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Central Asia in Revolt. The Moslem Uprisings in Sinkiang, 1928-1937,  
Based Chiefly on Travelers' Accounts.

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PREFACE



The geographical nomenclature in this paper has been based on the recommendations of the Royal Geographical Society (London), as given in the following works:

Reynolds, J.H. (Secretary, Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, Royal Geographical Society). "Place-Names in Sinkiang", Geographical Journal, LXV, No. 3 (March, 1925), pp. 242-47.

Stein, Sir Aurel. "Innermost Asia: Its Geography as a Factor in History", Geographical Journal, LXV, No. 5 (May, 1925), pp. 377-405 and No. 6 (June, 1925), pp. 473-501.

Great reliance has been placed upon the map, entitled "Chinese Turkestan and adjacent parts of Central Asia and Kansu" (scale 1/6,000,000), accompanying the latter work.

After its first use in the paper, the Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society has been cited as C.A.S.J., with the exception of a slight variation in the Bibliography. After April, 1930, the Central Asian Society added the word "Royal" to its name. This has been noted in the Bibliography by the use of either C.A.S.J. or R.C.A.S.J., as applied to volumes published before or after that date.



At this time I wish to acknowledge the great help given me by Dr. Robert J. Kerner, without which I could never have completed this paper. He has unselfishly given his time in trying to keep me on the right track , has given me many clues to the truth, and has endeavored to teach me to recognize truth from propaganda.

H. W.



I.

**THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE**



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Sinkiang, which means in Chinese the New Province or New Frontier, comprises all the possessions of China in Central Asia; notably Dzungaria, the Altai or western portion of the former Chinese province of Outer Mongolia, the old province of Ili, and Eastern Turkestan or Kashgaria. Chinese Turkestan, actually the name of Eastern Turkestan, as opposed to Western or Russian Turkestan, is the name usually applied to the whole province. The territory has an area of roughly 400,000 square miles, of which the greater part is desert. Externally its frontiers are well defined by mountains and deserts, such as the Altai, the Tien Shan, the Pamir, and the Kunlun Ranges and the deserts of Gobi and Dzungaria, while the commanding internal features are the great southern desert of Taklamakan, the northern desert of Dzungaria and the central Tien Shan Range.

Geographers usually divide this province into two distinct regions, separated by the Tien Shan, the range forming a kind of backbone to the country. On the north is the Dzungarian plain, like a great trough between the Tien Shan and the Altai Mountains, partially open at both the eastern and western ends. On the south is Kashgaria, or



the Tarim Basin, between the Tien Shan and the Kunlun Ranges, and being both the most populous and the oldest inhabited. These main regions correspond with the "Chinese division into T'ien Shan Pei Lu and T'ien Shan Nan Lu - the Road North and the Road South of the Heavenly Mountains."<sup>1</sup> The Ili valley or Kuldja region and the Turfan depression are smaller, almost distinct regions, as is the Hami district on the eastern frontier.

The sedentary population of the province, excepting that part in the southern oases of the Tarim Basin, depends for life on the snow and ice of the Tien Shan. The foothills of this great range are almost uniformly barren, but under the snowy crests are "great crags and forests of spruce, under these are the upland summer pastures of the nomads, and under these again in some places are superb lower grazing grounds...."<sup>2</sup> In the plains, Lattimore continues, "rain varies from little to less. The only water is from snow-fed rivers, which, breaking through the intervening foothill ranges, run on across the plains until they perish in great swamps of reeds, beyond which are the encompassing deserts that divide the province from Mongolia and China."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Owen Lattimore, "Chinese Turkistan" in The New Orient, II, The Far East (Chicago: 1933), edited by A.U. Pope and others, 100. Hereafter cited as "Chinese Turkistan", New Orient, II.

2 Lattimore, High Tartary (Boston: 1930), 36.

3 Loc. cit.



The towns are found where the streams break through the dry foothills, where the water can most easily be expanded by irrigation canals and made to support an agricultural population. Between the streams are the minor deserts, over which the "two great Roads, threading town to town like beads on a string, provide the only lateral communication."<sup>4</sup>

The Tien Shan is roughly the historical frontier between nomads to the north and farmers to the south, while the trough of the Dzungarian plain has long served as a bridge between the Mongolian plateau and the Kirghiz steppes and the plains of South Russia. The central Dzungarian desert forms the depth of the trough, north of which is the basin of the Irtish River, flowing through Siberia and into the Arctic Ocean. The fertile region between the Irtish and the Altai Range is known as the Altai, a continuous grassland, formerly administered from Kobdo on the Mongolian side of the mountains, but since the Chinese Revolution a part of Sinkiang. Much gold is taken out of this region, the name "Altai" being from a Mongol word meaning "gold".<sup>5</sup> A series of towns is found on the southern edge of the Dzungarian plain, along the foot of the Tien Shan, strung along the Pei Lu, or North Road, where is received most of the rainfall of the province, especially on the mountain slopes.

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4 Ibid., 37.

5 Ibid., 41.



Concerning the Heavenly Mountains Douglas Carruthers wrote: "In a length of eight hundred miles there are only two passes suitable for wheeled traffic,"<sup>6</sup> these being the low saddles of Tashihto and Tapancheng, connecting Dzungaria with the southern part of the province. At the northern mouth of the more important of these, Tapancheng, where a grip can be established over provincial communications, is the capital, Urunchi. To the west another low pass, the Talki, gives access to the Ili valley from Dzungaria.

The several hundred mile long Tien Shan Range is split in the west into northern and southern ranges by the wedge-shaped Ili valley, the base of the triangle being open to the Siberian steppe, while the apex to the east, where the Ili River has its source, is closed by lofty mountains, the central Tien Shan. The Chinese part of the valley, for the Ili River flows westward into Russia, has an area of about 25,000 square miles, or half the size of England,<sup>7</sup> being formed by the river Ili and its tributaries, the Kash, Qunguz, and Tekes. The region, while the most remote of the Chinese possessions, is one of the richest; Carruthers spoke of it as "the El Dorado of the Celestials."<sup>8</sup> It is often called the Kuldja district, from the chief town.

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6 Unknown Mongolia (London: 1914), II, 378.

7 Henry Lansdell, Russian Central Asia (Boston: 1885), I, 190.

8 Op. cit., 431.



From the south it can be reached by the difficult Muzart, or Ice Pass, and from the east by the easy Naret Pass.

The center of the province, with the Tien Shan to the north and west, and the Quruq Tagh, or "Dry Mountains", to the south, is the small Turfan depression, about two percent the size of its southern neighbor, the Tarim Basin.<sup>9</sup> Its floor extends only about one hundred miles east and west by fifty north and south, while the bottom of the basin is about three hundred feet below sea level.<sup>10</sup> The region takes its name from its chief city, a prosperous place a short distance east of the main road connecting the northern and southern parts of the province, thus having a strategic importance comparable to Urumchi to the north. For complete control of the province, these two points must be held by the same power.

The Tarim Basin, in the words of Von Le Coq, is "like a gigantic bowl filled in the center with moving sand- a terrible and in many places, owing to lack of water, an impassable desert."<sup>11</sup> It is huge, extending some nine hundred miles from Kashgar in the west to Lop Nor in the east and stretching fully three hundred and thirty miles at its greatest width.<sup>12</sup> West and north it is rimmed by

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<sup>9</sup> Ellsworth Huntington, The Pulse Of Asia (London: 1910), 295.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Buried Treasures Of Chinese Turkestan (London: 1928), tr. A. Barwell, 35.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Aurel Stein, "Innermost Asia: Its Geography as a Factor in History", Geographical Journal, LXV, Numbers 5 & 6 (May & June, 1925), 388.



the Tien Shan, and to the north-east by the Quruq Tagh, while to the south-west stands the lofty Pamirs, the "Roof of the World", from which juts the Karakoram and Kunlun Ranges, enclosing the Basin on the south and south-east. These great Ranges feed the Tarim River and its tributaries, the system finding its way along the northern edge of the Basin to its final destination in the swampy Lop Nor district to the east. In the center of the bowl is the Taklamakan Desert, between which and the mountains lies a belt of cultivation, a string of oases which makes Kashgaria the richest part of the province.

East of the Lop Nor is the Pei Shan, a dry plateau region which is the westward end of the Gobi Desert. North of this is Hami, a town and district on the southern edge of the easternmost extremity of the Tien Shan, here known as the Qarliq Tagh. This fertile district guards the eastern frontier of Sinkiang.



The peoples of Sinkiang may be grouped under three heads; the settled indigenous population, the nomads, and the immigrants. Under the first heading we find the Turki, the largest group in the province, concentrated in Kashgaria and in the Hami or Qomul district, on the eastern border. The word Turki is of Russian origin, for the Turki names himself after his town, being a Kashgari or a Qomuliq. The only general word he knows is Sart, an old Uigur word for merchant,<sup>13</sup> although the Chinese call him Ch'an-t'ou, or Turbaned Head.<sup>14</sup>

The Turki who live in Sinkiang are all Sunni Moham-medans. The distinguishing features are the small nose, large mouth, broad face and heavy beard. He is usually a farmer, though a poor one, due largely to lack of incentive. "Generally speaking, the Turki can grow, under the present higger-migger agricultural system, more than enough for his personal use and for marketing, so there is no inducement for greater efforts."<sup>15</sup> If the standard of living is judged by a full belly, warm clothes, and fat children, then his standard is high. Not a Turki in the land is without a warm wadded coat, for he puts food and clothes

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13 "Peoples of Sinkiang", Central Asian Society Journal (hereafter cited as C.A.S.J.), XVII, Pt. II (April 1930), 232.

14 Lattimore, "Chinese Turkistan", New Orient, II, 102.

15 Schomberg, "Habitability of Chinese Turkistan", Geographical Journal, LXXX (Dec. 1932), 508. Hereafter cited as "Habitability", Geog. J., LXXX.



before family, religion, ambition, education, or whatever sways the desires and opens the purse of mankind. It is comfort, first and last, which appeals to him.<sup>16</sup> He is wonderfully hardy, easily contented, and often very ingenious, with a marked taste for music, song and dancing.<sup>17</sup>

The nomads may be divided into the Mongols and the Moslems. The nomad Moslems are the Kirghiz and the Kazaks, rather unimportant tribes of poverty stricken Turks, with a trace of Mongol blood, especially the Kazaks. The Kirghiz manage to live more comfortably than the latter, The Mongols are called Kalmuks, a term of contempt, the largest group being the Torguts.<sup>18</sup>

Dzungaria is named from the Dzungar, the Left Wing of the great confederation of Western Mongols, who in the seventeenth century came very near to winning mastery over all Mongolia. Owing to internecine struggles, a large body broke away, migrating through Russian Central Asia to the Volga.<sup>19</sup> Some seventy years later most of these Mongols fled their Volga home and returned to China, the Manchu Emperor giving them land in Chinese Turkestan.<sup>20</sup> There

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16 Ibid., 509-10.

17 "Peoples of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XVII, 232-53.

18 Loc. cit.

19 Lattimore, "Chinese Turkistan", New Orient, II, 103.

20 See Thomas De Quincey, Revolt Of The Tartars (New York: 1898); also Henning Haslund, Men And Gods In Mongolia (New York: 1935), Book II.



they remained, the people known today as Torguts. They are lamaists and closely allied in features, religion, and habits with the Mongols of Mongolia and the Tibetans. The largest numbers of them are found in the Tien Shan Range.<sup>21</sup>

Schomberg wrote, in 1932, that today "no one takes any trouble about the rights of the nomads, who are nevertheless of great economic value, as their horses, cattle and sheep are a source of wealth to the province."<sup>22</sup>

The main immigrants are the Chinese, the ruling upper strata, and the Tungans, the Mohammedan Chinese, mainly from Kansu and Yunnan provinces in China. There are not many Chinese in Sinkiang, for most of them dread the cold winters there, but these few constitute the ruling class and the well-to-do merchants. The Tungans are often called the brains of the province, but they are not well liked.

The Mohammedan Chinese are not of pure blood, but it is not definitely known just what is their ancestry. Some say that they are the remnants of an old Turkic Uigur tribe from Eastern Turkestan which accompanied Genghis Khan to China, where they remained, adopting Chinese dress and customs, but retaining their religion.<sup>23</sup> Other writers say that they are descendants of Arabs who came to China in the Eight Century as mercenaries, keeping Arab traits in their

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21 "Peoples of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XVII, 232-33.

22 "Habitability", Geog. J., LXXX, 510.

23 William Morden, Across Asia's Snows And Deserts (New York: 1927), 262.



business initiative, in energy, in courage, and in deep love for horses. According to one authority they are of three sources - Arab, Uigur-Mongol and Salars from Samarkand.<sup>24</sup> Inter-marriage with Chinese has given the Tungans marked Chinese facial characteristics, though some authorities hold that they can usually be distinguished from the true Celestial. A typical Tungan, they believe, has a swarthier face, a more aquiline nose, and generally a more Latin look about him than an ordinary North Chinese.<sup>25</sup> The Tungans are Shiah Mohammedans, while the Turki of Sinkiang, it will be remembered, belong to the Sunni sect.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> R.B.Ekvall, "Revolt of the Crescent in Western China", Asia, XXIX, No. 12 (Dec. 1929), 945.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Fleming, News From Tartary (New York: 1936), 172.

<sup>26</sup> "Peoples of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XVII, 232.



The murder of Governor-General Yang Tseng-hsin came as a great surprise, for he was at the height of his power and apparently had nothing to fear from within the province.

II.

**BACKGROUND TO REBELLION**

By the week, on July 1, 1928, the Kuomintang or National People's Party had been introduced into Sinkiang, with an official ceremony and with flag raising, all of course under the control of the Governor, as was the case with all of the Kuomintang Party for the province since he had appointed. He even changed his own title from Governor-General to "President of the Provincial Council".<sup>1</sup>

Yang Tseng-hsin came to power in Sinkiang in 1911, when, after several months of unrest and insecurity following the revolution in China, he assumed control, and soon reestablished order and confidence.<sup>2</sup> He ruled by a firm hand, with an efficient army, with his administration, with a fixed and actually antagonistic population.

<sup>1</sup> Even Hedin, *Sinclair of The Gobi Desert* (New York, 1925), p. 3. Spriggs & O. Taylor, 32. Hereafter cited as Hedin, *Sinclair*.

<sup>2</sup> Walter B. Dill, "Politics and Trade in Central Asia," *U.S.A. VI*, p. IV (1929), 435.



The murder of Governor-General Yang Tseng-hsin came as a great surprise, for he was at the height of his power and apparently had nothing to fear from within the Province. During the week, on July 1, 1928, the Kuomintang or National People's Party had been introduced into Sinkiang, with an official ceremony and much flag waving, all of course under the control of the Governor, as was the council of the Kuomintang Party for the Province which he had appointed. He even changed his own title from Governor-General to "President of the Provincial Council".<sup>1</sup>

Yang Tseng-hsin came to power in Sinkiang in 1911, when, after several months of unrest and insecurity following the revolution in China, he assumed control, and soon restored order and confidence.<sup>2</sup> Surrounded by enemies, "with an indifferent army, with bad communications, with a mixed and mutually antagonistic population

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<sup>1</sup> Sven Hedin, Riddles Of The Gobi Desert (New York: 1933), tr. E. Sprigge & C. Napier, 62. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Riddles.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Bosshard, "Politics and Trade in Central Asia", C.A.S.J., XVI, Pt. IV (1929), 435.



under his rule, Yang gave his vast province complete tranquillity and a standard of law and order unequalled in China."<sup>3</sup> Officially he acknowledged the Central Government in Peking, but being well removed from its jurisdiction, he formed a state of his own, with its administration, laws, and money.<sup>4</sup>

His Excellency Yang Tseng-hsin was about sixty-four years old at the time of his death.

Opposite the Governor's yamen<sup>5</sup> in Urunchi, the provincial capital, was a judicial school, whose "Commencement" exercises Marshal Yang had honored, year after year, with his presence, attended by all the leading officials. In 1928 the exercises were held on July 7, and the Governor, in a radiant humor, had "delivered an encouraging and brilliant address."<sup>6</sup> Following this, a dinner was given by the superintendent of the seminary. Marshal Yang was attended only by his personal guard, known popularly as the "chief executioner", Colonel Kao Fu-luan, a jovial gaint who was devoted to his master, while the Marshals' usual armed escort was regaled in a distant room. After the first course was served, the waiters surrounded Yang Tseng-hsin, pulled pistols from

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<sup>3</sup> "His Excellency Yang-Tsen-Hsing", C.A.S.J., XVI, Pt. I (1929), 88. Hereafter cited as "H.E. Yang", C.A.S.J., XVI.

<sup>4</sup> Bosshard, op. cit., 435-36.

<sup>5</sup> Official residence.

<sup>6</sup> Hedin, Riddles, 65.



their sleeves, and shot him down. As the faithful Kao tried to cover his master with his own body, he too was shot.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Sven Hedin, whose associate Dr. Hummel was in the vicinity at the time and had talked with a teacher who had been at the banquet, says that immediately after the first mortal shot, the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Fan Yao-nan, had

hurried out, escorted by some of his men. He steered his course, with his troop, to the Governor-General's yamen and burst into his private room to seize the red seal of power. He who has that seal in his hands is the supreme authority in Sinkiang and must be obeyed by all. But there were two soldiers posted at the entrance who refused him admittance without specific orders from the Marshal. He then ordered his men to shoot them. They fell at their post.<sup>8</sup>

Fan then summoned Chin Shu-jen, Chief of the Chancellery (or Political Department), but the latter sent troops instead. After a short but brisk fight, thirteen of Fan's guard were killed and he was carried off to prison. His men were unable to use the machine guns which Yang kept mounted in the courtyard, as they did not understand the mechanism.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Hedin says that Chin acted promptly and

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 66-7 and "H.E. Yang", C.A.S.J., XVI, 87. They differ on several points, notably whether the dinner was given by the superintendent or by Fan Yao-nan and whether or not Colonel Kao was in the room.

<sup>8</sup> Hedin, Riddles, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 67-8.



energetically, having the city gates closed immediately and sending out military patrols to preserve order. Several of the murderers were shot the same evening, but Fan was tortured to make him betray his accomplices. According to Hedin,

it was said that they cut off his upper lip, his nose and his ears and put out his eyes. At night he was strangled by two men each pulling on one end of a rope thrown in a noose around his neck. The corpse was flung over the wall and was lying in front of the yamen on the following day.<sup>10</sup>

On July 8, 1928, Chin Shu-jen was chosen by the officials of the Province as Commander-in-Chief and President of the Council of Sinkiang.<sup>11</sup>

Urumchi was greatly disturbed by the murder and there was much tension in the air, but when Chin declared a state of siege, no one being allowed on the streets after 9 P.M., the situation gradually became calmer. When Dr. Hedin arrived in the capital three months after the murder, on October 4, the military patrols were still out and the gates were closed early, but everything seemed quiet.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 68-9. George Roerich says that Fan and his daughter were condemned to the ling-chi, a torture consisting of being cut alive into 10,000 pieces, Fan being made to witness her horrible fate. Trails To Inmost Asia (New Haven: 1931), 119. Hedin, however, says that Fan's daughter and her "ama", or servant, had fled into the town and had disappeared. Riddles, 69.

<sup>11</sup> "H.E. Yang", C.A.S.J., XVI, 88.

<sup>12</sup> Hedin, Riddles, 69-70.



The new President of the Provincial Council from the first day showed himself equal to the occasion. He maintained exemplary order in Sinkiang, and the strictest discipline. It never came to rioting or disturbances, pillage or violence. He possessed presence of mind and energy, and, like Yang, wished to manage the affairs of the province entirely on his own account.<sup>13</sup>

But only a few months after Yang's murder Chin began to rule the country arbitrarily and despotically. The tax burden became heavier and freedom to trade and ply a craft came to an end. Chin's newly enlisted troops were said to be a horde of ruffians from the gutters, a scourge and torment to the people. Customs duties were raised; collectors stole ruthlessly; trade with China was almost ended and internal commerce was dominated by Soviet Russia.<sup>14</sup>

The finances of the province were destroyed and as gold and silver disappeared, notes with no backing were used as currency, their value falling swiftly. The chief source of revenue, the trade in furs and wool, was turned

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 70. Compare with what Dr. Hedin says in a later book, published after Chin had fled Sinkiang and was in jail in China. "Chin Shu-jen, a man of humble origin from Kansu, showed himself from the very start totally unfit to hold so responsible a post. By misgovernment, greed and oppression he provoked rebellion and civil war..." The Flight Of "Big Horse" (New York: 1936), tr. F.H.Lyon, 2. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Big Horse.

