

The Revolt of the Basmachi According to Red Army Journals (1920-1922)

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INTRODUCTION

The revolt of the Basmachi spread across Central Asia during a period of nearly ten years, 1918 to 1928. This article will not present a methodical step-by-step account, nor even a particular aspect of this movement, but is an analysis of three journals published by the Red Army in Tashkent in the early 1920s, which were never subjected to any form of study as they were not to be found in the West and were inaccessible in the Soviet Union.

These first-hand documents cover the three years, 1920 to 1922, which correspond with the arrival of Turkkommissiia in Turkestan, putting an end to the power of the Turksovnarkom and of the Red Army commanded by Frunze, as well as the most intense moments of the revolt of the Basmachi. The following journals are concerned:

Voennaia Mysl', "military and scientific" review published by the revolutionary military Soviet of the Turkestan front;

Kommunist, organ of the Turkestan office of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee and of the Communist Party's Central Committee in Turkestan;

Voennyi Rabotnik Turkestana, published by the military council of editorial staff of the revolutionary military Soviet of the Turkestan front.

Those editions which were consulted were, unfortunately, not complete, and, in all, about sixty of the articles concern the Basmachi to a lesser or greater degree. These "technical" journals do not add new material to our present knowledge of the Basmachi; they do, however, shed light on the Russians' view at the time of the revolt, and draw a vivid and detailed picture of the Red Army's position in Turkestan, of the difficulties it encountered in the struggle against the Basmachi, and, on a more general level, the problems of the Russian forces in the region.

The difficulties of the Red Army and the weakness of the Russian forces is therefore exposed in black and white, and this in itself constitutes the major interest of these journals, whose tone and purpose would never be recovered — for good reason — afterwards.

The first part of this study is devoted to the way in which the Russians regarded the rebels, and the second part to the struggle they had against them, firstly on a military level, then on an ideological level.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BASMACHI MOVEMENT

At the beginning of the 1920s, these journals did not consider the rising of the Basmachi to be a major event. It was thought to be a direct result of the civil war. There is no thorough article devoted solely to the study of its origins and its appearance in 1918 under the guise of a vast resistance movement conducted against the new Russian power.

Two articles would have the origin of the Basmachi go back to the Russian colonisation and to the economic upheavals which thereby resulted, partly because of the extension of the culture of cotton in the second half of the 19th century.¹ P. Baranov estimates that the arrival of the Russian capital in Turkestan corresponds to the transition from a natural economy to a capitalist economy.² The extension of the culture of cotton brought about the destruction of traditional agriculture and impoverishment of the peasants deprived of land to benefit large exploitations; whereas the craftsmen were ruined by the importation of goods manufactured in Russia. In 1922, G. Skalov wrote:

The Basmachi movement is above all the result of the collision between a closed economy and the relatively developed lines of an economy of change.³

The ruin of a part of the population generated very great discontent amongst the Muslim clergy when confronted with Russian settlers. These sentiments soon found expression in revolts which were part of the religious war. Now most of these revolts (that is those of 1878, 1882, 1885, 1893 and 1898), as G. Skalov judiciously noted, took place in the region of Margelan and Andijan where the intensive culture of cotton was introduced.⁴ Nevertheless, despite the allusion to a religious war, he never emphasised the religious and national aspect of these revolts. For these two authors, whose ideas were permeated with Marxism, the economic argument prevails, and leads us into thinking of the Basmachi more as rebels than as “bandits”.

Their appearance in 1918 is associated with the economic ruin of Turkestan after the revolution. Thus Dervish mentions the terrible cattle plague which decimated nearly 60% of the Kirghiz livestock

and which aggravated the poverty of the nomads. However, he does not mention the big revolt of 1916 and the buying up of grazing land for Russian farmers. On the other hand, he does describe the reduction in the cultivated area of cotton plantations in Ferghana, which fell from 60,000 desiatinas (land measure equal to 2.7 acres) before the revolution to 45,000 in 1921, bringing about the bankruptcy of all the owners.⁵

B. Lavrenev⁶ and G. Skalov throw a different light on the economic causes of the Basmachi rising. They recall that Turkestan found herself totally isolated from the summer of 1918 to the autumn of 1919, because the troops of Ataman Dutov occupied Orenburg, thereby cutting off all communication with Russia. It was therefore impossible to export the cotton, whereas the bringing in of corn from the centre, which was cruelly lacking, was blocked (no doubt there would have been other means to stop it). Famine came on top of economic ruin. Tens of thousands of peasants, ruined and starving, came to swell the ranks of the Basmachi. P. Baranov described the situation:

