the times. If the high socialist era in Xinjiang had been a time of assimilationist state

[71] Ibid., 573-74.
[72] Ibid., 439-46.
[73] Ibid., 372-73.

policies, the reform era would see endless private initiative in the demarcation and maintenance of Uyghur communal borders. Yet despite stark differences like these, the cultural undertakings of the reform era built on the decades that came before in ways that are often overlooked, not least by historiography.[74] These linkages—and the historical lacuna surrounding them—are the subject of the following section.

Crossing the 1978 Divide: The History of Historical Fiction

We have seen in the preceding sections how mid-century Uyghur official culture was recovered and reshaped after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Yet while these continuities would have been clear to those carrying out the literary restoration, they are largely downplayed in Uyghur-language historiography and literary studies, a fact reflected in Western historiography as well. The reasons for this lacuna parallel those which long made 1949 an uncrossable fissure in Chinese history. After the end of the Chinese Civil War, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, the latter in its Taiwanese exile, had a shared interest in treating the 1949 founding of the PRC as a radical break with all of preceding Chinese history.[75] In the Cold War era, this clean bifurcation of the Communist and pre-Communist eras fit neatly into political preconceptions in both Asia and the West. In much the same way, Deng Xiaoping's reform policies were inaugurated with much fanfare as the self-conscious beginning of an era of reform. This was true in Xinjiang no less than in the rest of China, with poets like Abdukérim Khojaev waxing elegiac on the overthrow of the Gang of Four and the Eleventh Party Congress.

[74] Recent historical and anthropological work has, however, made considerable advances in connecting reform-era Uyghur culture to the canons and cultural systems that preceded the socialist era. E.g. Thum, *Sacred Routes*; Kara Abramson, "Gender, Uyghur Identity, and the Story of Nuzugum," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71.4 (2012): 1-23; Elise Anderson, "The Construction of Āmānnisā Khan as a Uyghur Musical Culture Hero," *Asian Music* 43.1 (2012): 64-90.

[75] Paul A. Cohen, "Reflections on a Watershed Date: The 1949 divide in Chinese history," in *Twentieth-Century China: New Approaches*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 27-36 (London: Routledge, 2003).

As with the 1949 divide in Cold War historiography, this conception of neat divergence—Maoism and reform—fit the post-Cold War political moment. As the People's Republic of China joined global trade networks and an increasingly globalized cultural sphere, the narrative of the reform era as a clean break with the past was both plausible and appealing in China and abroad. PRC historiography largely adopted 1978 as a natural dividing line in Chinese history, and as the reform era continued, this chronological division manifested itself in China studies abroad. The 1978 bifurcation's impact on international historiography was due in part to the greatly increased and highly productive integration of Sinology in China and abroad; perceptions of 1978 as a comprehensive break with the past were further heightened by the fact that the reform era did indeed mark a radical improvement in fieldwork and archival access in China for foreign researchers. In terms of economic and political history, there was a strong case to be made, as Deng's reforms rolled back much of Maoist policy and transformed China's economy and society. In the cultural sphere, however, continuities between the Mao era and the reform era have sometimes been obscured by the emphasis on this periodization. The problem is compounded by the inaccessibility of much of the Mao era's cultural products, due to the Red Guards' bonfires; the PRC's isolation during the Mao period; and a tight-fisted archival policy on the part of a party-state that sees no benefit in reopening the wounds of the PRC's early decades.

The 1978 divide was appealing and often persuasive for Uyghur writers and intellectuals in the early reform era. As noted above, writers and poets were eager to leave behind much of the heavily ideological work they had been obliged to publish in the Mao era, and the collected works of poets like Téyipjan Éliev and Abdukérim Khojaev largely exclude their paeans to

collectivization and their denunciatory poems from the various campaigns.[76] This conscious forgetting of Uyghur print culture during the Mao era was made possible by the Red Guards' enthusiastic destruction of nearly all print matter in Xinjiang dating to before 1966—as well as the continued regular use of print products as heat fuel in Xinjiang. Working on this relatively clean slate, Uyghur literati with access to the printing press and the lectern in the 1980s rapidly promulgated a narrative of Uyghur cultural history which skipped directly from the glories of pre-socialist classical Uyghur literature to the glories of reform-era modern Uyghur literature, while eliding most of the Mao-era and late Republican-era cultural construction that provided the foundation for the cultural elaborations of the reform era.

If the poetic styles developed in the mid-twentieth century were presented in the reform era as timeless Uyghur tradition, mid-century Uyghur prose fiction was largely forgotten, with 1980s fiction presented as the ex nihilo triumph of reform-era liberalization and literary genius. Until the reform era, declared literary critic Makhmutjan Islam at a 1986 Ürümchi conference, Uyghur literature contained "so few prose works they could be counted on your fingers." He credited the 1980s flourishing of Uyghur novels entirely to "the bright light of the new spring sun"—that is, the reform-era liberalizations and the creativity they unleashed.[77] At the same conference, which focused on Uyghur novels, a succession of prominent literary critics explained the emergence of Uyghur prose fiction as the immediate result of the reforms adopted in the late 1970s. Little reference was made to Mao-era Uyghur literature; the development of Uyghur

[76] Others retooled their work for reform-era publication. Elqem Ekhtem, author of fierce anti-Chinese polemics in the 1940s and pro-China rhapsodies in the 1950s, had some practice at adjusting his literary stylings to fit the ideological moment. Once the reform era began, he went so far as to rewrite and republish some of his Mao-era poems. Compare the last lines of the original version of Elqem Ekhtem's 1953 "My Friend Mutellip" (Dostum Mutellip) with those of the revised version that appeared in the poet's 1985 collection *Yéngish dolqunliri*. The first speaks of struggle against enemy classes, the second of struggle only against unspecified "yatlar" (foreign ones). Elqem Ekhtem, *Küresh dolqunliri* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1957), 52-59; Elqem Ekhtem, *Yéngish dolqunliri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1985).

[77] Makhmutjan Islam, "Romanchiliqimizni güllendürüsh toghrisidiki bezi qarashlirim," in *Uyghur romanchiliqi toghrisida*, ed. Makhmutjan Islam, 156 (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1987).

prose fiction was mostly presented as a direct leap from classical Uyghur literature, terminating in the early Republican period, to reform-era literature. All this despite the fact that many of reform-era Uyghur prose fiction's foremost practitioners—Abduréhim Ötkür, Khéwir Tömür, and others—had been active in mid-twentieth century Uyghur arts and letters. Some later works on Uyghur literature do acknowledge the foundational role of prose fiction in the early years of Maoism,[78] but impressions persist of prose fiction as a reform-era innovation, in part because of a widespread tendency to privilege the novel and the book over shorter prose fiction and journal publications, which were the bread and butter of Mao-era prose literature.

In considering the mid-century roots of Uyghur prose fiction as well as the ways in which they are obscured by the 1978 divide, it will be useful to trace the genealogy of historical and biographical fiction, one of reform-era Uyghur literature's central genres. After rising steadily in popularity in the early reform era, Uyghur historical and biographical fiction had come into its own by the mid-1980s, with novels by Zordun Sabir, Abdulla Talip, Khéwir Tömür, Abduréhim Ötkür, and others finding large audiences in Xinjiang. At the 1986 conference on novels, when critic Abduweli Kérim spoke at length on historical fiction, he largely dismissed Uyghur prose fiction before the reform era with a few sentences bemoaning the fact that Mao-era Uyghur literature had failed to produce a novel.[79] The below analysis will challenge such dismissals of mid-century Uyghur prose fiction by unearthing the Republican-era and Mao-era roots of contemporary Uyghur historical and biographical fiction, a genre of tremendous cultural and social significance. In particular, *Whirlpool Wave*, as both a representative and a foundational work, will be recontextualized in terms of Uyghur literary history in Xinjiang. We can begin by

[78] Abdushükür Turdi and Azad Rehmitulla Sultan, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 426-31.
[79] E.g., Ablimit Ismayil, "Tarikh, tarikhiy roman we ré'alliq—tarikhiy roman 'Iz' toghrisida mulahize," in *Uyghur romanchiliqi toghrisida*, ed. Makhmutjan Islam, 41-88 (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1987).

noting some significant continuities between historical fiction in the mid- and late twentieth century; as above, Lutpulla Mutellip will serve as a focus for this discussion.

The elision of mid-century Uyghur prose fiction from reform-era narratives of Uyghur literary history is particularly notable in light of the fact that a number of influential authors published prose fiction in both periods. While Uyghur official culture in the mid-twentieth century had largely been the province of young men and women, the bureaucratic restoration of the early reform era meant that many of Uyghur literature's most influential representatives in the 1980s were individuals who had come of age in the 1940s. Thus it was that in the early reform era, as in the 1940s and 1950s, many of the writers who shaped Lutpulla Mutellip's reputation had been his friends and contemporaries. Abdulla Talip was a typical example. In the mid-1940s, while he was still a teenager, his encounters with Lutpulla Mutellip had left a profound impression on him, and later formed the basis for his 1980 series. These connections between the poet and his later literary champion once more exemplify the significance of personal ties in the formation of literary canon. Abdulla Talip grew up in Aqsu, and beginning in 1943 published his first poems in the *Aqsu Xinjiang Gazette*.[80] Lutpulla Mutellip, who edited the paper's literature page, had arrived from Ürümchi that year to work at the *Gazette*, and his reputation preceded him; Abdulla and his classmates at Aqsu Teachers' College were eager to meet the celebrated young poet. Over the next couple of years, Abdulla met Lutpulla a number of times at the newspaper office and the Teachers College. In addition, Lutpulla was close with Abdulla's teacher at the College, and Abdulla was occasionally entrusted with carrying letters and manuscripts between the two.[81] Abdulla also seems to have been friendly in subsequent

[80] Abdulla Talip, *Abdulla Talip shé'irliri: ana yurt söygüsi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2008), 1-3.
[81] Abdulla Talip, "L. Mutəllip Wə Yax Əwlatlar," passim; Abdulla Talip, *Abdulla Talip shé'irliri*, 4-5; Tursun Barat, "Ilghar ma'aripchi, dramatorg Abdulla Rozi toghrisida," *Edib-sen'etkarlirimiz shejerisi (Shinjang tarikh matériyalliri* 37*)* (1994): 248-54.

years with Lutpulla's brother-in-law.[82] These connections and experiences helped inform and inspire *Whirlpool Wave*, which focuses primarily on Lutpulla's time in Aqsu.[83]

The line between history and fiction remains somewhat ambiguous in *Whirlpool Wave*, with the book's subtitle, "biographical novel," seemingly at odds with the preface, which styles the book simply as a "biography."[84] The novel contains numerous footnotes, helping add to the impression that the book is somewhere between fiction and history. Rian Thum has noted the porous boundary between fiction and history in Altishahr's manuscript canon;[85] a comparable state of affairs persisted in the reform-era print canon. The works of Khéwir Tömür (1922-92), a prolific novelist and memoirist-historian from Turpan, typify this ambiguity.[86] Khéwir Tömür, who along with Abdulla Talip helped popularize the biographical novel in Xinjiang, chose two of his hometown's most famous sons—Molla Zeydin and Abdukhaliq Uyghur—as the subjects for his first two books. The title of the first book, *The Molla Zeydin Chronicles* (*Molla Zeydin heqqide qisse*), and the foreword of the second, *The Man Who Awakened Early* (*Baldur oyghan'ghan adem*), identify them as *qisse*, a traditional Turkestani genre involving the literary recording of true events. Yet the preeminent reference work on Uyghur literature, in lauding Khéwir Tömür for resurrecting this traditional genre and thereby hewing to the highest standard of historical facticity, nonetheless repeatedly refers to his books as novels, and notes in closing that Khéwir Tömür "did not allow himself to be restricted by the limited historical materials and facts available, but rather investigated boldly and endowed the picture of historical life in his

[82] Abdulla Talip, *Lale-Qurban (tarikhiy roman)* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1997), 3.
[83] Much of Abdulla Talip's 1980 reminiscences of Lutpulla Mutellip found lightly fictionalized expression in Abdulla Talip's 1982 novel; compare, for example, Abdulla Talip 1980 (4): 16-17 with Abdulla Talip 1982, 227-33. A number of the section headings in Abdulla Talip's 1980 series are used as chapter titles in his 1982 novel.
[84] Abdulla Talip, *Qaynam örkishi* (1982), unpaginated preface.
[85] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 35-36.
[86] See chapter 2 for Khéwir Tömür's early activism in mid-1940s Xinjiang.

novels with clarity and concreteness."[87] The word *qisse* thus lends to thoroughly modern novels a patina of historical authenticity and Uyghur tradition, underlining the fluidity of genre in reform-era Uyghur literature.