<sup>14</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 3. Owen Lattimore also speaks of Russian trade in Sinkiang as being in practically a closed market. "Chinese Turkistan" in The New Orient, II, The Far East (Chicago: 1933), edited by A.U.Pope and others, 169. Bosshard, too, speaks of Russian trade and the earlier efforts of Governor Yang to suppress Russian influence in the province. Op. cit., 441-42, 444, 446-48. See also Fuad Kazak, Ostturkistan Zwischen den Grossmachten (Königsberg: 1937).



into a monopoly. No complaints were answered, while spies were everywhere. A careless word meant imprisonment.<sup>15</sup>

Professor Yuan, geologist and paleontologist with the Sven Hedin Expedition, wrote to his leader, in the summer of 1929, to the effect that "no imagination can conceive a worse bed of intrigue than Urumchi. One lives in a daily atmosphere of spies, tale-telling, suspicion and gossip."<sup>16</sup>

Letters and telegrams were subjected to a most rigid censorship, all letters being opened and read and telegrams often being held for a month before delivery. "A man might not even travel within the province without a passport signed by Chin himself. To leave the province was a matter of the greatest difficulty. He tried hermetically to seal Sinkiang so as to prevent any complaints and accounts of the real conditions there from getting out."<sup>17</sup>

As... ideas could find their way into the Province only through newspapers, private correspondence or verbal information brought by travellers, Marshal King [Chin], like a benevolent tyrant, solved what seemed to him a simple problem in a simple way. To prevent the dissemination of news through the Press, he built in his yamen a stove in which all imported printed matter was burnt, the Official Sinkiang Gazette being in his views sufficient to satisfy the legitimate intellectual demands of the population.... The difficulty of obtaining permission to enter or to leave the Province were such as to discourage most of the Chinese; and those who were allowed to cross the frontier were subjected to a period of strict observation.<sup>18</sup>

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15 Loc. cit.

16 Hedin, Riddles, 273.

17 Hedin, Big Horse, 3.

18 Georges Le Fèvre, An Eastern Odyssey (Boston:1935), tr. E.D.Swinton, 173.



Others do not condemn him so utterly, such as the writer who says that "it is manifestly unfair to blame Chin for all the disasters that have overtaken the Chinese in their far western territory. His advisors must share the responsibility, especially as the new Governor never enjoyed the free exercise of appointment which old Yang always exercised."<sup>19</sup>

During the three years of the rule of Chin Shu-jen, preceeding the outbreak of rebellion, there was much troop movement in the province. A different policy was followed than that of Governor Yang, for Professor Yuan learned from Chin's Foreign Commissioner, Chen, in August, 1929, that the expenditure on the army was ten times as great as before and reached a very considerable amount.<sup>20</sup>

In November, 1928, according to Dr. Erik Norin, one of Hedin's geologists, troops were pouring into the Lop Nor district, fearing disturbances there during the winter.<sup>21</sup> In the spring of 1929, Dr. Haude, the meteorologist with Hedin, wished to travel through Hami to Tibet, but the Governor-General "forbade his journey under the pretext that the eastern border district of Sinkiang was a war zone and disturbances were to be expected there. [Hedin claims that] in actual fact the most profound peace

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<sup>19</sup> "Recent Events in Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXI, Pt. I (Jan. 1934), 81.

<sup>20</sup> Hedin, Riddles, 276.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 258.



prevailed in the silent, sterile deserts.<sup>22</sup> At the end of July, the same year, Norin wrote from Urumchi: "The Lop Nor district was, however, closed to us on the ground that new movements of troops were there in progress."<sup>23</sup>

In October, 1929, the Misses Cable and French, well-known Kansu missionaries, met a Mongolian cavalry regiment going from Urumchi toward Hami and the Sinkiang-Kansu border.<sup>24</sup> Mr. F.H. Ridley noted that on December 4, 1929, there 700 soldiers billeted in Charkhliq, south of the Lop Nor, although there were only 140 families living in the town and 400 in the district.<sup>25</sup>

The situation must have become fairly serious, for on March 27, 1930, Nils Horner, one of Hedin's geologists working in the Lop Nor region, met a Mongol in the service of the Torgut Prince who told him that the only authorized way of entrance to Sinkiang from China proper was via Hami. Military guards were in all quarters, including the districts north of Lop, and the violation of this latest order was punished by confiscation of beasts and baggage.<sup>26</sup> On May 2, 1931, troops were again noted at Charkhliq.<sup>27</sup>

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22 Ibid., 305.

23 Ibid., 264.

24 Evangeline French, Mildred Cable, and Francesca French, A Desert Journal (London: 1934), 80 & 88.

25 "A Journey on the Fringe of the Taklamakan Desert", C.A.S.J., XVIII, Pt. II (April, 1931), 258.

26 Hedin, Riddles, 376.

27 "Some Notes on the Southern Road of Chinese Turkestan", C.A.S.J., XIX, Pt. IV (Oct. 1932), 671.



All of this was leading up to what is always dreaded by rulers. "Discontent increased; the people clenched their teeth and bided their time; the atmosphere was tense and gloomy. Inflammable matter accumulated, and only a spark was needed to fire the powder magazine."<sup>28</sup>

The immemorial Chinese practice in dealing with 'natives' is to work through their chiefs.... In times of Chinese ascendancy the best method of preventing barbarian unity is to favor the chiefs against one another in rotation. In recent years, however, the lack of obvious resistance and success of maintaining the continuity of Chinese rule at the time of the revolution and again after the murder of Governor Yang...-both obvious occasions for native insurrection- have encouraged the feeling that the natives are no longer dangerous.

.....  
 The Kuomintang urged that the time had come to set about the business of making all natives either turn Chinese or get out. The Kuomintang has but little political power in Chinese Turkestan, because the ruling Chinese faction can only maintain itself by keeping free of commitments to political factions in China. Nevertheless, the general cast of thought which the Kuomintang represents has been spreading.

During the long period of strong rule [of Governor Yang], the privileges and subsidies of the native Turki 'princes' who had once been at the head of 'native states' in a number of southern oases, had been either cut down or abolished. Even on the North Road<sup>29</sup> the powers of the Kazak chiefs and Mongol princes were being progressively curtailed. The only important surviving 'native state' in the south was that of Hami."<sup>30</sup>

For centuries the region of Hami or Qomul<sup>31</sup> had been

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28 Hedin, Big Horse, 3.

29 The Tien Shan Pei Lu, north of the Tien Shan Range.

30 Lattimore, "Chinese Turkistan", The New Orient, II, The Far East (Chicago: 1933), 116.

31 Five Hundred yards from the Chinese city of Hami is the Moslem city of Qomul, capital of the local Moslem princes.



the home of a branch of the Turki race, which had maintained a semi-independent state, ruled since A.D. 1699 by members of the same house. The princes of Qomul had paid a nominal tribute to the Imperial Court at Peking and their titles had been ratified by the Manchu Emperors. Although the Chinese maintained military garrisons at Hami and at Hsin Hsin Hsia, on the eastern border, "all local affairs were handled by the princes. It was the prince who collected taxes, administered justice, maintained an armed force, and had the right of life and death over all his subjects."<sup>32</sup>

The Kingdom, Khanate or Sultanate of Qomul extended from the Mongol Plateau on the east to the vicinity of Turfan on the west. On the north it was bordered by the Qarliq Tagh and on the south by the Chol Tagh, in Turki Chol meaning desert and Tagh mountain.<sup>33</sup> The population, the people often being called Qomuliqs, numbered from about 25,000 to 30,000. The administration consisted of four Beks in Kumul, five to look after the people in the plain, while twelve Beks were in charge of the mountainous parts of the state. The only direct taxation paid was one head of every hundred sheep or goats, once in three years.<sup>34</sup> There was a militia, of which the local people were very proud. Half lived in the town and half lived in the country; and they were said to be able to fire off their rifles, which was

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<sup>32</sup> W. Petro, "Mongolia, Kansu and Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, Pt. II (April 1933), 214.

<sup>33</sup> Le Fèvre, Eastern Odyssey, 157.

<sup>34</sup> "Hami or Kumul", C.A.S.J., XVI, Pt. I (1929), 92.



more than the Chinese soldiers could do, according to at least one writer.<sup>35</sup>

When the old and wise Prince Shah Mahsud died in 1930, Governor Chin decided that the proper moment had come to do away with the local independence of Qomul. Having this in view, he invited the heir, Prince Nazar, to come to Urumchi to discuss matters pertaining to affairs of state. Once there, the prince was taken and held prisoner. Then the Governor issued the following proclamation:

Since China has become a Republic, the entire population, regardless of race or religion, should benefit by being freed from the oppression of petty rulers and be subject to one code of law and one national administration. The Governor of Sinkiang, being responsible to the National Government for the welfare of Muslim citizens within his territory, has therefore taken over the functions of the former Princes.<sup>36</sup>

At the same time he announced the reduction of taxes.

At first the Moslem population submitted passively to the new regime.<sup>37</sup> Though the tax rates were reduced, the values of land and cattle were assessed at much higher rates, with the result of making the tax burden heavier than before. The Moslems were now forced to appeal to Chinese courts, where they could not get their rights, or

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<sup>35</sup> Loc. cit. This article has a good description of the town and district.

<sup>36</sup> Petro, op. cit., 214.

<sup>37</sup> Petro wrote: "Their experience might well be compared to that of western foreigners living in treaty ports in China proper who had been deprived of their extraterritorial rights." Loc. cit.



even fair treatment, as proceedings were carried on in Chinese and not sufficient interpreters were provided. Furthermore, "the Chinese introduced garrisons in many new places and the people now suffered from the usual exactions of Chinese soldiery."<sup>38</sup>

At about this time, when discontent was already rife in the district, a hundred starving peasants fled to Hami from Kansu. Governor Chin, a Kansu man, ordered that tilled fields should be taken from the Turki and allotted to his countrymen, the legal owners receiving absolute wilderness to cultivate in exchange. Thus he signed the death-warrants of the people he meant to befriend. The Mohammedans were roused to fury. "Chin in his blindness sharpened the dangerous antagonism between Mohammedans and heathens, between peaceful farmers bound to the soil and arrogant parasites from without."<sup>39</sup> The spark which set off the powder magazine was supplied by a Chinese tax-collector who compelled a Turki woman to become his property. This insult set the torches of rebellion ablaze.<sup>40</sup>

In March, 1931, three months after the Chinese had taken over local affairs,<sup>41</sup> the Turki killed the tax-collectors and all the refugees from Kansu, abandoned

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38 Loc. cit.

39 Hedin, Big Horse, 4.

40 Loc. cit.

41 Petro, op. cit., 14.



their fields, villages, and gardens, and fled to the mountains, the Qarliq Tagh, where they persuaded the Kirghiz, nomadic Moslems, to join the revolt.<sup>42</sup>

The Chinese realized that they had gone too far. They tried to conciliate the Turki, and sent a "High Pacification Commissioner", General Chu Ta-jen,<sup>43</sup> to negotiate at Hami. Georges Le Fèvre describes him as follows:

A spare but dignified veteran of eighty-two, his keen glance showed a spirit that time could not touch. He was a mandarin of the old school, and one of those officials who, from the Han dynasty to the present day, have succeeded in upholding the prestige without which the Chinese could never have governed the Barbarians outside the Great Wall.<sup>44</sup>

General Chu is said to have tricked the Turki with soft words and promises of leniency and restoration of their prince, then ordered his force from Barkul, a Chinese military post north of the mountains, to surround the rebels and fire upon them. The Turki, ever watchful, repulsed this treacherous attack, but naturally lost all faith in the Chinese with whom they had to deal.<sup>45</sup> Hedin says that the Chinese behaved with barbarous cruelty, and killed all their prisoners.<sup>46</sup>

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42 Hedin, Big Horse, 4.

43 Ta-jen means literally "Big Man", and corresponds to the title of Excellency.

44 Eastern Odyssey, 156.

45 Petro, op. cit., 215.

46 Big Horse, 4.



Prince Nazur had left at Qomul his son, the Duke Pei Sir, the last of his family. The Duke, whom Hedin characterizes as a young man in poor health, lacking energy and force of character, did not dare openly to join the rebellion, for he feared that his father, who was still a prisoner at Urumchi, would suffer for it.<sup>47</sup> The leaders of the rebellion were the councillors of the Prince, the Hodja Nias Hadji and Yollbars Khan, called the "Tiger Prince".<sup>48</sup> They resolved to ask help of their coreligionist, the young Tungan General of Kansu, Ma Chung-yin, and his Tungan followers.

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47 Ibid., 158-59.

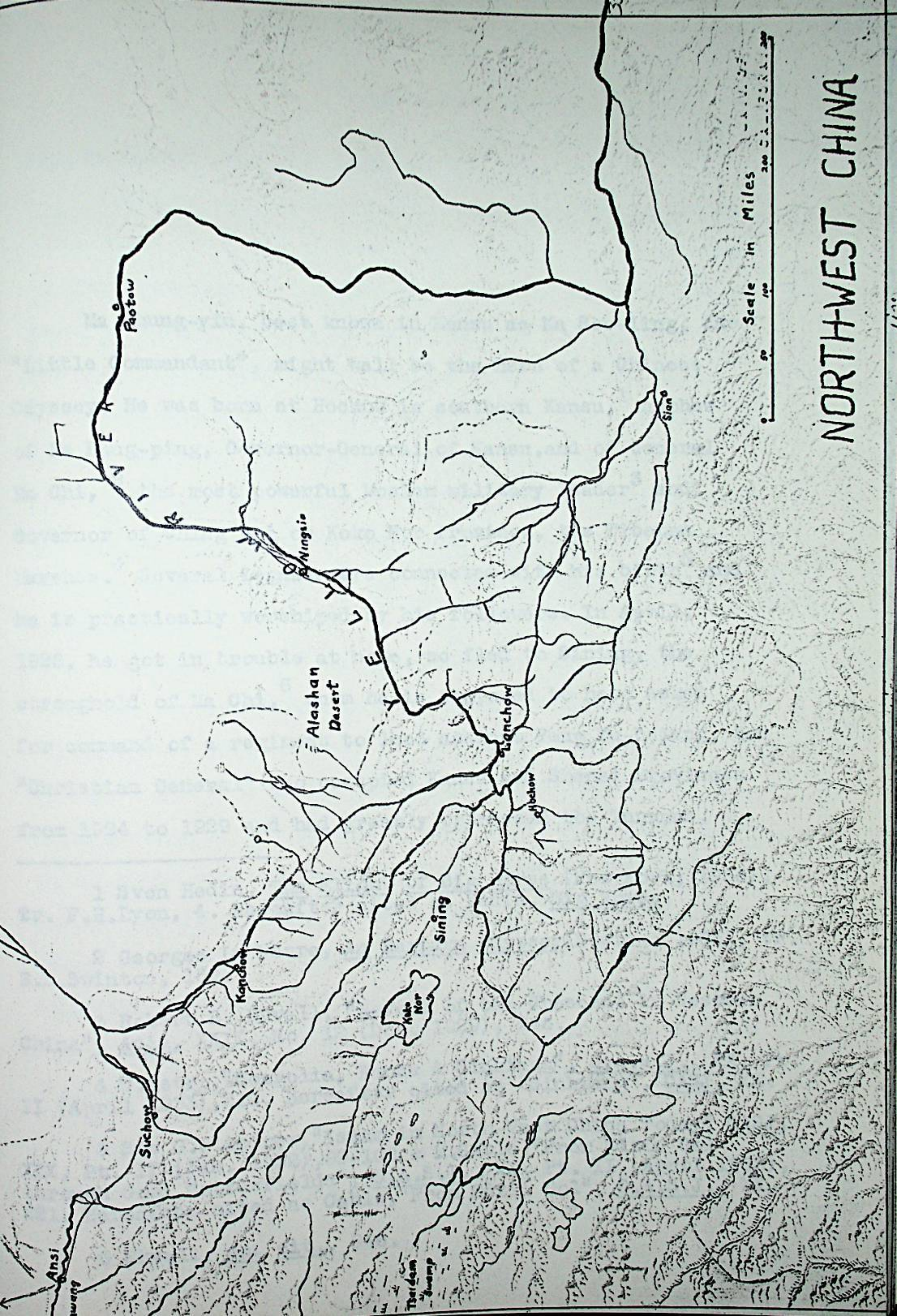
48 Ibid., 4.



III.

REBELLION AND INVASION





# NORTHWEST CHINA

Scale in Miles

50

100

150

200

250



Ma Chung-yin, best known in Kansu as Ka Sse-ling, the "Little Commandant", might well be the hero of a Chinese Odyssey. He was born at Hochow in southern Kansu,<sup>1</sup> nephew of Ma Hung-ping, Governor-General of Kansu, and of General Ma Chi,<sup>2</sup> the most powerful Moslem military leader<sup>3</sup> and Governor of Ching Hai or Koko Nor Province, the Tibetan Marshes.<sup>4</sup> Several legends are connected with his birth<sup>5</sup> and he is practically worshiped by his followers. In April, 1928, he got in trouble at home, so fled to Sining, the stronghold of Ma Chi,<sup>6</sup> whom he is supposed to have asked for command of a regiment to lead against Feng Yu-hsiang, the "Christian General" who occupied Kansu and Shensi Provinces from 1924 to 1929 and had greatly oppressed the Tungans.

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1 Sven Hedin, The Flight Of Big Horse (New York; 1936), tr. F.H.Lyon, 4. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Big Horse.

2 Georges Le Fèvre, An Eastern Odyssey (Boston: 1935), tr. E.D.Swinton, 139.

3 Robert B. Ekvall, "Revolt of the Crescent in Western China", Asia, XXIX, No. 12 (Dec. 1929), 946.

4 W.Petro, "Mongolia, Kansu & Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, Pt. II (April 1933), 210. Hereafter cited as "Sinkiang", CASJ, XX.

5 See G.F.Andrew, "Islam in North-West China Today", CASJ, XIX, Pt. II (Jan. 1932), 89-100 & M.Cable, "From Edzin Gol through Gobi Battlefields", C.A.S.J., XX, Pt. II (April 1933), 221. Hereafter cited as Cable, "From Edzin Gol", C.A.S.J., XX.

6 Ekvall, op. cit., 946.



Feng Yu-hsin's party was known as the Kuominchun.<sup>7</sup>

Young Ma was refused by his uncle, but little daunted, he gathered about him an armed band which alternated between looting travelers on the road and attacking isolated detachments of Feng's troops. He was so capable and proved such a fearless leader that his reputation spread far and wide, many deserting the Kuominchun army to join his rapidly growing band. "By a series of fast and decisive blows to Feng's rear he cut Feng's army communications between Sianfu and Lanchow, disorganized his supply service, and in this way was partly responsible for the victory of the Central Government."<sup>8</sup>

Following this successful campaign, Ma took his army, which was now equivalent to a division, to an area near the Yellow River, about halfway between Paotow and Ningsia, where he left them for a while. The young Tungan leader went to Nanking, both to see Marshal Chiang Kai-shek personally and to enter the military academy there, where he spent three months.<sup>9</sup> He is supposed to have asked of the Marshal, in return for services rendered the Central Government, to be appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Central Government's forces of Kansu and Sinkiang, and is supposed to have drawn the Marshal's attention to the fact that the rich province

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7 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 210.

8 Loc. cit. For an eyewitness account of this period See Ekvall, op. cit.

9 Hedin, Big Horse, 5.



of Sinkiang paid no revenue to the Central Government.