In 1917, a lot of cotton was sown in a large part of the lands of the Transcaspian *Oblast'*, and naturally a terrible famine came because of the lack of corn, resulting in the formation of the front of White Guards. In reality, they had become White during the struggle against the Bolsheviks. When it appeared, it was a popular movement against the Bolsheviks who were in power at that time; but its appearance was solely because the local population had not understood the reasons behind such a situation. Turkestan had undergone a serious economic crisis. A mass of small owners had gone bankrupt, the economic way of life had been totally ruined, and, in 1918, on top of this foundation of economic disintegration appeared the Basmachi movement.⁷

However, if the economic causes were for the most part put forward, they were not the only ones to contribute to the growth of the Basmachi movement. V. Kuvshinov noted three others:

- (a) The difficult living conditions, result of the imperialist war which had augmented the discontent amongst the workers.
- (b) The absence of individual security and the lack of political work, which was indispensable during the first months of the Revolution, and which had led the population into thinking of the Basmachi movement as a natural phenomenon.
- (c) The lack of political tact, and sometimes the abuse of certain representatives of power.⁸

This last point, which was approached in an elliptical way, was taken up again by G. Skalov and Dervish. Both men questioned the "colonialist" politics and abuse of the Tashkent Soviet, which became the Council of Commissars of the People of Turkestan" (Turksovnaikom), as well as the atrocities committed by the militia of the Armenian party, the *Dashnaktsutun*, on encountering the Muslims.⁹ G. Skalov did not name the Tashkent Soviet, and used the expression "Russo-Armenian group coloniser". On the other hand, Dervish,

whose real name was Tiurakulov and who was president of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic of Turkestan, denounced these crimes a lot more explicitly since he was more directly concerned:

The colonisers and the *dashnaks* [the Armenian nationalists] have decided to openly conduct a nationalist policy which has been expressed in the form of acts of pillage and banditry. . . It was a very sad time in the history of the *oblast'*, when the Russian power was represented by an international band of colonisers, of *dashnaks* and of native parasites.¹⁰

Furthermore, Dervish attributed the causes of the uprising of the Basmachi in Kirghiz to the "Kulak Terror", alluding to all the heinous acts perpetrated by the Russian settlers against the Kirghiz." Dervish was therefore the only person to place the Basmachi in a context of resistance against oppression. As for the others, this aspect was completely left in the shadows whilst purely economic causes were emphasised; and the revolt of the Basmachi would always be assimilated into a counter-revolutionary front.

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION, THE NATURE AND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BASMACHI

This question appears to be confusing at best. Four articles present four different points of view; and this tends to prove that, at the beginning of the 1920s, not only was the Russian power not master of the situation, but it was also troubled by this enemy, which was nothing like the troops of Wrangel, Kolchak or Dutov. We shall cite the articles in chronological order to emphasise better the surprising mis-reading of its adversary by the Soviet power.

In 1920, V. Kuvshinov described several *kurbashis* [see glossary].¹² Irgash [see Biographical Notes], who fought in the name of Islam, he wrote, was known for his blinkered views and for his stupidity. The slogans of Madamin Bek [see Biographical Notes] were summed up in the following words: "The struggle against the Russian regime and the autonomy of Ferghana", and had strong pan-Islamic undertones. Finally, "the representative of the true Basmachi movement, the brigand Khal Hodja [see Biographical Notes], is a complete degenerate". Sadly the author does not tell us the source of his information. If the defence of Islam mobilised the Basmachi, on the other hand V. Kuvshinov overestimated the pan-Islamic tendencies. In the same number of *Voennaia mysl'*, an indication of the nature of the revolt was given:

At the present time, the Basmachi movement is a movement which is deprived of all national spirit. It is in fact a movement which, under a pseudo-national aspect, is based on the religious fanaticism of the masses, and which is politically counter-revolutionary.¹³

The author insisted on the religious aspect, but more than that, and nearly despite himself, on the national character of the revolt. G. Skalov referred again to the economy in order to define the nature and objectives of the Basmachi of Ferghana:

