

A curious inconsistency lay in the circumstance that HAUDE and LI, who, it will be remembered, were staying in the so-called war-zone near Charkhliq, had not yet been instructed to return to Urumchi. It seemed as if the authorities had forgotten their existence.

The Chinese topographer CHAN had asked permission to resign, on account of news from his family; and the young digger PAI also wished to return home. Our application for passports for them was turned down, with the motivation that no Chinese were now receiving permits to leave the province. Similar obstacles would presumably be put in Professor SIU's way in the event of our considering it necessary to go to Nanking to win the support of the Central Government. The idea of such a journey, that must in any case be made in the spring, began now increasingly to occupy our minds. Accordingly, in the beginning of November, we informed the Foreign Minister that if our activities were to be obstructed it was our intention, since we had not come here to sit with folded arms in Urumchi, to betake ourselves to Nanking in the course of the winter.

At the same time we received a letter from HASLUND, relating that WANG, the *tao-t'ai* in Qara-shahr, had despatched mounted men to find out NORIN's whereabouts. When HASLUND had heard that BERGMAN was approaching from the south he had sent him a courier to advise him to leave the main highway and to visit NORIN by unfrequented roads. That troop movements were going on was evident, for both NORIN and HASLUND had seen contingents of two hundred and fifty to five hundred men moving southwards. As has already been mentioned, an invasion by fugitive Tungans from Kansu was feared. Some of the Chinese opined that this was only a pretext, and that what the Sinkiang authorities actually intended was the defence of their provincial independence of China proper, especially against Marshal FENG YÜ-HSIANG.

In order to avoid an open break, we observed all the external forms of politeness and consideration. To the Governor-General we sent a memorandum containing the following passage:

»We would remind you that the working region that has been allotted to NORIN is situated in the Quruqtagh, 1,000 li from Charkhliq, while HASLUND has been instructed to carry out anthropometric measurements in the Qara-shahr tract for a few weeks and then to join NORIN, so that also his working region is far removed from the scene of war. To avoid all risks, we have sent them both telegraphic instructions not to go to Charkhliq or its surroundings during the coming winter. They have already begun their work in their respective districts; and if they are now forced to return to Urumchi their work will be interrupted, which would entail a loss for science. We therefore send you this letter to beg you to reconsider the question and allow our members to continue their work in their districts.»

On November 17th we received a letter from CHIN in which he »advised» us to recall HASLUND to Urumchi. I myself was to be permitted to journey as far as to Toqsun, but no farther. We replied that I intended neither to follow his advice nor to journey to Toqsun, as I had nothing to do in that place and had never requested permission to make such a journey.