

WESTERN CHINA (XINJIANG)*

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Xinjiang is located in the north-western part of China and is now a province of the People's Republic (a full province and a national minority self-administering area). According to a number of Western scholars it is, in the broadest sense, simply part of the Central Asian region.

At the time of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the central government installed a military administration in Xinjiang after the mid-eighteenth century; the Qing court appointed a 'commander-in-chief of Ili and the surrounding regions' when it stationed a garrison in the remote Hui Muslim settlement of Ili. This was to allow a more integrated and effective military, administrative and political governance of Xinjiang. In some northern districts of Xinjiang, a prefecture and county system was established. In nomadic Kazakh areas, chieftains were invested as khans, petty kings, dukes and other nobles, thus allowing the Qing to control the area through these leaders. In areas inhabited by the Uighurs (in southern Xinjiang), civil affairs were in particular dealt with at village level through the direct imposition of *bokhs* (equivalent of *begs* or *beys*, dignitaries). The *bokhs* of this time differed from those of the past in that their traditional hereditary system was altered to allow only the direct appointment of office-holders. At Hami (Kumul) and Turfan (Turpan), the *yasaq* (tax, tribute) system was installed.

The 'generalissimo of Ili and the surrounding areas', simplified to the 'general of Ili', was a so-called 'roving ambassador'; in other words, he assumed the office of a fully fledged official of the royal court. In order to consolidate the north-western margins of the territory, the Qing government dispatched a regiment from China proper to garrison each of the frontier regions, with the heaviest troop concentrations guarding checkpoints and passes. The Qing also encouraged native Chinese to move to and set up administrative systems within Xinjiang so as to have a positive impact upon the region's development.

* See Map 3, p. 944.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1911 revolution

THE SUPPRESSION OF REBELLIONS LED BY THE KHAN
OF KOKAND'S DESCENDANTS

From 1820 to 1870, within the space of half a century, every ethnic grouping within Xinjiang was rent by dissension and conflict and numerous large and small-scale rebellions were instigated by descendants of the khans of Kokand (such as Bolonid and Hojijan). These often spread outside the confines of the area involved in the original dispute.

In the summer of 1826 (the sixth year of the reign of the Qing emperor Daoguang), Bolonid's grandson, Jahangir (Janghur), mustered more than 500 Dzungars (*Bloots*, in Chinese) from Kokand (Haohan in modern Chinese) and invaded Xinjiang. In 1828 (the eighth year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang), Jahangir once again stirred up rebellion, was defeated and later captured, and then sent to Beijing in chains to be executed.

In the autumn of 1847 (the 27th year of Emperor Daoguang's reign), Jahangir's nephew Qataty and 'Ali (Woli) Khan initiated seven Kokand rebellions, leading more than 1,000 crack cavalry in a surprise attack on Kashghar (Kashi) from Kokand. Several months later, the soldiers of these rebellions hastily disbanded and dispersed and headed across the border.

In the summer of 1857 (the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Xianfeng), 'Ali Khan once again rallied troops from Kokand and invaded Kashghar, attacking and occupying Kashghar and Yengi Hisar, the two 'Hui Muslim cities', step by step. From within his base area, he established a ruthless and inhuman administration that relied on murder and arson, extortion and tax racketeering. One wrong action, one misplaced word, even one rumour: all these were punishable by death. The khan was extremely despotic and derived pleasure from killing people with his own hands. He also consolidated religious control: women who did not cover themselves from head to toe in public with a *burqa* (veil) or who disobeyed the harsh laws were mercilessly flogged. Males over 6 years old had to tie up their hair and attend the mosque five times a day to pray.

By the beginning of autumn 1857 the Qing had amassed more than 5,000 government troops from Ili, Urumqi (Dihua in modern Chinese) and the surrounding areas; they then marched their army towards Yengi Hisar, recapturing this 'Muslim city' not long afterwards. Subsequently, the Qing Army advanced towards Kashghar, also retaking the 'Muslim city' there. The khan of Kokand and his aides carried off the plundered wealth they had extorted from the population of over 10,000 Uighurs and withdrew to Kokand. The khan's rebellion did not capture the public imagination, however. Having encircled and suppressed the rebellion, the Qing thereby managed to gain the support of the native populations of Xinjiang, and in particular that of the Uighurs.