By its very nature, the Basmachi movement has not only been directed against Russian authority, which is to install a Communist regime, but also against a capitalist economy of exchange. This movement expresses above all an inclination to restore a natural economy, and, which is most interesting, in more developed ways than before the Russian conquest. All the *kurbashi* were more or less powerful feudal men who had established hierarchical relations, more or less anarchical, amongst themselves. The most powerful divided Ferghana amongst themselves, and each one tried to organise the economy of his fief, applying himself to either the irrigation or the sowing of seed in the countryside (to which were sometimes applied orders from the Russian authorities) or to the harvests, paying taxes to the population and providing them, when necessary, with agricultural material and seeds (Israil, Parpi, Ismail Kurbashi, etc...).¹⁴

Such utterances are surprising from several points of view, and in the first place by the flattering, not to say idyllic portrait, which he gave of the Basmachi leaders. We are a long way away from the fanatical bandit normally presented. Added to which, the author was mistaken in part as to the social composition of the *kurbashi*.¹⁵

In 1922, that is four years after the beginning of the revolt, one finds a small sentence which summarised the perplexity of the Red Army, in the journal *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*:

Even though the struggle against the Basmachi does not date from yesterday, a lot of the Red commanders do not always know precisely who they are, what the movement is, or what the cause is of this scourge of Ferghana.¹⁶

Right at the beginning of the 1920s, the Russians were not clear against whom they were fighting. But it did not matter who the enemy was as long as the number of counter-revolutionaries was reduced.

THE MILITARY ORGANISATION AND TACTICS OF THE BASMACHI

Those who wrote in these journals were clearly more at ease when describing the organisation and tactics, simple compared with those of other enemies, of the Basmachi of Ferghana.¹⁷ The Basmachi regrouped themselves in “bands” which depended on the authority of a military leader called a *kurbashi*.¹⁸ No writer asked about the social composition of these bands, nor about the family ties, tribal or otherwise, which might govern the relations between Basmachi leaders and their men. Even less was there a question about the true internal organisation, which seems to be totally unknown. On the other hand, the rivalry between the Basmachi leaders was very well known:

Each band only obeyed its own *kurbashi*, and these very *kurbashi* did not cease quarrelling and did not hesitate to betray each other for a large sum of money.¹⁹

The Russians therefore had to deal with a divided resistance, which was a positive element for them. In 1918 and 1919, several *kurbashi* tried in vain to co-ordinate and unify the movement:

At the beginning of 1919, Madamin Bek, who was trying to centralise power into his own hands, came up against Irgash, who was conducting operations in the *uezd* of Kokand. A skirmish followed and it was only chance that saved Irgash from defeat.²⁰

Thus, the Red Army was informed of what was happening in the enemy camp. In Ferghana, the Red Army never had to fight big battles as it was dealing with what we would call today a band of guerillas. The actions of the Basmachi consisted for the most part of quick raids where surprise was used to effect and which were carried out in groups numbering twenty to two or three hundred extremely mobile horsemen, who, as soon as the attack had been made, escaped.²¹

The Basmachi tactics are the customary tactics of all oriental people. They consist of rapid and violent raids and they show themselves to be audacious and impertinent when they are great in number, and when the opposite is the case, they flee in panic like animals.²²

The Basmachi targets were the unity of the Red Army, and the secondary railway lines (the main lines being well protected as they connected the towns, the one place where Soviet power was really effective).²³ They applied themselves also to “the destruction of the economic bases of the *oblast*”,²⁴ particularly by “burning the tools of production”.²⁵ The activity of the Basmachi was particularly intense in the summer, whereas operations were far more rare in the winter.²⁶ Between 1918 and 1921, certain groups went over to the Soviet side, not by conviction but in order to:

- (a) rest, increase their military strength and repair their equipment;
- (b) arm themselves and take munitions from us, infiltrate spies into our general staff and our organisations.²⁷

In Ferghana, at Bukhara and in the Turkmen country, the rebels were effectively using espionage.²⁸

Without anything to distinguish them on the outside, clothed in the same way as the peaceful population, they were all round our units, not hesitating to infiltrate, and unrecognisable and elusive, they devoted themselves to espionage that has no equal, whose network extends from the Afghan frontier to Tashkent. The knowledge they have of our activity is sometimes amazing.²⁹

Of course, the Red Army had the Cheka at its disposition. However, the rebels had a disadvantage of major importance: their arma-

ments could not bear any comparison with those of the Red Army. The carbine was the weapon most available to them,³⁰ and B. Lavrenev stressed that they were excellent marksmen.³¹ The use of the grenade is also mentioned.³² As soon as the fight went to their advantage, they captured machine-guns from the Red Army, but they did not actually own any themselves. Before the arrival of the Red Army, this weapon was unknown in Central Asia. It was so frightening to the Basmachi that they called it *sheitan mashinka*.³³ Always, there were certain rebels who did not possess any weapons at all.³⁴ Most of the time they procured their weapons by buying them.