In his pathbreaking study of the roots of Uyghur identity in the hagiography and shrine pilgrimage traditions of the Tarim Basin, Rian Thum has suggested that the biographical novel has provided a contemporary outlet for important aspects of the Altishahri *taẕkirah* (hagiography) genre.[88] And indeed, in *Whirlpool Wave*, Abdulla Talip depicts Lutpulla Mutellip as a character with no flaws and seemingly unlimited virtues—a presentation that would have been familiar to readers and listeners of the hagiographic tradition Thum describes in the pre-Communist period. If the *taẕkirah*s are a source for the Uyghur biographical novel, however, their influence was mediated through Xinjiang's socialist era, and specifically through the print literature of the 1940s through the 1960s. These were the decades in which Abdulla Talip began his career as a writer, penning poems and dramas as well as journalistic fiction (a genre known in Uyghur as *ochérk*, from the Russian *ocherk*).[89] During these middle decades of the century, Abdulla Talip, who already nurtured a keen interest in Lutpulla Mutellip, would have come across multiple works of prose fiction depicting the late poet as a figure of endless talent and immaculate goodness. Some of these, like the short biographical fiction by Liu Xiaowu and Abdukérim Khojaev described above, drew from contemporary trends in Chinese literature.

While most copies of these prose fiction works were burned by the Red Guards, their cultural influence persisted into the reform era. If the full readership of mid-century Uyghur

[87] *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 4, 636. Khéwir Tömür's *Molla Zeydin heqqide qisse* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1981-82) recounts the life of the nineteenth-century satirical poet Molla Zeydin, while his *Baldur oyghan'ghan adem* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1987) tells the story of Abdukhaliq Uyghur, a poet killed, like Lutpulla, while battling Xinjiang's rapacious rulers during the Republican period. Khéwir Tömür's father, Tömür Éli, had been a leader of the rebellion in which Abdukhaliq Uyghur was killed.
[88] Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 193-209.
[89] For a synopsis of Abdulla Talip's career, see *Lale-Qurban*, 1-2.

prose works is difficult to establish, it is nonetheless clear that Uyghur intellectual elites—individuals like Abdulla Talip—were eager readers. (Liu's fictionalized treatment, as we will see below, exercised a substantial and sustained influence on Uyghur-language representations of Lutpulla.) By the end of the Cultural Revolution, Uyghurs in Xinjiang were also exhaustively familiar with hagiographic representations of figures like Lei Feng and Qadir Hézim, whose stories were promoted in print, in cartoon form, and by the roadside loudspeakers that were a ubiquitous feature of the Cultural Revolution period in Xinjiang as elsewhere in China. By the early 1980s, Abdulla Talip had multiple hagiographic precedents to draw on, ranging from the Islamic tradition to mid-century socialist fiction to the saints of high Maoism.

The most immediate predecessors of *Whirlpool Wave* were shorter works of historical fiction published in the Eastern Turkestan Republic and in early Maoist Xinjiang. Given that Lutpulla Mutellip had a starring role in several of these works, it is unsurprising that Xinjiang's first Uyghur biographical novel would take up the theme, especially since many of the mid-century authors were still active on Xinjiang's literary scene in the 1980s. A brief overview of these works will serve to outline the substantial continuities between Uyghur literary production in Xinjiang in the century's middle and final decades. Perhaps the first serious practitioner of historical fiction in the region was Eysa Yüsüp (b. 1916), a Turpan-born ETR veteran who later enjoyed a successful career in Maoist Xinjiang.[90] Eysa Yüsüp had worked at the Provincial Teachers' College while Lutpulla was a student there, and was transferred to work in Aqsu around the same time as Lutpulla. In 1947, like so many ambitious and idealistic young Uyghurs in southern Xinjiang, he moved to the Eastern Turkestan Republic, where he worked in education and government. In 1948, *Revolutionary Eastern Turkestan* serialized his "The Shackled Figure" ("Zenjirlen'gen ten"), a work of journalistic fiction (*ochérk*) recounting the

[90] Liu Bin and Iminjan Ehmidi Utuq, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3, 478-79.

1945 battle of Aqsu and the last days of Lutpulla Mutellip.[91] Eysa Yüsüp maintained his interest in Lutpulla and in the battle of Aqsu throughout the Mao era,[92] but it was only in the reform era that conditions permitted him to reprise his literary effort—in much expanded form. In 1988, he brought out the novel *Aqsu: 1945*, billed, like Khéwir Tömür's biographical novels, as a *qisse*, and weighing in at nearly a thousand pages.[93] While *Aqsu: 1945* is not as focused on Lutpulla as *Whirlpool Wave*, the poet does play a prominent role in the hefty tome.

While Eysa Yüsüp drew on the Russian *ocherk* genre, some early exponents of historical fiction in Maoist Xinjiang operated more in the Chinese literary context. The same year his mentor Liu Xiaowu wrote his first story about Lutpulla Mutellip, Abdukérim Khojaev tried his hand at historical fiction with "The First Battle," a short story recounting Lutpulla Mutellip's time in Aqsu from a Maoist angle.[94] Khojaev was not a practiced prose author, and his short story is little remembered; but his choice to experiment with prose fiction—and specifically biographical fiction—point to the growing significance of this genre in Mao-era Uyghur literature. The steady output of fictionalized accounts of Lutpulla's life continued right up to the eve of the Cultural Revolution. Mömin Muhemmidi, a relative of Lutpulla, published an *ochérk* on the late poet in 1962, focusing on Lutpulla's childhood and titled "Whirlpool Wave: A Biographical Ochérk on L. Mutellip's Childhood Years."[95] Like Eysa Yüsüp, Muhemmidi would expand on his youthful efforts decades later; 1998 saw the publication of *Uproar*, a full-length

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[91] On Eysa Yüsüp's *Zenjirlen'gen ten*, see Liu Bin 刘宾 and Iminjan Ehmidi Utuq, eds., *Uyghur edebiyati tarikhi*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 2006), 478-79.

[92] He was sufficiently preoccupied with the topic to complain at a Hundred Flowers Movement criticism meeting about inaccurate popular portrayals of the 1945 Aqsu underground. "Wenxue yishu jie dangwai renshi zuotanhui jixu juxing 文學藝術界黨外人士座談會繼續舉行," 15 June 1957: 3

[93] Eysa Yüsüp, *Aqsuda 1945- yil (tarikhiy qisse)* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1988).

[94] A. Khojayéw, "Birinchi jengde," *Shinjang edebiyat-sen'iti* 9 (1955): 45-53. Liu's story is treated in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[95] Mömin Muhemmidi, "Qaynam örkishi (L. Mutellipning baliliq hayatigha da'ir biografik ochérk)," *Shinjang edebiyati* 2 (1962): 23-40.

biographical novel treating Lutpulla's childhood and teenage years.[96] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ershidin Tatliq was tasked by the Xinjiang Writers' Union with copying out poems by Lutpulla Mutellip, Bilal Ézizi, and others from the newspapers in which they were originally published.[97] It was no doubt this intimate acquaintance with Lutpulla's work that inspired Ershidin Tatliq to pen *Stars Before the Dawn* in the mid-1960s, a novella on Lutpulla's life that was still at the printer's as the Cultural Revolution began.[98]

Ershidin Tatliq's novella was burned before it could be distributed; nearly all copies of Xinjiang's other early efforts at historical fiction were burned as well. It was in significant part this physical destruction of texts that lent the impression of Uyghur prose fiction as emerging from nothing in the reform era. Yet each of these authors—Eysa Yüsüp, Abdukérim Khojaev, Mömin Muhemmidi, and Ershidin Tatliq—was active in the early reform era, and two of them explicitly drew on their own midcentury efforts as they helped build the expanding genre of historical and biographical fiction in reform-era Xinjiang. In many ways, the Uyghur novel as it developed in the 1980s was simply the extension of their prior efforts, now in the monumental format that an increasingly globalized literary scene privileged as the premier nation-building genre. And if tracing the roots of historical fiction in the 1980s has meant recrossing the 1978 divide, tracing the deeper roots of the genre in the mid-twentieth century returns us to a historical moment considered in the first three chapters of this dissertation: the quarter-century between 1935 and 1960 during which the Ili-dominated Uyghur culture was constructed jointly across the Sino-Soviet border.

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[96] Mömin Muhemmidi, *Shawqun (roman)* (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1998).
[97] Ershidin Tatliq, "1949- yildin burun Shinjangda Uyghur tilida neshr qilin'ghan gézit-zhurnallar," *Shinjang tezkirichiliki* 68 (2004): 50.
[98] Lale, ed., "Ershidin Tatliq," *Tengritagh tori* 1 March 2009, http://uy.ts.cn/wenxue/content/2009-03/01/content_160981.htm (accessed 18 March 2019).

Historical and biographical fiction in Xinjiang, whether in the 1940s, the 1950s, or the reform era, has taken inspiration predominantly from local subject matter, and particularly from Uyghur heroes like Lutpulla Mutellip. In literary form, however, the genre was to a great extent constructed on Soviet antecedents. This was particularly true for midcentury authors, including even those like Abdukérim Khojaev who were deeply read in Chinese literature, given that their Han contemporaries were likewise heavily influenced by Soviet models. For Uyghur authors in Xinjiang, the most immediate precedents included not only the Russian-language literature that was then consumed in translation by literati throughout China, but also works composed in various Turkic languages of the USSR, including Uyghur. Numerous novels printed in Uyghur in the USSR, primarily translations from other languages, had circulated in Xinjiang—and especially in the north—from at least the 1940s.[99]

These books included biographical novels along the lines of *Whirlpool Wave*, and were part of the literary zeitgeist not only for midcentury Uyghur authors but for reform-era authors like Abdulla Talip as well. Indeed, by the 1980s, the didactic socialist *bildungsroman*, based not on noted historical figures but rather on admirable archetypes, had been popular among Uyghur readers for decades. Soviet novels like Nikolai Ostrovskii's semi-autobiographical *How Steel Was Tempered* (Ru. *Kak zakalialas' stal'*, Uy. *Polat qandaq tawlandi*), recounting the education and exploits of a young Bolshevik true believer, were very widely read in Uyghur translation into the 1980s, and likely provided a template not only for Uyghur *bildungsromane*, but for some Uyghur biographical novels as well.[100] It is unsurprising, then, that the collective memory of

[99] Interview with Mirsultan Osmanov, educated in Ili in the 1930s and '40s. Ürümchi, July 2014. Rian Thum likewise points to Soviet literature as one inspiration for the Uyghur biographical novel, noting the emergence of historical fiction in early Soviet Central Asia as well as the fact that a Uyghur translation of the Uzbek biographical novel *Nava'i* was distributed in Xinjiang in the mid-1950s. Thum, *Sacred Routes*, 201-02.
[100] On Ostrovskii's novel and others like it, see Lilya Kaganovsky, *How the Soviet Man Was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity Under Stalin* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008).

figures like Lutpulla Mutellip, enshrined to a great extent through fictionalized accounts, has come to resemble the fictional heroes of works like Ostrovskii's.[101]

A more direct precedent for Abdulla Talip's *Whirlpool Wave* was Mesimjan Zulpiqarov's 1969 novel *Lutpulla Mutellip*, published in Cyrillic-script Uyghur in Kazakhstan.[102] Zulpiqarov (1925-2012), like Elqem Ekhtem and Meshür Roziev, was born in Kazakhstan's heavily Uyghur Chilek region.[103] Like Elqem Ekhtem and Lutpulla Mutellip, Zulpiqarov moved with his family to Ghulja in the early 1930s to escape collectivization and the accompanying famine and repression in Soviet Central Asia. Zulpiqarov was educated in Ili's schools, and as a teenager fought in the ETR army, rising rapidly through the ranks. After 1949, like many ETR officers, he was grandfathered into the PRC army in Xinjiang, and then into civilian office. Seeing which way the political winds were blowing and correctly surmising that ETR veterans would be under eternal suspicion in Mao's China, Zulpiqarov emigrated to the USSR in 1955. He settled in Almaty, and over the subsequent decades emerged as one of the USSR's most prominent Uyghur writers.[104]

Like Abdulla Talip and so many others involved in creating Lutpulla's posthumous reputation, Mesimjan Zulpiqarov had known Lutpulla personally. They grew up together in Ili, and their studies at Xinjiang Pedagogical College in Ürümchi overlapped. Zulpiqarov had also been inspired by Lutpulla's literary efforts, then appearing regularly in the provincial newspaper,

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[101] Similarly, David Der-wei Wang notes that the super-heroic, super-patriotic soldiers of Du Pengcheng's 1954 *Guarding Yan'an* constitute "fictional predecessors of the Lei Feng cult of the '60s." "Reinventing National History: Communist and Anti-Communist Fiction of the Mid-Twentieth Century," in *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of a Modern Century: A Critical Survey*, ed. Pang-Yuan Chi and David Der-wei Wang (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 43.

[102] Mesimjan Zulpiqarov, *Lutpulla Mutellip* (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1969).

[103] Mesümjan Zulpiqarov, *Ömür sehipiliri* (Almaty: Nash Mir, n.d.), 1, and passim; Clark and Kamalov, "Uighur Migration across Central Asian Frontiers," 172-73.