"Chiang Kai-shek...is reported to have said: 'If you get control of Sinkiang, I shall ratify your appointment.' This satisfied Ma Chong Yng [sic]."<sup>10</sup> He returned to his troops, assumed the title of Commander-in-Chief, and is supposed to have started plans for a campaign against Sinkiang.<sup>11</sup>

The campaign was opened by the siege of the rich city of Ningsia, which Ma spared in return for a ransom of money and equipment for his troops. Then he marched across the Alashan Desert to Kansu, where the Governor-General, his uncle, appointed him to be Commander-in-Chief at Kanchow. All north-west Kansu was under his rule, right up to the border of Sinkiang. Everyone had to serve in his army, which was about ten thousand strong.<sup>12</sup>

General Ma, like many of the Tungans, was an able military leader. He praised the precision of the German soldiers, and claimed to know all about "Bis-a-mak" and "Hin-da-bu" (Bismark and Hindenburg). When asked about his military theories, he replied: "I prefer to adopt Napoleon's tactics. He always assailed his enemy on the flanks. I won victories by patterning myself on him."<sup>13</sup>

Ma Chung-yin believed in the most Spartan rigorousness

<sup>10</sup> Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 210.

<sup>11</sup> Loc. cit. General Ma was of course familiar with the growing unrest in the province.

<sup>12</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Georg Vassel, My Russian Jailers In China (London: 1937), tr. G.Griffin, 52-3.



in discipline and training, but he never asked of his men anything that he himself would not do. Vassel tells of seeing him one morning, in freezing weather, leading a column of troops at a brisk run, all "attired only in singlets and shorts and...literally blue with cold."<sup>14</sup> This young leader was a famous rider, and loved to career madly through the streets, standing on the backs of two horses, and all the while firing with deadly accuracy at targets along the way. He was just as deadly when leading his men into battle, and they claimed that every shot from his pistols dropped an enemy. It is said that his soldiers worshipped him and were only too eager to lay down their lives for such a man.<sup>15</sup>

As advisor in military<sup>^</sup> affairs, he secured the services of an ex-colonel of the Turkish Imperial General Staff, Kemel Bey, who spoke French, German, and English fluently.<sup>16</sup> This able officer had received military training in both Germany and France, being, before 1914, attached to a German infantry regiment on the Baltic, and latter a student at the Military Academy in Paris. Returning to Turkey during the first World War, he served on the staff of Colonel von Epp on the Caucasus front against Russia, was taken prisoner, and sent to Harbin.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Ibid., 54.

15 Ibid., 57.

16 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 211.

17 "The Russian Domination of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXVI, Pt. IV (Oct. 1939), 649. A summary of an article, supposedly by Wilhelm Filchner, in Berichte des Asiens Arbeitskreises, I, No. I (Feb. 1939).



From Manchuria, where he taught Turkish for a time, he came to Kansu.

Ma Chung-yin's "ambitious project", according to Georges Le Fèvre, "was frowned upon by the family council and vetoed by everyone except by young General Mâ Pu-fang, the commander of the troops in the neighbouring Province of Ching Hai."<sup>18</sup> Le Fèvre believes Ma Chung-yin feared that his uncle Ma Hung-ping, the Governor of Kansu, who had been the first to disapprove of his project, might occupy north-west Kansu in the absence of the young Tungan, so Ma Chung-yin made a secret agreement with Ma Pu-fang. By this, the latter was to occupy the territory while his cousin went adventuring in the "New Province". "But without some ostensible and plausible pretext it was not possible for Ma Pu-fang to invade a neighboring province, even collusively and by agreement."<sup>19</sup>

"Incidents" began to occur on the Kansu-Ching Hai border, however, according to Le Fèvre, so when Ma Pu-fang asked permission of the Central Government to lead a punitive expedition against his cousin, it was granted, and Ma Chung-yin was declared a rebel. The troops from Ching Hai advanced into Kansu, but occupied only such places as had been evacuated by Ma Chung-yin's troops, which had withdrawn westward and were now concentrated at Ansi and Tunhwang on the

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18 Eastern Odyssey, 140.

19 Loc. cit.



Sinkiang border.<sup>20</sup> After his cousin marched into Suchow, leading the regular Chinese troops, posters were put up telling that Ma Chung-yin was completely defeated, then later that he was going to be Governor of Turkestan, then that he was killed, and finally his obsequies were celebrated by a general holiday and free theatre for all.<sup>21</sup>

And now, with his base protected, Ma Chung-yin marched his Tungan army of several thousand men,<sup>22</sup> in the hot summer of 1931, across the western end of the Gobi Desert from Ansi to Hami, following the old Imperial Highway or Silk Road. He is supposed to have destroyed the wells behind him and cut the postal and telegraph lines, so for at least three months there was no communication or travel between Sinkiang

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 141. This theory is confirmed by Petro, who was with Le Fevre in the Citroën Expedition, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 211, but Hedin is more conservative, merely saying that "when Ma began to rule western Kansu with the airs of an autocrat and refused to obey orders, Ma Pu-fang was sent to chastise him" and that "Ma Chung-yin suffered a fresh defeat." Big Horse, 5. The missionary, Miss Cable, who was in Kanchow in November 1930, says that Ma Pu-fang joined Ma Chung-yin there at that time, "but we were all startled one morning to hear that a violent quarrel had taken place between the cousins, and that Pu-fang had marched off, taking with him a large body of men which afterwards became his own army." "The New 'New Dominion'", C.A.S.J., XXV, Pt. I (Jan. 1938), 15; and Evangeline French, Mildred Cable and Francesca French, A Desert Journal (London: 1934), 156. Hereafter cited as French, Cable and French, Desert Journal.

<sup>21</sup> Cable, "From Edzin Gol", C.A.S.J., XX, 223.

<sup>22</sup> Petro and Le Fevre estimated his troops, upon seeing them, at 4000, while Hedin says that they probably numbered about 500. Miss Cable says that he occupied Suchow with some 10,000 troops, then swept on towards Turkestan. Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 215; Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 158; Hedin, Big Horse, 5; Cable, "From Edzin Gol", C.A.S.J., XX, 223.



and Kansu, at least by the main Gobi caravan route. <sup>23</sup>

The frontier post at Hsin Hsin Hsia was driven in by the advancing Moslems, the garrison of about a thousand Chinese troops under the command of Colonel Chang retreating to Hami, carrying their machine guns and one field piece. The infantry were carried in enormous carts drawn by four or six mules, as is almost always done in Sinkiang, where the troops have to cross stretches of desert. Near Hami, on June 28, 1931, at the little village of Yi K'o Shu, they were ambushed by the advance guard of Ma's army and the Turki rebels, but were saved, or at least greatly aided, by the unexpected appearance of the Citroën Expedition. Thinking themselves safe so near Hami, the Chinese had withdrawn their cavalry patrols and marched into a valley, the crests on both sides of which were occupied by hidden Mohammedans. At the height of the fighting, the expedition emerged from a sunken road upon the scene. "The surprise and curiosity caused by the sudden appearance of the cars seemed to paralyse both sides and all firing ceased."<sup>24</sup> It was learned later that the Mohammedan cavalry mistook the Expedition for government armored cars hauling artillery (the trailers). Moreover, the [motion picture] camera standing on a tripod on top of the cinema car looked from a distance like a machine gun."<sup>25</sup>

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23 French, Cable and French, Desert Journal, 194 & 201.

24 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 152-53.

25 Ibid., 153.



The Chinese took advantage of the lull and hastened to occupy the commanding points, so that when the Moslem cavalry charged again, the Chinese had the advantage, their machine guns and one field gun being well placed and ready for action. Meeting such unexpected resistance, the horsemen turned back.

But one, possibly carried away by excitement, galloped blindly across the Chinese lines, where his mount was killed and he was unhorsed. Some of the Chinese infantrymen jumped on him, pinned him to the ground, and two of them cut off his arms with long curved swords. A third ran his knife into the body - as a butcher rips open a sheep - plunged his arm deep into the warm entrails, tore out the heart and liver and brandished them in the air as trophies. Another cut off the head, swung it round by the long black beard, and threw it away. Thus, before the eyes of the handful of horrified Europeans, were enacted scenes of a Central Asia which had not changed since the days of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane.<sup>26</sup>

At this time the advance guard of a relief column arrived, and the troops proceeded to Hami, this time, however, with the flanks protected by cavalry patrols. The approaches to the city were guarded, and the city itself, when the Citroën Expedition arrived there, was in a state of turmoil, feverishly organizing its defenses. The streets, which were rivers of mud after a rain, were blocked by military convoys, camel-caravans, mounted men and armed soldiers of all kinds. The garrison had for some time been cut off from Urumchi by the rebels.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 154-55. For a description of the ambush, see 151-56; and Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 212-13.

<sup>27</sup> Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 213.



Ma Chung-yin's next move was to send a letter to General Chu, the Pacification Commissioner, who was in command of the Chinese forces at Hami, which were gathering there from all the surrounding posts. This letter was worded as follows:

By order of the National Government of China I have been appointed Commander-in-Chief of all military forces of Kansu and Sinkiang. Having assumed my new post of this date, I allow you to petition for your resignation and I order you to hand over to me the command of the Hami Garrison.

Urgent order.<sup>28</sup>

General Chu received the two messengers personally, then ordered the head of one to be cut off, and sent it back to General Ma by the other, as a reply to this insolent message.<sup>29</sup>

That night, July 3, the assault on Hami began. The joint Tungan and Turki army encircled the city, and a general attack was launched which lasted for two days and nights. Mr. Petro was in the city at the time, and he says that "wave after wave of rebels rushed towards the high walls under the terrific machine gun and rifle fire of the garrison."<sup>30</sup> The front rank, carrying scaling ladders, consisted of Chinese peasants impressed in Kansu by Ma and treated virtually as

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>29</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Loc. cit. Petro related the story himself in a lecture before the Royal Central Asian Society, a written account of which is in their Journal, but also told the story to Georges Le Fèvre, historian of the Citroën Expedition, who gives it in his book, An Eastern Odyssey.



slaves, driven forward by Tungan soldiers armed with huge curved swords.<sup>31</sup> A third rank was of Turki riflemen, expert marksmen, who covered with their fire the charge of the Tungans.<sup>32</sup> As the ladders were placed against the walls, the defenders adopted medieval tactics, discarding "their firearms for pikes and axes, and hurled down on the attackers heavy rocks, blazing tow soaked in oil and hand grenades--- from which in their excitement they forgot to withdraw the safety-pins."<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding the stubborn defense, the Tungans succeeded in getting over the city wall in three places, but their success was not supported by reserves.<sup>34</sup> For just when it seemed that the city was doomed, someone remembered his machine gun, and the weapon, which had been silent, suddenly came to life. Emplaced as it was, in a blockhouse flanking the wall, when it opened fire it mowed down the attackers and the glacis was soon cleared.<sup>35</sup>

Three times that night the rebels and the invaders threw themselves at the walls, but each attack was less determined than the last, and all were beaten back. At dawn they retreated, leaving only enough men to snipe any Chinese.

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31 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 241. These swords are called in Chinese "Kui T'uo Tao", which means literally "cut-head-knife."

32 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 215.

33 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 241.

34 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 215.

35 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 242.



who showed their heads above the parapet.<sup>36</sup>

The Chinese garrison was well armed, there being in the arsenal an immense stock of modern rifles and ammunition, four machine guns, a plentiful supply of hand grenades, two Krupp 65 millimeter howitzers, and a number of old brass cannons,<sup>37</sup> (as well as the lubricating oil confiscated from the Citroën Expedition dump). After repulsing these first assaults, the garrison might have made a very successful sortie, "for a Shamanist sorcerer had somehow found out and reported that Ma Chung-yin was preparing to take all his Tungan troops over to Barkul,"<sup>38</sup> The General feared a trap, however, not trusting the sorcerer as he did later when he discovered that the magic-worker had been right on this occasion.

The attack ceased entirely on the morning of the third day, the losses on both sides having been serious, with corpses heaped on the ground before the walls of the city. The rebels managed to carry away their dead for burial, but the Chinese left to the packs of hungry dogs which roamed the city, the task of disposing of the bodies of their dead comrades. For the next two weeks there was much firing at night from both sides, but for some time there were no further serious attacks on the city.<sup>39</sup>

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36 Loc. cit.

37 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 215-16.

38 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 242.

39 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 216.



In fact, after the third day there were around Hami only about 1,000 rebels, holding in check a garrison of 6,000 Chinese regulars.<sup>40</sup>

After the first assault on Hami, General Ma had given his troops but one day's rest. Then, leaving the small force to watch the beleaguered city, he led his cavalry over the Qarliq Tagh range and took by surprise the fortified Chinese town of Barkul, where he slaughtered most of the Chinese garrison and <sup>took</sup> an important military booty, for the town contained a large ammunition dump.<sup>41</sup>

Leaving a hundred men to occupy Barkul, the "Little Commandant" led his troops over the little known and barely accessible passes and mountain trails of the Qarliq Tagh and Bogdo Ula ranges of the Tien Shan to Chi Ku Ching Tze (Seven Bitter Wells),<sup>42</sup> which was the headquarters of the Sinkiang Government troops - 10,000 men under the command of General Liu.<sup>43</sup> Taking advantage of a dark night, the Moslems crept up and suddenly opened fire on the camp from all sides. Dreadful confusion ensued, with about 8,000 Chinese being slaughtered, upon which the General committed

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40 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 242.

41 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 217. Dr. Hedin differs with this account on several points. He says that Ma "marched first to Barkul [after crossing the Gobi]. Everywhere he was received as a liberator. The commandant of Barkul went over to Ma, who took two thousand rifles and a quantity of ammunition." Big Horse, 5.

42 The "Heptagonal Well", Hedin, Big Horse, 46.

43 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 217. See also Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 163.



suicide.<sup>44</sup> This victory was apparently in July, 1931. Victor Point of the Citroën group, who passed by there later, says: "But no Chantos [Turki] were to be seen there - only Chinese-dead Chinese, thousands of corpses mummified by the heat and extreme dryness, greenish waxen figures more horrible than skeletons, with their eyes pecked out by vultures - all that remained of General Liu's army."<sup>45</sup>

One writer, referring to this period, says: "The Chinese army met with overwhelming disaster, which was the natural corollary of sending an untrained mob of tottering Methuselahs and unweaned children to fight mountaineers. No one who has ever seen the armed forces of Sinkiang would say that this description is unfair."<sup>46</sup>

Chi Ku Ching Tze has great strategical importance, being located at the southern end of the saddle of Tashihto, one of the two main passes of the Tien Shan, at the point where the main Road from China splits into the North and the South Roads. A small detachment of men was left here by Ma Chung-yin, in order to block the roads leading from Turfan and Urumchi to Hami, while he led his main force back to the city of Hami. There, he gave his men a few day's rest, but soon ordered a new assault on the place.<sup>47</sup> "It was the

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44 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 189.

45 Ibid., 235.

46 "Recent Events in Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXI, pt. I (Jan. 1934), 82. Hereafter cited as "Recent Events", CASJ, XXI.

47 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 217.



stubborn resistance of Hami alone that prevented the rebels from marching victoriously on Urumchi."<sup>48</sup>

The provincial government of Chin Shu-jen was now in a precarious position.

In dealing with their subject races, the Chinese have often shown great statesmanship and ability, but these qualities were now absent, and the Chairman or Governor declined to buy off the Tungans. It is said that they only asked at first for 40,000 silver taels, a small sum, but silver is not very plentiful in Sinkiang, and in any case it was only an installment.

The local government then called on the Torgut Kalmuks of Karashahr to assist them. These Mongols possessed the only trained military force in the province, and had been used by [Governor] Yang in 1927 when the Tungans had threatened...Hami.<sup>49</sup>

The Torguts were ruled by a Regent, the Töin [princely] Lama, a very able and influential man, who had awakened nationalism among his followers and who had stated "that his soldiers should not shed their blood in other's wars, but only for their own interests."<sup>50</sup> At about the same time that Chin's government endeavored to seize Qomul from the Turki, they foolishly tried to take control of the Torguts. Besides appointing Chinese Ambans to rule the tribe, they arranged to assassinate the Regent, a plot which was common knowledge. Of course the Töin Lama discovered it, and consequently refused the help of his Mongol troops against Ma Chung-yin and the Tungans, which probably would have made a great

<sup>48</sup> Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 189.

<sup>49</sup> "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 82.

<sup>50</sup> Henning Haslund, Men And Gods In Mongolia (New York: 1935), tr. E.Sprigge & C.Napier, 243.



difference in the course of events.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, the siege of Hami was continuing. Petro of the Citroën Expedition, who was in Hami during the first week or so of the siege, went to Qomul, the adjoining Moslem city. He was taken prisoner by the rebels and taken to headquarters, where he was befriended by Colonel Kemel, who kept him in camp as a personal guest. Petro reported that:

During the week I spent with the rebels they renewed their efforts to capture the city by assault, and the place seemed ready to surrender. On the eighth day an officer appeared on the wall, carrying a white flag. He wished a parley, and asked for a deputation to come in to discuss terms of capitulation for the fortress. But Ma Chung-ying [sic], remembering how his former messengers had been received, was little disposed to send anyone. I then offered my services as an envoy.<sup>52</sup>

General Ma, a man of rapid decision, at once wrote a letter to General Chu and gave it to Petro to deliver. He met an officer at the gate, a friend of his, who told him frankly

that most of the high commanding officers were of the opinion that the only thing to do was to surrender the fortress, as the losses were heavy and the troops completely demoralized. The General, on the contrary, stubbornly refused to open negotiations and insisted on continuing the defense, trusting more to the advice of the local sorcerer than to that of his staff.<sup>53</sup>

I was then conducted to General Chu's headquarters, where the whole Defence Council was assembled. My arrival caused great excitement, and everyone plied me with questions until the General silenced them by knocking on the table.

'Did you see Ma Chung-ying?'

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51 "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 83.

52 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 243.

53 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 217.



'Yes.'

'Is it true that he is only twenty-one years old?'

'Yes.'

'Gentlemen!' The General got up with an effort, supported on both sides by his bodyguards. 'I am eighty-one years old, and my hair was white before Ma Chung-ying was born. How dare you ask me to surrender the city to this infant robber, this suckling...?'

The Members of the Council hung their heads in shame, and agreed to defend the place to the bitter end.<sup>54</sup>

By the beginning of October, three months after the first assault, the city of Hami was still besieged, although it had been stormed forty-three times. Every sortie attempted by the garrison had been repulsed. Losses had been heavy. Of the 6,000 original defenders only 2,500 remained. Twice the rebels had dug tunnels and blown up the city wall. Petro showed the Chinese how to stop this by having "the defenders dig a trench round the wall, to below water-level. The rebels, who had no pumps, were unable to mine this trench, for their galleries were flooded and the powder was rendered useless."<sup>55</sup>

By this time famine was raging, with all sorts of animals being slaughtered for food, except dogs - which were unclean. There was no wheat flour to be had, a soldier's daily ration consisting of only a pound of Kaoliang [a kind of millet or sorghum]. "What sustained the men was opium. They could not have held out without it, and as long as it

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54 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 243-44.

55 Ibid., 246.



lasted and no strenuous effort was demanded of them they could get along on practically no food."<sup>56</sup>

Murmuring began among the soldiers as the food gave out and there was open talk of surrender. Sixteen messengers had been sent to Urumchi since the siege began. None had returned. General Chu was forced to open negotiations for peace, but the delegation which he sent to Ma Chung-yin was imprisoned, with but one member, the Mullah, being allowed to return. The Tungan's reply was: "Unconditional surrender."<sup>57</sup>

It was then, in the middle of October, that Mr. Petro obtained the General's permission to try to escape in his truck, providing he should carry a message to the Governor-General at Urumchi.<sup>58</sup>

In the meantime, Governor Chin had been collecting fresh forces to meet the rebels, and troops had been assembling from all parts of the province. There were Chinese, Manchus, Andijans, Kazaks, Kirghiz, and White Russians. They came from Chuguchak, Qara Shahr, Kashgar, and even from Yarkand, far away to the south. Because of the great distances, they came in slowly, and it was only by the 15th of August that these different elements began to concentrate in the zone of military operations.<sup>59</sup> On September 10, the Citroën

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56 Ibid., 247.