Many of their agents, furnished with considerable financial means, tried to buy as many weapons as possible. The sale of arms is an evil in Turkestan which goes back a long way; and which is not about to end as was recently proved by a certain Vidmar, who was shot for having sold arms to the Basmachi.³⁵

In 1920, the Soviet authorities took measures to regulate the traffic of arms, and this obstructed the rebels:

In the spring of 1920, the conduct of the business of buying and selling arms, as well as their protection, was transferred from the revolutionary military Soviet to the revolutionary military tribunal. This step was dictated by reality, as it was at this time that there was an increase in the sale of arms to Persia, Afghanistan, Bukhara and the Basmachi.³⁶

Unfortunately, there is no article to be found which would allow us to judge the efficacy of these measures.

At Bukhara, the Basmachi were partisans of the last Emir, Said Alim Khan, who fled to the eastern part of the emirate when the Bukharan "revolution" took place in August 1920.

Our second adversary, the survivors of the bands of the Emir of Bukhara, has an identical character except that it has the rudiments of order, tactics, discipline and better armaments.³⁷

The author concluded on the subject of Basmachi tactics generally with the following words:

These adversaries are not to be despised. Where their Asian tactics are concerned, they are courageous and are a serious adversary, particularly if they are successful in the first moments of battle.³⁸

Meanwhile, these "Asian" tactics undermined the powerful Red Army to the point where the Basmachi, less numerous and badly armed, held them at bay for nearly ten years, another illustration of the difficulties encountered by a classical army up against a band of guerrillas.

HELP FROM ABROAD

The revolt of the Basmachi reached a magnitude never to be equalled

in 1922, stimulated by the arrival of Enver Pasha at Bukhara in November 1921; he had been sent by Moscow to the rebels on a mission of peace, but joined their side. Seconded by Turkish officers who were under his orders at Constantinople, he hoped to found a large Turkish Muslim state in Central Asia, and counted on using the uprising of the Basmachi for his own ends. He undertook, without great success, to unite under his direction all the rebel leaders, in order to co-ordinate the action under one single command. In the spring of 1922, the forces of Enver Pasha (nearly 20,000 men) controlled the whole of the eastern part of Bukhara, as well as a large part of the ex-emirate. Throughout, he did not manage to obtain the support of the Muslim masses towards his pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic plan. On 4 August 1922, he fell under the fire of the Red Army, while the survivors of his general staff and several Basmachi leaders fled into Afghanistan. This new menace, coming from a man enjoying great prestige in the Muslim world, worried the Soviet authorities, who tried in vain to negotiate in April 1922. An article which appeared a month later in the review *Kommunist* gives its view of the situation:

What will be the outcome of this enterprise? From a military point of view, there can only be one opinion, that the large Soviet Federation which knew how to contain the English and French attack when fighting Denikin, Kolchak and Wrangel, is strong enough to destroy the enterprise of Enver Pasha. It can be seen that his forces are not large enough, nor would be so after the holding at bay of his attempt to mobilise a part of the Basmachi in Ferghana to augment his side. . . . It is not the military aspect of this affair which makes us worry, it is more the political aspect. . . . In effect, the past glory of Enver as man of the Muslim State, can still attract crowds of ignorant *dehqans* [see glossary] in some remote regions today.³⁹

Another article gives the impression that in the *oblast'* of Sarmarkand the revolt took place because of the influence of Enver.⁴⁰ Thus, in 1922, the Soviets perceived a very clear aggravation of the situation.

Moreover, the present political situation in Turkestan, where the interminable civil war has resulted in famine in Ferghana, the reinforcement of the Basmachi movement and its extension into the Samarkand and other regions, has become particularly tense due to the appearance of Enver Pasha in the eastern part of Bukhara.⁴¹

More than a potential danger to the Soviet authorities, Enver Pasha seemed especially like an agent of French imperialism and more particularly British, as the following extract witnessed:

The socialist republics of Central Asia are facing a new venture from the Imperial English, connected this time with the name of Enver Pasha. . . . Enver has the insolence to address the Soviet Federation with propositions which are visibly dictated by Lloyd George and Barthou.⁴²

Further on the author confirmed that the British used Enver Pasha to open a new front in Central Asia. The provenance of Enver's military material was given as tangible proof of the British hope:

In fact, the military authorities have discovered amongst the bands of Enver Pasha's men carbines and English equipment which has obviously been brought in via Afghanistan.⁴³

Afghanistan is the second country accused of supplying aid to the Basmachi, and her role was not restricted to being merely a transmission belt for the British.

