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SOURCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY UYGHUR HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

The late nineteenth century political, social and cultural history of the Uyghurs, especially in the period 1860-1880, is of great importance to historians as it deals with emerging nationalism and views of the intersection of competing powers (Great Britain, Russia, Ottoman and Qing Empires). First I will present Uyghur sources from late nineteenth century Uyghur history and my own analysis of their value to us, highlighting the role of local sources and perspectives. I will use primary Uyghur sources as my core sources but I will also use relevant Chinese, English and Ottoman Turkish primary sources and relevant second hand Uyghur, Chinese, and English sources which I have had access to during my time at Harvard University. Second I will present my critique of Chinese and foreign scholars' work such as Kim. Kim Ho-dong viewed the rebellions of this period as "Holy War" and said Britain and Russia used a "wait and see" policy during the Zuo Zong-tang Campaign and reoccupation, both ideas which can be called into question. I will discuss these points using evidence from several sources. In my paper, I will also attempt to answer several questions such as: Was the Yaqub Beg (AKA. Yaqub beg) regime legitimate? How did the local people react to Yaqub Beg's regime? Was Yaqub Beg a holy warrior or an opportunist? Was he a person who tried to impose his regime on the Tarim Basin or was he representing the local aspirations?

Key words: XIX. Century Uyghur History, Yaqub Beg, Uyghur Sources, Local Perspectives

Introduction

The late nineteenth century political, social and cultural history of Xinjiang, especially in the period 1860-1880, is of great importance to historians as it deals with emerging nationalism, competing colonial and imperialist powers and the seeds of later events in the 20th and 21st centuries. After the 1839 and 1840 Yapien Zhanzheng

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(Opium War) or the China–Anglo War, China slowly became colonized by the West, Russia and later, by Japan. This war was followed by the 1850–64 Taiping rebellion in central and southern China and the 1862 Tungan/Hui (Chinese Muslims) rebellion in Gansu. All of these seriously affected the Qing's prestige and deeply depleted the military and economic power of Great Qing Empire. In the ensuing power vacuum and due to the geographical isolation, Uyghurs, other Turkic peoples and the Tungans in Xinjiang seized the opportunity to declare independence from the Qing Empire.

The full knowledge and understanding of this period of history, in the late 19th century in Xinjiang, has heretofore been restricted as historians have had limited viewpoints. Few historians have been able to access Uyghur sources of information. First of all, Uyghur sources have not been readily available, few of them have been translated into Western languages, or even into Chinese, and as few trained historians can read Uyghur, these sources remain unknown. This paper will introduce and discuss some of the little known Uyghur sources. It then goes on to offer new interpretations and or differing viewpoints about some key persons and events. These reinterpretations are important for studies of Uyghur culture and history and aid in the understanding of current events. This paper specifically attempts reinterpretations of the nature of the independent state of Yacub Beg, including his acceptance by local Uyghurs, and the nature of this rebellion, whether it was basically religious or political. Also, the involvement of the Great Powers as they struggled for influence and power in Xinjiang will be explored with new interpretations.

The paper will start with notes on the background of the era and a review of the major sources of the Yacub Beg period. This will be followed by an introduction of relatively overlooked Uyghur sources. The next section tackles the question of Yaqub Beg and the religious nature of his rule and his relationships with the local Xinjiang Uyghur population. The last section views the 'Great Game' between Russia and Great Britain vis-à-vis the involvement of the Chinese and their own colonialist ambitions in Central Asia. This paper hopes to demonstrate that the addition of and exploration of Uyghur sources will significantly add to our knowledge of this volatile time in Xinjiang history.