[104] In a typical sixth-grade literature textbook from the Perestroika period, works by Zulpiqarov and Ziya Semidi, who had also emigrated to the USSR, comprised fully half of the section on post-war Uyghur literature. Q. Hasanov, M. Mekhsutov and Q. Emetov, eds., *Edebiyat: VI sinip üchün derslik* (Almaty: Mektep, 1989).

where Lutpulla was editor of the literature page. “I associated a bit with Lutpulla,” recalled Zulpiqarov decades later. “I tasted the heavy, painful flavor of the reactionary, backward regime under which he lived.” Lutpulla’s death, which was widely reported and mourned in the ETR, would have registered strongly with Zulpiqarov, then serving in the ETR army. Since the 1950s, Zulpiqarov had been nursing the idea of devoting a literary work to the late poet.[105]

Zulpiqarov’s novel differed in important ways from Abdulla Talip’s. For one thing, Zulpiqarov was a much more sophisticated stylist and storyteller, and his substantially shorter novel nonetheless realizes its characters more fully. Beyond this, the key difference, though not a surprising one, is the differential portrayal of Han Chinese characters and the Soviet Union. Han characters in Zulpiqarov’s novel, written during the height of Sino-Soviet tensions, are primarily depicted in negative terms, with the notable exception of CCP members like the director of Lutpulla’s school in Ürümchi.[106] Conversely, while there are no living Russian characters in the novel, there are plenty of dead ones: Lutpulla, his friends, and his mentors are constantly studying the works of Lenin, Gorky, and Mayakovsky. It is surely symbolic that while Lutpulla’s literature teacher at his Russian Gymnasium in Ili is discussing a Pushkin story, Lutpulla begins daydreaming about the nineteenth-century Ili hero Sadir Palwan: a Uyghur youth in a Russian school, dreaming a Russian hero into a Uyghur one.[107] Both novels present a progressive group of Uyghurs preparing the ground for the eventual liberation of Xinjiang; yet the source and meaning of this liberation is understood differently in the two books. In Zulpiqarov’s novel, the USSR looms large as the ultimate guarantor of progress and liberation for the region, and the

[105] M. Zulpiqarov , "'Lutpulla' romani qandaq yézildi," *Kommunizm tughi* 29 Dec. 1982: 3; M. Zulpiqarov, “Yalqunluq sima,” *Uyghur avazi* 28 Nov 1992: 2.
[106] Zulpiqarov, *Lutpulla Mutellip*, 79-84.
[107] Ibid., 15.

author speaks of "the mighty Soviet people," never the mighty Chinese people.[108] In Zulpiqarov's telling, when salvation does arrive in Xinjiang, it marches from the north and the west: the army of the ETR, with Soviet backing, which heads south from Ili in an attempt to liberate southern Xinjiang from the Guomindang. In Abdulla Talip's novel, of course, it is the liberation of 1949 that is heavily foreshadowed.

While the differences between the two works were significant, the similarities are more striking. As in *Whirlpool Wave*, the physical geography of the Uyghur homeland looms large in Zulpiqarov's novel; and within the homeland, Ili has pride of place. Thus does the title character of Zulpiqarov's *Lutpulla Mutellip* look out over the mountains and valleys of Ili, take up a fistful of dirt, and declare "How dear you are!" Not long after, Lutpulla visits a stream where he often played as a child. Drinking deeply from the stream, Lutpulla rubs some of its water "as a relic [*tewerük*]" onto his eyes.[109] Loving, extended geographical descriptions of Xinjiang abound in the novel, as the author recreates Xinjiang for the numerous Soviet Uyghurs who had never seen it.[110] In both novels, government officials and soldiers bully peasants and laborers—a similarity to be expected for works born in socialist literary milieus. And both works display a distrust for ethnically ambiguous figures; this theme in Abdulla Talip's work will be treated in greater detail below.[111] In *Lutpulla Mutellip*, as in *Whirlpool Wave*, long horse cart rides prove useful narrative devices for relaying historical exegesis via conversations between Lutpulla and the drivers.[112]

While relations between China and the USSR were still frosty in the early 1980s, Deng's opening policies allowed once more for the distribution of Soviet literary works in China. The

[108] Ibid., 143.
[109] Ibid., 12, 35.
[110] Ibid., 88-89, 97.
[111] A prominent example in Zulpiqarov's novel is Zoming/Zunun, a Uyghur policeman-translator. On p. 126, for example, he is depicted muttering under his breath in Chinese as he conspires against Lutpulla.
[112] E.g., *Lutpulla Mutellip*, 6; *Qaynam örkishi*, 19-25, 73-102.

two Uyghur communities, separated by two decades of Sino-Soviet conflict, began to reconnect, as Soviet Uyghur works were reprinted in Xinjiang's Uyghur journals and a growing number of Uyghurs in each community began crossing the Sino-Soviet border for trade and family visits.[113] In this context, Abdulla Talip presumably knew of Zulpiqarov's novel, though it remains unclear whether he had read it before writing his own. Even if Abdulla Talip had been entirely unaware of Zulpiqarov's work, parallels between *Lutpulla Mutellip* and *Whirlpool Wave* would be unsurprising, given the preeminent place of Lutpulla Mutellip in the firmament of Uyghur heroes on both sides of the border, and the fact that both authors drew on the same tradition of historical fiction and socialist *bildungsromane*, one which until the Sino-Soviet split had largely been shared between Xinjiang and Soviet Central Asia.

If historical fiction in reform-era Xinjiang drew on Mao-era and Soviet literary precedents, it was the emergence of alternative historical scholarship in reform-era Xinjiang—and the state's crushing response to that scholarship—that formed the immediate context for Uyghur intellectuals' remarkable commitment to historical fiction.[114] In the 1980s and early 1990s, no aspect of intellectual life in Xinjiang was more contested than Uyghur history; as with the resurgence of literary activity during the early reform era, this was in part a reaction to the Mao era's heavy-handed state controls on information and publishing. For generations of students, the party-state's tendentious version of Xinjiang history, which privileged class consciousness and emphasized Xinjiang's eternal unity with China, had been the only game in town. As these controls were loosened in the early 1980s, the party-state's monopoly on

[113] *Tarim*, for example, was reprinting Soviet Uyghur works by the early 1980s; e.g., Abliz Hézimow, "Mesel we hejwi shéirlar," *Tarim* 11 (1983): 115-20. It is nonetheless true that to this day many Uyghur writers and intellectuals in both China and the former USSR remain remarkably unaware of literary and intellectual developments in the Uyghur communities across the border. This can be only partially explained by erratic restrictions on the importation of Cyrillic-script materials into Xinjiang.

[114] Gardner Bovingdon and Nabijan Tursun, "Contested Histories," In *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr, (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), 353-74.

historical narrative crumbled rapidly, and new historical accounts began to make inroads in propagating a Uyghur-centered narrative of Xinjiang history—a narrative received with great interest by a Uyghur public long deprived of access to such narratives. Both the Uyghur public and the party-state perceived these conflicting versions of the past as holding direct implications for Chinese rule in Xinjiang in the present.

As has been discussed at some length in the scholarly literature on Uyghur nationalism, perhaps the most notable contribution to this discourse was a series of books by Turghun Almas, an ETR alumnus originally from Kashgar who had held high-level posts in the early Maoist cultural bureaucracy and gained some recognition as a poet. In the second half of the 1980s, with a sense of urgency borne of years in prison and decades deprived of the ability to publish, Turghun Almas published in quick succession a remarkable series of historical works that reinterpreted Xinjiang's history through the lens of romantic Uyghur nationalism. 1986 saw the publication of *A Brief History of the Huns*, a group which some Uyghurs regard as part of their national ancestry.[115] Two years later, in *Classic Uyghur Literature*, Turghun Almas employed oral and written literature to link the Huns to the Orkhon Uyghurs and the Karakhanids.[116] The biggest splash, though, was 1989's *The Uyghurs*, in which Turghun Almas provided the boldest and furthest-reaching nationalist reading of Uyghur history since Muhammad Imin Bughra's *History of Eastern Turkestan* a half-century before.[117]

By the end of the 1980s, Turghun Almas's historical work was being widely read, and had helped add a patina of footnoted historicity to nationalist interpretations of the Uyghur past.

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[115] Turghun Almas, *Honlarning qisqiche tarikhi* (Kashgar: Qeshqer Uyghur neshriyati, 1986).
[116] Turghun Almas, *Qedimki Uyghur edebiyati* (Kashgar: Qeshqer Uyghur neshriyati, 1988).
[117] Turghun Almas, *Uyghurlar* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1989). Bughra completed his magnum opus in 1940 while in exile in Kabul; for a fascimile, see Shimizu Yuriko, *The memoirs of Muḥammad Amīn Bughra: autograph manuscript and translation* (Tokyo : TIAS, Dept. of Islamic Area Studies, Center for Evolving Humanities, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, the University of Tokyo, 2012).

But the party-state, despite its substantial liberalization of the publishing sphere, had not developed an iron stomach for direct challenges to its preferred narrative of Chinese political and cultural hegemony over Xinjiang from time immemorial. When Turghun Almas's work began to acquire a significant popular following, the party-state promptly banned his writings and decided to make an example of him. A meeting of scholars from Xinjiang and inner China was convened in Ürümchi, with the stated goal of discrediting Turghun Almas and his work.[118] Stripped once more of his right to publish, Turghun Almas spent his remaining days in legal limbo and political exile, though highly esteemed by a public that still sometimes read his work in secret.[119]

The bargain was clear: research on Uyghur history would be permitted, so long as it did not challenge overarching Chinese state narratives—and so long as it did not significantly influence popular understandings of history. While the state may have lost interest in Uyghur official culture, it remained committed to suppressing historical research it viewed as challenging the legitimacy of its rule in Xinjiang.[120] With these considerations in mind, Uyghur intellectuals who hoped to shape and strengthen national consciousness were obliged to once more make literature the central focus of their efforts. As noted above, poetry continued to play a key role here, as it had in previous decades; but it was historical fiction that did most to bring dissenting visions of Uyghur history to Xinjiang's reading public. The gap between official and fictional histories only widened further in the years after the denunciation of Turghun Almas, as the party-

[118] The minutes of this meeting, featuring prominent Uyghurologists like Liu Zhixiao, Uyghur Sayrani, and Ibrahim Muti'i, were published for internal circulation. Liu, Sayrani, Muti'i, and others likely had little choice about their participation in the conference. Shinjang dashösi partkom teshwiqat bölümi, eds., *"Uyghurlar" qatarliq üch kitab mesilisi heqqidiki muhakime yighinining ilmiy maqaliliridin tallanma* (Ürümchi: Zizhiqu shuiliting yinshuachang, 1991).

[119] In the mid-2000s, nearly two decades after Turghun Almas's *The Uyghurs* was banned, an acquaintance presented me with a copy secreted away in a trunk.

[120] The importance the party-state has placed on controlling the narrative of Xinjiang history can be seen by the fact that while the State Council Information Office has since its formation in 1991 issued only 119 white papers for all of China, at least three of the white papers have been devoted in significant part to the history of Xinjiang. Martin Lavička, "Reading between the lines of Chinese propaganda: assessing the rhetoric in official and semi-official documents concerning the XUAR," paper presented at "Present Tense, Past Perfect? Narrative constructions of social representations in Central Eurasia" workshop (Copenhagen, March 2019), 8-9.

state continued to suppress dissenting Uyghur historical works even while novelists like Zordun Sabir reached huge audiences with historical fiction on subjects de-emphasized in PRC historiography.[121]

With historical exegesis a prime motivator in the composition of historical fiction, the border between history and fiction often proved permeable. Just as pure fiction like *How Steel Was Tempered* has served as a template for historical fiction, historical fiction has sometimes found its way into history. Thus, three decades after the 1956 publication of Liu Xiaowu's fictionalized account of Lutpulla's life in *People's Literature*, Liu's story began to be reprinted as a biography, without further clarification. In 1987, it appeared in the Chinese-language version of the *Ürümchi Historical Materials* series under the more ornate title "Starlight Brightening the Dark Night: A Biography of the Martyred Uyghur Poet L. Mutellip," and three years later was reprinted in translation in the Uyghur-language series of the *Ürümchi Historical Materials*.[122] (The series' Chinese title, *wenshi ziliao*, or "cultural and historical materials," differs slightly from its Uyghur name, *tarikh matériyalliri*, or "historical materials.") No indication is given in either reprint that Liu's account is anything other than a straightforward biography, nor is reference given to the original 1956 publication in *People's Literature*. The recycling of Liu's piece illustrates the slippage from fiction to fact in Lutpulla's accepted biography, as well as the careful approach demanded by the useful but problematic *Historical Materials* series.[123]

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[121] Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 97-99.

[122] Liu Xiaowu, "Weiwu'er shiren Li • Mutelifu 維吾尔詩人黎•穆特里夫," *Renmin wenxue* 2 (1956), 104-09; Liu Xiaowu, "Zhaoliang anye de xingguang: Weiwu'er shiren Li Mutalifu lieshizhuan 照亮暗夜的星光：维吾尔诗人黎•穆塔里甫烈士传," *Wulumuqi wenshi ziliao* 13 (1987): 91-107; Lyu Shawwu, "Qarangghu zulmetni yorutqan nurluq yultuz," *Ürümchi tarikh matériyalliri* 7 (1990): 154-80.