57 Loc. cit.

58 Petro, "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 218.

59 Le Fevre, Eastern Odyssey, 190.



party met in the Taksun or Manan Chose Pass, south of Turfan, thousands of them, marching half naked in the blistering sun, their equipment carried in carts.<sup>60</sup> Communication was difficult to maintain. The single telegraph line, repaired each morning, was cut each night by invisible hands.<sup>61</sup>

In September, 1931, the Sinkiang Government troops, under the command of a General Chang, were based at Tashihto, where were organized the levies pouring in.<sup>62</sup> Tashihto, at the northern end of the pass of the same name, was the logical place to concentrate troops to counter the Tungan force which had taken Chi Ku Ching, at the opposite end of the pass, in July. The threat of a force here kept the Tungans from advancing westward and ravaging the rich Turfan area. The Tungans, however, had evacuated Chi Ku Ching, which was a cup-shaped depression, and could easily be attacked from the north through the low, 5300 foot saddle of Tashihto, and were concentrating their main forces to the east of Chi Ku Ching,<sup>63</sup> where the Hami road passed through the edge of the Qarlicq Tagh. Here "a narrow gateway in the mountains led to an equally narrow corridor"<sup>64</sup> between red hills. Le Fèvre wrote: "At the foot of the mountains the road meandered between enormous blocks of rock and climbed up through

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60 Ibid., 228.

61 Ibid., 190.

62 Ibid., 234.

63 Ibid., 235 & 248.

64 Hedin, Big Horse, 44.



the narrow Liao Tung gorges."<sup>65</sup>

On October 23, Petro arrived at Urumchi and reported the critical situation at Hami to Governor-General Chin, who immediately ordered General Chang to break through the rebels at any cost and relieve the city.<sup>66</sup> This he was able to do by the end of the month,<sup>67</sup> by desperate fighting in which even Ma Chung-yin was said to have been wounded.

The Russian, Dr. Cherbakoff, who was in Kashgar from 1927 to October 1931, says that in the summer of 1931, after General Ma had captured Barkul and wiped out General Liu's army, making the condition of the Sinkiang Government very critical, that the Soviet Government, through the mediation of its Consul General at Urumchi, offered military assistance to Governor Chin. He claims that this aid was given, that three military airplanes were sent to Sinkiang with a compliment of pilots and observers, airplane bombs, machine guns, and a quantity of rifles and ammunition, all of which were used to smash General Ma and lift the siege of Hami. In return, a secret commercial treaty, to "promote friendship", was concluded in Urumchi on October 1, 1931, between the U.S.S.R. and the Provincial Government of Sinkiang.<sup>68</sup>

The writer has been unable to either prove or disprove

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65 Eastern Odyssey, 163.

66 Ibid., 252.

67 Petro says on October 25, Le Fevre says November 1.

68 "In Kashgar, December, 1927, to October, 1931." <sup>by</sup> Dr. Cherbakoff. C.A.S.J., XX, Pt. IV (Oct. 1933), 538-39 & 541.



the statement concerning the use of Russian equipment to defeat General Ma. French members of the Citroën Trans-Asiatic Expedition were, from early July to late November, continuously in Urumchi, through which any supplies from Russia would have had to pass. They failed to report any such occurrence, although that is by no means proof that supplies did not pass through. Both George Vassel and Sven Hedin later spent some time with General Ma and his troops, but apparently heard no tales of airplanes being used against the Tungans on the occasion of their first defeat. However, Governor Chin must have received something in return for signing the secret commercial treaty, and it must have taken a well-armed force to have defeated General Ma, who was defending an easily held position.<sup>69</sup>

Bosworth Goldman, an Englishman who travelled in Siberia, apparently in 1931-32, visited, in Novo-Sibirsk, the capital of Western Siberia, a hospital for wounded "from the Manchurian War". He questioned the men:

They replied that they had been fighting in the southern Altai, in co-operation with some Chinese, against 'anti-social elements' disturbing the advance of the class-warfare banner into Sinkiang. ...Another man told me that he had been over for the second year, and that in 1932 they had taken organizers familiar with the Mongolian languages to start communist 'cells' in villages they occupied. I regard this as valuable evidence...of the Russian penetration into Sinkiang, a progress said to have originated in 1931 when the Chinese governor of the province hired Russian troops and aeroplanes to assist in the suppression of Tungan revolts....A man on a newspaper said that the

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69 See above, 42.



troops had been paid for in cotton and wool gathered as tribute by the Chinese governor.<sup>70</sup>

The present régime...encourage[s] minor rebellions against the Chinese governors, and then suppress[es] them very leniently with their own troops at the expense of the Chinese. My friend explained that it was of paramount importance to the successful expansion of Soviet rule in Sinkiang that the Chinese governors be made to 'lose face'; then the authority of the Peasants' Committees springing up under the influence of the propaganda 'cells' sent over with the soldiers would be felt.<sup>71</sup>

Ma Chung-yin and his battered army retreated to Kansu, shortly to be followed by hordes of Turki refugees. The Misses Cable and French were in Tunhwang at the time, and Miss Cable wrote:

Soon the news was round the city; the gates were shut and three thousand men were on the wall to greet the oncomers. Ma Chong Yng's [sic] men battered the gates and said that they must be opened or there would not be a man left alive in the city by evening. His threats were treated with great respect. By the afternoon his men were in full possession and all the ammunition was handed over; the mayor of the town spread a feast to entertain them; and the brigand general carried off the young men of the district to his headquarters.<sup>72</sup>

In February, 1932, Ma Chung-yin made his entry into Suchow. He was appointed by the Central Government at Nanking to command the 36th Division and in that capacity was able to enlist fresh recruits. Then he remained quietly at Suchow for a whole year.<sup>73</sup>

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70 Red Road Through Asia (London: 1934), 132-33.

71 Ibid., 137.

72 "From Edzin Gol", C.A.S.J., XX, 224.

73 Hedin, Big Horse, 6. Petro says that he "became Brigade-Commander in the 22nd Division of the Chinese Central Governments's Army, a division commanded by his cousin and ally, Ma Pu Fang." "Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XX, 219.



In the Qomul area, in the Sarliq Tugh, and in the  
Kerian basin the rebellion continued. Governor Gai sent  
several generals to punish the Turki, foremost among them  
General Sheng Shih-tai, military advisor to the Governor

IV.

REBELLION CONTINUED

and a former Chinese general in Manchuria, who had been sent to Sinkiang in a military capacity a short  
time before. He roved from place to place, inflicting pun-  
ishment and vengeance for the Turki rebellion and reducing  
towns and villages to ashes. There was hard fighting between  
General Sheng and Ma Chung-yin's adjutant, Ma Shih-ting,  
who had stayed behind, probably with a detachment of Tianshan,  
to aid the Turki. "China's cruelties to the people continually  
brought gist to the revolutionaries' mill."

The Citroën Expedition stopped in Hami early in Decem-  
ber, 1931, and Le Fevre wrote:

The castle on the outskirts of the city had been  
so knocked about that those of us who had seen the  
place five months earlier could hardly recognize  
it. The houses were now shambles, the streets  
strewn with branches filled with refuse, and of  
the former beautiful rows of poplars nothing re-  
mained but a tangle of stumps. Beyond this zone of  
death came a succession of half-ruined villages in

1. Shen Hsiang-shan, *Journal of His Expedition to Xinjiang*  
(1932), pp. 2-3. Hereafter cited as *Hsin*. 46 - 55



In the Qomul area, in the Qarliq Tagh, and in the Turfan basin the rebellion continued. Governor Chin sent several generals to punish the Turki, foremost among them General Sheng Shih-tsai, military advisor to the Governor and a former Chinese General Staff officer in Manchuria, who had been sent to Sinkiang in a military capacity a short time before. He moved from place to place, inflicting punishment and vengeance for the Turki rebellion and reducing towns and villages to ashes. There was hard fighting between General Sheng and Ma Chung-yin's adjutant, Ma Shih-ming, who had stayed behind, probably with a detachment of Tungans, to aid the Turki. "Chin's cruelties to the people continually brought grist to the revolutionaries' mill."<sup>1</sup>

The Citroën Expedition stopped in Hami early in December, 1931, and Le Fèvre wrote:

The oasis on the outskirts of the city had been so knocked about that those of us who had seen the place five months earlier could hardly recognize it. The houses were now shapeless mounds, the irrigation-canal trenches filled with refuse, and of the former beautiful rows of poplars nothing remained but a tangle of stumps. Beyond this zone of death came a succession of half-ruined villages in

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<sup>1</sup> Sven Hedin, The Flight Of Big Horse (New York: 1936), tr. F.H.Lyon, 6. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Big Horse.



roamed packs of filthy, famished dogs. Through the gaping doorways we could see the deserted hearths and - already covered by a thick layer of dust - the humble household objects, such as cauldrons, clay pipes, old caftans, left behind by the panic-stricken inhabitants. Above the overgrown gardens, trampled crops, and grey fields of parched unharvested wheat the sky was black with crows, which, after circling in the air, would now and again settle in a mass like a huge funereal veil descending on the countryside.<sup>2</sup>

Chin's troops had even plundered the palace of the dead Shah, one of the most imposing and stately structures in Central Asia, of all its valuables, then had burned its pillars, balconies and roofs and broken down its walls of sun-baked brick.

On the summit of the palace was a well, many feet deep and two feet in width. There for centuries past the kings of Hami had accumulated all the silver and gold they had squeezed out of their subjects, and it was rumoured that at Shah Maksud's death the well had been brimful. But the place was ingeniously and cunningly hidden, and only one or two of the king's sworn confidants knew where it was. Chin's robber bands had orders to find the well at all costs and carry its piles of treasure to his yamen at Urumchi. A traitor, for a liberal reward, showed them the way to the spot, which was in one of his son's private apartments. The well was emptied and the treasure taken to Chin. He had it loaded on a caravan, which was to go via Barkul to Iwei-hwa and Tientsin. But before the caravan with the royal booty had crossed the frontier of Sinciang, it had been attacked by robbers and thoroughly looted.<sup>3</sup>

Governor Chin was able, however, to get at least some of his fortune out of the province, for in the winter of 1932-33, an airplane of the German-Chinese Eurasia Company

<sup>2</sup> ~~George~~ Le Fèvre, An Eastern Odyssey (Boston: 1935), tr. E. D. ~~Stanton~~, 288-89.

<sup>3</sup> ~~Hart~~, Big Horse, 35.



is said to have carried a million dollar's worth of bullion of his to Peking.<sup>4</sup>

Hodin was told by a Turki in Hami that "Chin's troops had behaved like devils from hell, and had killed fifty thousand Turki, men, women and children, in towns, villages and farms."<sup>5</sup> But he was told by Yakub Beg and his younger brother Ahmed Beg, sons of Yollbars Khan, that two hundred Turki at the most had been killed at Hami, but eleven thousand at Pichan, near Turfan.<sup>6</sup> It is noticeable that the great massacres were always in "some other town".

Early in 1932 Governor Chin succeeded in a second attempt to assassinate the Regent of the Torgut Mongols, the Töin Lama. His nephew, the Prince, now of age, accompanied him to Urumchi at the time, but was spared, and apparently later, under a new Governor-General, even came under the influence of the Chinese.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile the rebellion continued, even without, or at least with very little help from the Tungans of Kansu. In the winter of 1932-33 Ma Shih-ming, the afore-mentioned aid of Ma Chung-yin, marched north-westward in the direction of Urumchi. Chin sent an army to Tapancheng Pass, between

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<sup>4</sup> George Vassel, My Russian Jailers In China (London: 1937), tr. G. Griffin, 52-3.

<sup>5</sup> Big Horse, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>7</sup> "Recent Events in Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXI, Pt. I (Jan. 1934), 83. Hereafter cited as "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI.



Turfan and the capital, to check the Mohammedan forces, but while the Chinese were drinking and making merry, Ma Shih-ring took them by surprise. A hundred escaped, the rest were killed. Urumchi was saved by a later engagement, when the Moslems were defeated and had to retire southwards.<sup>8</sup>

In the first half of January, 1933, in the bitter cold of a Central Asian winter, the Turki again dashed upon the capital; Dr. Hedin says "like wild beasts, slaughtering every Chinese they met on their way."<sup>9</sup> Chin ordered the White Russian émigrés and the Chinese living in the neighborhood to move inside the fortified walls of the Chinese town. The atmosphere in the capital was one of gloomy resignation, the Chinese doing almost nothing to organize their defenses. The sentries on the walls had orders to shoot anyone who defied the order not to go out. A civilian guard was set up while an army of about 1,500 White Russians, enrolled from the districts of Kuldja and Chuguchak, was thrown against the rebels.<sup>10</sup> The attacking Turki were repulsed, but by no means defeated. They gathered for the decisive struggle.<sup>11</sup>

Stealthily they returned. On the night of February 21, they stormed the western suburb of Urumchi, where the fighting

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8 Hedin, Big Horse, 6.

9 Loc. cit.

10 The Soviet representative protested against the employment of these White Russians, but matters were too precarious for diplomatic objection.

11 Hedin, Big Horse, 6-7 and "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 84.



was savage and bestially cruel. No one was spared; the victims were not shot, they were slowly tortured to death. The government troops did not gain an inch, but their artillery unlimbered and set fire to the houses occupied by the rebels, setting the whole suburb ablaze. The missionaries, both of the China Inland Mission and the Catholics, Societas Verbi Devini, served in the field hospitals, the two English doctors, Fishbacher and Mathers, dying of typhus. Innumerable people had been executed on suspicion of being concerned in the insurrection. Six thousand poor innocent people lay dead among the ruins.<sup>12</sup>

The rebels' position was hopeless, but they held out for twenty-four hours longer; then they fell back with heavy losses and fled towards the mountains to the south, but this was only a prelude to continued devastation. All the oases for sixty miles around were plundered; those who would not join the rebel movement were killed. In the spring the Turki again assembled their forces and besieged Urumchi, cutting off all food supplies. Governor Chin's brother confiscated all the wheat and sold it to the people at huge prices.<sup>13</sup>

The White Russians, because of better organization, spirit, and courage, won victories which astonished the Chinese but did not win their gratitude. Fearing that they would get too powerful, Chin gave them the poorest equipment

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<sup>12</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 7-8.



and sent them to the most dangerous posts. But high Chinese officials made common cause with them and Chin was asked in writing to resign. After being put off several days, on April 12, a regiment of émigrés 500 strong stormed the Governor's yamen, in the face of Chin's bodyguard of twice that number. Chin Shu-jen, protected by darkness and his disguise as a common soldier, succeeded in escaping by a back gate and getting away with a few horsemen. His brother and a few other senior officers were captured and executed; his followers were driven out.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of May, 1935, he telegraphed to Nanking that he had been driven out by the Russians and that Sinkiang was lost to China forever. At last he appeared at Nanking, where he was arrested. For in June, Chin's secret treaty with the Soviet was discovered by the Central Government's Commissioner for Pacification, General Hwang Mu-sung, who had arrived in Urumchi a short time before. Chin Shu-jen was accordingly put on trial at Nanking for secret negotiations with a foreign power and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.<sup>15</sup>

Hardly had he left when a meeting of officials elected the old Minister of Education, Liu Ting-shan, a friend of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 8-9. Another writer said: "The White Russian troops, dissatisfied with their terms of service, or else for less satisfactory reasons, attacked the Governor's yamen." "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 10-11.



the former Governor Yang and a mandarin of the old school, provisional Governor-General.<sup>16</sup> On April 14, 1933, General Sheng Shih-tsai was provisionally appointed Tupan or Military Governor of Sinkiang. He is a graduate of a military school in Japan and an ex-officer from Manchuria.<sup>16</sup> The Italian writer, Clemente Astorri, says: "The White Russians elected as the new Tupan or military governor Sheng Shih-tsai."<sup>17</sup>

Now there entered upon the scene a group which was to play an important role in this drama, the Chinese troops known as the North-eastern force, or the Manchurian Volunteers. When the trouble between China and Japan over Manchuria took place, a force was raised from the merchants and settlers in Manchuria, who, when defeated, fled to Russian territory and were disarmed.<sup>18</sup> Now, under the command of General Ma Chan-shan and Su Ping-wen, they were allowed to cross Siberia and enter Sinkiang at Chuguchak.<sup>19</sup> Naturally, they were grateful to the Soviets. But whether they participated in the coup de etat which put Sheng in office, is hard to say. One writer says that they arrived in March, with 6,000 going to Urumchi and 3,000 to Kuldja.<sup>20</sup> A Russian writer, P. Vostokov, says:

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16 Loc. cit.

17 "Sinkiang 1928-1938", Asiatica, V, No. 2 (March-April, 1939), 128.

18 "The Rebellion in Chinese Turkestan", C.A.S.J., XXII, 101. Hereafter cited as "Rebellion", C.A.S.J., XXII.

19 "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 84.

20 Loc. cit.



"Cette aide arriva juste à temps en février - mars 1933."<sup>21</sup>

Under the new government of Sheng Shih-tsai and Liu Ting-shan, the people began to quiet down. Messengers promising peace and freedom were sent around by the authorities, urging the people to put down their arms and go back to their fields. Hedin wrote: "But the Turks were not satisfied with promises. They demanded one of the two highest posts in the government. The Chinese could not agree to this. Manchuria and Jehol had been lost; China owed it to her prestige not to lose the Far West the same way. The Mohammedans, disappointed, began to arm again."<sup>22</sup>

The cause of the rising, however, is not found as easily as that. There was trouble within the ranks of the rebels, and most likely agents provocateur from without. Astorri says that for a month all was relatively quiet in this region, then in the beginning of March Yollbars Khan grew discontented with the new governor (Sheng having nominated Hodja Nias Hadji as Governor of Central Sinkiang, over Yollbars) and rebelled again, aided by other Turki leaders, and recalled Ma Chung-yin from Kansu.<sup>23</sup> Hedin wrote that Hodja Nias Hadji had been appointed ruler of Eastern Sinkiang and the Turfan area by Sheng, but did not say when.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "L'U.R.S.S., La Mongolie et le Fin Kiang", Le Monde Slave, series 2, Vol. XIII, Pt. I-II (June 1936), 451.

<sup>22</sup> Big Horse, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., 128.

<sup>24</sup> Big Horse, 169.



Hedin met in Turfan, in February, 1934, two Russian-speaking Poles, "a so-called doctor of medicine called Loszczynski and his assistant, Plavski by name."<sup>25</sup> They had reached Turfan via Ansi and Hami. Plavski told Hedin that he was an occultist and fakir and had studied at Calcutta.<sup>26</sup>

Another of the eccentric, mysterious wanderers we met in Turfan was a little black-bearded professor Li, who had started from Peking with four students in June, 1933, and walked all the way to Hami; they had arrived there in October and had come on to Turfan, which they reached in December. Li and his party of young men called on us too, and told us that they intended to stay in Sinkiang for five years at the most, to study the local languages and literature. Literature in Sinkiang! they would not need five years for that.<sup>27</sup>

The German scientist, Wilhelm Filchner, claims that in 1928 or 1930 Japan sent paid "prophets" into the province to rouse the Moslems against Russia and England, and further says; "I know only the names of three of these 'prophets': Mustapha Djarula, Mussa Bekh, and Dr. Schiakr....These gentlemen promulgated the gospel of freedom for Islam....[and] they did succeed in rousing the Sarts in Sinkiang, and it is without any doubt through the propaganda of these three that the Sarts rose in 1933 and 1934."<sup>28</sup>

Another writer stated more recently that:

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25 Ibid., 55.

26 Ibid., 91.

27 Ibid., 61-2.

28 "The Russian Domination of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXVI, Pt. IV (Oct. 1939), 648. A summary of an article, supposedly by Filchner, in Berichè des Asiens Arbeitskreises, I, No. I (Feb. 1939).



just before the outbreak of the current war <sup>in</sup> China there was a very active Japanese military mission stationed at Hami. Foreign travelers, returning from North Sinkiang at the time reported the mission, which was controlled by the Special Service Section of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchukou, was busily importing arms into the area and distributing them among the Mohammedan contents.<sup>29</sup>

But whatever the cause, or causes, the Turki arose in rebellion once more. To their help came Ma Chung-yin. In May, 1933, the emissaries of the Turki had gone to Kansu to ask his aid. He handed over to Ma Pu-fang all that part of Kansu which was under his administration, put his army in marching order, and started across the Gobi.<sup>30</sup>

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29 Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 10, 1939, 5.