Background

Starting in 1862, in Gansu and Shaanxi provinces, the Tungans (Hui or Chinese Muslims) began rebellions against the Qing. Because thousands of Tungans, originally from these provinces, had previously moved to Xinjiang and settled as farmers, small business owners and serving the Chinese military, tensions increased in Xinjiang as well. These tensions affected not only the Tungans, but also relations among the Uyghurs, Han Chinese, Mongol and Manchu authorities. The Tungans rebelled in Xinjiang, first in Kucha, followed rapidly by Urumchi, Yarkand, Kashgar and Yengisar, Manas, Sanji, Qutubi, Jimsar and Qurghas, and north and east of Urumchi. All of these arose within a few months. In many towns and cities in the Yili Valley, Uyghurs and Tungans

attacked in November 1864. In Hotan Uyghurs rebelled in the same period. The Qing held on to power in the Turfan and Qulumul/Hami region and in Karashr, Ush Turfan, Bai and Aqsu/Aksu. Generally it was the Tungans who started the rebellions and afterwards Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims followed them very quickly. The leadership of local rebellions soon moved from Tungans to local Uyghurs. In 1864, the Qing began a massacre of Tungans in Xinjiang.¹

Sources on the Yaqup Beg Period

The Yaqup Beg period was a period of enormous political disorder that quickly swamped all of Xinjiang. This period's "revolt" ended the Qing hegemony in the South and North of Xinjiang and established an independent state led by Yaqup Beg. The independence of the state ended with Yaqup Beg's death and the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang. The political game among Russia, Britain and China also involved power shifts. Yaqup Beg's independent state was recognized and supposedly supported by international powers such as Great Britain, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This period was a unique historical time for Xinjiang and has drawn the attention of a number of scholars. The British author Demetrius Charles Boulger wrote *The Life of the Yaqup Beg: Athalik Ghazi, and Badaulet, Ameer of Kashgar*.² It was the first published history of this period, written in 1878. This book's main thrust was to describe the Chinese conquest and rule in Kasghar, the creation of the Yaqup Beg state, its relationship with

Russia, the British Empire and the Qing, and also the Qing reconquest of Kashgar. The Turkish historian Mehmet Atif in 1883 produced *Kashgar Tarihi* (History of Kashgar)³. This was a brief history of Kashgar from the Hun period to the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang. It included Ottoman diplomatic relationships with the Yaqup Beg government and also dealt with the internal condition of Yaqup Beg's government and the confrontation with the Qing. In the twentieth century, Burhan Shehidi wrote *Lun Agubo Zhengquan* (Discussion about Yaqup Beg's Political Power)⁴ in 1958. Ji Dachun wrote *Shilun yibaliusi nian Xinjaing nongmin qiyi* (The 1864 Peasant Revolt)⁵ in 1979.

Kim Ho-dong wrote *Holy war in China – the Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877*⁶. First of all, the claim that Yaqup Beg's revolt was a *holy war* is one that is difficult to accept as I shall show in a later section. This title was not an expression of the roots of the war, but simply made the book more marketable as this title is an attractive one for readers who look for simple answers. *Ghazat Dermulki Chin*

¹ Nazimi, Ghazat Der Mulki Chin (Holy War in China) 1995: 7

² Boulger, The life of Yakoob Beg, 1878

³ Akif, Kashgar Tarihi, 1883

⁴ Shehidi, Lun Agubo Zhengquan, 1958

⁵ Ji, Shilun yibaliusi nian Xinjaing nongmin qiyi, 1978

⁶ Kim, Holy War in China, 2004

(Holy War in China) by Molla Bilal Binni Molla Yusup Nazimi (1876)⁷ inspired Kim Ho-dong who took the name and gave it as the title of his book. Molla Bilal Binni Molla Yusup Nazimi was a renowned poet in Ili and gave us information about the Ili rebellion only. However, *Ghazat Dermulki Chin* is only tangentially related to Yaqub Beg and his state. Also, Kim Ho-dong made several points about Britain and Russia using a “wait and see” policy during the Zuo Zong-tang’s Xinjiang Campaign and reoccupation which could also be called into question. This point will be discussed later using evidence from several sources.

The Turkish historian Mehmet Saray wrote *The Russian, British, Chinese and Ottoman Rivalry in Turkistan* in 2003⁸. Saray described Russian, British and the Qing’s expansion policy in Central Asia. Saray conducted research in Ottoman and British Foreign Ministry archives. Books and articles in these archives contain many works that have had huge contributions, but they are badly out dated, include stereotyped judgments and factual inaccuracies. The archives are long on quotations and/or references to Chinese, English, Russian, Ottoman Turkish, German and French sources. However, they have not used Uyghur Chaghatay sources and minimized Uyghur factors and local sources. Most of them did not even mention Uyghur Chaghatay sources and as such their work lacks local peoples’ perspectives.