[123] When referencing the *Historical Materials* series, I have made every effort to corroborate and cross-reference with other sources. For a sensitive consideration of the uses and limitations of the *Historical Materials* series in writing the history of China's ethnic minority regions, see Benno Ryan Weiner, "The Chinese Revolution on the

As the years passed, Liu's story burrowed further into the collective memory as unalloyed history, eventually cropping up in wide-ranging places. One diligent reader of Liu's story has been Tursun Ershidin, whose numerous books (seven and counting) on Lutpulla Mutellip have contributed immensely to Lutpulla's reputation in the reform era. These books are presented either explicitly as fiction or as biography; a more careful examination, however, will show these genres to be less distinct than Tursun Ershidin's presentation would suggest.[124] In 2007, for example, his most extensive biography of Lutpulla quoted Liu's story, in Uyghur translation and without attribution, as historical fact.[125] A passage from Liu's story, though with attribution and in the original Chinese, is also quoted as fact in an article on Lutpulla's life and works by prominent editor and literary critic Zhang Yue.[126]

Such crossover underlines the key role of literature in defining the contours of historical memory and group identity for the Uyghur community of Xinjiang. In a political climate where state-sponsored historical works are distrusted and dissenting historians unable to publish, historical fiction has played a crucial role in building a usable Uyghur historical narrative in the reform era. As the Chinese party-state has retreated from socialist universalism and lost interest in Uyghur official culture, the canon it helped create in the 1950s and 1960s has proved an essential resource for nation-building Uyghur intellectuals. Even a socialist internationalist like Lutpulla Mutellip, whose extant collected works do not contain the word "Uyghur," would prove

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Tibetan Frontier: State Building, National Integration and Socialist Transformation, Zeku (Tsékhok) County, 1953-1958," Diss. (Columbia University, 2012), 46-51.

[124] One early fictional effort was *L. Mutəllip ɧəққide ɧikayə: balilиқ we өsmürlük dəwri (powest)* (Ürümchi: Xinjiang həlq nəxriyati), 1982.

[125] For seepage from fiction to fact, compare, for example, Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip* (2007), 108 ("Uni tépish zörür bolup qalsa… Yapon'gha qarshi nakhshilarni yaki mektep naxshilirini éytip mangatti") to Liu, "Weiwu'er shiren Li • Mutelifu," 105 ("要找，你只好到公共活动的場所去…唱着抗日歌曲"). See also the very similar wording in Tursun Ershidin, *L. Mutellip* (2007), 191-92 ("L. Mutellip bu ehwallarni körgendin kéyin… Méhrikhan isimlik bir momayning öyide turatti") and Liu, "Weiwu'er shiren Li • Mutelifu," 106 ("黎•穆特里夫來了，工人的生活可就变了样…要吃瓜大家来凑钱").

[126] 张越, "Weiwu'er xiandai geming wenxue de kaituozhe—lun shiren Li Mutalifu de chuangzuo 维吾尔现代革命文学的开拓者—论诗人黎•穆塔里甫的创作," *Minzu wenxue yanjiu* 2 (1984): 22.

a powerful icon for a Uyghur national narrative in need of national heroes. The Ili network likewise lost much of its influence in Uyghur official culture as the reform era wore on; yet the canon it had helped create—in cooperation with the Maoist state—would endure even as Ili's cultural power faded. As we will see in the final section, even as Ili increasingly lost its cultural hegemony in the Uyghur community, Lutpulla's star burned brighter than ever.

LUTPULLAMANIA

In the 1980s, Lutpulla Mutellip's poem "Answer to the Years" ("Yillargha jawab") was inscribed in gold letters on a wall in Paris. Finally, Parisians enthused, a poet had given an answer to time itself! Of course, this did not actually occur; but the story circulated widely in Xinjiang's bazaars and schools, and seemed believable to its retailers and listeners. "You can't imagine how people elevated Lutpulla to the skies in those days," recalled an acquaintance who was in grade school during this period. Typical was Atush, a district in southwestern Xinjiang near the border with Kyrgyzstan, where a ceremony commemorating Lutpulla was held in the county theater around 1980. Posters of the poet went up on schoolroom walls, and one teacher asked students to bring in a few cents to buy small pictures of Lutpulla, much as schoolchildren a few years earlier would have acquired Mao badges. Around the same time, the literature club at an Atush high school, under a teacher's guidance, observed Lutpulla's birthday and displayed his poems in wall newspapers (*tam géziti*).[127]

All of this in the proud oases of southwestern Xinjiang, a region whose cultural competition with Ili remains intense to the present day, with Atush and Ili in particular maintaining a fierce rivalry over the origins of reformist education in Xinjiang. As late as the 1920s, Ili poets like Lutpulla would have been considered unworthy of attention in southwestern

[127] Personal communications with several individuals from Atush, April 2011, August 2014, Ürümchi.

Xinjiang, whose local intellectuals prided themselves on the superiority of their high culture. The socialist era, however, had leveled many of the distinctions that would once have marked Lutpulla as the cultural property of a specific group, whether defined geographically (Ili), in terms of social group (secular intellectuals), or ideologically (socialists). Following the sweeping destruction of the Cultural Revolution, the surviving fragments of mid-century Uyghur culture were in the early reform era rapidly reassembled into something new: a Uyghur national culture subsumed neither by Chinese nor by Soviet identity. Lutpulla Mutellip, that endlessly malleable hero, now transcended the specifics of his historical existence to emerge as one of this national culture's most potent symbols.

In the early years of the reform era, as Uyghur writers and intellectuals worked busily to salvage a Uyghur national pantheon from the Chinese socialist canon, Lutpulla's reputation soared to previously unknown heights. While during the Mao era Lutpulla had been the subject of innumerable poems as well as short stories, journalistic fiction, and a biographical film, the reform era saw the creative energies of capitalism and nationalism bejewel the late poet's reputation with the full mundane paraphernalia of commercialist commemoration: books, music videos, websites, and even a commemorative watch. The iconography is telling: Lutpulla has been enshrined in most of the various poster series featuring famous and admired Uyghurs, as well as a few favorites from world history; recent series include such luminaries as Bill Gates and Isaac Newton alongside Lutpulla and the medieval Turkic poet Elishir Nava'i.[128] The juxtaposition of canonical Uyghurs with various internationally known figures represents an effort to connect an idealized Uyghur past to an equally idealized world history; the Uyghur pantheon is thus legitimized as a subset of an imagined irreproachable global canon.

[128] These poster series were available in state Xinhua bookstores as well as privately-owned Uyghur bookstores throughout the 2000s.

Yet this commemorative apogee was achieved just as those who built Lutpulla's posthumous reputation began to leave the stage. In the first decade of the reform era, as in the two decades preceding the Cultural Revolution, figures like Abdulla Talip and Elqem Ekhtem, who had various personal connections to Lutpulla Mutellip, had played a critical role in tending and extending Lutpulla's memory. Many of these figures were no longer active in Uyghur public culture, however, in the years when Lutpulla's legend reached its peak. By the end of the 1980s, the old guard of Uyghur official culture began to pass on, with Abdukérim Khoja, Téyipjan Éliev, and Zunun Qadiri dying within a couple years of each other in 1988 and 1989. Other members of the Mao-era Uyghur bureaucratic elite moved into retirement, though some stayed active in publishing and other pursuits. Their posts were filled by young Uyghur intellectuals from throughout Xinjiang, with little special advantage accruing to young cadres from Ili. In the 1990s, then, the Ili network's sway in Uyghur official culture swiftly diminished, and intellectuals from the numerically superior south of the province gained increasing prominence in Xinjiang's cultural bureaucracy as well as the growing sphere of unofficial public culture.

In the 1950s, the original Ili elite had demonstrated its ability to recruit young protégés from Ili and smooth their passage into the provincial bureaucracy; yet this social reproduction was not replicated in the reform era. In addition to the passing of the old guard, the end of the Ili network's lengthy domination of Uyghur public life in Xinjiang was due to several factors. Some of these were political, and connected in various ways to Ili's traditional position as a zone of contact between Chinese Turkestan and the rest of Central Asia. A major blow to Ili's position in Xinjiang came with the fall of the Soviet Union, the erstwhile source of Ili's economic, cultural, and—in the 1940s—military advantage. Equally significant was the Ghulja incident of 1997, in which both peaceful and violent Uyghur protests against state repression in Ili were followed by

asymmetrical state violence against civilians as well as mass arrests.[129] Against the backdrop of a general increase in heavy-handed state measures and grassroots resistance in Xinjiang in the 1990s,[130] the Ghulja events were followed by heavy and sustained state repression in Ili, which quickly lost what remained of its status as an important trade link between China and the former Soviet Union.

At the same time, the party-state cultural bureaucracy in Xinjiang, long a prime source of the Ili network's power, began to lose its monopoly on public culture as a liberalized press afforded individuals without party-state affiliation more opportunities to publish their work, and Xinjiang's urban stages became host to musicians, actors, and comedians from outside the official system. Combined with the Ili region's declining political and economic fortunes, this had the effect of strengthening the relative cultural power of southern Xinjiang, where the bulk of Xinjiang's Uyghur population resides. Kashgar and Atush, in the southwest of the province, were the foremost beneficiaries, and over the course of the reform era Kashgari merchants and Atush intellectuals moved in large numbers into the regional capital and the regional cultural bureaucracy. In addition, the global Islamic revival has in the last quarter-century made substantial inroads in Xinjiang, particularly in the south of the province.[131] Alongside this explicitly religious movement, self-defined traditionalist intellectuals, who typically privilege Islam as an element of Uyghur identity more than the secularist Ili cohort, have found their voice

[129] James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 329-34.
[130] Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 105-34; Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 341-52. Millward and Bovingdon both note that state repression in Xinjiang continued to accelerate in the 2000s, even as reported violent incidents in the region seemed to decrease in frequency.
[131] For a longitudinal account of Islamic revivalism in reform-era Kashgar, see Edmund Waite, "The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Xinjiang: Implications for the Uyghurs' Positioning Between a Central Asian and Chinese Context," in *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*, ed. Ildikó Bellér-Hann, M. Cristina Cesàro, Rachel Harris, and Joanne Smith Finley, 165-81 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

in Xinjiang's public culture.[132] Groups that had been excluded from writing the dominant Uyghur narrative during the half-century of Ili's cultural dominance have found themselves in a position to have their say on Uyghur identity, culture, and history. Yet in more ways than not, they made their contributions to Uyghur public culture within a framework established by Ili: the Ili dialect, now codified as standard Uyghur; standards of cultural sophistication established by the Ili-CCP symbiosis; and a canon of cultural heroes drawn primarily from Ili.

Thus it was that even while the Ili network swiftly faded and those who had known Lutpulla Mutellip retired or passed on, Lutpullamania continued unabated in the 1990s. The prestige Lutpulla had acquired as a pan-Uyghur icon made him indispensable for Uyghur intellectuals who sought to reshape their nation, even if their political, cultural, and geographical affiliations were very much in opposition to those Lutpulla himself stood for. The mid-century Uyghur literati who had promoted Lutpulla due to personal ties, hometown affinities, or shared ideologies were no longer needed to maintain his reputation. Once Lutpulla had been successfully installed in the Uyghur pantheon, his legend was useful to people promoting any cause for which he could be claimed—including the broad cause of promoting Uyghur identity and patriotism. As we have seen above, dramatic ideological and cultural shifts often have the effect of repurposing cultural icons rather than replacing them. A canon, once forged, is not easily discarded; appropriation is often the most appealing and the most powerful option. As in the 1950s, ideological change in the reform era served only to heighten the power and importance of cultural touchstones like Lutpulla Mutellip.

[132] A classic example of this is Yalqun Rozi's 1999 article "A Lost Soul in Our Literature," in which the prominent literary critic attacked the novelist Perhat Tursun as a traitor to Islam—and thus to the Uyghur people. The critic went so far as to declare the novelist "the Salman Rushdie of Uyghur literature," and to compare him to 'Abd al-Ghafur Damolla, the Sheng Shicai lackey discussed in chapter 1, whose blasphemous comparisons of Sheng to the Prophet Muhammad live on in popular memory. Yalqun Rozi, *Teklimakandiki altun koldurma* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khelq neshriyati, 1999), 156-75.

Yet unlike in the early Mao era, the burnishing of Lutpulla's reputation in the reform era occurred largely without the direct involvement of the party-state cultural bureaucracy. The political context had changed not only in terms of economic policy and liberalization of the public sphere, but in its ethnic dimensions as well. Chinese nationality policy was deeply affected by two momentous political events at the close of the decade: the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Tiananmen Square events. Having largely abandoned socialist economic policies, it became clear to the CCP that a new ideology was needed to justify the party's continued hold on power. At the same time, the breakup of the USSR along national lines unnerved the CCP, which if anything had enjoyed less success than the Soviet leadership in promulgating a national identity across ethnic borders. China's demographic composition seemed to offer a different path. While ethnic Russians formed a bare and diminishing majority in the 1989 USSR, Han Chinese have consistently comprised over 90% of China's population since the founding of the People's Republic. If unvarnished Russian nationalism was not a long-term option for the Soviet Union, Han nationalism was more plausible in China.

