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Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier, by David Brophy, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2016, 347 pp., \$39.95/£31.95/€36.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780674660373

This book is largely about activists from two Turkic-speaking Muslim communities from Xinjiang, the Taranchis (who in the early 1880s, after a brief Russian occupation of Xinjiang's Ili Valley, emigrated from there to Russian Semirechie, where they became farmers surrounded by nomadic Kazakhs) and the Kashgaris (represented by traditional traders between Xinjiang and the Ferghana Valley, and later, seasonal workers from Xinjiang recruited for Soviet cotton production). Less involved were Chinese-speaking Muslim Dungans, plus Eastern Turkestan's Mongol aristocracy and other groups. Brophy's monograph focuses on Uyghur community representation in Xinjiang and especially in imperial and Soviet Turkestan, in relation to Soviet policies towards Xinjiang and China. This issue of representation correlates to the development of an overarching Uyghur cultural or national identity, which, as Brophy sees it, developed along various conflicting lines, and was initially carried forward by Taranchi activists. The Taranchis' agenda was connected to land issues in Russian Turkestan, and Taranchis later tried to use Soviet nationality policies to acquire official status in the USSR. In contrast, Kashgari notables on both sides of the Chinese–Russian border were less interested in

categories of modern nationalism, being bound together by broader Turkic and Muslim identities. But the publicists and activists of both communities were flexible in adapting to changing policies and political constellations in Russia and China, and the book also tells the story of Russian and Soviet foreign policies with regard to the Qing empire and autonomous Xinjiang administrators. The last chapter throws the reader into the turbulent 1930s and 1940s, when China's provinces were ruled by a host of warlords; here the Muslim activists found themselves between contradictory Soviet interests, the rise of the Guomindang in Canton, and two short-lived experiments of an East Turkestan Republic, before the region was integrated into Mao's People's Republic of China in 1949.

Brophy ties these political complexities to the activities of elite individuals of Xinjiang origin, and thereby emphasizes their agency. Among the main personalities in his story, we find Kashgari *aqsaqals* (headmen) who, partly with Chinese confirmation, represented their cross-border trading communities in Russian and Soviet Turkestan. On the Taranchi side, the central personalities are political intellectuals of the Jadid educational reform movement who, inspired by Tatar Jadidism, developed an interest in the history of their communities; one of them, Nazarkhoja Abdusamadov, began to use the name 'Uyghur's son', and to claim that the Turks of Xinjiang preserved the heritage of the ancient Uyghur civilization (a prominent object of Russian and European Turkologist research at the time), arguing that this heritage just needed to be revived after centuries of oblivion. In 1918, Taranchi activists established a 'Uyghur Club' in Vernyi (present-day Almaty); this and similar (often socialist-leaning) intellectual circles made the term a political catchword. In between, we find travelling Islamic scholars who left their mark on the community discourse, such as the Syrian Shami-Damulla, a hadithocentrist theologian whom I have hitherto encountered only through the impact he later made in early Soviet Uzbekistan. Among the modernist teachers who set up schools in Xinjiang were also Young Turk emigres as well as Volga Tatars such as the celebrated Abdullah Bubi, who for a while taught in exile in Gulja; and many Uyghur intellectuals published their historical and publicist works first in the Volga-Urals, in Tatar journals that appeared in Kazan, Ufa and Orenburg. The Jadidist agenda among leading Uyghur intellectuals came to an end with the Great Terror of 1936–1938, when most of them were executed, to be replaced by fully Soviet-trained functionaries.

While Brophy concedes that, in general, the politicization of Uyghur identity discourses emerged ten years after similar national discourses had unfolded in Russian Turkestan, he also emphasizes that 'Uyghurism' (first encompassing not only the Turks of Xinjiang and Semirechie but also the Dungans and others) emerged before the Soviet national delimitation in Central Asia, and was therefore not a Soviet product; rather, it came via several pathways 'from below', with activists who then attempted to employ the existing Soviet nationality policies in the 1920s and 1930s. And when activists sought Soviet recognition for their nation, the Bolsheviks were hesitant to grant it beyond a few 'national' Uyghur collective farms in Semirechie and the Fergana Valley. With this point, Brophy is close to Adeeb Khalid, who, in his *Making Uzbekistan* (2015), argued along similar lines for the case of Uzbek nationalism and state-building. But Brophy's book also connects to recent works on 'trans-imperial Muslims' between Russia and Istanbul, including James Meyer's *Turks Across Empires* (2014) and Mustafa Tuna's *Imperial Russia's Muslims* (2015), which both describe the flexibility of Muslim activists' professed identities in different and changing contexts. Like these authors, Brophy explores the local activists in contact situations not only with Russian administrators but also with secular Russian (and German-origin) Orientalists; these historians and linguists sometimes informed political decisions, including on the crucial questions of how to define a common Uyghur language (should it be based on the Taranchi or Kashgari dialect?), and which alphabet to use for it. In the 1920s and 1930s, the major research institutions in

Moscow studying Xinjiang and educating Uyghur politicians were the Moscow Communist University of Toilers of the East (KUTV) and its counterpart for China (KUTK), both of the Comintern; but while the Comintern advocated a policy of revolutionizing Xinjiang (portraying the Uyghurs as a nationality oppressed by Chinese imperialism, and under threat by the British), the Soviet Foreign Ministry urged moderation, in order to maintain trade and good relations with China, and to secure the influx of the Kashgari workforce.

Brophy's analysis is based on a large array of sources, in Russian, Tatar, Uyghur and Chinese and, in particular, he makes excellent use of various Russian and Central Asian archives. Whenever the author leads us into a particular case, he operates on a high level of analysis, with individual trajectories forming strings over several chapters (such as those of Abdullah Rozibaqiev and Qadir-Hajji Hashim Hajjiev, the leading figures for the Taranchis and Kashgaris, respectively, in relation to Soviet policies in the 1920s and 1930s). I have to admit that some chapters are so densely composed that they make no easy read for the non-initiated, but the book has much to offer for students of nationalism in Central Asia, Russia and China, with some interludes touching upon Mongolia's ambitions in the region. For the scholar of Islam, the book is interesting for its discussion of the Jadid modernists, who experimented with Muslim next to other identities, and who, as in the Volga-Urals, depended on wealthy businessmen (such as the Musabaevs from Artush, and the Akhunbaevs from Kashgar) as sponsors of their school projects. As Brophy's goal is to elucidate the genesis of modern political Uyghurism, it is not surprising that 'traditionalist' (non-Jadid) school projects and publications receive little attention; one gets the impression that Jadidism was quickly victorious. Likewise, Sufi affiliations are only mentioned in passing, and important Sufi shrines (which, I assume, also functioned as markers of Muslim regional identities in Xinjiang) appear only when their *waqfs* were eventually confiscated. This might be a reflection of what the imperial and Soviet sources have to offer.

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