

understood that we ourselves were fully aware of the fact. He had been on SHENG SHIH-TS'AI's side at the beginning of the war, but had been taken prisoner by MA CHUNG-YING, who had appointed him his chief-of-staff. He had neither power nor influence.

LI assured us that we might set off to the west whenever we liked, but that he, who was responsible for our security, must get news of the situation on the road to Qara-shahr before he could let us go.

The prospects for our journey into the interior of Sinkiang seemed more than dark. The curious thing was that MA's representatives in Turfan not only put no obstacles in the way of our journey to Qara-shahr, but actually encouraged it, and obviously intended to take the necessary measures to make it safe.

One day HUMMEL was summoned to the commander of MA's cavalry, MA HOSAN, a particularly close friend of the commander-in-chief. This man had been wounded in the leg by a bomb-splinter and had been barbarously tended by the Polish »doctor» and a Chinese medico. Now he came into expert hands.

RUMOURS ABOUT MA CHUNG-YING

Turfan made a sinister impression. With a few exceptions the bazaar shops were shut, barred and bolted. Trade was paralysed, and the springs of life had run dry. There was practically no movement in the streets, and a feeling in the air that something was about to happen.

The town was full of rumours. It was said that General MA meant to stay at Davan-ch'eng for another three weeks, scattering his army in the mountains to protect it against aeroplane bombing. He was anxious to get into touch with the Soviet Consul at Chuguchaq; and it was believed that he intended to send KEMAL KAYA EFFENDI to Moscow with one of the two aeroplanes captured outside Urumchi. But KEMAL did not like air-travel, so the plan came to nothing. This KEMAL was a Turkish officer from Istanbul who had for several years been MA CHUNG-YING's military adviser in Kansu. Some of the members of our previous expedition had met him there.

It was said that twenty per cent of MA's army was down with some epidemic, and that the number of wounded was very large. Three of his best generals were alleged to be incapacitated by wounds.

We heard that MA CHUNG-YING himself was recklessly brave and had a boundless contempt for death. He was always in the front line under fire, and he exposed himself to aeroplane bombs with scornful defiance. His character was complex and puzzling. He could be child-like, naive, helpful and sympathetic; but he could also display barbarous cruelty, and kill the whole population of places he captured. If he was annoyed, he could shoot down with his own pistol an officer