Since the early 1990s, then, the CCP has redoubled its efforts to fill the void left by the abandonment of socialist policies with a Han nationalism that leaves increasingly little space for national minorities.[133] If in the 1980s party-state efforts to win Uyghur hearts and minds had become largely perfunctory, in the following decade the state turned increasingly to repressive policies in Xinjiang. Beginning in the early 1990s, Uyghurs in Xinjiang experienced steadily tightening controls on expression, movement, and religious practice, as well as increased

[133] The development of Han nationalism in reform-era China lies outside the scope of this chapter, but readers can refer to an increasingly rich literature on the subject. Peter Gries, for example, has offered a thoughtful critique of the narrative that Han nationalism or Chinese nationalism has been a top-down phenomenon in post-Mao China. Gries depicts instead a dynamic interplay between the party-state leadership and popular nationalists, in which state authorities at various times suppress, co-opt, or deliberately encourage popular nationalist sentiment. Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 116-34.

pressure to use Chinese rather than Uyghur in schools and workplaces. The Chinese party-state increasingly withdrew from Uyghur official culture, even as Uyghur nationalism grew symbiotically alongisde Han nationalism and state repression of minority communities. Lutpulla Mutellip, long the party's favorite Uyghur poster boy, largely ceased to interest the Han authorities after the 1980s. There were some exceptions, especially among the old guard; in August 1993, for example, at a large meeting in Nilqa celebrating the 71st anniversary of Lutpulla Mutellip's birth, Liu Xiaowu recited a poem he had written for the occasion.[134] For the most part, though, commemoration of Lutpulla in official contexts was increasingly instigated and carried out almost entirely by Uyghur intellectuals.

By the beginning of the 1990s, Lutpulla Mutellip was an inseparable part of Uyghur communal identity. In particular, contemporary Uyghur culture increasingly construed his martyrdom as a defining event—sometimes literally so. In 1991, the editors of the authoritative six-volume *Annotated Dictionary of the Uyghur Language* knew where to turn in illustrating the entry for "to behead" (*jadigha basmaq*). "He took the paper and started to read. His eyes fixed immediately on the tragic news of the beheading of fire-hearted poet L. Mutellip by the Guomindang butchers in Aqsu."[135] Scholarship on Lutpulla's scant corpus appeared at a remarkable clip throughout the 1990s; the indefatigable Lutpulla Mutellip specialist Tursun Ershidin brought out multiple books on the long-dead poet over the course of the decade; *Whirlpool Wave* was reprinted in large quantity, and was joined in 1998 by Mömin Muhemmidi's biographical novel *Uproar*, recounting Lutpulla's childhood and adolescence. Textbook and periodical editors never tired of reprinting Lutpulla's poems, usually focusing on a small group of favorites: "Answer to the Years," "This Young Bud of Mine Would Open," and a

[134] Mehemmet Shawudun, "Lutpulla Mutellip khelqning qelbidiki sha'ir," *Tarim* 12 (1997): 130.
[135] Abliz Yaqup and Ghenizat Gheyurani, eds., *Uyghur tilining izahliq lughiti*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Milletler neshriyati, 1991), 507.

handful of others. Uyghur students continued to proudly memorize Lutpulla's work; Australian scholar Colin Mackerras, during a 1994 conversation with a young Uyghur, was regaled with a recitation of one of Lutpulla's poems.[136] More and more often, Lutpulla was depicted as wearing a *doppa*, a traditional Uyghur skullcap, despite the fact that no extant pictures show him in such headgear. (The only headwear Lutpulla was photographed wearing was an aviator's cap, complete with goggles.)[137]

Lutpulla was rapidly becoming a sort of ur-Uyghur figure, his symbolic significance increasingly divorced from his actual life and work. The talented rock singer Esqer (Ch. Aisika'er 艾斯卡尔, 1964-), a Chinese-educated Uyghur resident in Beijing for many years, speaks halting Uyghur and is unlikely to be able to understand Lutpulla's poetry in the original. But his expanded rendition of the popular 1980s song "Lutpulla" ("Nupula" in Esqer's oddly transliterated Chinese version), released in 1996, was immediately popular among Uyghur listeners, and remains the best-known version of this best-known song about Lutpulla.[138] Sung half in Uyghur and half in Chinese, the song's lyrics, as well as the accompanying music video, feature a narrator (Esqer himself, in the video) who admires Lutpulla's bravery and seeks to find his grave in order to pay his respects. The lyrics connect Lutpulla to the narrator through blood and soil—the ingredients of the nation. "Your blood flows in every person's body / so this piece of earth is your home… For this piece of earth is your home / your soul and verses / have already joined with my body." In a 2008 interview, Esqer recalled that he had been brought to tears when

[136] Colin Mackerras, *China's Minority Cultures: Identities and Integration Since 1912* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 94, 106.
[137] A fairly complete selection of extant photographs is Tursun Ershidin, *Lutpulla Mutellip* (Ürümchi: Shinjang güzel sen'et – foto süret neshriyati, 1995). The aviator cap photo is on p. 13.
[138] Aisika'er 艾斯卡尔 / Askar, *Grey Wolf • Huilang* 灰狼 *MTV* (Guangxi: Zoom Music International, Jin fenghuang yinxiang chubanshe, n.d), CD. For more on Esqer, see Nimrod Baranovitch, "Inverted Exile: Uyghur Writers and Artists in Beijing and the Political Implications of Their Work," *Modern China* 33.4 (2007): 462-504; "Nupula" is treated on 470-72. Uyghur fluency varies widely among Uyghurs educated in Chinese-medium schools, or *minkaohan* 民考汉.

he first heard Lutpulla's story many years before. His song, with its Chinese verses, is intended "to introduce [Lutpulla] to still more people. I sing it abroad as well… I tell about him, even if I can't tell that much, that our nation had such a poet, such a young man… such a hero. Other things about him, this and that, I don't know."[139]

In 2007, a decade after Esqer's "Lutpulla" hit the bazaars, Hong Qi (洪启, 1973-), a Uyghur musician who was raised in an adoptive Han family and has limited command of Uyghur,[140] released "Poet Lutpulla" ("Shiren Nupula 诗人努莆拉").[141] Sung entirely in Chinese, the song bore the clear influence of Hong Qi's mentor Esqer (as evidenced by the adoption of Esqer's idiosyncatic transliteration "Nupula"), but represented a further step away from the historical specificity of Lutpulla Mutellip. The song is backed by traditional-sounding Uyghur music and sprinkled with generic images of Xinjiang popular in Chinese literary representations of the region: fruits and melons, yellow sand, grapes. Another song on the album commemorates the CCP's ur-martyr, Lei Feng. All of this underlines Lutpulla's gradual movement in Uyghur culture from a revered poet to a generic symbol of Uyghur identity. "Poet Lutpulla, I look to that picture on the wall," sang Hong Qi. "The stories our ancestors told us have all passed into myth." And indeed they have.

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[139] Esqer, "Esqer Hui lang 灰狼: Diyarim söhbet khatirisi," posted on www.diyarim.com 13 Nov. 2008. This interview by the popular Uyghur-language website Diyarim [Uy. "My Homeland"] can no longer be accessed at its original location on the Diyarim site, which was shut down after Xinjiang authorities accused it of helping to incite the July 2009 riots in Ürümchi. The relevant clip can now be seen on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5lHJacu2L8 (accessed 22 Aug. 2014). For more on the fate of Diyarim, see Andrew Jacobs, "China Imprisons 3 Men Who Maintained Uighur Web Sites," *The New York Times*, 30 July 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/31/world/asia/31china.html (accessed 22 Aug. 2014).

[140] Beige Wind, "Dispatches From Xinjiang: Hong Qi, The Uyghur Folksinger Who Grew Up Han," 13 June 2014, http://beijingcream.com/2014/06/dfxj-hong-qi-the-uyghur-folksinger-who-grew-up-han/ (accessed 20 Aug. 2014). Beige Wind, "Dispatches From Xinjiang: The 'Real' Hong Qi, Bob Dylan, and Ürümchi," 19 June 2014, http://beijingcream.com/2014/06/dfxj-the-real-hong-qi-bob-dylan-and-urumchi/ (accessed 20 Aug. 2014).

[141] Hong Qi 洪启. *Alimujiang, ni zai nali? (zuopinji No. 2)* 阿里木江，你在哪里？（作品集 No. 2）. Guangdong: Guangdong Starsing Culture Transmitted Co., Ltd, 2007. CD.

Such has been the paradoxical development of Lutpulla Mutellip's reputation during the reform era. As the realities of his life and the conditions of his early canonization have become increasingly remote, his symbolism has become ever more powerful. This is due in part to the general conditions of Uyghur life in reform-era China, where increased pressure by the state and discrimination by the Han majority have strengthened Uyghur identity, even while making it more difficult for Uyghurs to maintain their language and culture. In significant part, Lutpulla's deracination is a testament to cultural success: the overarching success of the Ili network. Over the course of several decades, adapting this historically specific Ili poet to fit the entire Uyghur nation has made it necessary to empty the man and his work of content. This has been the general fate of the Ili-based official culture created and promoted in the mid-twentieth century. As the Ili network succeeded in building Uyghur official culture in its own image, that culture was reinterpreted so as to exclude Ili's special role. The Uyghur official culture built by Ili intellectuals no longer belongs to them, or to Ili; it belongs now to the Uyghur nation.

Lutpullamania was not without its skeptics, of course. Some young intellectuals in the 1980s parodied the song later popularized by Esqer, replacing the opening line "Salam Lutpulla, esleymen séni…" ("Greetings, Lutpulla, I remember you…") with the rhyming "Sarang Lutpulla, desseymen séni…" ("Crazy Lutpulla, I trample you").[142] The word "Uyghur" does not even appear in Lutpulla's works, they pointed out, whereas there are numerous references to China; was he not merely a court poet of his own era, much as poets like Téyipjan Éliev would later prove to be under the CCP? Yet Lutpulla Mutellip's meaning in Uyghur culture had become so independent of his poetic work that such doubts were largely confined to bull sessions in college dorm rooms. For the most part, Lutpulla remained beyond reproach. Even Ekhmetjan Osman, who mocked Téyipjan Éliev and disdained heavy-handed ideological poetry like Lutpulla's,

[142] Personal communication with Uyghur intellectual educated in the 1980s, April 2019.

nonetheless honored Lutpulla in his work as a national symbol. The brilliant, radical founder of contemporary Uyghur modernist poetry granted Lutpulla mythic status in a poem whose other dramatis personae include the moon, the sun, the sea, and freedom. "The weary moon / fell asleep upon a cloud, / and had a nightmare. / It fell to earth, / that very night / crying bitterly / Lutpulla was born."[143] In explaining these lines, the poet commented that he considered Lutpulla worthy of admiration, adding that although his ideas were now outmoded, "in that era, the progressive trend among Uyghurs was communism."[144]

From the early 2000s through 2016, the Internet significantly democratized Uyghur literature, for so long dominated by the state-controlled press. Popular general-interest sites like Diyarim (My Homeland), Selkin (Gentle), and Shebnem (Dewdrop) offered content running the gamut from news to music to message boards.[145] As has been typical in modern Uyghur culture, literary topics tended to intermingle with social issues, and often provided a forum in which to treat questions of community, tradition, and identity. Online feuds between self-styled literary modernists and conservatives were frequent, and often carried over into real-life social interactions. Poets and fiction writers were no longer bound by the preferences and personal networks of journal editors and publishers. Numerous literary works which never found their way into print were widely circulated on the Internet; some authors and works, having achieved fame online, only subsequently found their way into print. Increasingly, the Uyghur cultural canon was determined by popular consensus rather than state diktat.

