

at his heart — who presented their ultimatum the first time and fired on him from ambush the second. You may console the general with the reflection that even if we had fired and, in consequence, been shot down ourselves to the last man by superior numbers, the lorries would have been taken anyhow, and MA would have used them to get away quicker. It is very easy to make complaints like this afterwards.»

Somewhat embarrassed, he answered with a smile:

»Well, I was only carrying out an order . . . . But the passports you brought from Nanking, which General VOLGIN has handed over to General BEKTEEV, and which have been translated into Russian, ought to have given you the authority you needed to be able to refuse to hand over your cars.»

»Yes, you are quite right in theory. But do you know what the Tungans' answer was? They said: 'This has nothing to do with Nanking. There's a war on here, and no passports are valid in wartime.'»

#### GENERAL BEKTEEV

On the morning of the 18th I was asked to call on General BEKTEEV at headquarters, and now the third long examination began.

This time I described events in greater detail than before. The general asked a few questions which had not come up during the interrogations by VOLGIN and PROSHKURAKOV.

»How was it possible,» he asked, »that Nanking could send out a road-making expedition in the middle of a war?»

»Because Nanking had received pacific assurances from Urumchi that the war was over and all rebellions suppressed. And the situation is different now from what it was last autumn.»

»No, there has been a state of war here the whole time, and the war is reaching its decisive stage just now. But why did you not inform the Governor-General, SHENG SHIH-TS'AI, of your arrival?»

»I knew that the Central Government had called upon the Governors-General of Kansu, Ning-hsia and Sinkiang to give us their protection and help in case of need. I knew also that the governors of Lanchow and Ning-hsia had replied that they would do everything to make us secure. As I was in the service of the Central Government, I had no right and no occasion to send private telegrams to the Governor-General at Urumchi.»

Then the vital question that VOLGIN and PROSHKURAKOV had already asked was repeated — why had we not waited upon the Governor-General of the province first of all, instead of joining his enemy? I gave the same answer as before. But now I added that when we came to Hami that town and the whole road