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AN INVADER WHO HOISTED THE BANNER
OF RELIGION – AGBOR

At the beginning of spring 1865 (the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi), Agbor seized his chance and led his soldiers in an invasion of Chinese Xinjiang. Agbor was originally a bandit from the khanate of Kokand, but by currying favour with the authorities and relying on the influence of his female relatives, he eventually became a high-ranking official. By the summer of 1864 (the third year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign), the Kyrgyz chieftain Unduq had seized and occupied the 'Muslim city' of Kashghar. Since he had for some considerable time been in occupation of the aforementioned city and was engaged in a war of attrition with the Qing Army, he sent envoys to Kokand to request military assistance. In order to eliminate the threat Agbor now posed to his ambitions, the khan of Kokand sent Buslukh (the great-grandson of Bolonid, the rebellious khan of Kokand) to invade Xinjiang. In the autumn of 1865, however, Agbor stormed and captured the Chinese settlement at Kashghar. By the end of that year, Agbor had by deception gained the town of Khotan (Hotan). By 1867 (the sixth year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign), Agbor had successively captured and occupied Kuqa, Korla (K'uerh le) and Kalasar and their surrounding areas.

At this time, Agbor's inclination was to 'contain his aspirations and be satisfied' with his conquests, so he styled himself the 'Bidiao'ult Khan' ('King of Great Good Fortune'). By 1869 (the eighth year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi), Agbor had driven out his puppet Buslukh. In the spring of 1870 (the ninth year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign), Agbor began to push northwards. By the end of the year he controlled most of northern Xinjiang. In order to consolidate his rule, Agbor attempted to internationalize the situation. He collaborated with the British and with tsarist Russia and allowed them to extend their influence over the region. He concluded separate trading agreements with Russia and Britain in 1872 and 1873 respectively, thus directly bolstering foreign colonial influence within the areas he controlled. Agbor's invasion was resisted by each nationality in Xinjiang; the peoples of Khotan, Turfan and Urumqi en masse, and in succession, instigated armed insurrections and, with the support of the Qing army, together beat back the invaders.

In 1875 (the first year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing appointed Zuo Zongtang as imperial commissioner to supervise military operations in Xinjiang. At the end of spring 1876 (the second year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), Zuo Zongtang rode out from Lanzhou towards Suzhou (in modern Gansu province), leading his army towards Xinjiang. His military strategy was to 'seize the north and then take the south', first recapturing northern Xinjiang, then recovering southern Xinjiang. By October of the same year, all of northern Xinjiang had been recaptured. At the end of spring 1877 (the third year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing general Liu Jintang led his forces from

Urumqi and mounted an assault on Turfan. In the resulting battle, more than 2,000 men were taken prisoner and no fewer than 10,000 of the enemy surrendered, thus destroying Agbor's royal power. As a result of the Uighurs' resistance and the Qing Army's victory, Agbor had reached an impasse, and he committed suicide at Korla military camp.

After Agbor's death, his son Bokh Koli continued the struggle. At the end of the summer of 1877 (the third year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing general Liu Jintang's detachment entered the hinterland of southern Xinjiang. In the autumn of the same year, the Qing Army recaptured the four towns of Korla, Baicheng (Bay), Aksu and Wushi (Uqturpan) in the eastern sector of southern Xinjiang. Subsequently, the army made for the four major towns in the west and by February 1878 (at the beginning of the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu), had reoccupied all of Kashghar, Yerqiang (Kargilik), Yengi Hisar and Khotan. Bokh Koli and his cronies fled across the border into Russia.

Agbor had invaded in February 1865 (the first month of the fourth year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign) and it took until February 1878 (the beginning of the fourth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign) for the Qing forces to recover the whole of Xinjiang. Agbor's influence over Xinjiang had lasted 13 years. Within his base areas, Agbor had established many halls of religious instruction, undoubtedly widening and strengthening the power of religious doctrine. He also set up a secret police force and the 'Ra'is' Islamic sect (adherents were his agents) to monitor people's movements. He introduced a multitude of taxes, which the people in his base areas saw as sucking the life-blood from them through ruthless exploitation and pillage. Although such cruelty allowed his wealth to increase daily, the Muslims lost much of their fortune, descending into abject poverty. Moreover those in the upper echelons of the religious structure gained enormous benefits from being within the government and business structure, and as a result they willingly served the rebel government. Agbor compelled non-believers to adopt Islam; those who obeyed survived and those who demurred were disposed of – it is likely that over 40,000 people who refused to convert to Islam were systematically exterminated.

It was the fervent hope of all the peoples of Xinjiang that Agbor's tyrannical influence be wiped out, restoring to them their original and rightful interests. According to historical records, when Zuo Zongtang led his Third Route Army towards Xinjiang, he received an ecstatic welcome from all the people he came across: 'In tune with the road, the army marches straight on, either as the guide, or as compatriots in war, always ready to serve.' At the time that Zuo Zongtang led his army into Xinjiang, he crushed the colonialists who wished to divide China, ensuring that its territory and sovereign powers remained intact and unified.

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THE XINJIANG PEOPLES' STRUGGLE AGAINST FEUDALISM

One of the effects of the uprisings of the Hui Muslims of Sha'anxi and Gansu and the revolutionary movement or the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom within China proper was that the peoples of Xinjiang, and in particular the Uighurs, started to oppose the endless intrigues between the imperial Qing officials and the local *bokhs*, thus attacking the feudal system of serfdom.