By 2009, Internet use was sufficiently widespread that news of the death of at least two Uyghurs at the hands of Han rioters in Shaoguan, Guangdong, while met with silence by state

[143] "Yéngi chöchekler," in Ekhmetjan Osman, *Uyghur qizi lirikisi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1992), 70-71.
[144] Personal communication with Ekhmetjan Osman, Toronto, March 2012.
[145] These observations on Uyghur literature online are based primarily on the author's extensive reading of and participation in Uyghur-language message boards between 2007 and 2012.

media, circulated widely in Xinjiang's Uyghur community via the Internet, despite authorities' best efforts to censor the message boards. Widespread outrage over the killings and the state's reaction to them led to protests in Ürümchi that soon spiraled out of control. As decades of resentment over state repression, economic disenfranchisement, and widespread discrimination by the Han majority boiled over, Xinjiang's capital was wracked by waves of violence: first of Uyghurs attacking Han, then of Han attacking Uyghurs, with a reported total death toll of almost 200. The Chinese party-state, in a policy move unprecedented in any country since the advent of the Internet, shut down the entire Internet in Xinjiang for nearly a year. By the time the servers were switched back on, most online content had been permanently erased, and a number of Uyghur Internet entrepreneuers—including the webmasters of Diyarim, Selkin, and Shebnem—had been handed lengthy jail sentences.[146]

Uyghur websites rebounded somewhat after the state eased up its Internet restrictions in 2010, but the World Wide Web was soon overshadowed in Xinjiang by the tremendously popular Chinese messaging app WeChat (Uy. *Ündidar*, or "voice meeting"; Ch. *Weixin* 微信, "micro-message"). Usage of WeChat soared in Xinjiang in the early 2010s, and many urban and rural residents who had never had personal computers and rarely frequented Internet cafés became linked via the app with other Uyghur speakers throughout Xinjiang and even internationally. For the first time since print and broadcast media became significant forces in Xinjiang, writing and recording in dialects other than the Ili-Ürümchi variant could be read and heard across the region. The overwhelming popularity of smartphones seemed to spell the end of state-aligned Uyghur elites' domination of Xinjiang's public arena—and with it, perhaps, an end

[146] Henryk Szadziewski and Greg Fay, "How China Dismantled the Uyghur Internet," *The Diplomat*, 22 July 2014, https://thediplomat.com/2014/07/how-china-dismantled-the-uyghur-internet/ (accessed 4 April 2019); Mihray Abdilim, "Uyghur Webmasters Sentenced," *Radio Free Asia*, 28 July 2010, https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/webmasters-07282010170425.html (accessed 4 April 2019).

to the Ili-based official culture's nearly century-long reign over linguistic, literary, and other standards in Uyghur national culture.

Yet the canon and cultural norms codified by Ili intellectuals, and impressed upon Uyghur culture in the crucial historical moment when mass printing and mass literacy helped define a nation, ultimately demonstrate their staying power even in the digital era. Uyghur WeChat users with massive followings tended to leave recordings in the standard, Ili-based dialect; poetry and other literary works shared on the platform likewise tended to employ standard orthography; and the Ili canon made a smooth transition into cybserspace. A typical message widely circulated in September 2014 noted that it had been "sixty-nine years since the death of fire-hearted poet Lutpulla Mutellip," and provided a potted biography of the late poet.[147] For the message's Aqsu-based author, and for its innumerable reposters across Xinjiang, Lutpulla was not primarily an Ili poet; he was a symbol digitally uniting the far-flung oases and settlements of the Uyghur community. A few weeks later, another viral WeChat message offered a parody of Lutpulla's poem "Answer to the Years." In four clever stanzas, "Answer to Money" listed a series of comic complaints about its author's chronic impecuniousness while closely following the structure of Lutpulla's most famous poem. Seven decades after the poet's death, with his socialist dreams replaced by digital capitalism, a poem about wallets and credit cards stood as a reminder of just how ubiquitous the young Ili poet remained in twenty-first century Uyghur culture.

Uyghur websites persisted, despite censorship pressure from the Chinese state and market pressure from WeChat. Here, too, Lutpulla proved ubiquitous as a metonym for Uyghur literature, and even for the Uyghur nation as a whole. Along with only a handful of other figures—Ili hero Sadir Palwan, Ili poet Téyipjan Éliev, Qumul poet and novelist Abduréhim

[147] I have omitted exact metadata for the viral messages cited here due to the ongoing crackdown in Xinjiang.

Ötkür—Lutpulla entered the twenty-first century as a pan-Uyghur symbol. For a people forbidden from displaying a national Uyghur flag, such consensus cultural symbols have tremendous resonance and significance. Thus it was that many of the new digital communications platforms, having helped break the old elite's monopoly on Uyghur official culture, chose nonetheless to use the elite's canonical figures as their emblems. As Uyghur culture entered the digital age, the enduring imprint of the Ili network's shaping of Uyghur culture looked out confidently from computer monitors across Xinjiang. One Uyghur website after another, from literary forums to general interest sites, adopted Lutpulla Mutellip's image as a banner: the kind of banner nearly all Uyghurs can rally around.



Figure 8: Artist's rendering of Lutpulla Mutellip featured in home page banner for Elgiyar, a general-interest Uyghur website featuring news, discussion, and entertainment. www.algiyar.com, accessed 15 Feb. 2015

CODA: UYGHUR CULTURE IN EXTREMIS, 2017-2019

> Mendelsohn: Look, I'm a student of dead languages. Yiddish is unique in the history of the world to be a language that died in six years. To have a language that is completely in the prime of its health—
>
> Chabon: It was at its *peak*.
>
> Mendelsohn: —at its peak, both as a language and as a literature, and then not to exist six years later, is a thing unique in the history of the world, as far as I know.
>
> —Julie Philips, interview with critic Daniel Mendelsohn and novelist Michael Chabon, September 2007[1]

> "The intellectuals are basically gone."
>
> —Uyghur resident of Ürümchi, June 2018[2]

In 2016, despite continued state restrictions on the press and pervasive discrimination in the private sector, Uyghur literature and arts in Xinjiang remained vibrant and forward-looking. Publishing in Uyghur had perhaps never been so wide-ranging and diverse, with avant-garde poets like Tahir Hamut finally breaking into print with their own volumes and classics of Uyghur literature extensively republished in large print runs. Uyghur editions of foreign and Chinese works appeared in greater number than at any time since the halcyon days of the early reform era, with first-rate translations by major authors like Abduqadir Jalalidin published in book form and in journals like *Literary Translations* (*Edebiy terjimiler*). The Uyghur Internet, despite heavy-

[1] Julie Philips, "Jewish Detective Stories: A Talk with Michael Chabon and Daniel Mendelsohn," *Julie Philips*, 19 Sep. 2007 (accessed 20 Sep. 2018). https://www.julie-phillips.com/wp/?p=515

[2] This coda draws on my fieldwork in Ürümchi and Ili in June-July 2018, which included conversation with locals as well as visits to most of the state (Xinhua) and private bookstores in Ürümchi and Ghulja that have traditionally stocked Uyghur-language books.

handed state controls, remained a sprawling and freewheeling sphere, with Uyghur-language websites supplemented by the smartphone-based social media application WeChat. Writers, intellectuals, and everyday citizens shared ideas and creative work on the various digital platforms, and sparred avidly over every topic that could pass muster with the censors. Web-based video series began to appear, some of them strikingly original in their filmmaking, their comedy, and their mixing of Uyghur, Chinese, and other languages.[3] Professors like the prominent anthropologist Rahile Dawut were training a large and promising generation of Uyghur graduate students, and more Uyghurs than ever were studying abroad. While it would be too much to describe the zeitgeist as optimistic, in 2016 a sense of innovation and possibility was palpable in Uyghur public culture. In keeping with a habitual disregard for high-level politics in a region where citizens have no voice in the political arena, few paid close attention when a new regional party secretary, Chen Quanguo (陈全国, 1955-), arrived in Xinjiang in late summer.

In spring 2017, Uyghurs living abroad found electronic communications with relatives and friends in Xinjiang gradually falling silent. Around the same time, reports began filtering out of China of mass detentions in Xinjiang, specifically targeting the region's large Muslim communities: Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Hui. With communication from Xinjiang tightly controlled by the state security apparatus, the scale of the detentions, and of other extraordinary measures taken by the party-state in Xinjiang, remained unclear for some time; but by the end of 2017, journalists, academics, and members of the Uyghur diaspora had pieced together a grim picture of conditions in the region.[4] As of this writing, conservative estimates suggest that a growing

[3] The most popular of these was *The Pomegranate Has Ripened* (Uy. *Anar pishti*, Ch. *Shiliu shu le* 石榴熟了), directed by Hezret'éli Yasin and starring Muhemmetjan Memet'éli. The series continues to be produced, though the content has changed markedly in step with the political trends in Xinjiang over the last two years.
[4] For a useful timeline of reporting on the Xinjiang crisis and a summary of what was known about the mass extrajudicial detentions as of late summer 2018, see Lucas Niewenhuis, "Re-Education Camps In China's 'No-Rights Zone' For Muslims: What Everyone Needs To Know," *SupChina*, 22 Aug. 2018,

network of extralegal internment camps in Xinjiang has swallowed at least 10% of the Uyghur population, or more than one million individuals. Widespread anecdotal reports of 30% or 40% detention quotas in Xinjiang's Uyghur villages, where four fifths of the region's Uyghur population resides, suggest that the total number of detainees may in fact be much higher; and to those numbers may be added an equally uncertain but also substantial number of individuals from Xinjiang's other Muslim communities.[5] The duration of internment is generally indefinite, and releases have been few and far between; pretexts for detention can range from communicating with a relative abroad to having an acquaintance accused of excessive religiosity. The camps are ostensibly geared toward instilling loyalty toward the party-state and ridding inmates of undesirable religious or political tendencies. While no independent monitors or journalists have been permitted access to the camps, available accounts converge in depicting a punishing physical and psychological routine, with torture and humiliation a frequent occurrence and numerous deaths due to malnutrition and mistreatment. In recent months, reliable reports have indicated an ominous trend toward the large-scale secret transfer of Uyghur detainees to facilities elsewhere in China.[6]

While the mass internment began in the villages, it soon reached the cities, and by mid-2017 it was clear that no part of Xinjiang's Uyghur population would be spared. Uyghur families began sleeping in multiple layers of clothing, in case the police arrived in the night to take them away. In late 2017 and early 2018, as the detentions continued to tear through Uyghur society,

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https://supchina.com/2018/08/22/xinjiang-explainer-chinas-reeducation-camps-for-a-million-muslims/ (accessed 15 April 2019).

[5] Adrian Zenz, who has made a careful study of the ongoing mass internment in Xinjiang on the basis of procurement bids for camp construction, satellite photos, and other evidence, recently estimated that current and former inmates in Xinjiang's internment system for Muslims number between 1 million and 1.5 million. Adrian Zenz, "Press Briefing on Human Rights in Xinjiang," Geneva, 13 March 2019. Video recording available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWey4fZWZAI (accessed 11 April 2019).

[6] Shöhret Hoshur, "Shenshining Süyjyago türmiside Uyghur rayonidin yötkelgen mehbuslar barliqi delillendi," Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 7 Feb. 2019, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/qanun/xitayda-uyghur-mehbus-02072019165153.html (accessed 16 April 2019).

the campaign seemed to turn with particular intensity to the intellectual and cultural elite. Fieldwork in summer 2018 confirmed that Uyghur public life had been decimated by the detentions, which by then had swept up many, perhaps most prominent Uyghur writers and intellectuals. By autumn of that year, the number of prominent Uyghurs who had escaped detention was dwindling, and accounts began to emerge of well-known individuals taking desperate measures rather than face internment in the camps. Qeyser Qéyum, chief editor of the influential journal *Literary Translations*, hurled himself from the eighth floor of his Ürümchi office building the day he received a police summons.[7] Amidst a widening purge of minority cadres at the *Xinjiang Gazette* offices, a senior editor of the Kazakh-language edition reportedly hanged himself in his apartment.[8] Lifelong party members and career civil servants, after decades loyally serving the state and attempting to reconcile Uyghur identity with Chinese rule, have found their efforts rewarded with indefinite detention in the camps.[9] Conservative literati like Abduqadir Jalalidin have disappeared into the detention system along with avant-garde iconoclasts like Perhat Tursun and apolitical scholars like Rahile Dawut.[10] As of this writing, the

[7] Shöhret Hoshur, "'Edebiy terjimiler' jurnilining bash muherrir Qeyser Qéyumning özini öltürüwalghanliqi delillendi," *Khewerler*, Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 20 Sep. 2018. https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/siyaset/qeyser-qeyum-09202018140925.html (accessed 21 Sep. 2018). Abdukérim Khoja had been the founding editor of *Literary Translations* in the 1960s and had again edited the journal in the 1980s. Abdul'eziz Ismayil, ed., *Abdukérim Khoja ijadiyiti heqqide* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösmürler neshriyati, 1999), 116-20.
[8] Personal communication, April 2019.
[9] Shöhret Hoshur, "Proféssor Azad Sultanningmu 'ikki yüzlimichilik' bilen eyiblinip tutqun qilin'ghanliqi delillendi," *Khewerler*, Erkin Asiya Radio'si, 18 Sep. 2018 (accessed 21 Sep. 2018), https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/qanun/uyghur-ziyaliy-lager-09182018140232.html
[10] Shöhret Hoshur, "Shinjang pédagogika uniwérsitéti sha'ir Abduqadir Jalalidinning tutqun qilin'ghanliqini delillidi," *Khewerler*, Erkin Asiya Radio'si, 23 April 2018, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/kishilik-hoquq/abduqadir-jalalidin-tutuqlandi-04232018222333.html (accessed 21 Sep. 2018); Joshua L. Freeman, "Uyghur Poetry in Translation: Perhat Tursun's 'Elegy,'" *Fairbank Center Blog* 7 Sep. 2018 (accessed 21 Sep. 2018) https://medium.com/fairbank-center/uyghur-poetry-in-translation-perhat-tursuns-elegy-902a58b7a0aa; Chris Buckley and Austin Ramzy, "Star Scholar Disappears as Crackdown Engulfs Western China," *The New York Times*, 10 Aug. 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/world/asia/china-xinjiang-rahile-dawut.html (accessed 15 April 2019).