British, German and Russian explorers and reporters such as Robert B. Shaw, Johnson, W.H., Foryth, T.D.⁹ and Kuropatkin A.N.,¹⁰ certainly provide us with useful insights from their perspectives as outsiders. They provided extremely valuable information about Yaqub Beg’s government, military and administrative functions and the socioeconomic situation. However, their observations often betray a cultural prejudice and a powerful sense of Western superiority that was prevalent in the nineteenth century.

Uyghur sources

Until recently most foreign and Chinese scholars have usually ignored the Uyghur documentation, which I have used extensively in this work, which will bring out the local point of view. I am also hoping that these documents, which I have roughly translated into English from original manuscripts, will be a valuable contribution to the history of the people of Xinjiang and will clarify some of the misunderstandings about them.

Chinese and some foreign scholars have been trying for many years to bring foreign elements onto the history of Xinjiang, and have ignored the Uyghur origins

⁷ Nazimi, Ghazat Der Mulki Chin, 1995

⁸ Saray, *The Russian, British, Chinese and Ottoman Rivalry in Turkistan*, 2003

⁹ Foryth, T.D. Report of a Mission Yarkund in 1873. Calcutta: Foreign Department Press. 1875.

¹⁰ Kuropatkin, Kashgariia 1879.

of the people. They have not acknowledged the ethnic patterns in Xinjiang where the main population has been mostly Uyghur or Turkic people through many centuries. Although Xinjiang has experienced many invasions in ancient and medieval times by Chinese, Tibetans, Mongols, Manchus and Russians, the region was always dominated, ethnically, culturally and linguistically by the Uyghurs. It is interesting to note that some Western scholars as well as their Chinese counterparts have tried to minimize the existence of the Uyghur and other Turkic people in Xinjiang in their writing. Until the 1880s Xinjiang was not fully integrated into the Qing imperial system and its relationship to the Qing was very problematic. Chinese were still *outsiders* to the Region. Although Xinjiang people (Uyghurs and other Turkic people) were forced to recognize Qing hegemony with military force, they culturally identified themselves as part of the larger Islamic and Turkic world.. It was only after the invasion of Zuo Zong-tang that the name Xinjiang was given to the region on November 18, 1884. Xinjiang means 'new borderlands' or 'new frontier' and this new name shows that it was only in the late nineteenth century that the Chinese saw the region as a 'new' part of China, although still on the edges or margins of the empire.

Now I will introduce some Uyghur sources for late nineteenth century of Xinjiang history.

1. *Hoten Tezkirisi* ("History of Hotan")¹¹. This book was written by Muhammed A'lam about 1894. This book gave specific, accurate and reliable historical information from 1870 to 1880 relating to the Yaqup Beg period of Hotan history. He first described the Khotanese uprising against Qing rule. Secondly, he described the Khotanese struggle with Yaqup Beg's conquest. Lastly he described Niyaz Beg's rule in Hotan and gave some general information about Yaqup Beg and his state.

2. *Tarihi Amminiye* (History of Peace)¹² was published in 1903 by Mulla Musa Sayrami (1837-1917). It is one of the most important local historical sources and Sayrami was one of the best Central Asian and Uyghur historians. This book includes the beginning of the rebellion to Zuo Zong-tang's reconquest of Xinjiang, and also provides remarkable and accurate information about late nineteenth century history of Xinjiang. Sayrami continued to revise his work throughout his life time and the final version came into its complete form in the *Tarihi Hemidi* (History of Hemidi) in 1908¹³.