Here is some concrete evidence of the participation of Afghanistan: during the fighting in the eastern part of Bukhara, we made some Afghan prisoners. Amongst the remains of the dead left on the battle fields there were also many Afghans to be found. Enver's troops were always revitalised with British munitions. The dead have Afghan passports in the eastern part of Bukhara. Enver's letters which we intercepted complain of the inefficacy of the aid, and ask to be able to hide in Afghanistan should there be failure. We discovered an organisation in the eastern part of Bukhara which is supporting the Basmachi and which is closely connected with the Afghan Embassy: the Afghan ambassador was summoned by the Bukhara government and asked to leave this territory.⁴⁴

Further on, moreover, we learn that the Afghan ambassador was involved in a plot against the Bukhara government. Some Afghans were definitely fighting there on the side of the Basmachi, in order to make holy war against the Russians; and for what better reason as the Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1921 stipulated the complete independence of the Popular Socialist Republic of Bukhara. But the reason for Afghan support of the rebels was explained with the following:

In 1918, Afghanistan waged an unsuccessful war against England, in order to consolidate its position. This unfortunate war deprived Afghanistan of the hope of augmenting her territory on the southern frontier, and it is why her attention is now turned towards Bukhara and Turkestan. However, the Afghan army is incapable of fighting against a regular army, and her defeats on the Indian front prove it. On the other hand, the present political situation in Bukhara favours successful operations. Thus, we have the following picture: Afghanistan concentrates troops at the frontier, without knowing what they are going to do, and helps the insurrectional movement as much as possible.⁴⁵

This same article also pointed out that Abdul-Hamid Arifov commissioner for the defence of Bukhara, who went over to the side of the rebels, "is on his way to Paris to lead a campaign against Russian power in the East".⁴⁶

Contrary to Russian views help from abroad appeared to be very minimal, and these journals took this into account up until the event of the defection of Enver Pasha. It should also be noted that these journals kept silent on the arrival at Bukhara in June 1920 of a person just as influential as Enver Pasha, the Bashkir Nationalist leader Zeki Validov, who joined the Basmachi.

THE SUPPORT OF THE POPULATION

The early 1920s was an extremely troubled period for Turkestan and the attitude of the Muslim population towards the Basmachi is witness to this confusion. Russian authority was really only present in the towns, while in the villages where the old life went on it was often not known who the Bolsheviks were.⁴⁷ The population was, on the one hand, a victim of the atrocities committed by the Red Army (especially that of the Turksovnarkom), and, on the other hand, suffered the acts of brigandage of certain bands of Basmachi, and did not hesitate to ally itself momentarily with the Red Army in order to fight them. But as a general rule it adopted a “benevolent neutrality”,⁴⁸ which made the task of the Red Army difficult. Thus, in 1920:

Some extremely mobile bands made some surprise raids and departed again to hide themselves without fighting. The sympathy shown by the native population towards the Basmachi complicates the struggles to an extreme.⁴⁹

Two years later the situation was exactly the same: The superiority of the Basmachi over us is due to their incomparable knowledge of the terrain, to their elusive quality and the complicity of one part of the population.⁵⁰

Although it was a question of “sympathy” and “complicity” towards the rebels for some writers, other articles evoke the hostility of the population towards the Bolsheviks and the Red Army.

We are not dealing with an enemy which is organised for fighting, but with the population itself which is hostile towards Russian authority; as a result of its politics, it sees the ruin of its economic life, and is not able to understanding the causes which have led Ferghana to her ruin. . . The whole of Ferghana is in a similar situation, each *Kishlak* [see Glossary], each *izba* is a certain refuge for the Basmachi because the population is completely hostile to Russian authority.⁵¹

The population in Bukhara was also manifesting the same sentiment, quoted here at the time of the expedition of Hissar in February 1921 against the Emir’s troops:

The attitude of the population regarding the Red Army, thought to be a strange army with another faith and another nationality, was hostile enough. The decomposition of our units only served to reinforce this hostility.⁵²

Often peasants by day and rebels by night, the Basmachi were the expression of a spontaneous revolt by the population against the atrocities committed against it and the violence perpetrated against Islam. The hostility manifested by the population was the same as that which was entertained against the Russian settlers before the Revolution.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLT

As with its origin, the consequences of the Basmachi movement were interpreted from a strict economic point of view and which ended in the ruin of the economy and the disorganisation of the productive machinery; even if the movement was not the major reason.

