

chat for a while. In this way we got a picture of the situation that was, certainly, not always reliable, but better than none at all. When we asked how it was possible for Reds and Whites to work together, a powerfully built, fair-haired fellow replied:

»Why, when we've got a common object we get on all right.»

He added:

»In January and February we were in a terribly bad way in Urumchi. We were expecting MA to take the town at any moment. Then the Governor-General sent a wireless message to Moscow asking for help. It came. If it had not, the town would have fallen, and not one of us would have escaped alive.»

In the evening four Russian soldiers arrived to keep guard at our gate and in our courtyard. It was said that many of the Mongols who had arrived were little better than the Tungans, and the general desired that no-one should molest us. We thought that the real object in setting this strong guard was to keep us under observation, and find out whether we had any secret communication with the Tungans. At all events, it was pleasant to be able to sleep quietly, without the fear of nocturnal raids.

PRISONERS AGAIN

In the morning a captain appeared, with seven soldiers armed to the teeth, to relieve the first party of four men. So the supervision was to be made stricter. We could not make the most innocent and necessary little excursion to the backyard without being escorted by a soldier carrying a rifle. All the rooms in our quarters, and all parts of the premises not occupied by us, were examined — presumably to make sure that we had no large stores of arms and ammunition. Our wireless receiver was taken to the Russian headquarters.

One or two of our fellows who wanted to go out and look at the bazaar were forbidden to leave our yard. If there was any important errand to be discharged, the sentry had first to ask permission from the general, and if this was granted everyone who went out had to be escorted by two men. So our second imprisonment had begun.

In the course of the day we had a visit from two Russian officers. They came straight up to me and introduced themselves — Colonel PROSHKURAKOV, adjutant to General BEKTEEV, and Captain VASSILEV, who was prepared to act as English interpreter in case none of us spoke Russian.

PROSHKURAKOV was a tall, thin man with a big red nose, but none the less of pleasant appearance. He was a White Russian who had come to Urumchi after the Red revolution. He had earned a livelihood by opening a food shop in the main street of the Russian quarter. In common with about 1,500 Russian