3. *Ghazat Dermulki Chin* (Holy War in China) was written by Molla Bilal Binni Molla Yusup¹⁴. Nazimi (1822-1900) was the pen name of this renowned poet in Ili who gave unique information about the Ili rebellion. It is a long poem interspersed

¹¹ A'lam, *Hotan Tezkirisi*, 1894

¹² Sayrami, *Tarihi Eminye*, 1903

¹³ Sayrami, *Tarihi Hemidi*, 1908

¹⁴ Nazimi, *Ghazat Dermulki Chin*

with prose. This book provided details of the internal situation among Uyghurs (called Taranchi), Tungans, Mongol, Shibe (locally settled Manchu) and Hitay (Chinese and Manchu soldiers and officials). This book was written in 1876 and published in Qazan, Russia in 1877. It is a comprehensive survey of the history of Xinjiang, especially of the Ili region during the agitated decade from 1864 to 1876.

4. *Janabi Badualet Hikayerleri* (Stories of His Highness Badualet)¹⁵ by Ahmet Quli Andijani was published in 1904 in Kashgar. This book described Yaqub Beg's life, his state and his *holy war* in Xinjiang.

The Local People and Yaqub Beg

In this section some reinterpretations will be provided about Yaqub Beg's state, its legitimacy and the local people's reaction to his rule. In the following paragraphs I will attempt to answer several questions such as: Was Yaqub Beg a holy worrier or an opportunist? Was he a person who tried to impose his regime on the Tarim Basin or was he representing local aspirations?

In order to answer these questions, it is important to explore the local inhabitants' view of Yaqub Beg and his reign. The following poem is from *Hoten Tezkirisi* (History of Hotan)¹⁶. I took it from Hamada, Musami's *L' Histoire de Hotan*¹⁷ and I translated it into English from Chaghatay.

From Beijing the Chinese came, like the stars in the sky.

The Andijanis¹⁸ rose and fled, like the pigs in the forest.

They came in vain and left in vain, the Andijanis.

They went away scared and exhausted, the Andijanis.

Everyday they¹⁹ took a virgin as wife.

They watched and entertained the beauties

.....

They made difficulties among the Muslims

¹⁵ Andijani, Janabi Bedualet Hikayeleri, 1904

¹⁶ A'lam, Hotan Tezkirisi, 1894

¹⁷ Musami, L' Histoire Hotan,

¹⁸ Andijanis are people from Central Asia

¹⁹ The Andijanis

Yette shehir²⁰ were in turmoil for years and years.

Suddenly anger comes from God

Disaster comes from Beijing

.....

He²¹ escaped from Turfan and came to Korla

He did not open fire on the enemy and was shamelessly defeated

Like a coward you²² went to the grave

It made all the soldiers surprised

Left behind the cities in disaster

Hitay²³ caused oppression

Muslims crying to God²⁴

The following two different Uyghur historians also show the strong sense of betrayal and the animosity of Uyghurs, especially Khotanese, against Yaqup Beg and his regime. "Great Ataliq Ghazi²⁵ conducted all the affairs of the country for himself. He didn't appoint a couple of learned or upright persons to the post of vizir (minister). He decided and carried out all the affairs of state..."²⁶

"Yaqup Beg took all power in his state; he didn't have consultants and ministers. He made all of the decisions himself that related to government business. He never consulted with others and he considered others not eligible and had no skills to consult or to give advice. Yaqup Beg said at one meeting: 'If God made someone king of his people, all of the state powers should belong to that person. This special privilege was given by God'. Yaqup Beg didn't know anything about history and real politics. He was a person who didn't know the basic principles of Islam, and he was also a very ignorant and very selfish person.... He killed all of his people who criticized him ... He was a terrible dictator."²⁷

²⁰ Seven cities (Kashgar, Yerkent, Hoten, Aqsu, Uchturfan, Kucha and Turfan)

²¹ Referring to Yaqup Beg

²² Addressed to Yaqup Beg

²³ Chinese and Manchu

²⁴ Hamada: 1982: 28

²⁵ Yaqup Beg

²⁶ Baytur 1986: 575

²⁷ Bughra 1998: 341-342

“Yaqup Beg never fought with his enemy. All of his war was against East Turkistan’s freedom fighters. His war was not from a patriotic standpoint; he only hated and oppressively killed people who had the same faith and ethnicity with him.”²⁸ “If Yaqup Beg had fought back against the Qing dynasty’s attack, there is no doubt that he would have saved the country from Qing occupation forever.”²⁹