The break for nearly two years in the economic ties with Russia, the Basmachi movement in the *oblast'* of Samarkand and Ferghana, the White fronts which have created an impregnable cordon around the Republic at the time of the Civil War, the catastrophic cattle plague due to the terrible djuta [see Glossary] are the causes of the decline in agriculture in Turkestan.⁵³

V. Kuvshinov shared the same analysis, and added that every blow aimed at economic life in Ferghana, large producer of cotton and of agricultural products, had repercussions on the whole of Turkestan.⁵⁴ Consequently, the Basmachi were responsible for the downfall of the Turkestan economy, as the revolt first burst out in Ferghana. A third article, however, also insisted on the role played by local causes:

Apart from a general financial crisis, industry and commerce in Turkestan are victims of purely local causes, which reside in the Basmachi movement, the belated and insufficient application of the NEP. . . and in a lack of funds which is particularly important.⁵⁵

It is altogether remarkable that none of these articles should dwell on the underlying causes of the uprising, or on the eventual consequences. But, the Basmachi were thought to be counter-revolutionaries, who, once crushed, would be destroyed forever. That is why these military reviews, mouthpiece for a strong and enthusiastic Red Army in its mission to bring peace and to sovietise, undertook no serious analysis whatsoever of its adversary, condemned to disappear.

I. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BASMACHI

THE MILITARY STRUGGLE

1920 was the year when a radical change in Soviet power took place in Turkestan. The brutal and colonialist policy of the Turksovnarkom, thus alienating the Muslim allegiances irremediably, was a real threat to the establishing of Soviet power in Central Asia. Once communication had been re-established with the centre, the government in Moscow sent a special commission to Tashkent, which was ordered by Lenin to rally the Muslim masses to the new regime and restore order. The Turkkommissiia, comprising six members, was to exert supreme power over the Communist Party and the government. The commissions arrived in Tashkent in November 1919, followed by the

Red Army led by Frunze, also a member of the Turkkommissiia. The Turksovnarkom only had the Red Army of Turkestan available, which was created on 27 May 1918 and whose soldiers were recruited from amongst the Russian labourers of Tashkent. It also benefited from the services of the militia of the Dashnaktsütün party. The Turkkommissiia, on the other hand, had at its command a powerful, well-trained, well-armed and disciplined army and possessed a considerable trump card: units of Muslim Tatars and Bashkirs. Between 1920 and 1923, the total strength of the Red Army was between 120,000 and 160,000 men, comprising 30,000 Muslim soldiers and 350 officers.⁵⁶

And yet, despite this extremely strong force, the Red Army had many difficulties in defeating the rebels, and was confronted by multiple problems whose echo can be found in these journals.

THE PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

The Red Army had to face a completely new type of adversary, and on several occasions the question of adequate organisation came up. In September 1920, a first article questioned the bad general organisation of the Red Army.⁵⁷ A second article declared that, in order to fight effectively against the Basmachi, the organisation of the army units had to be reinforced.⁵⁸ V. Kuvshinov himself stated, but without going into any detail, that after January 1920, the Ferghana units were reorganised.⁵⁹

When Muslims were conscripted for military service in 1920, the Red Army was confronted with a new problem:

The government of the Republic of Turkestan has just called up the whole of the country's population to join the Red Army, and from now on it will no longer be only the foreign European population doing its service under the red flags, but also the aborigines of the country — the whole of the indigenous population of the Republic, who, until now, has not served in the ranks of the army.