30 Hedin, Big Horse, 11.



V.

SECOND INVASION



George Vassel gives a vivid description of the departure of General Ma Chung-yin's army from Suchow, an army which the young German estimated as more than 8,000.

A dark mass of human beings, camels and oxen, was pouring out of the city gate towards the west amid clouds of dust. There were hundreds of heavily laden camels, the bells on their necks clanging monotonously, their drivers easily discernible by their gaudy headgear. In their rear followed high-wheeled ox-carts, flanked on either side by infantry. Behind them again came a company of cavalry, which presently galloped past the lumbering camels and oxen along the track through the desert.

... And now I had an opportunity of seeing at close range General Ma's famous cavalry riding past me and keeping its post at the head of the marching columns. This was the famous white cavalry regiment of which General Ma was especially proud. The broad iron swords of the dragoons clanked as they rode along on their magnificent white horses, while on their shoulders they carried carbines of the most varied and antiquated patterns. Next came the brown regiment, while in the rear followed the black regiment, comprising some two thousand horsemen.

At a short distance behind the cavalry came the infantry - regiment after regiment, headed by the Chinese standard - a blue field with a white star on a crimson background. On they swept, platoon after platoon, followed by their officers, with their mausers at the ready. The columns strode along, keeping perfect time with their shrill, high-pitched, mournful, Asiatic marching-songs.

Sandwiched between some of these trained and trustworthy soldiers I saw large drafts of recruits who had been compelled to join General Ma's forces. These raw levies were constantly kept under very close observation. Among these recruits in the chrysalis stage I saw 'companies of children' --



boys of from twelve to fourteen years of age, some of whom had voluntarily joined up, while others had been dragged from the arms of their parents or from their schools.

Wreathed in clouds of dust, this motley host marched on towards the desert, while the civilian population flanked their route for a considerable distance, looking on listlessly without the faintest trace of either aversion or enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup>

It was a desperate gamble that the young Tungan leader took, taking such a large force across the monotonously flat, burning Gobi Desert, and he staked everything on it. This time he did not plan to retreat. He destroyed everything enroute, Sven Hedin says "partly to hinder possible pursuit by an army from Nanking, partly to prevent his own soldiers from deserting and returning to their homes."<sup>2</sup> Vassel, who closely followed the Tungans, spoke of a route through "desolation and death." He wrote: "We were constantly seeing by the wayside the carcasses of horses, camels and asses, wrecked carts, and the graves of soldiers who died on the march through the desert. Nearly two thousand five hundred soldiers of General Ma's army perished in the Gobi."<sup>3</sup>

Ma Chung-yin marched unhindered through Hami and Eastern Sinkiang, and assumed control of that part of the country, aided by Yollbars Khan and his Turki followers. Hodja Nias Hadji, the other Turki leader, remained loyal to

<sup>1</sup> My Russian Jailers In China (London: 1937), tr. G. Griffin, 101-102. Hereafter cited as Vassel, Russian Jailers.

<sup>2</sup> Silk Road (New York: 1938), tr. F.H.Lyon, 219.

<sup>3</sup> Russian Jailers, 115.



Governor-General Sheng Shih-tsai, though General Ma tried hard to win him over. The Hodja's secretary, an educated young Chinese named Pan, is said to have advised the Hodja "to try to do something for his tormented people, and not to allow himself to be led away by the inducements the invader proffered and the promises he made."<sup>4</sup>

In the meanwhile, in May, 1933, General Ma's troops advanced towards the capital, reaching Kuchengtze (or Guchen) unopposed. The government troops, mainly White Russians, under General Li Hai-jo, took to the field and met the rebels half-way between Kuchengtze and Urumchi. The government forces, 6,000 strong, were routed.<sup>5</sup> General Li was taken prisoner, and later made Ma's chief-of-staff. He was a graduate of the Paoting military academy, and under Governor Chin had been Governor of Chuguchak, on the Russian border, and at the same time, Governor of Hami, a thousand miles to the east.<sup>6</sup>

Sheng Shih-tsai re-formed his army, combined it with the ex-Manchurian troops, and leading it himself, inflicted a decisive defeat on Ma Chung-yin a few days later. Hundreds of rebels were killed, the rest fled in disorder.<sup>7</sup> When

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<sup>4</sup> Sven Hedin, The Flight Of Big Horse (New York: 1936), tr. F.H.Lyon, 169. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Big Horse.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>6</sup> When Hedin talked with him in February, 1934, he apparently had neither power nor influence. Big Horse, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 12; and "Recent Events in Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXI, Pt. I (Jan. 1934), 85. Hereafter cited as "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI.



vasel reached Hami, the streets, he wrote:

were becoming more and more crowded with wounded men who had been carried back from the scenes of carnage some twenty-five miles away in the desert in carts, on the backs of asses, camels, and in Kirghiz carts....There were no doctors and no medical appliances available for these wretches, with the result that many whose lives might have easily been saved, perished miserably.<sup>8</sup>

The Chinese failed, however, to make use of their victory. Instead of pursuing Ma they gave him time to reorganize his scattered troops. He took Turfan on June 14, 1933, thus cutting off Urumchi from the southern part of the province. There he collected the various rebel groups, including the former adherents of Governor-General Chin, who now had almost no alternative than joining the rebels. From Kucha and Aqsu, on the Kashgar road, came Ma Chung-yin's former adjutant, Ma Shih-ming,<sup>9</sup> who had kept alive the flame of rebellion in Sinkiang while his superior had reorganized his forces in Kansu.

With the Tungans withdrawn from the South Road, Hodja Nias Hadji aroused the Turki, and in June they slaughtered the peaceful Tungans of Qara Shahr, who had the misfortune to belong to the same race as the invaders.<sup>10</sup> In July he led the Turki eastward along the South Road to the Manan Chose Pass (the Toksun Gorges), just south of Turfan, and latter

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<sup>8</sup> Russian Jailers, 118.

<sup>9</sup> "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 85.

<sup>10</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 85.



sent another contingent of his Turkd through a lesser-known pass to attack the Tungans from the west.<sup>11</sup> In August, however, he was defeated by Ma Ho-san, the Tungan chief-of-cavalry, and driven south. He held the "pass" between Qara Shahr and Kurla for a time,<sup>12</sup> then in September retreated to Kurla,<sup>13</sup> where he looted the Tungan part of town.<sup>14</sup> From here he sent out small forces to the south and west to gather supplies, and while thus weakened, was driven from Kurla by the Tungans.<sup>15</sup> It was reported that in September the Hodja arrived in Yangi-hissar, between Kurla and Kucha, with "seven thousand Turkis, [sic] mounted but unarmed. All who had served under him and all who had helped him had been amply rewarded. He had got [sic] money from Urumchi."<sup>16</sup>

Peace did not last long in Qara Shahr, for the Torguts swept down from the Yulduz valley, in the highlands of the Tien Shan, and pillaged the villages around the city, although its inhabitants and wall were able to save it. The people of the villages fled westward. Ma Chung-yin sent emissaries to the court of the young Torgut prince, to try to win him over to the Tungan side, But the Buddhistic Mongols spurned the Moslems.<sup>17</sup> At the end of September, 1933, the Torguts, and

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11 Ibid., 170.

12 Ibid., 172.

13 Ibid., 170.

14 Ibid., 96.

15 Ibid., 170.

16 Ibid., 125.

17 Ibid., 85.



The Kazak nomads with them, were supposedly neutral.<sup>18</sup> The feeling of insecurity was quite general in the province by July. The fields were not sown, as the peasants had been pressed into military service. All produce was confiscated, causing a food shortage, and as all carts had been requisitioned for the army, what food there was could not be moved from one district to another. The capital was cut off on all sides, the only connection with China proper being by air, for the airplanes of the German-Chinese Eurasia Company were still operating. But shortly this route, too, was closed - by Sheng's orders.<sup>19</sup>

The Central Government in Nanking made several attempts at peace. In the spring of 1933, the newly appointed General Hwang Mu-sung, a Cantonese, and his staff, arrived at Urumchi with the title of "Pacification Commissioner". He came by airplane, insisting on a complete cessation of hostilities. Negotiations began, but the war continued.<sup>20</sup> Hedin wrote:

It looks as if General Hwang had intended to seize the supreme power in Urumchi for himself. With this object he attempted a coup which cost three high officials their lives.... Sheng Shih-tsai... frustrated General Hwang Mu-sung's plans and, as a mark of respect for the Central Government,

18 "Recent Events", C.A.S.J., XXI, 85.

19 Hedin, Big Horse, 12.

20 Ibid., 13; and "The Rebellion in Chinese Turkestan" C.A.S.J., XXII, Pt. I (Jan. 1935), 103.



allowed him to return in safety to Nanking by air."<sup>21</sup> The civil Governor, Liu Ting-shan, was apparently implicated; a year later he was still kept under military guard in his own Urumchi home.<sup>22</sup>

In September the Foreign Minister himself, Lo Wen-kan, later Minister of Justice at Nanking, arrived at Urumchi and tried to make peace. But when Sheng demanded that Ma should retire to Hami and put himself under Sheng's orders, Ma refused, for he had a stronger strategic position at Turfan, which dominated the roads to Eastern and Southern Turkestan, as well as the main pass to the North. Ma was also careful not to accept the Governor-General's invitation to come to Urumchi for a conference.<sup>23</sup> Lo Wen-kan, too, experienced difficulty in leaving the province, which he did via Chuguchak and the Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>24</sup>

General Ma Chung-yin's position in the late summer of 1933 was very strong. With his headquarters at Turfan, he controlled almost all of the region south of the Tien Shan, and could draw on all of it for supplies. His men held strong positions at the Tapancheng Pass, between Turfan and Urumchi,

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<sup>21</sup> Silk Road, 6. Peter Fleming wrote: "It is legitimate to suppose that the official confirmation of Sheng Shih-tsai in office - which was announced on Hwang's return to Nanking - was the price paid by the Central Government for its emissary's life." News From Tartary (New York: 1936), 250.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>23</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Hedin, Silk Road, 14. For details of his trip from Urumchi to Chuguchak, see Vassel, Russian Jailers, 154-57.



where they had dugouts in which they even concealed their horses.<sup>25</sup> The Governor of Ili, Chang Pei-yuan, felt that Sheng had not treated him fairly and was negotiating with Ma. In Urumchi Sheng Shih-tsai had supplies for only two months, while the two airplanes which he had acquired were useless for lack of fuel.<sup>26</sup> He controlled only the region of the North Road, from Kuchengtze to Chuguchak, for the Kirghiz and the Tungans of the Altai had joined the revolt.

In the fall of 1933, the Altai force attacked Chuguchak, the important town on the Sino-Russian border which serves as the gateway between the two countries. An eye-witness described them as looking "more like a horde of Asiatic mercenaries whom the political upheaval had swept along from their mountain fastnesses and arid deserts than like conquer<sup>or</sup>s."<sup>27</sup> He claims that in the van was a troop of "well-disciplined, trim and efficient" regulars, led by Ma Shih-ming, adjutant to the Tungan Commander-in-Chief.<sup>28</sup>

At a short distance followed a horde that was tolerably well equipped according to Asiatic standards - that is to say, many of the firearms which they bore along with pride would have been welcome trophies for many a museum. I saw needle-guns, blunderbuses, and muzzle-loaders galore. On these crude warriors came, mounted on their little unkempt, big-headed Mongolian horses. In their rear dense clouds of dust, which shut out the light of

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25 Vassel, Russian Jailers, 147.

26 Ibid., 153.

27 Ibid., 172.

28 Loc. cit.



the sun, billowed onward, and then came the infantry, a motley mob who looked like a mixture of all the brigand armies of China - men with wild eyes and matted hair, brutalised and bestial-looking wretches, with lust for blood and booty written in their repulsive faces - nomads, outlaws who had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the upheaval that was going on.<sup>29</sup>

The rebels attacked the fortress, which had recently been modernized, and was garrisoned by White Russian and Chinese troops, but were taken in the rear by 600 well-equipped White Russians sent from Urumchi.<sup>30</sup> The rebels were apparently very short of ammunition. They put up a valiant fight, and came close to winning, but all they actually succeeded in doing was to leave behind "a deep undying hate of the Mohammedans."<sup>31</sup>

Now the Governor of Ili, General Chang Pei-yuan, allied himself with Ma Chung-yin and advanced on Urumchi, marching eastward along the North Road. On November 26, 1933, the Ili troops captured a convoy of trucks from Russia, carrying war materials to Sheng. However, "a courier from Chang to Ma was intercepted, and so Sheng obtained proofs of an extensive network of conspiracy against the government. On December 10 a number of generals of the Manchu army were arrested, and several Russians."<sup>32</sup> The government troops were reorganized,

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29 Loc. cit.

30 Ibid., 175-76 & 179.

31 Ibid., 182.

32 Hedin, Big Horse, 14. One of these Manchurian officers, whom Vassel calls Jau-Dse-Hui, was in prison with him in Chuguchak. See Russian Jailers, 183-84; 199-203; 208; 215-18.



General Bektleiev becoming commander of the White Russians and General Antonov one of the Governor's right-hand men. They immediately took the offensive against the Ili rebels.

On December 31, they took Si-hu, the important junction town where the Chuguchak road branches off from the North Road, between Urumchi and Kuldja. As they steadily advanced, Chang Pei-yuan tried to escape southward over the Muzart Pass (or Ice Pass), in mid-winter. Caught by a blizzard, his troops deserted in masses, and at last Chang shot himself.<sup>33</sup> Apparently General Ma had planned to meet him on the South Road, for in January, 1934, there was fighting between the Tungans and the Turki at Kucha.<sup>34</sup> Governor Sheng's army occupied the Ili Valley, and drove back the Altai rebels, greatly strengthening the government position.

Suddenly, in the cold of December or January,<sup>35</sup> Ma and his Tungans advanced northward through the Tapancheng Pass and was within six miles of Urumchi before being discovered by the government troops. Now began a terrific siege. Before the telegraph lines were cut, Sheng recalled the troops sent to Chuguchak, but with the North Road covered with snow, they marched slowly, and did not reach the capital until February 11.<sup>36</sup> Hedin stated that the Tungans would have won

<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>35</sup> Hedin says on January 12, 1934. Ibid., 14.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 14-15.



if Shong Shih-tsai had not bought aeroplanes, armoured cars, machine-guns, ammunition and motor-lorries from Russia, and even hired troops from that country."<sup>37</sup>

It is hard to say whether any Soviet troops actually entered the province, because of the bias of all the writers upon the subject. The only eye-witness account available is that of George Vassel, a German Nazi, who was imprisoned in Chuguchak from December 1933 to May 3, 1934. Referring to that border town just before Christmas, he wrote:

A moment later, as we were strolling along the snow-covered street we noticed long columns of peculiarly-dressed civilians. They marched along in step, and had obviously been very well trained. They had skis slung over their left shoulders, and they carried brand-new rifles of the latest pattern. They were picked youths. In a flash it struck me that they were Red Guards garbed as civilians!

.....  
 All day long as I looked from my window I saw Soviet militia patrols moving to and fro through the town, while fresh columns of Red soldiers garbed as civilians kept pouring in. And all through the following night, too, I heard at regular intervals the tramp-tramp of bodies of soldiers, punctuated every now and then with the clatter of artillery horses and the lumbering noise of heavy wheels.<sup>38</sup>

Two White Russians, one of them a Volga-German, told Vassel quite frankly that they were in terror of their lives, because large bodies of infantry and several batteries of artillery which had been despatched by Red Russia were on their way to Urumchi, outside which town General Ma was at

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37 Ibid., 17.

38 Russian Jailers, 191.



that moment fighting for his very existence."<sup>39</sup>

A short time later, after Vassel had been imprisoned, he again saw soldiers pass through Chuguchak.

...Suddenly I saw columns of men passing along the street in perfect step and with military precision. They had brand-new rifles of the latest make with bayonets fixed, and they were in semi-civilian garb. I knew instinctively, however, that they belonged to the regular Soviet army. ...

Regiment after regiment had passed along the street, and in their wake followed greyish-green monsters - armoured cars with machine-guns mounted on their steel turrets. I counted six of these armoured cars. They were followed by portable radio sets. The rear was brought up by several batteries of artillery and ammunition and luggage vans.

.....  
I was just crossing the threshold again when I heard a loud humming noise overhead.... I looked up at the sky. The air was dark with a squadron of heavy bombers bearing no mark of their nationality. They were flying along eastward fairly low and very slowly. They had come from the west, from the Soviet frontier, and were making for Urumchi, the town which was beleaguered by General Ma.<sup>40</sup>

An English newspaper man, who visited the Tungsans in South Sinkiang later, wrote:

Early in January 1934 the Tungan forces beleaguering Urumchi were taken in the rear by Urumchi's creditors - a force of several thousand Soviet troops advancing from the west and supported by aeroplanes, armored cars, and possibly light tanks. On the banks of the frost bound Tutung River, thirty miles west of Urumchi, a battle raged for several days; but the Tungsans' unskilled ferocity was no match for a mechanized foe, and the troops - who were all peasants from parts of China as yet but little inured to the blessings of modern civilization - were badly demoralized by gas-bombs dropped by the Soviet airmen.<sup>41</sup>

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39 Ibid., 192.

40 Ibid., 206-207.

41 Fleming, News From Tartary, 252.



General Ma, who had been besieging Urumchi for almost a month, retired with the main body of his troops on the night of February 16, 1934, to Tapancheng Pass, where he dug trenches and established a base camp. For days violent winter storms raged over the Tien Shan, and the government airplanes were grounded.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile hundreds of reinforcements were rushed to the Tungan front, poor ignorant peasants, many of whom were killed before they ever got a rifle in their hands. 1,500 troops who had been sent to put down bandits in the Hami area were called back to the front on February 8, bringing with them 700 Turki "recruits".<sup>43</sup> Colonel Chang Sin-ming, chief-of-staff at Turfan and commandant of the training corps, told Dr. Hedin that he thought that Ma had 27,000 rifles and sixty machine-guns along the whole stretch from Hami to Kashgar. At the Turfan arsenal were eighteen old field guns and fourteen machine-guns.<sup>44</sup> The Tungsans had captured eleven field guns at Urumchi,<sup>45</sup> as well as an armoured car, clumsily made in the capital itself, which they later abandoned in the Toksun Gorges when it had run out of fuel.<sup>46</sup> They had also captured Governor Sheng's two airplanes.<sup>47</sup>

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42 Hedin, Big Horse, 17

43 Ibid., 30.

44 Ibid., 64.

45 Hedin, Silk Road, 139.

46 Hedin, Big Horse, 143.

47 Ibid., 59.



General Ma Chung-yin was now in a very precarious position. In January the Chinese and Turki arose against the Tungan garrison in Barkul, the commandant alone, Ma Ying-piao, managing to escape and to make his way through the Carliq Tagh passes to Hami.<sup>48</sup> During the first few days of February, about 200 Turki "bandits" from Kucha arrived in the Hami region, but were scattered and many killed by Ma's troops.<sup>49</sup> Hedin says that when he arrived in Hami in February 1934, the "Turkis were cautious in their utterances. They cherished an inextinguishable hatred both for the Chinese and for the Tungans. The Chinese were infidels and ate pork; the Tungans were at least Mohammedans like the Turkis, but hankered after absolute power over the province. [But] so long as Ma Chung-yin was lord over Hami, the Turkis must stand by him..."<sup>50</sup>

When Ma withdrew his troops from Hami on February 8,<sup>51</sup> the Turki knew their moment had arrived. They drove out the remaining soldiers and the Commandant of Hami, Chang Peng-ming, who early in February fled across the Gobi in a truck. At that time he was negotiating with Ma Pu-fang, wishing to be admitted into the latter's army in Kansu.<sup>52</sup>

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48 Ibid., 38.