According to these sources, Yaqup Beg put his utmost effort into refreshing his image as a holy warrior to protect Islam. When the common enemies disappeared, fighting among fellow Muslims started and here the concept of religious war could no longer serve as a unifying ideology. Yaqup Beg did not assume the title of Khan and Sultan. He preferred to use Ataliq Gazhi (Father Holy Warrior) or Badoulat. Badoulat means the ‘fortunate’ or ‘blessed’ and was used as a euphemistic appellation. Khoqandi rulers had always referred to themselves as Khan and Yaqup Beg’s failure to do this put him outside the tradition and line of ancient authority. His acknowledgement of the Ottoman sultan and his suzerainty was also motivated by receiving the title of Emir bestowed by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Eziz. Thus Yaqup Beg become famous in the Islamic world as an infidel-fighter, and by accepting the status as Emir by the Ottoman Sultan made a valuable ally of the Ottomans who proved a more generous source of military aid than the British. The Sultan provided cannons, thousands of modern, and old, rifles and military officers to help Yaqup Beg train his army³⁰. Yaqup Beg put forth great effort to engage Islamic allies to strengthen his legitimacy.

Thus, these *rebellions* began to be viewed as motivated primarily by religious concerns. Islam did provide the unifying ideology that joined Tungans with Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims and rulers of the different oases. Uyghur writers described the hostilities as a *Holy War* to rid the land of infidel occupiers. However, Xinjiang Muslims had lived in relative peace and stability under Qing rule for a century before these events, and faith in Islam did not lead to unrest in that period. As Bughra and Alam pointed out above: it was economic distress and rampant misrule from the 1850s that created the conditions underlying the uprisings.

Having positioned himself as a defender of the faith and having attracted holy warriors to fight against the infidel Khitay (Chinese), Yaqup Beg pursued a strict Islamist policy. His officials enforced adherence to Islamic law, using Qadi Rais (religious judges) to crack down on his opponents or possible threats to his power. Yaqub Beg eliminated all those in regional power. He killed many religious leaders such as Rashidin and Walidin and killed thousands of Muslims.³¹ According to

²⁸ Bughra 1998; 344-345

²⁹ Bughra 1998: 346

³⁰ Irade Dahiliye, No. 46753; Bellew, Kashmir and Kashgar 1875:188; Akif, Kashgar Tarihi 1883:363

³¹ Hamada: 27-28; Baytur, 1986: 516

Bughra, Yaqub Beg killed 40 thousand people in Hotan alone.³² Badaulat/Yaqub Beg stood in a more exalted position if we compare him to the former ruler and he even morally stood in a higher position than those from the Islamic caliphates. For example, he always performed the ritual ablutions and this was one of his good habits. "When he sat down, he turned his face to Mecca (Qible) and kneeled wherever he went. He prayed the whole night... He stayed away from alcohol... His good name and generosity spread around the world. He built roads in the cities and villages. He built madrassas, mosques and buildings. He also built stopping points for caravans along the roads. None of the former Khans and Sultans did such great things. Those things are witness to his greatness and his great name."³³

Yaqub Beg also sent representatives to recite the Quran in Mecca and built a Rabat (hostel) in the name of Altishe (Six cities). It still exists and is used freely by Uyghurs who go on the hajj even in these modern days. However, we can see from the above that his religious attitude was mostly for his own benefit, to impress his audience and gain support from powerful allies.

According to the documents and statements quoted above, the 1864 *rebellions* are treated as *Holy War*. It was certainly fueled by hatred of the Qing regime and its officials and has been cast by Muslim writers such as Molla Musa Sayrami, Muhmmmed Zerif Qari Haji Damolla, Abdureshit Islami, Molla Billa Binni Molla Yusup (Nazimi) and Mulla Sahkir in the rhetoric of holy war. As such, these descriptions greatly oversimplify a complex and confusing series of events, involving a variety of mutually hostile actors.