The author then proposed using in a rational sense the "aborigines" when considering the question of "the natural qualities" of each ethnic group.⁶¹ One year later, this same author brought the Muslim conscripts under consideration again, but this time from a social angle:

We must also concentrate all our efforts to make it as easy as possible to achieve this obligation, and render a simple and agreeable service capable of bringing together the nationalities in Turkestan, without, however, disturbing the family economy, nor breaking the ties between the soldiers and their family and relations.⁶²

His advice even covered an unexpected aspect: Even the equipment should totally correspond with the customs of the Turkestan population, as it would be very hard for servicemen to have to cope for a relatively short period of time. We are thinking particularly of the clothing called "aurat" which completely covers the body from the middle of the stomach to the knees.⁶³

Such solicitude is very surprising, and one could ask oneself in what way the Muslims responded to conscription which probably reminded them of the big revolt in 1916, and its bloody repression. And, the eventual prospect at having to fight against their co-religionist Basmachi must have made this new obligation difficult to accept. The author insisted as well on the racist feelings of the Russian soldier where the Muslim conscripts were concerned.⁶⁴ Conscription for the natives must truly have posed quite a few problems; in the same review number, an article talks of the reorganisation of the office of recruitment, in which at least one Muslim had to work.⁶⁵

In 1921, P. Baranov laconically indicated the reorganisation of the officer corps, and the exclusion of the officers of war-time. No doubt he is referring to the officers who served under the old regime.⁶⁶

THE PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

In Turkestan, the Red Army was disoriented: its adversary was not a classical army applying conventional strategy, but consisted of "bands" practising guerilla tactics. The geographical conditions were also new, the Red Army had to adapt to the desert and mountains. B. Lavrenev therefore stated that the conditions under which the war took place the soldier who was used to fighting in Russia was at a disadvantage and he was likely to commit involuntary mistakes.⁶⁷

However, if the mountains and desert were irksome for the men, the staging of military convoys proved to be an insurmountable problem. A convoy was mandatory during a campaign for provisions, munitions and forage. When convoys were insufficient, requisitions had to be made from the villages, which in turn provoked the hostility of the population, as was the case during the failed expedition of Hissar against the Emir of Bukhara.⁶⁸ In mountainous regions the carts had difficulty in negotiating the paths, whereas in the desert the wheels got stuck in the sand, and water for the cart animals to drink was scarce.⁶⁹ Generally, the Red Army used the railway for its military convoys; however, in the case of expeditions to far-out places, the train was obviously out of the question. The author suggested, therefore, implicitly to resort, like the natives, to camels, of which he lengthily extolled the merits, or to yaks or donkeys, and to use the traditional *arbas* (see Glossary).

The second constraint geographically was in the ignorance of the terrain. B. Lavrenev showed that the Red Army did not have enough precise maps available, nor sufficient mountain guides.⁷⁰ M. Shkliar deplored, on top of this, the incompetence of the interpreters.⁷¹ Thus, there was a whole period when the Red Army, in touch with a new reality, had to adapt to it.

THE SEARCH FOR TACTICS AND THE GOOD USE OF ARMS

Until 1920, the Turksovnarkom, having burnt its fingers with its failures, attempted to scotch the Basmachi revolt by way of negotiation. The success of this venture would have been doubly beneficial for the Soviet authorities: the rallying of the rebels would have given a certain prestige, both regional and international, and it would have avoided economic disorder. The Russians, therefore, went into parleys with the *kurbashi*, even with those who did not have much experience of actual command.⁷² A few Basmachi leaders went over to the Russian side, and were incorporated into the first brigade of the Cavalieri Uzbek.

On 31 January, Majkham Hodja, Akbar Ali and their band came over to our side, thus making a total of six hundred armed Basmachi and two thousand unarmed. On 2 February, Parpi and his men, about three hundred Basmachi, did the same.⁷³

Dervish also says that Djani Bek (see Bibliographical Notes) changed sides.⁷⁴

These rallyings of men were based on a total misunderstanding, because the rebels were acting in terms of a temporary and tactical compromise.⁷⁵ Some of the *kurbashi*, such as Djunaid Khan, even profited from the negotiations by setting traps for the Russians,⁷⁶ whereas others were constrained by circumstances:

At the beginning of 1919, Madamin Bek, who wanted to centralise power into his own hands, ran up against Irgash, who was leading operations in the *uezd* of Kokand. A skirmish followed, and only luck saved Irgash from defeat. At this time, a Turktsik commission had been set up in Ferghana in order to liquidate the Basmachi movement in a peaceful manner. Irgash could do no more unless he submitted to Madamin, or else treated with the commission, which he did.⁷⁷

He went back to the resistance not long afterwards. In 1920, his rival Madamin also signed a peace treaty with the Russians, only to return to the side of the rebels a few months later.

In 1921, the Turkkomissiiia put a stop to these aberrant alliances and betrayals:

. . . one of the previous means used, the admission of the *kurbashi* and their followers into the Russian army, even into the militia, is now definitely out of the question; and partial retreats are only allowed in exceptional circumstances, and solely with the agreement of the centre.⁷⁸

It did not seem very clear what was meant by the term “partial retreats”. Could these defections be thus qualified?