49 Ibid., 43.

50 Ibid., 28.

51 He communicated with Hami by radio.

52 "On the Road from Kweihwa to Urunchi", C.A.S.J., XXI, Pt. III (July 1934), 467-69.



On February 18, it was said in Turfan that twenty per- cent of General Ma's army was sick with some epidemic, and that three of his best generals were wounded and incapacit- ated. It was rumoured that he meant to scatter his troops among the mountains to protect them from bombing.<sup>53</sup> On the 15th and 16th, airplanes had dropped small bombs and threat- ening proclamations on Turfan.<sup>54</sup>

On February 20 General Antonov and a contingent of the White Russians were sent across the Tien Shan by devious routes and difficult passes to attack Qara Shahr and cut off the Tungan retreat.<sup>55</sup> On the 27th the Tungans at Qara Shahr were expecting hourly an attack by the Torgut Mongols, who had joined the government side and had just raided the country to the east of the town.<sup>56</sup>

By the end of February, 1934, the weather had cleared, and the government air force launched a terrific bombing attack on the Tungan positions at Tapancheng. This was fol- lowed by infantry action, and Ma Chung-yin was defeated.<sup>57</sup> His men fought courageously, and it is said that the first three hundred Tungans taken prisoner were shot, because of the fury aroused by their resistance.<sup>58</sup> General Ma Chung-yin

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53 Hedin, Big Horse, 59.

54 Ibid., 55.

55 Ibid., 15.

56 Ibid., 85.

57 Ibid., 15.

58 Ibid., 184.



told one of Hedin's men several weeks later that "The northern army could never have driven me from Urumchi, Dawancheng [Dapanchong] and Turfan if it hadn't got Russian help. It wasn't easy for my troops to stand their ground against aeroplanes which rained bombs, and armoured cars, and stronger artillery."<sup>59</sup>

The Tungans retreated through Turfan and took their next stand at the Toksun Gorges and the Manan Chose Pass, while Sheng's troops moved into Turfan. On about March 7 Qara Shahr was attacked by the government forces, presumably by General Antonov and his White Russians, and their Torgut allies. The Tungan garrison at Kurla, to the south, rushed to the scene of battle, but this flanking attack made untenable Ma's front at the Manan Chose Pass. Sven Hedin, who was in Kurla at the time, wrote:

It was not easy to find out what really happened at Kara-shahr [Qara Shahr]. Some said that a thousand Torguts had assaulted the town in alliance with Russians, Turkis and Kirghizes, but had been driven back by Ma's garrison, which was only three hundred strong. Hami, Turfan and Toksun had been taken by the northern army....The cavalry general Ma [Ho-san], had been carried on mule-back from Turfan to Korla, where he had just arrived [March 12] in the company of the chief of staff, General Li.<sup>60</sup>

Airplanes dropped bombs and leaflets on Qara Shahr, one of the leaflets, printed in Chinese and Turki, being translated as follows:

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59 Ibid., 228.

60 Ibid., 142-43.



Open letter to the Turkis.

I understand very well how the bandit Ma has endeavoured to make you the poorest of the poor. At present his forces have been greatly diminished; indeed, destroyed. But he is still trying to compel you to fight on his side. In his hands you are lost. But I shall do my utmost to assure your rehabilitation and the safety of your lives and your property. If you make genuine submission to me, you shall live in peace and quiet and receive all that you require for your maintenance.

Tupan Sheng Shih-tsai<sup>61</sup>

Qara Shahr was reluctantly given up, the Tungans crossed the river and burned all the boats, and on March 13, General Ma and most of his defeated army arrived at Kurla. It was estimated that he had lost 9000 men killed or taken prisoner on the retreat from Tapancheng.<sup>62</sup> Hundreds of the Sinkiang Tungans gave themselves up to Sheng's troops.

The young General's star was waning. Yollbars Khan and Kemal Bey had fled to Hami on the fall of Turfan, and later surrendered to Governor Sheng.<sup>63</sup> A group of 3000 Tungans from the Altai who were marching south to join Ma were said to have been ambushed while passing through perpendicular cliffs. White Russian troops opened up on them from front and rear with machine-guns, 2,500 being killed, the rest escaping by abandoning everything and climbing through snow and ice to the top of the cliffs.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 159-60. "Tupan" is the title of the military governor-general.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 185.



To the north-east of Ma Chung-yin was the main government army, advancing from Qara Shahr. Led by General Volgin and General Bektieiev, the commander-in-chief, it was supposed to have been made up of 1000 each of White Russian Cossacks, Soviets, and Torgut Mongols.<sup>65</sup> A Cossack regiment, 500 strong, had ridden south from Turfan, across the Quruq Tagh, to Yingpan in the Lop Nor area, and from there and Tikenlik on the Tarim River, were advancing on Kurla from the south-east.<sup>66</sup> Another large army was marching westward from Qara Shahr up the Yulduz Valley, planning to cross the southern Tien Shan by difficult passes and intercept Ma's retreat to Kucha, to the west. This corps was said to be 7000 strong, composed mainly of Torguts and 500 White Russians.<sup>67</sup>

Far to the west, at Aqsu, lay Hodja Nias Hadji, with his 10,000 or 15,000 Turki, well armed with Russian rifles. They were of doubtful fighting quality,<sup>68</sup> but another government army from Ili was coming across the Muzart Pass to join them.<sup>69</sup>

At Kurla General Ma commandeered the trucks of the Sven Hedin Expedition, loaded on them field guns, machine-

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65 Ibid., 182. According to a Cossack questioned by Hedin.

66 Ibid., 201 & 240.

67 Ibid., 158.

68 See below, 80.

69 Hedin, Big Horse, 152 & 158.



guns, rifles and ammunition, and in the afternoon of March 13, departed for Kucha.<sup>70</sup> He reached the latter town on the 15th, finding there hundreds of soldiers from Ili, the remnants of the army that Chang Pei-yuan had been bringing south to join the Tungans.

With a self-confidence worthy of a Tamerlane he ascended to a beflagged tribune on one side of the large courtyard of the yamen and delivered, in a voice that never trembled, a speech that thrilled the thousand deserters from the Ili army to the marrow.

. . . . .  
 'Welcome, brethren, friends, soldiers! Welcome to my army! Together we will beat the northern army and all our enemies who still dare to attempt to stop our victorious progress. Under the leaders of the northern army you have nothing to expect but starvation, suffering and thraldom. Perhaps you have heard of Ka Sse-ling (the "Little Commandant") of Kansu? I am Ka Sse-ling! It is I who shall unite all the peoples and races in these lands into one great dominion. With your support and your help I shall work for the happiness and prosperity of the whole people. I promise to give you freedom, well-being, enough and to spare of everything. Together we will organize this country and make it great, strong and powerful.'<sup>71</sup>

Then he continued his flight westward.

Kashgar was his goal, the only place where he could be safe and rest awhile, for that city was safely in the hands of the advance guard of his army.

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70 Ibid., 148-51.

71 Ibid., 252-33.



As early as May, 1933, a Tungan force arrived in Kashgar, bringing from the north the seed of rebellion.<sup>1</sup> The local Chinese administration, which by liberal rule had kept Kashgar quiet during the troublous times of the previous two years, was overthrown by a Moslem combination of

VI.

### TROUBLE IN KASHGARIA

Dzungars, Uighurs, and Kirghiz, the last having been, shortly before, probably armed with Russian weapons by the Tso Tai District Governor of Kashgar, the Tungan Ma Shao-wu. Here in the north the uprising "assumed a fanatical Moslem form", according to Colonel Glover, the British Consul-General in Kashgar. He reported that ten or eleven Kirghiz were killed and their belongings looted, while only the heroic efforts of the British Indian trade representatives saved the lives of the Swedish missionaries of Yarkand.<sup>3</sup>

In Khotan the Chinese were dispersed, the fate of the Tso Tai, Yang, being unknown, and power assumed by those

<sup>1</sup> Sven Hedin, *The Flight of Big Game* (New York, 1933), p. 10. <sup>2</sup> F. R. Jenks, *Sin*, hereafter cited as *Sin*, Big Game. <sup>3</sup> Colonel J. Thomson Glover, "Present-Day Kashgaria", *C.A.S.I.*, XIV, Pt. III (July 1937), 440. <sup>4</sup> *Sin*, cited as *Sin*, "Kashgaria", *C.A.S.I.*, XIV.



Turki and the Shah Mansur led a force from there to Yarkand, whose garrison of about 2000 Chinese troops held out bravely against the Moslem insurgents. After a violent siege of several weeks, the Chinese were granted a safe-conduct and marched out of the city for Kashgar. In the desert they were

As early as May, 1933, a Tungan force arrived in Kashgar, bringing from the north the seed of rebellion.<sup>1</sup> The local Chinese administration, which by liberal rule had kept Kashgaria pacified during the troublous times of the previous two years,<sup>2</sup> was swept away by the Moslem combination of Tungans, Turki, and Kirghiz, the last having been, shortly before, foolishly armed with Russian weapons by the Tao Tai or District Governor of Kashgar, the Tungan Ma Shao-wu. Here in the south the uprising "assumed a fanatical Moslem form", according to Colonel Glover, the British Consul-General in Kashgar. He reported that ten or eleven Hindus were killed and their belongings looted, while only the heroic efforts of two British Indian trade representatives saved the lives of the Swedish missionaries of Yarkand.<sup>3</sup>

In Khotan the Chinese were massacred, the fate of the Tao Tai, Yang, being unknown, and power assumed by three

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1 Sven Hedin, The Flight Of Big Horse (New York: 1936), tr. F.H.Lyon, 244. Hereafter cited as Hedin, Big Horse.

2 Colonel J.Thomson Glover, "Present-Day Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, Pt. III (July 1937), 440. . Hereafter cited as Glover, "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV.

3 Loc. cit.



Turki Amirs. Shah Mansur led a force from there to Yarkand, whose garrison of about 2000 Chinese troops<sup>4</sup> held out gamely against the Moslem insurgents. After a violent siege of several weeks, the Chinese were granted a safe-conduct and marched out of the city for Kashgar; in the desert they were treacherously cut-down. Peter Fleming, who passed through this region several years later, was told the story by one of the twenty-eight survivors, who was in 1935 mayor of Yarkand under the Tungan rule.<sup>5</sup> After taking Yarkand, one of the Khotan Amirs led a force of Khotanis to join the rebels at Kashgar, arriving about the middle of July, 1933.<sup>6</sup>

As seemed the case in all their dealings with the other Moslem peoples, the Tungans got along well with them at first, but soon the usual political and religious difficulties arose, and by mid-summer, 1933, the two groups had come to blows. A Turki from the north, with the romantic name of Timur, was for a while leader of the rebel party, in alliance with the Kirghiz under Usman Ali, the Amirs of Khotan, the Andijans or Turki from Russian Turkestan, and the Tungans. "There was talk of establishment of an Islamic Republic, based on Kashgar. But Timur was no Yakub Beg. He fell foul of the Kirghiz, chased Usman Ali and his wild

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4 Ella K. Maillart, Forbidden Journey (London: 1937), tr. T. McGreevy, 215.

5 News From Tartary (New York: 1936), 310.

6 The Times (London), July 24, 1933, 11. (From their correspondent in Simla, India.)



hill-men from Kashgar, and was himself, on his way back, attacked and decapitated [?] by Tungan soldiery. This started a new war between Turks [sic] and Tungans."<sup>7</sup>

Thus by the latter part of July, 1933, the Tungans and the Chinese, having at last of necessity become allies, were besieged in the Kashgar New City, called Han-cheng or Yangi-shahr, the high-walled Chinese citadel six miles from the old town. The two Tungan leaders were both from Yunnan, Ma Shao-wu, the ex-Tao Tai of the district, and Ma Chang-tsang. An official announcement issued July 22 by the Turki leaders said that an attack would soon be made by the combined Khotani and Kirghiz on the New City, where Ma Chang-tsang held much coveted supplies of money and arms. Janib Beg had just marched 1000 Khotani troops to Kashgar, to cooperate with the Khotan Amir already there.<sup>8</sup>

For the remainder of the year 1933, the Turki and their allies held and administered, in a muddled sort of way, the Old City and the oasis, while the Tungans, a handful in number, were besieged in the New City. The Chinese and the Tungans made sorties on the besiegers with great effect, it being only in numbers that they were at a disadvantage, as the mob surrounding them had run short of ammunition and were at a loss to procure more.<sup>9</sup> Teichman says that "the Tungans

<sup>7</sup> Sir Eric Teichman, Journey To Turkistan (London: 1937), 111.

<sup>8</sup> The Times (London), July 24, 1933, 11.

<sup>9</sup> "Recent Events in Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXI, Pt. I (Jan. 1934), 87.



were outnumbered many times, but it takes more courage than the average Turki has to tackle a Tungan in his lair, and the Turki's could make no impression on the Tungan stronghold."<sup>10</sup>

Glover says that "groups of Turki's from Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar, Artush, and Turfan struggled with Kirghiz adventurers for supreme power, so that the siege operations suffered accordingly."<sup>11</sup> This is supported by the Times' correspondent, who says that Timur, the Turki leader,<sup>12</sup> was reported to dislike the Khotan Amir and that "if he does not join the attack it is expected that he will quarrel with the Khotani and Kirghiz unless a compromise is effected by Khoja Niaz Haji [sic],...whom Timur and the Amir profess to recognize owing to the influence he derives from his wealth."<sup>13</sup>

In the autumn of 1933 a "Moslem Republic" was set up in Kashgaria, a movement which gained more publicity in European newspapers than its importance warranted. Who its leaders were is hard to determine, although undoubtedly at a slightly later date the Hodja Nias Hadji was President and the Mullah Sabit Bakl, Prime Minister.<sup>14</sup> Like all other

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10 Journey To Turkistan, 148.

11 "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 440.

12 Who, according to Teichman's account, would seem to have been killed before this. See above, 77.

13 The Times (London), July 24, 1933, 11.

14 Nicholas Vakar wrote: "In August [1933] a congress of Turks of Chinese Turkestan meeting at Aksu proclaimed the southern part of the country an independent republic, and elected Khoja-Niyaz-Hajji [sic] as president." "The Annexation of Chinese Turkestan", Slavonic Review, XIV, (cont.)



revolutionary governments in this part of the world, it printed its own money, employing a wandering Czech for the purpose.<sup>15</sup> In the beginning of February, 1934, "two delegates of the Turki Government arrived in Delhi [India] with the object of securing recognition of the new Republic" and it was reported that they were "going on to Kabul [Afghanistan], Teheran [Persia], and Angora [Turkey] on a similar mission."<sup>16</sup> The Havas News Agency had reported on January 30, from Angora, that the Turkish government had denied recognition to the new Moslem state.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, much was happening in Kashgar. The Hodja Nias Hadji, who has been mentioned in connection with the new republic, will be remembered as one of the original leaders of the Turki rebellion at Hami in 1931, who had invoked the aid of Ma Chung-yin and the Tungans of Kansu, but who had split with him in the summer of 1933 and had been defeated by him a short time later at Qara Shahr. Seeking to re-establish himself, the Hodja Nias Hadji ordered arms and ammunition from Soviet Russia, and came to the Kashgar region in order to receive them from across the border.<sup>18</sup>

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(July 1935), 122. Hereafter cited as "Annexation", Slavonic Review, XIV. Miss Maillart has it thus: "In November, 1933, Kashgar became the capital of a 'Republic of Eastern Turk-estan,' with a president named Sabit..." Forbidden Journey, 215.

15 Fleming, News From Tartary, 226-27.

16 The Times (London), Feb. 19, 1934, 11.

17 North China Herald (Shanghai), Feb. 7, 1934, 198.

18 Hedin, Big Horse, 244-45.



The Hodja and his force entered Kashgar on January 13, 1934, and assumed control of the Turki forces there.<sup>19</sup> The new forces and leadership were not sufficient, however, to take the New City from the Tungans.

In fact, the armies of the new "Moslem Republic" showed their prowess a short time later when they fled, about 10,000 of them, on hearing of the approach of what turned out to be about 800 Tungans and 1200 unwilling Turki conscripts. On February 6 the advance guard of Ma Chung-yin's army entered Kashgar and freed the beleaguered garrison of Han-cheng.<sup>20</sup> As this included Chinese and Turki as well as Tungans, and the Tungan soldiery not being a gentle lot, it was soon turned into a "hell on earth". Hedin wrote: "The missionaries of the Swedish Missionary Association had all their work cut out to look after the wounded and impoverished people."<sup>21</sup>

February 14th again saw the Tungans in action. While they were pursuing Turki forces north of the Kashgar River, a large body of Moslem troops approached from the west and overpowered, with aid from within, the guards at the gates of the Old City. But, says Consul Glover, the Tungans returned quickly, charged in proper military formation, and swept out the Moslem troops. This was the signal for the

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19 Glover, "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 441.

20 Loc. cit.

21 Big Horse, 245.



appearance of the cruel side of the Tungans. The order was given for a general house-to-house slaughter, which was avidly carried out. Some 2000 or 3000 people were slain, mostly by sword in order to save ammunition. Many were old men, women, and children. Afterwards the soldiers were observed giving handfuls of loot to the beggars. It was at this time that the British Consulate was fired upon and Mrs. Glover wounded.<sup>22</sup>

The Tungans were strong enough to clear the near vicinity of the city and they next attempted to take Yangi Hissar, a short distance south on the Yarkand road. The younger brother of Shah Mansur of Khotan was defending it, and the Shah came to his aid, but he was defeated by the Tungans, his troops scattered, and he was killed. The siege continued. "The citadel was well built for defense, and the besiegers had only rifles. They persisted with frontal attacks, and attempted to set on fire the heavy gates of the city, the walls of which were some 15 to 20 feet thick at the base. Under heavy fire, they persevered, and in three weeks had tunnelled and mined under the walls, and in this way succeeded in taking this very strong position."<sup>23</sup>

General Ma Chung-yin and his main force arrived in Kashgar on April 7, 1934, having fought their last action

<sup>22</sup> Glover, "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 443-44.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 446. Fleming says that after the Tungans took Kashgar in February that "two of the Emirs [sic] of Khotan were killed." News From Tartary, 216.



with provincial troops at Aqsu, across the desert to the north, and having successfully eluded the rest of Sheng's forces. The young Mohammedan leader immediately began consolidating his position around Kashgar. About half of his army, under his chief-of-cavalry, Ma Ho-san, was stationed at Maralbashi, a short distance to the north-east and guarding the northern approach to the city of Kashgar; the remainder the young General kept with him in the city. Ma Chung-yin was apparently in good spirits during his stay in Kashgar, playing tennis with enjoyment and impressing all with his courteous bearing. He often visited the British and Russian consulates, presumably hoping to be able to buy arms and ammunition from one country or the other.<sup>24</sup>

"However, early in July, as a result of certain negotiations, Ma Chung Ying [sic] and a few of his staff left for Soviet Russia..."<sup>25</sup> "He accordingly was escorted to the frontier...by Monsieur Constantinoff, the Secretary, and by some members of the trade agency of the Bolsheviat Consulate."<sup>26</sup> Tass News Agency reported on July 15, 1934, from Tashkent, Russia, that General Ma, three officers and 79 cavalrymen had crossed into Russia on July 10th and had been interned.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Hedin, Big Horse, 245-46.

<sup>25</sup> Glover, "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 441.

<sup>26</sup> "The Rebellion in Chinese Turkestan", C.A.S.J., XXII, Pt. I (Jan. 1935), 102. Hereafter cited as "Rebellion", C.A.S.J., XXII.

<sup>27</sup> North China Herald, July 18, 1934, 86.



After the disappearance of Ma Chung-yin, the chief command was taken by General Ma Ho-san, who was related to him in some way. The new leader had proclamations placed around the city "announcing that an agreement had been reached between the Chinese at Urumchi and the Tungans at Kashgar, according to which the last-named town was to be ceded to the Chinese, while the Tungans were recognized as possessors of the Khotan oasis."<sup>28</sup> The Tungans then marched away, across the Yarkand River to Khotan, where they established a new "independent state".