In 1857 (the seventh year of Emperor Xianfeng's reign), Uighur peasants from Kuqa started an uprising against the leadership at Maimaishli. The uprising was cruelly suppressed on this occasion by Wu'erqing, the imperial secretary; the leaders and workers of the Maimaishli peasantry were rounded up and unceremoniously put to death. The Qing government, furthermore, as a result of the unprofitable returns on his employment, said of Wu'erqing that 'he who makes decisions may also be removed from office', and accordingly the local *bokhs* were also penalized.

In 1864 (the third year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi), the Kuqa peasantry started a massive uprising. Under the command of a peasant called Tohudiniyaz, a makeshift army captured the town of Kuqa, put to death the imperial secretary Salinga, the *bokh* of Ajim and others. The *yasaq* ruler of Kuqa tried to persuade the army to abandon its military struggle, using the argument of 'imperial beneficence wiping the slate clean' – with the result that he was also put to death. The supporters of the uprising then elected Rexiding Hoxho (c. 1808–67) as their leader, naming him 'Hoxho Khan' (he is called the 'Yellow Hoxho' in Qing dynasty literature). Before long, the influence of the peasant army was felt as far afield as Wushi, Aksu, Turfan, Korla and other areas.

In the same year, the Hui chieftain Toming and the commander-in-chief of the regular army Suo Huanzhang began an uprising in the regional capital, Urumqi, subsequently capturing that city. Toming was no more than a petty overlord, building palaces and fixing weights and measures. He styled himself 'King of Bright Truth'. Towards the end of the same year, the Huis and Uighurs began a counter-uprising and succeeded in capturing the capital city, shooting dead the rebel minister Tokto. In the spring of 1866 (the fifth year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign), a peasant army from Ili stormed and captured the quarters of the Ili general at Huiyuancheng (town of Ili) and the Ili general Ming Xu and his subordinates were slaughtered. Ming Xu's second-in-command, General Chang Qing, was also taken prisoner. In 1865 (the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi), the Ili army's Maizmuzat seized the reins of power, calling himself 'Su Dan' and establishing a harsh system of control in a vain attempt to set up a separatist regime in the region.

In the 1860s the anti-feudal struggle by every nationality within Xinjiang raged north and south of the Tian Shan (Heavenly Mountains). But any authority such a struggle might have possessed was in turn usurped by regional

and religious leaders; the success of the struggle was subsumed by these people's desperate race to serve their own ends, with the result that none of the ethnic peasant uprisings led to any real gains.

In 1876 (the second year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing moved their troops into Xinjiang. By 1878 (the fourth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing forces had wiped out the effects of Agbor's insurgency and that of all the local feudal separatist movements. The Qing were now back in full control of Xinjiang.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES OF XINJIANG AGAINST INVADERS

After the Opium War of 1840, Britain sought to infiltrate Xinjiang through India and Afghanistan. Several Central Asian overlords took on the status of vassals, or 'British dependants', by allowing missionaries and merchants to enter Xinjiang through their territories, thus extending Britain's influence and control over Xinjiang. Before the end of 1882 (the eighth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), five areas of Xinjiang were completely under Britain's sway and another three were 'British dependencies'.

At the time of Agbor's invasion of Xinjiang, the British, Turks, Russians and others controlled the border posts. All of them then entered into 'official diplomatic relations' with Agbor, giving him direct aid, and, through these treaties, seized a share of the region's rights and interests. By granting diplomatic recognition to Agbor and legitimizing his control over the occupied regions, his despotism spread throughout Xinjiang, crushing in its turn the power of the imperialists with sundry local plots.

In 1864, and again in 1883, Russia compelled the Qing to conclude separate border treaties, such as the 'Sino-Russian pact on the allocation of the north-western border' and the 'Sino-Russian border treaty for Tajikistan' and others, which annexed huge areas of the Qing empire. Included in this territory was the homeland of the nomadic Kazakhs, who did not agree with the policy of 'the people complying in order for their land to be returned'; bit by bit they moved into new areas within the regions of China proper. But when Russia attempted to suppress this migration, the Kazakh tribes rose in the 'Great Banner Military Revolt'. In 1871 (the tenth year of Emperor Tongzhi's reign), Russian armies invaded Ili. They encountered the firm resistance of the imperial Qing garrison and the local Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uighur and Hui tribes, under the slogan: 'Alone we anticipate the common soldier's early departure, but together we shall recover our land.'