Most of the scholarly research on Uyghur and Xinjaing undertaken by foreigners, Chinese or locals has been affected by the political limitations. Even the present well-known Uyghur writer Zordun Sabir in his novel misinterprets Yaqub Beg and his state. For example Sabir said, "Yaqub Beg always tried very hard to make his state one of the provinces of the Ottoman empire...Yaqub Beg failed because he rejected Russian and Great Britain support..."³⁴ Sabir also sees Yaqub Beg as a freedom fighter.

Chinese historians have, in the past as well as currently, not been objective about the Yaqub Beg period of Xinjiang history and mercilessly criticized Yaqub Beg and his state's brutality, yet do not mention the brutal and oppressive Qing regime in Xinjiang. Chinese historians described Yaqub Beg's state as an 'occupied' state, not a legitimate one, and a puppet state of Russian and Britain. They describe Yaqub Beg as a man full of guile, acrimony, a barbarian, politically corrupt and brutal.³⁵ Chinese historians have used Chinese, English and Russian primary sources (concentrating on

³² Bughra 1998: 331

³³ Islami 1963: 161

³⁴ Sabir 2000: 1556

³⁵ Zhongguo Xibu Kaifa Wenjian/ Exploitive documentation of China West, Book. 1, : 411-415; Zhongguo Xinjiang Diqu Yisilan shi/History of Islam in Xinjiang Region of China, Book II, 2000: 65-67

the negative parts of these books and articles) and almost never used Uyghur primary sources. Most Chinese historians now and in the past have not been able to read or speak Uyghur.

Russian and British Interests: The Great Game

The Russians were interested in Xinjiang from at least three points of view: a) as a threat to the Russian advance into Inner Asia should Britain establish a protectorate over the Yaqup Beg state, b) as a source of profitable trade and c) a disruptive factor in Russian efforts to consolidate colonial control over the Khanates of Central Asia.

Expectations and anxieties abounded as the Russians tried but could not establish normal diplomatic relations with Yaqup Beg. They demanded free commercial activity without tax in Yaqup Beg's country, as they used to do with the Chinese administration in the past. When Yaqup Beg refused their demand, the Russians said that they would not recognize his independence. In the end, both sides decided to compromise on these proposals, and established friendly relations with each other. However, it was very difficult for the Russians to overcome their anxieties about the British influence in Yaqup Beg's state and they began to support the Chinese forces who were approaching from the east in their intention of reoccupying Xinjiang. They did not want to see the British in a threatening position in Central Asia. As one of the leading Russian generals said, "The Russians hated to see a strong Muslim state in East Turkistan supported by the British. They (the Russians) disliked the Chinese as neighbors; they yet liked them better than the English."³⁶

Britain had commercial and political interests in Yaqub Beg's state. Great Britain also feared Russian commercial competition and wanted security for Britain's Indian Empire. All those factors forced Britain to push into Afghanistan, Tibet and Xinjiang. The British imperial authorities hoped that they would succeed in establishing a puppet state, blocking further Russian influences. Yaqub Beg was friendly with Great Britain as well as being very cautious with the Russians.

As for the Chinese policy, according to General Zuo Zong-tang the commander of Chinese forces who were sent to occupy Xinjiang and his supporters in the Chinese government, it was thought necessary to control Xinjiang for the safety of China. They thought that "the occupation of the Sinkiang was essential to the security of Peking. Unless all strategic points in Xinjiang were held by China, Muhammedan rulers of that area would sooner or later have to yield either to Russia or Britain."³⁷

Before Zuo Zong-tang and his soldiers could come into Xinjiang, the British realized they had to move quickly because the Chinese needed financial, political and logistical support before the campaign was able to start. Britain helped Zuo Zong-tang

³⁶ Henze 1998: 68

³⁷ Hummel 1994:765

persuade the Qing court and when his proposal was accepted by the Qing government, in April 1876, Zuo Zong-tang began preparations for the Xinjiang campaign. He selected 60,000 service personnel, well-trained and armed with imported Western guns and Chinese made versions of new Western weapons. Zuo Zong-tang mobilized his troops accompanied by 5,000 wagons, 29,000 camels and 5,500 donkeys and mules to transport and store a reserve of 16 million kilograms of grain. Zuo Zong-tang obtained this grain from a Russian supplier in Siberia.