At about the same time the other "independent state" was ushered out of existence. After being driven from Kashgar by Ma Chung-yin, the leaders of the "Moslem Republic" entered into negotiations with the Urumchi authorities, in order to unite their forces against the Tungans. On June 27, 1934, Reuter News Agency reported from Simla, India, that the Hodja Nais Hadji, head of the "Turki Republic", wanted under Chinese rule again and on June 30th that he had joined the Chinese.<sup>29</sup> After the disappearance of General Ma, the "struggle between the republic and the government of Urumchi was resumed at once."<sup>30</sup> Vostokov claims that the president

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28 Hedin, Big Horse, 246.

29 North China Herald, July 4, 1934, 2 & 7.

30 Vakar, "Annexation", Slavonic Review, XIV, 122. P. Vostokov wrote: "D'abord le gouvernement provincial, allié en fait aux Uigurs, battit Ma Tchou-in qui s'enfuit sur le territoire soviétique... Puis ce fut le tour du 'Sin Kiang indépendant'." "L'U.R.S.S., la Mongolie et le Sin Kiang", Le Monde Slave, series II, XIII, 1-2 (June 1936), 452.



of the "Republic", Hodja Nias Hadji, deserted to the side of Urumchi and of Moscow, while the ministers who did not want to follow him were arrested by the Chinese and executed.<sup>31</sup> Reuter reported from Peking on August 2, 1934, that "with the surrender and disbandment of the remaining rebel troops at Hotseng [?], the independence movement in South Sinkiang had been completely suppressed, according to a telegram from Tihua [Urumchi] received by the Ta Kung Pao, Tientsin daily, on July 31."<sup>32</sup>

Nicholas Vakar explains in more detail:

The President of the Musulman republic, Khoja-Niyaz-Hajji [sic], was invited by the Soviet delegation to Irkeshtam....The result of this meeting was that the republican government fell into disagreement with the President of the Republic and detached itself. Part of the government, with the Prime Minister, Mulla [sic] Sabit Baki, at its head, pronounced against any rapprochement with the Bolsheviks, and embarked on an open struggle with the President of the Republic....The leaders of the Musulman movement who had not yet submitted were drawn into a trap and killed. The Paris paper, Yash-Turkestan [edited by Mustafa Chokai], has a telegram from Mecca, dated 13 February [evidently 1935], which says: 'The republican Prime Minister, Mulla Sabit Baki, formerly professor of theology in the University of Alexandria, and the Minister of Justice, Zarif-Kari, have been shot by the Chinese at Aksu....'

Thus the Musulman republic has come to an end.<sup>33</sup>

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31 Vostokov, loc. cit.

32 North China Herald, Aug. 8, 1934, 194.

33 "Annexation", Slavonic Review, XIV, 122.



After the Tungans left Kashgar, early in July, 1934, the city was without organized rule for over three weeks. Glover, the British Consul-General, wrote: "Outside the Consulate robbery, murder, and loot [sic] took place every night; shots and cries were heard, and one day the lower Consulate garden was entered and some of the sheep were stolen."<sup>34</sup> But during the week ending July 26th the Provincial Government of Urumchi took over control of the district.

The Government troops consisted of 800 or 900 Turki, under the command of General Mahmud Sze-jung, and about 200 of the "Manchurian" Chinese troops, led by General Kung Cheng-han, appointed by Governor Sheng as the Pacification Commissioner for the district.<sup>35</sup> They were followed on August 7th by General Liu Pin, Commander-in-Chief and Commissioner for Defense at Kashgar,<sup>36</sup> and more Chinese troops.<sup>37</sup> He was taken by airplane from Urumchi to Maralbashi and by automobile from there to Kashgar.<sup>38</sup>

Ma Shao-wu, the old mandarin from Yunnan, was retained

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34 "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 441.

35 Glover, loc. cit.; Hedin, Big Horse, 246; and The Times (London), Aug. 9, 1934, 9 and Aug. 16, 9. (Both articles from their correspondent at Simla, India.) The figures in the passage above are those given by Glover, who was on the scene. The Times correspondent gives them first as 400 Chinese and 2,000 Moslems, a week later as 300 Chinese and 2,000 Moslems.

36 The Times (London), Aug. 23, 1934, 9.

37 Glover, "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 442.

38 Hedin, Big Horse, 246.



as Tao Tai, a position which he had held before the troubles in the south began.<sup>39</sup> During the week ending August 2nd, Usman Ali, the Kirghiz leader, and 1000 troops, joined General Mahmud.<sup>40</sup> Garrisons of Provincial Government troops were posted at Yangi Hissar and at other points along the Yarkand road, but there were no clashes with the Tungans.<sup>41</sup> As soon as General Liu Pin arrived, he sent a delegation to negotiate with the Tungans at Khotan.<sup>42</sup> The Sarikol area, between Kashgar and Gilgit, India, remained unsettled, but General Kung claimed that the authority of the "provincial and central Government" had been completely restored over the rest of the province.<sup>43</sup> General Kung soon after returned to Urunchi.<sup>44</sup>

Kashgar now came under the rule of a triumvirate, representing the the usual condominium of Chinese-Turki rule which was being put into effect in the province. It consisted of General Liu Pin, one of the officers of the "North-Eastern" or Manchurian army, commanding a detachment of those troops; General Mahmud Sse-jung, a zealous Moslem, commanding the Turki troops and the loyalty of most of the Mohammedans

39 The Times (London), Aug. 9, 1934, 9.

40 Ibid., Aug. 16, 1934, 9.

41 Ibid., Aug. 9, 1934, 9.

42 Ibid., Aug. 23, 1934, 9.

43 Loc. cit.

44 "Rebellion", C.A.S.J., XXII, 105.



in the Kashgar area; and last, the Tao Tai, the district Civil Governor, Ma Shao-wu, who had held official positions in the province for over thirty years. All three were outwardly on good terms with one another, but under tight control from Urumchi. 45 Liu Pin held the chief authority.

The new domain of the Tungans was a well-to-do land, one of the richer sections of Sinkiang. It consisted in the main of a string of oases laying north of the mighty Kunlun Mountains, between the lower Altin Tagh Range and the Taklamakan Desert. The western boundary was the Yarkand River, the eastern border being just beyond Charkhliq, which is just south of the Lop Nor. The Tungans thus held the main towns of Posgam, Qarghaliq, Guma, Khotan (the capital), Chira, Keriya, Niya, Charchan, and Charkhliq. They controlled the main trade route to India, over the Karakoram Pass, and a route to China proper via the Koko Nor, the great Tsaidam Swamp of northern Tibet.

A writer in the Royal Central Asian Society Journal maintains that the Tungans in Khotan had no intention of settling down. "Everyone admits that the Tungans have great military ability and are very courageous - rare qualities in Central Asia - but they have shown great hatred towards the Chinese." It was only in Kashgar, he says, that they curbed this feeling [?], spared the Chinese, and combined

45 Teichman, Journey To Turkistan, 149. Glover wrote: "From a Consul's point of view, the system appears over-centralized." "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 452.



with them. This he attributes to the presence of the two Foreign Consulates and says that elsewhere countless Chinese have been slain by them. "It is well to remember that Chinese-Tungan feeling has always been bitter and irreconcilable and that the Tungans were often avenging old wrongs on the innocent."<sup>46</sup>

Glover, commenting on their character, wrote:

The Tungans possess outstanding military qualities; man for man, no troops got the better of them, not even the White Russian troops....They were usually laughing and cheerful. Unlike the traditional and present-day Chinese soldier, who, however well-trained, prefers to settle a dispute on paper or by words, the Tungan for choice settles it by fighting.

When the fight is over they nurse no grudge, but again continue on their way smiling.<sup>47</sup>

They controled the Khotan area with very few men, the British Consul-General saying that it was miraculous the "way the Tungans conscripted people and made them work for them." He says that there were "at the most 2,000 real Tungans, in a foreign and hostile country, but their rifle strength was probabably 10,000 or more."<sup>48</sup> Peter Fleming, who traveled through the Khotan State in 1935, believes that their effective strength was then

probably in the neighborhood of 15,000 rifles, but they could put into the field a very much larger force of auxiliaries armed with swords. About 80 per cent of the regular troops are cavalry, extremely

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<sup>46</sup> "Rebellion", C.A.S.J., XXII, 103.

<sup>47</sup> "Kashgaria", C.A.S.J., XXIV, 443.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 445.



well mounted; there are several machine-guns and a few light cannon. The units are officered by Tungans, but in some the majority of the rank and file are Turkis.<sup>49</sup>

Miss Maillart, who accompanied Fleming, remarks that the Tungan barracks were cleanly kept, as well as the racks of rifles.<sup>50</sup> These weapons of theirs were a motley lot.

Fleming was visited by the Military Commander at Charchan, whose bodyguard was "heavily though heterogenously armed and had brought with them, for purposes of pomp, an old and portly machine-gun on a pack horse." As for guns, one had

a Winchester .303. an old sporting model and clearly the legacy of an expedition. There was an ancient Japanese service rifle, several Snyders, a German rifle (1890), and a Lee-Enfield from the Indian frontier very approximately dated by the initials VR. But the most intriguing of all was a Remington marked 1917 and stamped clumsily with the double eagle of Imperial Russia; I saw these hybrid weapons elsewhere in Sinkiang and presume that they were supplied by the Americans to White forces during the Siberian intervention.<sup>51</sup>

The Khotan arsenal was housed in several ramshackle buildings, with an exhibition/hall containing fifteen or twenty light cannon which had been captured from the Urunchi forces. Painted green and blue, they were kept in "a beautifully spic and span condition, but the supply of ammunition for them was not much more than symbolical."<sup>52</sup> Girls were kept busy taking rifles to pieces, while men tinkered at

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49 News From Tartary, 263.

50 Forbidden Journey, 199.

51 News From Tartary, 268-69.

52 Ibid., 303.



scrap iron guns. Molds used in making grenades were ranged along a courtyard, Fleming stating that "small hand-grenades were being manufactured with as few precautions as if they had been hot-cross-buns."<sup>53</sup>

General Ma Ho-san told the two travelers that the bombs dropped by the Soviet airplanes had "released terrible gasses....He was trying to have masks made and wondered whether we knew the chemical mixtures with which they had to be impregnated. As for munitions, he had enough. There were still plenty of the rifles captured in battle."<sup>54</sup>

Fleming wrote:

Externally as well as internally, Khotan is dominated by its garrison. All day long, in spite of the oppressive heat, chanting columns of troops marched through the bazar between their quarters and the various parade-grounds....For the most part they wore an undress uniform of grubby white, with floppy white sun-hats on their shaven heads; this pastoral and rather feminine headgear consoled oddly with the brutish pock-marked faces, the bloodshot glaring eyes. Often a regiment would pass very slowly through the streets, doing an exaggerated acrobatic goose-step and swinging their arms above their heads; and in the evening, dressed in shorts and a kind of football shirt quartered in red and white, they raced and jumped and played a big-scale variation of Hunt the Slipper under the walls of the New City. Bugles were always blowing somewhere, and all the day the fierce Moslem songs rolled about the city like the sound of an angry sea. I have never seen troops in China train so hard.<sup>55</sup>

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There was no doubt that Tungan rule lay heavily on the oases; the Turkis were groaning under the

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53 Ibid., 302. See Maillart, Forbidden Journey, 228.

54 Maillart, Forbidden Journey, 231.

55 News From Tartary, 302.



weight of other peoples' military ambitions. Almost all the activity that was going on was going on for the benefit of the garrison; the donkeys trotting in from the outskirts of the oasis with loads of fodder or of fuel, the men who were leveling a new parade ground - these and other signs of forced labor abounded. Both farmers and merchants were victimized by exactions.<sup>56</sup>

Ma Pu-fang of Kansu, kinsman of Ma Ho-san and Ma Chung-yin, sent, in the summer of 1935, an eleven man embassy to Khotan, traveling the desert road via Tunhwang. But they criticized the exactions system so severely that the delegates were kept in isolation until they got back home.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps Sir Eric Teichman is correct when he says that "of the three races playing the chief roles in politics of Chinese Central Asia, the Chinese are the rulers born and bred, astute, superior beings, the Tungans the fighters, and the Turkis made by Providence to be the ruled."<sup>58</sup>

"The ruled", however, were not just a herd of cattle to be driven about by armed bands. In May, 1935, the Tungans had to put down a revolt of the Turki at Charkhliq, the easternmost oasis of the Khotan State. This they did with thoroughness, more than a hundred citizens being executed.<sup>59</sup>

In the spring of 1936 about 4,000 Kazaks, Moslem nomads, migrated in a continual stream from near Khotan to Kansu province of China, according to Central News Agency

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56 Ibid., 288.

57 Maillart, Forbidden Journey, 185.

58 Journey To Turkistan, 138-39.

59 See Fleming, News From Tartary, 267, 281 & 284; Maillart, Forbidden Journey, 194 & 196.



reports from Lanchow, China. Carrying arms, camp equipment and driving herds of cattle and horses, they traveled over a thousand miles in search of richer pastures, and possibly because of conflict with other peoples. They settled north of Ansi, on the southern slopes of the Machung Shan range, in northern Kansu.<sup>60</sup>

Ma Ho-san always proclaimed his allegiance to Nanking.

Early in 1935, in the absence of telegraphic or postal facilities, he sent an emissary to the Central Government of China, about two thousand miles away, to reiterate his loyalty, explain the Tungan point of view, and of course, to ask for assistance.<sup>61</sup> General Ma was also in communication with the Urumchi authorities. Teichman observed in November, 1935, that "negotiations with these Tungans were supposed to be in progress, but with the Chinese it takes a long time to reach finality in such affairs."<sup>62</sup>

Russian influence early began to make itself felt in the Kashgar area. On August 27, 1934, the Times reported that General Liu Pin (a Christian) had offended the Moslems there by ordering a portrait of Sun Yat-sen placed in the local "idgah" or Moslem prayer house. A merchant who protested, Islamic religious law "forbidding the display of any

<sup>60</sup> North China Herald, Apr. 1, 8 & Apr. 22, 1936, 142.

<sup>61</sup> See Fleming, News From Tartary, 263; Maillart, Forbidden Journey, 231; and "The Mongol Dilemma", C.A.S.J., XXII, Pt. III (July 1935), 466.

<sup>62</sup> "Chinese Turkestan", C.A.S.J., XXIII, Pt. IV (Oct. 1936), 572.



representation of man or animal in a sacred building," was arrested and tried "before a military court on a charge of insolence towards the newly restored authority".<sup>63</sup> The Tungans immediately seized on this as propaganda directed against Chinese rule.<sup>64</sup>

On October 26, 1934, Ma Shao-wu, the Tao Tai, while driving in his carriage with his wife and child to his home in the suburbs, was attacked by a band of men and almost killed.<sup>65</sup> His assailants, hidden behind a wall, poured a volley of shots into his hooded Peking cart at point-blank range, but still bungled their job. "The child was unhurt, the wife only slightly wounded, and the old man, though terribly shot about the legs, was able to drag himself into the cover of a maize field."<sup>66</sup> Fleming says that the "Police, with a cynicism unusual even in Sinkiang, did not even make a pretense of rounding up the men who had shot him. It was a dirty business."<sup>67</sup> A year later he was reported in Moscow on his way to Berlin for medical treatment.<sup>68</sup> It seems probable that his crime was being a Tungan and a devout Moslem.

On August 28, 1936, it was reported that fifty Moslem schoolboys of Sinkiang had been sent by the Provincial

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<sup>63</sup> The Times (London), Aug. 27, 1934, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Dec. 6, 1934, 13.

<sup>65</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>66</sup> Fleming, News From Tartary, 327.

<sup>67</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>68</sup> North China Herald, Oct. 30, 1935, 178.



Government to Russia for their education, and that "before leaving, the lads were addressed by a Moslem general, who urged them to remember the religion of their forefathers."<sup>69</sup> This general could easily have been Mahmud Sse-jung, the Turki leader in Kashgar, who was an opponent of the Soviet "advisers" and their propaganda.<sup>70</sup>

A report in the Times reads as follows:

The Sinkiang authorities have withdrawn the restrictions they formerly imposed on Moslem education and religion. Some time ago a number of the Moslem schools were closed by authority and restrictions placed on prayers in the mosques. It is now stated that these orders were issued under a misapprehension, as the Government stands for complete religious liberty.<sup>71</sup>

In the Spring of 1937 the pent-up rivalrys in South Sinkiang burst forth, being touched off, perhaps innocently, by General Mahmud. "For a long time he complied, docilely enough, with orders from Urumchi, but when bidden to report in person to the capital a natural prudence prompted him to slip away over the passes into India."<sup>72</sup> Sven Hedin says that Mahmud:

told his followers that he was going on a shooting trip in the mountains, and went off in the direction of Yangi-hissar. When he had gone, the whole of his East Turki army, which had been in garrison at Kashgar, set off for Yarkand. Outside Yarkand

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69 The Times (London), Aug. 28, 1936, 11

70 Hedin, Silk Road (New York: 1938), tr. F.H.Lyon, 300.

71 The Times (London), Aug. 28, 1936, 11.

72 Ibid., Aug. 21, 1937, 9.



Mahmud Si Yang [sic] met his troops and handed over the command to one or two of his right-hand men. He himself departed to India...<sup>73</sup>

By June 2nd he had reached Srinagar, India, and was reported contemplating a pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>74</sup> It is likely that his army joined forces with the Tungans and seized the important city of Yarkand.

Now was the time for the Tungans to make another bid for power. Early in March, 1937, Ma Ho-san left Khotan for a few days in order to direct maneuvers in the west.<sup>75</sup> He was away from his capital quite often during the next several months. On May 3rd he arrived at Khotan with his full staff, and ordered hundreds of camels sent to Keriya to transport war materials to the western border. That evening troops set up, eastward of Khotan, a military camp which remained there for a week.<sup>76</sup> Dr. Wilhelm Filchner, the German scientist who was detained in Khotan from October, 1936 to the end of July, 1937, wrote:

Fresh news which arrived daily left no doubt that war was in full swing in west Sinkiang. On the 22nd of May the last Khotan regiment departed for Qarghaliq. All the regiments stationed at Lob, Keriya, and Niya had already marched through Khotan bound for the same place.

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 Soon every approximately able-bodied man had

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<sup>73</sup> Silk Road, 300-301.

<sup>74</sup> The Times (London), June 3, 1937, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Wilhelm Filchner, A Scientist In Tartary (London: 1939), tr. E.O. Lorimer, 305.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 311.



been roped in for military service. The enthusiasm with which the people leapt forward to gratify the ambition of their Padsha [Ma Ho-san] was indicated by the hordes of recruits who were driven goose-stepping through the streets, roped together in fives with their hands tied together and lashed to their bodies. Some of the lads were packed off to the front after a very hasty, incredibly severe training, some were incorporated in the militia. Older men were chosen out and sent to protect the frontiers with India. They set out on the 9th of June, well mounted, with a very few carbines and a lot of hand-grenades.<sup>77</sup>

The Times of June 3rd reported that "a section of the army who are followers of General Mahmud have begun an attack on the Old City [of Kashgar]." It further said that "the mutiny does not at present appear serious."<sup>78</sup> On June 24th a report said that conditions were reported quiet again at Kashgar, but that six bombing airplanes has arrived there from Urunchi.<sup>79</sup> Filchner wrote of Khotan:

Soon rumours were current of heavy casualties caused by the Bolshevist hand-grenade attacks. The city began to lose its confident air of victory. Soldiers deserted, and many who were caught were publicly beheaded. Night and day, police and military patrols guarded the streets...As long as operations in the west continued, trade of every kind was at a standstill and prices soared.

On July 5th, 1937, we read the following official notice in Khotan: 'Order has been restored, merchants may travel where they please.' On July 9th, the Padishah [Ma Ho-san] returned at the head of his troops and was received in triumph by the population.<sup>80</sup>

77 Ibid., 315.

78 The Times (London), June 3, 1937, 13.

79 Ibid., June 24, 1937.

80 "Central Asia", C.A.S.J., XXV, pt. III (July, 1938), 378-79.