After the cruel authority of Agbor had been dismantled, Zuo Zongtang implemented a series of measures to deal with the effects of this disaster in Xinjiang. He placed special emphasis on the revival of the economy of Xinjiang, enforcing the proper regulation of taxes and levies, and adopting other policies

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of reconstruction and rehabilitation in order to quicken the pace of economic development. At the same time, Xinjiang became a province of China. In view of Xinjiang's new situation, Russia concluded the 'Sino-Russian Ili pact' (the 'Sino-Russian treaty rewritten') with the Qing government in February 1881 (the seventh year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), and China recovered Ili.

XINJIANG BECOMES A PROVINCE OF CHINA

Before Xinjiang became a Chinese province, it had usually been called Xi Yu (the Western Territories). In 1762 (the 27th year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong), the Qing had invested a 'generalissimo of Ili' with the power to conduct all government business in the region. Urumqi was established as the administrative capital and imperial counsellors were installed at Ili, Tacheng (Qoqek) and Kashghar; other places were run by administrators or chieftains. In northern Xinjiang, some areas instituted a system of counties and prefectures; at Hami, Turfan and each Mongol area, a *yasaq* system was established; in southern Xinjiang's other areas, the *bokh* system was introduced.

In 1877 (the third year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu), Zuo Zongtang was appointed by the Qing and promoted to be chairman of the Xinjiang provisional provincial government. In 1878 Zuo Zongtang once more put forward arrangements for Xinjiang's institution as a province and these suggestions were largely endorsed. In 1882 (Guangxu's eighth year), in the summer and autumn, the governor-general of Sha'anxi and Gansu, Tan Zhonglin, and the superintendent of military affairs in Xinjiang, Liu Jintang, individually and successively submitted a jointly considered letter to the Qing that attached great importance to the arrangements suggested for Xinjiang's establishment as a province. The letter also lauded the pilot projects implemented in southern Xinjiang. These pilot projects were similar to structures in China proper which established administrative rule on the county and prefecture pattern, with county and prefectural officials implementing the system of appointments according to the regulations.

At Aksu and Kashghar, superintendents had been appointed. Under the Aksu superintendent's direct supervision, subordinate *tings*¹ were set up at Kalasar, Kuqa and Wushi, with a subordinate *zhou* (prefecture) at Wensu and, similarly, a *xian* (county) at Baicheng. Answering to the Board of Corrections at Kashghar was a subordinate *ting* at Yengi Hisar, with subordinate *zhous* at Shule (district of Kashghar), Yarkand (Shache) and Khotan, and then subordinate *xians* at Shufu, Yecheng and Yotan. As a direct result of the *bokh* system, the Qing afterwards decided that 'those areas with all manner of *bokh*-type systems should completely discard them'. The *bokh* system was thus eliminated,

1. *Tings*, or 'halls', were government departments at provincial level. [Trans.]

a move of great significance in accelerating the development of Uighur society in Xinjiang.

In 1884 (the tenth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the Qing ratified the change in Xinjiang's status and declared it a province. On 17 November 1884 (the ninth month in the tenth year of Emperor Guangxu's reign), the imperial government sanctioned the establishment of a police commissioner and chief civil servant for Xinjiang. On 19 November 1884 the court appointed Liu Lintang as commissioner of police and as a leading imperial envoy with the rank of ambassador to oversee the day-to-day running of Xinjiang; Wei Guangshou was appointed head of the civil service. In 1885 Liu Lintang and Wei Guangshou in turn established their headquarters at Urumqi and used Urumqi for provincial meetings, setting up the *wumen*, or headquarters of the police and civil service, there too. In line with the stated policy of 'a new deal for ancient lands', the old name of Xi Yu was changed to Xinjiang (the New Territories). The new provincial mechanism for Xinjiang was put into action.

When Xinjiang became a province, the imperial Qing government made fundamental reforms to the administration of Xinjiang compared with previous dynasties. Henceforth, whether in policing or administration, the entire army of Xinjiang became in theory an instrument of civil government and the central headquarters of the Xinjiang Army were moved from Ili to Urumqi. Up until 1909, Xinjiang was divided into 4 regions, with each region being subdivided into 6 garrisons, 10 *tings*, 3 prefectures and 21 *xians*. Thus the government of Xinjiang was brought into line with the system operating in the rest of China. When Xinjiang became a province, the Qing government made root-and-branch changes to the administration of the area, strengthening its ties with the motherland and between each of its numerous nationalities and the Han in the political and economic fields, thus enabling its society to progress and develop. The literature was codified and the national defence of the border regions was consolidated. All these matters were of tremendous significance for the region.

The republican period (1912–49)

THE XINHAI (1911) REVOLUTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Qing emperor Guangxu issued an edict entitled 'Constitutional Reform and Modernization'.² The general of Ili, Zhang Geng, proposed a plan for the Xinjiang government that addressed

2. This edict was in fact promulgated in 1898. [*Trans.*]

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