campaign has emptied out every corner of Uyghur intellectual and cultural life, without regard for ideology or record; to be sent to the camps, it is enough simply to have been born a Uyghur.[11]

The mass detention of artists and intellectuals is only the most extreme aspect of the multi-pronged campaign to erase Uyghur culture. Many practices echo the Cultural Revolution—with the key difference that this campaign targets only Muslim minorities. Much as during the height of Maoist radicalism, parents are now forbidden from giving their children names considered overtly Islamic.[12] There are increasing reports of pressure on Muslims to eat pork, evoking the Cultural Revolution practice of forcing Muslim "class enemies" to raise pigs.[13] Once more, unannounced, warrantless home searches are a feature of daily life; and with the list of banned books ever expanding, Uyghur citizens rush to burn volumes from their own libraries.[14] Other elements of the present campaign are entirely without precedent, even during the Cultural Revolution. Uyghur-language education is being completely phased out in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in favor of Mandarin, and state bookstores have ceased carrying Uyghur-language textbooks. Uyghur-owned bookstores are closing rapidly as sales drop and staff are arrested;[15] remaining Uyghur bookstores are stocking up on Mandarin learning materials.[16]

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[11] As during the Campaign Against Local Nationalism six decades earlier, materials denouncing prominent individuals are presented in mass meetings throughout Xinjiang. Shöhret Hoshur, "Yalqun Rozi bilen Sattar Sawutning 'bölgünchiliki' bilen eyiblinip jazalan'ghanliqi delillendi," *Khewerler*, Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 25 Sep. 2018 (accessed 26 Sep. 2018). During the Campaign Against Local Nationalism in the late 1950s, a typical newspaper denunciation, directed against journalist Nizamidin Hüseyin, was read at meetings across Xinjiang, with meeting participants denouncing his supposed crimes. Qutlan, "Qaraqurum bürküti: Nizamidin Hüseyinning hayati (20)," *Yoruq sahillar* 5 Feb. 2019. https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/yoruq-sahillar/qaraqurum-burkiti-02052019164019.html (accessed 10 Feb. 2019).

[12] Aidar Bazil'baev, *Chetyre goda v khaose: o tak nazyvaemoi "kul'turnoi revoliutsii" v Sin'tsziane* (Almaty: Izdatel'stvo "Kazakhstan," 1978), 25-26; Xin Lin, "China Bans 'Extreme' Islamic Baby Names Among Xinjiang's Uyghurs," *Radio Free Asia*, 20 April 2017, https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/names-04202017093324.html (accessed 12 April 2019).

[13] Darren Byler, "The Future Of Uyghur Cultural — And Halal — Life In The Year Of The Pig," *SupChina*, 6 Feb. 2019, https://supchina.com/2019/02/06/uyghur-cultural-and-halal-life-in-the-year-of-the-pig/ (accessed 12 April 2019).

[14] Human Rights Watch, "'Eradicating Ideological Viruses': China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang's Muslims," 9 Sep. 2018, https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs (accessed 16 April 2019).

[15] I observed multiple recently closed bookstores in Ürümchi and Ghulja during summer 2018 fieldwork, though

The party-state had adopted a clear policy over the last two decades of reducing the public use of native languages in Xinjiang, starting with the gradual replacement of native-language education in the region with "bilingual" education that devoted only minimal class time to Xinjiang's native languages: first in colleges and universities; then in high schools, and finally in elementary and middle schools. In the last few years, Chinese-language preschool had been made compulsory for Uyghur children in many areas. Once the present campaign got off the ground, however, the party-state's war on Xinjiang's indigenous languages took on an intensity more reminiscent of settler colonialism in the Americas and Australia.[17] This includes mandatory boarding schools for Uyghur and Kazakh children, where students are taught in Chinese and punished for speaking their native languages.[18] In the internment camps, detainees are likewise forbidden from using their native languages and forced to speak only in Chinese, a language many are not comfortable in. On the phone messaging apps where Uyghur poetry was blooming just a few years ago, insufficient use of Chinese can now cause Uyghur users to be flagged by surveillance programs as potentially problematic elements.[19]

As the preceding chapters of this dissertation have demonstrated, the party-state's institutions were from the early 1950s deeply involved in the articulation and popularization of a Uyghur identity in Xinjiang centered around a distinct language and literature. Now, in its efforts

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other bookstores in both cities remained open. David Dettmann notes that all three Uyghur bookstores he saw in Khotan in spring of that year had been shuttered, with signs on the doors noting that they had been "closed for reorganization" on order of the local Public Security Bureau. (Personal communication, April 2019).

[16] One set of textbooks in particular seemed ubiquitous as of summer 2018. Chen Suining 陈绥宁 and Shen Yinyin 沈荫荫, *Khenzu tilidin asas—40 ders*, tr. Tahir Abduweli, Abdughappar Abdurakhman, and Anargül Abduréhim (Ürümchi: Shinjang uniwérsitéti neshriyati, 2018 [1st ed. 2007]).

[17] There is an extensive literature on the intentional destruction of the cultures and languages of the Americas' native peoples, a project that continued well into the twentieth century. A useful review of the scholarly literature on Native American boarding schools is Julie Davis, "American Indian Boarding School Experiences: Recent Studies from Native Perspectives," *OAH Magazine of History* 15.2 (2011): 20-22.

[18] Yanan Wang and Dake Kang, "With parents detained, Uighur kids in care of Chinese state," *Associated Press* 21 Sep. 2018, https://apnews.com/903a97b7c62a47b98553b6f422827dd7/China-distances-children-from-families-to-subdue-Muslim-west (accessed 21 Sep. 2018).

[19] Byler, "China's Hi-Tech War on Its Muslim Minority."

to dismantle Uyghur identity, the party has once more demonstrated an understanding that language and literature are key to Uyghur communal cohesion. That understanding was on display recently, as half a dozen Uyghur officials at the Xinjiang Education Bureau were sentenced to life in prison. The authorities charged that, among other crimes, they had sought to split the motherland by printing textbooks with biographical material on Ahmadjan Qasimi, Mahmud Kashgari, Yusūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, and Memtili Tewpiq—the very figures from whom Uyghur intellectuals, with the full support and cooperation of the party-state bureaucracy, had constructed a Uyghur cultural lineage in the mid-twentieth century.[20] The party-state, having for decades served as a willing partner in the creation of Uyghur official culture and of the print culture that transmitted it, would now attempt to unmake the Uyghur people in part through the elimination of Uyghur-language printing and the literature it bore.

As noted above, Uyghur publishing was flourishing throughout 2016, with numerous novels, books of poetry, and other publications appearing as late as December of that year. In the first few months of 2017, however, the appearance of Uyghur books and journals slowed to a trickle as the regional government announced a broad "review" of Uyghur-language publications. The list of banned Uyghur books quickly ballooned to include popular historical novels by Zordun Sabir (*Motherland*) and Abduréhim Ötkür (*The Awakened Land*), works by acclaimed short story writer and novelist Memtimin Hoshur, and even the extensive oeuvre of Seypidin Ezizi, the Eastern Turkestan Republic veteran who rose to become Maoist Xinjiang's most influential Uyghur official.[21] The publication of renowned poet Ghojimuhemmed Muhemmed's

[20] Shöhret Hoshur, "Yalqun Rozi bilen Sattar Sawutning 'bölgünchiliki' bilen eyiblinip jazalan'ghanliqi delillendi," *Khewerler*, Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 25 Sep. 2018 (accessed 26 Sep. 2018). https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/siyaset/radiyomizgha-mektup-09242018150730.html

[21] Qutlan, "Bir qisim Uyghurche nadir eserlerning jahazdin chüshürülüp bir terep qilin'ghanliqi melum bolmaqta," Erkin Asiya radio'si, 23 Sep. 2017, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/qisqa_xewer/nadir-eserler-cheklenmekte-09232017192442.html (accessed 16 April 2019); Shöhret Hoshur, "Alaqidar khadimlar ataqliq yazghuchi Memtimin Hoshurning eserliridin 'mesile' chiqqanliqini ashkarilidi," 12 April 2019,

collected works, edited and prepared in ten volumes, began to great acclaim with the 2016 publication of the first four volumes, but was unceremoniously halted by the authorities in 2017.[22] Ghojimuhemmed Muhemmed died of heart failure the following year at age forty-seven, as most of Xinjiang's other prominent Uyghur poets—Chimen'gül Awut, Adil Tuniyaz, Perhat Tursun, Abduqadir Jalalidin—were carted off to the camps.

Kashgar Uyghur Publishers alone saw more than 600 of its titles included in the register of banned books, and within a few months almost a third of its employees had been taken into detention. The publisher ceased printing original works in Uyghur, and was instead charged with printing and distributing Uyghur translations of government publications. In late 2018, the publisher was shuttered altogether, and its remaining employees sent to a village outside Kashgar, where they would work during the day and attend political study sessions in the evening.[23] The chill wind reached even to Beijing, where Nationalities Publishers (Ch. *Minzu chubanshe* 民族出版社, Uy. *Milletler neshriyati*), which specializes in minority-language books, announced that every one of its Uyghur-language titles had been pulled from the shelves in Xinjiang pending completion of the government's investigation of Uyghur-language publishing. "It's not like this in Tibet. Only in Xinjiang is this happening," noted the head of the publisher's book sales department.[24]

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https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/memtimin-hoshur-04112019164707.html (accessed 16 April 2019); Qutlan, "Seypidin Ezizining kitabliri yighiwélinip siyasiy sinzorgha tapshurulghan," Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 9 Aug. 2017, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/medeniyet-tarix/cheklengen-kitab-08092017160338.html (accessed 16 April 2019). Zordun Sabir and Abduréhim Ötkür's works are discussed briefly in the preceding chapter; on Ili writer and former Xinjiang Writers' Association head Memtimin Hoshur, see Joshua L. Freeman, "*Qum basqan sheher* by Memtimin Hoshur" (review), *Translation Review* 80:1 (2012), 135-36.

[22] Irade, "Tonulghan sha'ir Ghojimuhemmed Muhemmed Khotende wapat bolghan," *Qisqa khewerler*, Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 12 July 2018, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/qisqa_xewer/tonulghan-shair-07122018175517.html (accessed 16 July 2018).

[23] Shöhret Hoshur, "Qeshqer Uyghur neshriyatida 'mesililik kitablar seweblik' kespiy khizmetler tokhtitilghan," Erkin Asiya radio'si, 3 Dec. 2018, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/siyaset/qeshqer-neshriyati-12032018154120.html (accessed 16 April 2019).

[24] Qutlan, "Béyjingdiki milletler neshriyati neshir qilghan Uyghurche kitablar yighiwélin'ghan," Erkin Asiya

By summer 2017, the publication of original Uyghur-language books in China had ceased entirely, with the very last volumes dating to May of that year. A year later, the only new Uyghur-language books in evidence during fieldwork in the region were translated documents on the Chinese constitution and CCP policy as well as textbooks for learning Mandarin. Uyghur journal publishing, which had boasted a large and lively array of periodicals through the end of 2016, fared little better as the campaign rolled forward. While a number of journals apparently continued sending issues directly to subscribers, by summer 2018 the only post-crackdown Uyghur journals to be found in Ürümchi's previously lively bookstores were issues of the bland, health-focused periodical *Life* (*Hayatliq*).[25] In Ghulja, some bookstores also offered new issues of the local literary journal *Ili River* (*Ili deryasi*); the status of local journals from elsewhere in Xinjiang, in the past easily available in Ürümchi, was unclear. Of the diverse and numerous journals that had helped make Uyghur arts and letters such a lively field just two years earlier, this was all that remained on the shelves. In recent months, signs have mounted that a similar fate is in store for Uyghur and Kazakh newspapers, which first brought large-scale Turkic print culture to the region. In Ürümchi, several prominent Uyghur reporters and editors at the *Xinjiang Gazette* were handcuffed and taken away by security services at a large staff meeting in summer 2018.[26] In Ili, where Turkic-language publishing began in Xinjiang more than a century ago, the local Uyghur- and Kazakh-language editions of the *Evening News* (*Ili kechlik géziti*) were

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radi'osi, 10 Aug. 2019, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/medeniyet-tarix/cheklengen-kitab-08102017141212.html (accessed 16 April 2019).

[25] Word of mouth had it that a couple of other journals, *World Literature* (*Dunya edebiyati*) and *Miscellany* (*Termiler*) were still being sent directly to subscribers, but no copies were to be found in bookstores. Tables of contents for the major literary journal *Tarim* have circulated online up to the present, but well-known authors have largely vanished from the journal's pages, including the head editor, poet Yazin Zilal.

