

*émigrés* in Urumchi, Chuguchaq, Manas and other Dzungarian towns, he had enlisted in one of the three White Russian regiments that had been formed by CHIN SHU-JEN. When CHIN treated them with superior airs they had driven him out. Now they were serving under CHIN's successor, General SHENG SHIH-TS'AI. Together with a contingent of Soviet troops, they had been the first to take up the pursuit of MA CHUNG-YING.

PROSHKURAKOV said:

»General BEKTEEV, commander-in-chief of the provincial government's field army, who arrived at Korla to-day from Qara-shahr, asks to be excused from calling on you in person, as he has got a headache from all the dust on the road. The general has ordered me to ask you a few questions.»

I invited the two visitors inside, and the last speaker proceeded to cross-examine me:

»When were you last in Nanking — in Peking — for what firm are you travelling(!) — what is the object of your journey — how large is your party — what are their names — what are their professions — how many drivers — how many servants — which way did you come from Peking — what day did you arrive at Hami — how and by whom were you received here — what impression did you get of the country on the way here — on what day did you arrive at Turfan — which of MA's officers did you meet there — have you met MA CHUNG-YING himself — what was your impression of General LI — how long did you stay in Turfan and how were you treated there — did you meet a couple of Poles — when did you leave Turfan and by which road — why did you not go to Urumchi — if the main road was blocked why did you not take the road via Ku-ch'eng-tze — when did you first come to Korla, and how far west did you go — why did you turn back at Chompaq — when did you return here — how many rifles and pistols have you — how much ammunition — have you a wireless apparatus? »

I gave detailed replies to all his questions, and the captain took them down. PROSHKURAKOV told us that VOLBARS KHAN and KEMAL had fled to Hami on the fall of Turfan, and were going to surrender to SHENG SHIH-TS'AI.

This examination lasted for an hour and a half. At first the questions were put in a brusque, curt, military style. Later he thawed, and even condescended to laugh at some comic situation. Finally he rose, became serious, and said in the tones of one making a formal pronouncement:

»I am ordered to convey to you General BEKTEEV's great dissatisfaction and astonishment that you, who bear a well-known name and are approaching the close of an honourable career, should have helped our and the provincial government's worst enemy to escape by placing your motor-lorries at his disposal.»

»Colonel, please ask General BEKTEEV what he would have done if he, unarmed, had been fallen upon by forty Tungans with loaded rifles, holding pistols aimed