From the above account, it appears likely that the Tungans and the Turki followers of Mahmud Sse-jung had joined forces and had taken Yarkand, evidently after stiff fighting against provincial troops. There may have been an attack on Kashgar, perhaps by Turki unsupported by Tungans. In the Times of August 21, 1937, it was reported that, though it was "not yet clear at what juncture, or on what terms, the Tungans threw in their lot with the rebellious Turkis..."<sup>81</sup> Hedin says that "the combined armies were 15,000 men strong, and with this force Ma [Ho-san] marched against Kashgar."<sup>82</sup> He fails, however, to give a date for this attack.

Filchner, writing of Ma Ho-san's return to Khotan on July 9th, says:

The town was beflagged next day in honour of the King's [Ma Ho-san] victory. What victory? In the evening preparations were made for a huge festive banquet. Before the feasting had begun, however, the Padsha and his staff suprised every one by driving in the greatest haste out of town. I accidentally picked up the information that he was off to Kashgar.<sup>83</sup>

On August 21st the Times reported that General Ma and the Tungans were in Kashgar, and that his troops dominated Yarkand, "either in alliance with or in spite of the Turki insurgents."<sup>84</sup> (An article published on January 5, 1938,

81 The Times (London), Aug. 21, 1937, 9.

82 Silk Road, 300.

83 A Scientist In Tartary, 320.

84 The Times (London), Aug. 21, 1937, 9.



says "in collaboration with discontented Turki elements..."<sup>85)</sup>  
 Fighting was still going on, the Times reported, and:

Chinese provincial troops are reported to be holding out in the New City...and around the aerodrome, which is near the New City and at which six Russian aeroplanes equipped as bombers recently arrived from Urumchi. The Chinese provincial commander in Kashgar has fled. The chief of the secret police, a Tadjik from across the Soviet border, had been less fortunate; he and an...assortment of his subordinates, after being besieged in a yâmen, were captured by the Tungans and have met with an unknown but doubtless disagreeable fate.

...  
 The latest reports indicate that they [the Tungans] have reached Aksu.<sup>86</sup>

Hedin wrote:

Ma Ho-san, himself driven in a lorry, led his troops by way of Faisabad and Maralbashi to Aksu, which he captured though the new town held out. Now the Red Russian propaganda bore fruit; the Tungans and East Turkis quarrelled and split, but withdrew to Kashgar and Yarkand. A large number of Tungans went over to the Reds.<sup>87</sup>

According to an article in the Times, the failure of the Turki-Tungan rebellion may be traced to the defection of one Tungan brigade, which was stationed in the Maralbashi-Faizabad region, where it supported Turki forces. Disaffection arose within the brigade during the temporary absence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Tungan forces, General Ma Ho-san, and the already awkward administrative and military problems facing the rebel forces were complicated by mutiny within their ranks.<sup>88</sup>

Whether the Tungan troops deserted because of "Red" propaganda, or just dissatisfaction, is hard to say. After

85 The Times (London), Jan. 5, 1938, 11.

86 Ibid., Aug. 21, 1937, 9.

87 Silk Road, 300.

88 The Times (London), Jan. 5, 1938, 11.



readjusting their allegiances, they marched to Kashgar. An article in the Times says:

The withdrawal of the brigade from Faizabad weakened the Tungan control over Kashgar, and undermined their strategic hold on Yarkand. When the disaffected brigade reached Kashgar it found that its former allies there had not awaited its arrival; consequently no fighting took place in the immediate neighborhood of the city. As the newcomers had already transferred their allegiance to the Provincial authorities the Sinkiang Government won an unexpected and welcome victory. It is understood that the Faizabad brigade was, as a matter of precaution, subsequently disarmed and disbanded, the Turki elements being sent home, each man being given a soft, warm winter coat and a little hard cash.

The Provincial civil and military authorities quickly assumed control of Kashgar. The siege of the New City, which had lasted for three months, was lifted; officials who had been imprisoned in the Old City were released. The Provincial soldiery, assisted by Russian aeroplanes and additional forces from Urumchi, began to 'mop up' the remaining rebels in the Kashgar-Yarkand area, and later spread their net towards Khotan, in the south, and Aksu, in the north, where defeat was inflicted on the rebel Turakis.<sup>89</sup>

The German aviator, Baron C.A. von Gablenz, on a trial flight from China, was forced down near Khotan early in September, 1937, and was detained by the Tungans for about a month. He "heard that there had been fighting recently at Aksu between troops from Urumchi and Kashgar and saw the defenses of...Khotan being strengthened with feverish energy."<sup>90</sup> Later he learned that General Ma Ho-san had been defeated by a General Ma Shing-wei, of the provincial forces, and that the Tungan leader's troops "had deserted him and marched via Guma to Khotan...."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> The Times (London), Jan. 5, 1938, 11.

<sup>90</sup> Hedin, Silk Road, 303.



General Ma Ho-san gave up the fight and, accompanied by his body guard, fled over the Karakoram Pass to India. The 450,000 Rupees worth of gold [approximately \$120,000] which he took with him was confiscated by the British Government,<sup>91</sup> the British taking the view "that this gold had been stolen from the Chinese Central Government, which still ruled over Eastern Turkestan, at least in form."<sup>92</sup>

After the flight of their leader, the Tungan troops:

ceased to put up any organized resistance, the soldiers indulging in acts of petty banditry in the region they had for so short a time controlled.

The Provincial authorities, based on Kashgar, regained power over the Yarkand region early in September, and only small bands of Tungans were left roaming the inhospitable country between Kashgar and Yarkand. The aeroplanes endeavoured to rout them out, with little success. By the end of the month provincial troops were in possession of the southern oases as far as Khotan, and the Tungans appear to have been driven out of the Tarim basin into the foothills of the Kwen Lun [sic] Mountains on the border land of Tibet.

The Turks of the rebel army are being disbanded; and attempts are being made to enlist the Tungans into the Provincial military forces.<sup>93</sup>

Thus was ended nearly a decade of struggle and strife, of rebellions and invasions.

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91 Report from the British Consul General, Kashgar, No. F. 64/38, dated Kashgar, the 18th July 1938. Hedin says that Ma carried 300 pounds of gold dust. Silk Road, 301.

92 Hedin, Silk Road, 301.

93 The Times (London), Jan. 5, 1938, 11.



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### SUMMARY

and of Qorqat, who rose in rebellion, and they incited the Uighurs, the Chinese Moslems, of the neighboring provinces of Kansu.

In July, 1921, the Chinese forces arrived at Hami, led by the young General Ma Chang-yin, the nephew of the Governor of both Kansu and of Shing Hai provinces. The Chinese garrison of Hami resisted several vicious attacks by the Moslem allies, then General Ma led most of his troops across the Pien Shan and took the city of Barkul to the north. Following this, he led them westward to Gulistan, at the southern end of the important Kashgaria, and wiped out the Chinese provincial army stationed

at Hami. General Ma's troops and the rebels besieged it for several months, but by the end of October, 1921, the town was relieved by a provincial army, and the



were driven back to Kamsu, where the "Young General"  
 set his forces.  
 Turki, aided by Ma Shih-ying, the adjutant of the  
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After the murder of Governor Yang Tseng-hsin on July 7, 1928, the rule of Sinkiang was taken over by Chin Chu-jen, the Chief of the Chancellery. By oppression and misgovernment, the new authorities provoked the Moslem-Turki of the Hami or Qomul district to rise in rebellion, and they invoked the aid of the Tungans, the Chinese Moslems, of the neighboring province of Kansu.

In July, 1931, the Tungan forces arrived at Hami, led by the young General Ma Chung-yin, the nephew of the Governors of both Kansu and of Ching Hai provinces. The Chinese garrison of Hami resisted several vicious attacks by the Moslem allies, then General Ma led most of his troops across the Tien Shan and took the city of Barkul to the north. Following this, he led them westward to Chi Ku Ching Tze, at the southern end of the important Tashihto Pass, and wiped out the Chinese provincial army stationed there.

Returning to Hami, General Ma's troops and the rebels besieged it for several months, but by the end of October, 1931, the town was relieved by a provincial army, and the



Tungans were driven back to Kansu, where the "Young General" reorganized his forces.

The Turki, aided by Ma Shih-ming, the adjutant of Ma Chung-yin, continued to resist the Chinese, whose avenging army was led by General Sheng Shih-tsai, newly arrived in Sinkiang from Manchuria. In January and February, 1933, the rebels besieged Urumchi, but were driven back. In the spring they again surrounded the capital, and although they did not take it, Governor Chin was forced to flee and General Sheng Shih-tsai became the new ruler of the province. Aided by the Manchurian Volunteers, a force driven from Manchuria by the Japanese, interned in Siberia, and returned to China via Sinkiang, Sheng began to quiet the Turki rebels.

By May, 1933, however, the Turki had again risen in rebellion and Ma Chung-yin led a large Tungan army to their aid. A provincial army was defeated on the North Road by the Tungans, and Urumchi was only saved by the victory a few days later of Governor Sheng and the Manchurians. General Ma reformed his troops and took Turfan in June, cutting off Urumchi from the southern part of the province. Hodja Nias Hadji, who had remained loyal to Sheng, and his Turki forces along the South Road were driven westward from Qara Shahr, and a Tungan army penetrated to Kashgar.

In the autumn of 1933, rebels from the Altai raided the country west of Urumchi and the Governor of Ili joined the rebel movement; by the end of the year both groups were



defeated by White Russian troops of the provincial government. In mid-winter, December or January, the Tungans advanced from Turfan through the Tapancheng Pass and laid siege to Urunchi, but were driven back in February, Sheng Shih-tsai being aided by at least munitions and airplanes from Soviet Russia. General Ma established his Tungans in strong positions at Tapancheng Pass, but by the first of March were driven south by airplane bombing. At the same time the Turki in the Hami region arose against the Tungans. The "Young General" and the remnants of his Kansu army retreated westward along the South Road, through Turfan, Qara Shahr, Kurla, and Aqsu, and entered Kashgar on April 7, 1934.

The first of his troops had reached Kashgar almost a year earlier, and had united with the Moslem Turki and Kirghiz to overthrow the Chinese in power. By mid-summer of 1933, however, the Tungans had fallen out with the other Mohammedans, and had united with the Chinese in defence of Han-cheng, the New City of Kashgar, against the rest of the rebels. That autumn a short-lived "Moslem Republic" was established by the latter, and Hodja Nias Hadji became its President, but his forces were still unable to dislodge the Tungans from Han-cheng. In February, 1934, the "Republic" was driven from Kashgar by the advance guard of Ma Chung-yin, preceeding his entry in April.

Early in July General Ma left the scene and entered



Russia, leaving his command to Ma Ho-san, who announced an agreement with Governor Sheng, led the Tungans to Khotan, and occupied the southern oases. The Hodja Mias Hadji declared his allegiance to Sheng and the "Moslem Republic" disappeared.

For three years the Tungans quietly nursed their wounds in south Sinkiang, then in May, 1937, General Ma Ho-san led his army to attack Kashgar, seizing the opportunity to unite with rebellious Turki troops. At first he swept easily through Yarkand, Kashgar, Maralbashi, and Aqsu, but when the Tungan brigade at Maralbashi deserted to the provincial side, the rebellion collapsed and Ma Ho-san fled over the passes to India. Comparative quiet returned to Sinkiang.



NOTES TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY



Although no one source has been of use throughout this paper, the writings of Dr. Sven Hedin and his associates have been very valuable and to a certain extent have formed the framework for the paper. His expeditions were in the Province of Sinkiang from November, 1927 to April, 1930 and from February to April, 1934. Dr. Hedin's works are irreplaceable when concerning events he witnessed, but tend to be sometimes unreliable otherwise.

He and his associates, notably Ambolt, Haslund, Horner, and Norin, have written many books which I have found useful, but Owen Lattimore has pointed out that "neither Hedin himself nor any of his young men whose books have thus far been published have given an adequate account of the Moslem rebellion of 1932 and 1933, though they saw a lot of what happened." Reviewing Karavan, by Nils Ambolt, Lattimore further points out that though Ambolt says "nothing about the causes of the rebellion or its probable results, he vividly describes a few scenes of violence and confusion. The first part of his book shows why revolution in such a land is necessarily savage: ignorance, isolation, and lack of the habit of fighting seems to breed a special hysteria when oppression, always



taken for granted, suddenly reveals that it is unable to maintain itself by force."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Wilhelm Filchner, who was in south Sinkiang from October, 1936 to July 1937, gives the only first-hand account of this important period, but his writings are rather unreliable. He seems to unduly stress Bolshevik intrigue, for he is admittedly a German agent.

A Periodical... [which] has recently appeared in Germany... is concerned with Central Asian affairs and the great Eurasian highway leading from Eastern Europe to Western China, a highway which is becoming important once more as the natural airway to China. It is no secret, since in this periodical Professor Filchner writes of it, that it was he who has mapped so much of this air route and has given possible landing-grounds along it in his great Tibetan and Central Asian journeys.<sup>2</sup>

Peter Fleming and Miss E.K. Maillart, who visited the same region a short time before, give very readable eye-witness accounts of Tungan activities, although they witnessed no hostilities. Miss Maillart's book is a bit more accurate and comprehensive.

Colonel J. Thomson Glover, who was British Consul General in Kashgar from October, 1935 to October, 1936, tells very little in his one short written account, but that is extremely valuable, and gives the only accurate dating of the important events which took place in Kashgar during that period.

<sup>1</sup> Geographical Journal, XCIV, No. 4 (Oct. 1939), 340-41.

<sup>2</sup> "The Russian Domination of Sinkiang", C.A.S.J., XXVI, Pt. IV (Oct. 1939), 648.



The Haardt-Citroën Expedition was in the Province during the crucial latter half of 1931, and the writings of both Le Fèvre and his colleague Petro are basic for this period of the first Tungan invasion of Sinkiang. The latter's account of the siege of Hami gives a vivid picture of the Tungan methods of warfare.

Very interesting is the book which Georg Vassel calls My Russian Jailers In China, the title alone showing the obvious anti-Soviet bias of the author. He apparently was kept in jail by pro-Russian Chinese officials of Sinkiang during the important events of 1933-34, in order that he not see "too much", but he saw, according to his account, a surprising amount, which of course reflects no credit upon the Soviets. It is interesting to note his reference to the "Sin-Sui Transport Company", and to "Sin-Sui, a thriving frontier-town between Sinkiang and Kansu, a town which... was now the victim of the insidious penetration of the Red tyrants from the West."<sup>3</sup> Interesting because the Transport Company is so-named because it connects Sinkiang and Suiyuan, provinces which are not contiguous.

The most valuable source may prove to be the book Turkistan Turmoil, written by Aitchen K. Wu, who was a provincial official in Urumchi during the rebellions. It has

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<sup>3</sup> Georg Vassel, My Russian Jailers In China (London: 1937), tr. G.Griffin, 276.



recently been published in London, and the writer has not yet seen it. However, an article by Mr. Wu in a recent issue of Asia was of little use, giving no definite information.

Among the secondary works the unsigned articles in the Royal Central Asian Journal, probably by its editorial staff, are of great value, although not always accurate. Owen Lattimore's writings are important because of his expert knowledge of the country, but he has apparently not made a special study of this period. The only really complete study of this problem is that by Clemente Astori ("Sinkiang 1928-1938", Asiatica, V, No. 2 (March-April, 1939), pp. 122-33.), but he seems to rely too heavily upon the works of Sven Hedin. The few pages on this period found in Dr. Fuad Kazak's book are very good, for he has made full use of Russian sources.

It can probably be safely said that the only reliable accounts are those of events ~~actually~~ witnessed by those writing of them, and these, too, can not be fully trusted.



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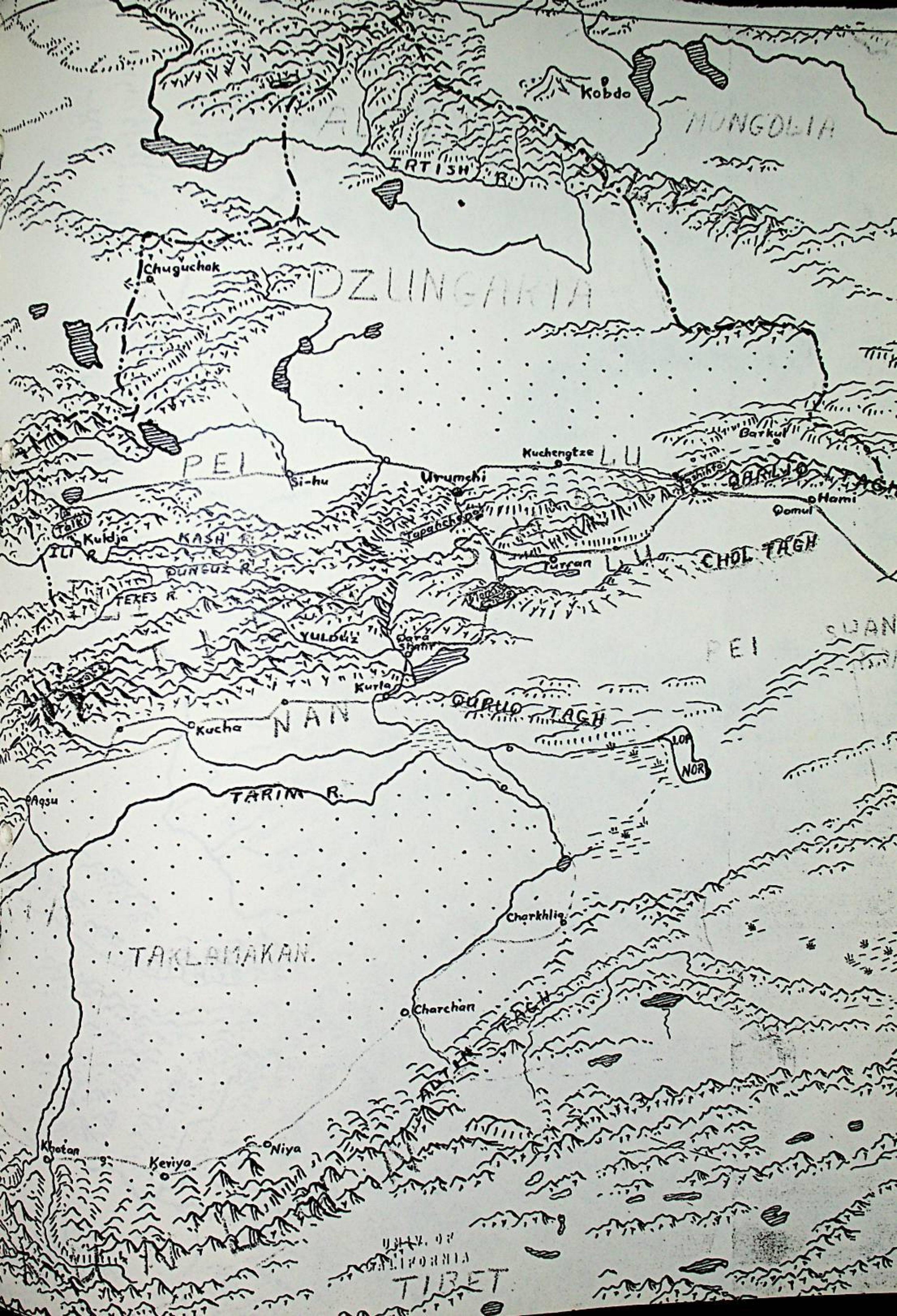
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Kobdo

MONGOLIA

ALTAI MOUNTAINS

IRTIISH R.

DZUNGARIA

Chuguchak

PEI

Kuchengtze

Urumchi

QARQUN TAGH

Hami

Qomul

CHOL TAGH

Kuldja

KASH

Tapachchay

Turpan

TERES R.

YULDUZ

Dara Shah

Kurla

PEI

SWAN

Kucha

NAN

QARQUN TAGH

LOP NOR

TARIM R.

Aqsu

Charkhliq

TAKLAMAKAN

Charchan

Khotan

Keriya

Niya

TIBET



Scale in Miles