[26] Shöhret Hoshur, "'Shinjang géziti' idarisining ishkhana mudiri: 'gézitkhanimizdin 4 Uyghur khadimning tutqun qilin'ghanliqi rast," *Erkin Asiya radi'osi*, 5 Sep. 2018, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/qanun/gezitxana-xadimi-09042018141443.html (accessed 9 May 2019).

discontinued at the beginning of 2019 by the Xinjiang Party Committee.[27] As journalists and editors continue disappearing into detention, the last lights in native-language publishing have begun to flicker out.

The party-state's motivations for launching this unprecedented campaign remain a topic of extensive debate, a discussion that lies outside the scope of these pages. It is enough to note that such a radical policy shift could not have occurred without approval by the highest levels of party leadership in Beijing, and that state policy in contemporary Xinjiang is ultimately the responsibility of the regional party secretary. It is no coincidence, then, that the current campaign coincided with the CCP's appointment of Chen Quanguo as party secretary of Xinjiang.[28] From a modest background in Henan, Chen grew up during the Cultural Revolution and in the reform era steadily ascended the party hierarchy, finding time along the way to earn a doctorate in management with a dissertation seasoned with generous dollops of plagiarism.[29] Dr. Chen put his management skills to work as party secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, where his administration implemented a raft of hard-line policies, most notably the "convenience police stations" dividing urban areas into grids for purposes of surveillance and control. In August 2016, his five-year rule in Tibet having effectively stamped out protest and resistance, Dr. Chen was dispatched by the CCP leadership to bring Xinjiang into line. In the year after his arrival in the Uyghur Autonomous Region, convenience police stations were constructed on a staggering scale, and state hiring of security personnel increased twelvefold over the previous year. The region's Uyghur population was subjected to universal mandatory DNA sampling; a pervasive network of

[27] Shöhret Hoshur, "'Ili kechlik géziti'ning Uyghurche we Qazaqchisining neshirdin tokhtighanliqi delillendi," Erkin Asiya radi'osi, 14 Jan. 2019, https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/siyaset/uyghurda-metbuat-01142019182855.html (accessed 16 April 2019).
[28] Adrian Zenz and James Leibold, "Chen Quanguo: The Strongman Behind Beijing's Securitization Strategy in Tibet and Xinjiang," *China Brief* 17.12 (2017), https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/ (accessed 15 April 2019).
[29] Tom Hancock and Nicolle Liu, "Top Chinese officials plagiarised doctoral dissertations," *Financial Times*, 27 Feb. 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/2eb02fa4-3429-11e9-bd3a-8b2a211d90d5 (accessed 15 April 2019).

facial, voice, and gait recognition systems; and the required use of smartphones and social media as a means of demonstrating loyalty to the party: altogether, a digital and biometric surveillance state unprecedented in human history.[30] The centerpiece of Dr. Chen's new policies in Xinjiang, however, was a familiar twentieth-century method; namely, mass internment camps for minorities.

While Chen Quanguo holds final authority, the public face of the Xinjiang party-state is Shöhret Zakir (1953-), chair of the regional government. Like a number of top officials in today's China, including premier Xi Jinping, Zakir is a member of the "red second generation" (Ch. *hongerdai* 红二代), or high-ranking officials who are the children of high-ranking officials. While there are relatively few Uyghurs among the red second generation, it is perhaps unsurprising that even during this tragic chapter in China's relations with its Uyghur minority, the party-state would choose as its public face in Xinjiang the son of a former top Eastern Turkestan Republic official who later served the CCP with distinction. Shöhret Zakir's father was Abdulla Zakirov, whose highly successful career was quintessential for the Ili cohort examined in this study.[31] Born in Ghulja, Zakirov *père* was sent for several years of higher education in the USSR in the mid-1930s on one of Sheng Shicai's study abroad programs, and on his return to Xinjiang took up editorial posts at the *Tarbaghatay Xinjiang Gazette* and the *Ili Xinjiang Gazette*. Joining the ETR government soon after its formation, Zakirov served in

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[30] Darren Byler, "China's Hi-Tech War on Its Muslim Minority," *The Guardian*, 11 April 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/apr/11/china-hi-tech-war-on-muslim-minority-xinjiang-uighurs-surveillance-face-recognition (accessed 12 April 2019). The Xinjiang surveillance state has emerged as something of a testing ground for the rest of China, with other provinces and municipalities eagerly purchasing artifical intelligence and facial recognition technologies designed to identify Uyghurs and other "sensitive groups of people." Paul Mozur, "One Month, 500,000 Face Scans: How China Is Using A.I. to Profile a Minority," *The New York Times*, 14 April 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/technology/china-surveillance-artificial-intelligence-racial-profiling.html (accessed 15 April 2019).

[31] Guancha 观察, "Xinjiang zhuxi Xuekelaiti • Zakeer huiying hongse shenfen: na ge bu shi zai hongqi xia chengzhang 新疆主席雪克来提 • 扎克尔回应红色身份：哪个不是在红旗下成长," *Guancha*, 11 Mar 2015, http://www.guancha.cn/local/2015_03_11_311816.shtml (accessed 17 April 2019).

numerous top leadership posts; like many other high-ranking ETR officials, he was then inducted into the CCP soon after the People's Liberation Army arrived in Xinjiang.[32] In January 1950, Zakirov made a seamless transition from Secretary General of the ETR's ruling Youth League to Secretary General of Xinjiang's new civil government, and enjoyed a flourishing career in the party-state until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. That apex decade of Maoist radicalism brought much suffering to Zakirov as well as to his teenage son, Shöhret, who was subjected to reeducation in and around Ürümchi before becoming a schoolteacher once the most frantic years of the Cultural Revolution had subsided.[33] Once the reform era began, Zakir *fils* worked for several years in the petroleum industry, but his career really took off in 1984 when he followed in his recently deceased father's footsteps and took up a series of posts in the Xinjiang civil government. He ultimately outdid even his father's illustrious party-state career, and was appointed chair of Xinjiang's government in January 2015.

Since the ongoing campaign against China's Uyghur population began in late 2016 and early 2017, Shöhret Zakir has been the ubiquitous spokesman for the Chinese party-state on Uyghur matters. As the camps expanded in 2018, Zakir declared that Xinjiang had seen a marked improvement in "social harmony," and boasted of an increase in tourism in the region.[34] Despite his own experiences of reeducation during the Cultural Revolution, Zakir has repeatedly defended Xinjiang's internment camps as a "vocational education and training program" entirely

[32] Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui zuzhibu 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会组织部, Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu weiyuanhui dangshi yanjiushi 中共新疆维吾尔自治区委员会党史研究室, and Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu dang'anju 新疆维吾尔自治区档案局, eds., *Zhongguo gongchandang Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu zuzhi shi ziliao 1937-1987* 中国共产党新疆维吾尔自治区组织史资料 1937-1987 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1996), 23; Xinjiang baike quanshu bianzuan weiyuanhui 新疆百科全书编纂委员会, eds., *Xinjiang baike quanshu* 新疆百科全书 (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe 中国大百科全书出版社, 2002), 733.

[33] Shi Yugang 石玉钢, ed., *Zhongguo minzu nianjian: 2015 (zong di ershiyi qi)* 中国民族年鉴:2015(总第二十一期) (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu nianjian bianjibu, 2015).

[34] Phila Siu, "Xinjiang official vows to continue 'intense' campaign against separatists," *South China Morning Post*, 14 March 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2137061/xinjiang-official-vows-continue-intense-campaign (accessed 11 April 2019).

within the scope of the law.[35] The camps, insists Zakir, are "like boarding schools where the students eat and live for free."[36] Zakir likely has little choice in making assertions like these; even Uyghur officials with the finest CCP pedigrees have been dispatched to the camps in the last year as "two-faced officials," accused without evidence of outwardly serving the party while secretly conspiring against it. Unlike in the late 1950s, the numerous Uyghur officials targeted by the campaign are not primarily individuals with independent power bases; they are the men and women that the party-state itself has trained and entrusted with responsibility, and who have in turn done their best to reconcile the competing and often conflicting imperatives of the party-state, their own professions, and the Uyghur community.

As of 2018, visitors to the Ghulja People's Park could still see the old Culture Center of the Eastern Turkestan Republic that Abdulla Zakirov helped lead some seven decades earlier. The ETR's nearby Graveyard of Revolutionary Martyrs, however, was closed indefinitely for repairs. The republic's martyrs, as we have seen above, are no longer welcome in the PRC pantheon. Neither are other Uyghur cultural heroes like Abduréhim Ötkür, whose novels are now banned, or Mahmud Kashgari, the ancient lexicographer whose appearance in a recent textbook was a pretext for imprisoning the editors. Half a century ago, when the Cultural Revolution led to the denunciation of the existing pantheon of Uyghur heroes, the revolutionary authorities offered a new—if largely imaginary—pantheon of Maoist Uyghur martyrs. The party-state today offers no such Uyghur role models. The space for being simultaneously a proud Uyghur and a patriotic Chinese citizen, for years an increasingly tight interval, has now disappeared entirely. As it

[35] Xiang Bo, *Xinhua Net*, 16 Oct. 2018, "Full transcript: Interview with Xinjiang government chief on counterterrorism, vocational education and training in Xinjiang," http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-10/16/c_137535821.htm (accessed 11 April 2019).
[36] Chris Buckley and Amy Qin, "Muslim Detention Camps Are Like 'Boarding Schools,' Chinese Official Says," *New York Times*, 12 March 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/world/asia/china-xinjiang.html (accessed 11 April 2019).

stands, for Uyghurs to be acceptable to the party-state, they must give up their culture and their identity in its entirety.

Efforts to preserve Xinjiang's Uyghur culture are now limited to the communities of the diaspora, where existing Uyghur populations have grown rapidly with an influx of refugees. Cultural preservation initiatives include Uyghur language classes for children growing up outside the Uyghur homeland,[37] efforts to digitize as much as possible of the Uyghur written heritage,[38] and publishing projects to ensure the continuity of Uyghur literature.[39] In April 2018, a group of twenty-five Uyghur intellectuals gathered in Istanbul to establish the World Uyghur Writers' Union (*Dunya Uyghur yazghuchilar uyushmisi*), to be led by exiled poet Tahir Hamut.[40] Having left China in 2017, Tahir Hamut was spared the fate of other prominent Uyghur poets in Xinjiang over the last two years; but like many Uyghur intellectuals in the diaspora, he remains focused on the situation back home and on his role as transmitter of a threatened culture. In the first poem he wrote after leaving China, he gave voice to the pain of exile, the ambiguity of survival, and the bittersweet duty of memory.[41] It is fitting to conclude this coda with his words; as we have seen throughout this study, poetry has from the beginning proven a powerful instrument to express and define what it means to be a member of the Uyghur community.

> What is it
> from far away, from behind the domed water,

[37] Durrie Bouscaren, "'We Need to Keep Our Language Alive': Inside a Uyghur Bookshop in Istanbul," *Pacific Standard*, 10 April 2019, https://psmag.com/ideas/inside-a-uyghur-bookshop-in-istanbul (accessed 11 April 2019).
[38] One of several efforts is described in Bahram Sintash, "China Is Trying to Destroy Uighur Culture. We're Trying to Save It," *Washington Post*, 18 March 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/18/china-is-trying-destroy-uighur-culture-were-trying-save-it/ (accessed 9 April 2019).
[39] Kelly Ng, "The Future of the Fight to Preserve Uyghur Culture," *SupChina*, 8 April 2019, https://supchina.com/2019/04/08/the-future-of-the-fight-to-preserve-uyghur-culture/ (accessed 9 April 2019).
[40] Dunya Uyghur yazghuchilar uyushmisi, "Dunya Uyghur yazghuchilar uyushmisi quruldi," Wetinim munbiri, 16 April 2018, https://wetinim.com/archiver/?tid-1745.html (accessed 16 April 2019).
[41] Tahir Hamut, "Three Poems," tr. Joshua L. Freeman, *Asymptote Blog* "Translation Tuesday" feature, 29 May 2018, https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2018/05/29/translation-tuesday-three-poems-by-tahir-hamut/ (accessed 16 April 2019).

that stayed with me, that came along with me?
A weak vow written in the yellowing fog,
audacity standing at an angle
or
the layered dimness passed from hand to hand?

These days
are crowded with shattered horizons,
shattered!

In the runaway season
if surrender hides deep in the suitcase
if noble doubts run over the weight limit
if dead ends continue onward
if the exodus stalls at the second floor
what is it
that keeps you from seeing I am still alive?

So simple are my inner soul and outer face,
oh dark-eyed one,
a tree that reddens from within
turns to stone beside me

A spray of sweet-smelling camel grass
grows quickly, blooms open
at the doorstep of the past

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[1] Erratic script reform in China, and especially in Xinjiang, has resulted in multiple written forms for many personal names, both in Uyghur and in Chinese, from the 1930s to the present. In this list of references, the most common current spelling of each author's name has been adopted for ordering purposes; other variants used in listed publications are given in brackets.

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