Zuo Zong-tang's main problem was financing the Xinjiang campaign. The Qing court approved the provision of 4 million liang yin (silver) in domestic funds. In addition, the court approved of Zuo Zong-tang's borrowing 5 million liang yin from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (a British Bank).³⁸ Between 1876-81 Zuo Zong-tang spent an amount equivalent to one sixth of the annual expenditure of the treasury.³⁹

As we have seen in the above documents the military and financial weakness of the Qing might have prevented a recovery of Xinjiang. Kim Ho-dong pointed out, "This final calculation let countries (Great Britain and Russia) preserve their neutrality in the war, leaving the fate of the Muslim state to a contest between China and Kashgar."⁴⁰ But in reality, Great Britain and Russia sponsored the reconquest of Xinjiang by the provision of supplies to the Chinese armies as well as lending funds. In 1872 Ghulja, in the north of Xinjiang, was occupied by Russia. Great Britain was afraid of Russian expansion in Xinjiang and Russia feared the increasing British influence in Xinjiang and Yaqub Beg's influence in the occupied territory in central Asia. Both empires hoped and expected to see the Qing in Xinjiang, not an independent Yaqub Beg emirate. So both Britain and Russia were involved in a hypocritical policy; Great Britain and Russia promised Yaqub Beg that they would help him to make peace with the Qing, but on the other side both supported Zuo Zong-tang's Xinjiang reconquest campaign. One could say that this was 'just business' as the funds were borrowed from the British bank and the Russian supplies of grain were bought from Russia. But if these war materials had not been made available, China would not have had the capability to reconquer Xinjiang at that time.

After 1878 active Chinese rule started in Xinjiang and the reconquered territory was officially incorporated onto the Qing Empire. It was first ruled directly by the appointed Chinese governor Zuo Zong-tang and in 1884 renamed Xinjiang.

³⁸ Zhongguo xibu kaifa wenjian book 1: 423

³⁹ Hsu 1968: 53

⁴⁰ Kim 2004: 158

Conclusion

According to many writers, even Uyghur ones, the 1864 Xinjiang rebellion was *Holy War*. While it was certainly fueled by hatred of the Qing regime and its officials, this description greatly under complexifies a confusing series of events, involving a number of mutually disagreeing entities. Instead of being a *Holy War*, a more accurate interpretation would be a struggle against Manchu-Qing oppression in Xinjiang. It was perhaps natural and easy for the Muslims of Xinjiang to define their grievances in terms of religious oppression. An alternative view of Yaqub Beg was that he was not a Uyghur freedom fighter and holy warrior, but a Khoqandi opportunist who imposed his regime in the Tarim Basin. Zuo Zong-tang's Xinjiang campaign can be seen not as an independent Qing inspired war, but one that was economically and logistically supported and sponsored by Great Britain and Russia, and the Qing were certainly politically supported by Great Britain.

Xinjiang offers much to interest scholars in many disciplines, but very little work actually has been done. The reasons are not only geographic isolation and extreme political sensitivity but also linguistic barriers. There are huge numbers of sources available in Uyghur, Chinese and Russian that take time to investigate and learn to use. Most Western scholars rely on Chinese sources and ignore most Uyghur sources. As well, it would not be acceptable to judge Xinjiang late nineteenth century history without using and referencing Uyghur primary sources, some of which contain some extremely valuable and remarkable documents. Uyghur views and conclusions differ regarding Yaqub Beg's state and often take issue with Chinese and foreign historians. To reach objective conclusions of the late nineteenth history of Uyghur, and general Uyghur history as well, without extensive study of Uyghur sources is an error. The main reasons for Uyghur sources not being used in China and the West are lack of translated Uyghur sources, political limitations and the lack of Uyghur language skills among researchers of Xinjiang history.

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