The Red Army, determined under the orders of Frunze to fight a merciless battle against the rebels, tried to put appropriate tactics into practice. Between 1920 and 1922, an impression of tentativeness came from these journals, which translated into the search for pin-point tactics, as for example the said tactic of “filtering”, or placing an advantageous line of battle in order to push the Basmachi back against a mountain when the passes were closed.⁷⁹ This tactic, based on the big lines of battle, never brought any success; and it was decided to use smaller units which were much more mobile, and therefore, adapted better to the enemy and the terrain. After this hiccup, Frunze managed to find a tactic which proved to be effective, and in which the Muslim units played an important role.⁸⁰

In addition to the crushing superiority in numbers, the Red Army had another advantage over the Basmachi. It possessed better performing and more modern weapons than the carbines and grenades of the rebels: machine-guns and aviation. Moreover, the machine-gun was particularly respected by these latter:

The *Sheitan-mashinka*⁸¹ has become a veritable bogey-man to our Turkestan enemy, who have an aversion to it. When the enemy is ten times more numerous than us, the skilful and opportune use of the machine-gun makes the result of the fight come out in our favour.⁸²

The shooting techniques are thus appreciated:

They are frightened of well-aimed and sustained shooting. . . a nervous and unregulated fire, a shot in the air does not frighten the Basmachi; it even reinforces their audacity. Shooting by salvo has no effect whatsoever, as they are excellent shots themselves; they replied to questions concerning our shooting that they were indifferent to our salvos.⁸³

When the army had to fight in Muslim villages, instructions were given to minimise the damage and losses:

When attacking a village, it is hoped that first of all they will be frightened by artillery fire. Broken down walls and *saklias* [see Glossary] must not be attacked, but the flank and back the *kishlak* may be by a cross-fire. Only occupy the *kishlak* if it is indispensable to its defence.⁸⁴

Aviation had a very reduced role. Moreover, there were few aeroplanes and even fewer airports. The Muslim population nick-named the aeroplanes, which they had not seen before, *sheitan arba*.⁸⁵ In 1920, the number of flying hours for the whole of Turkestan rose to 493.⁸⁶ The role of aviation was divided between two axes, the Trans-

caspian region and the Ferghana.

Krasnovodsk has fallen. The merits of aviation have rightfully been noticed by the commanders. But the aircraft did not remain inactive for long, and soon had new tasks: the struggle against the Basmachi in the mountainous part of Ferghana, and the liaison with the farthest parts of Turkestan.⁸⁷

In Ferghana, aircraft were particularly used in reconnaissance missions, often inconclusive, or again as demonstrations of force:

The enemy operations, customarily led by small groups of horsemen having the facility to melt in with the population, make these reconnaissance missions extremely difficult. . . The throwing of bombs and machine-gun fire are only used rarely, and are essentially a visual means of demonstration to exert pressure on the morale of the enemy. The targets envisaged in both cases are the groups of twenty to thirty horsemen and small convoys.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, the reconnaissance missions had a technical difficulty:

Given the partisan character of the Basmachi action, it is extremely difficult to make reconnaissance missions and fight against them, as the aircraft have to descend to a low altitude in order to sustain brisk fire.⁸⁹

Added to which, the Basmachi understood very quickly which altitude they should adopt:

As soon as an aeroplane appeared, the Basmachi bands dispersed instantly right up to the moment of opening fire.⁹⁰

Thus, aviation, which should have been a major trump card, proved to be useless. It seems that the Russians might have been able to bombard enemy positions; but, on the contrary, At Tasin says that in 1920, nearly 410 kilos of propaganda were dropped. Unfortunately, no additional detail is furnished as to the content of the brochures (they must have been tracts) or the frequency of this type of operation; this could not have had great importance due to the shortage of paper in Central Asia at this time.

THE MATERIAL PROBLEM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Since 1920, the most frequently evoked problem was that of provisions. During the second meeting of the military commissions of the Turkestan front, it was noted that there was little ordinary meat, and that tobacco was of very bad quality.⁹¹ The Red Army could not supply itself with fresh provisions from Russia, which was too far away and also a victim of famine, and so had to requisition its necessities from the peasants.

The revolution had a pressing need for foodstuffs. Bread and meat could only be had from the indigenous peasants.⁹²

The government of the Republic of Turkestan was therefore forced to “set aside” the agricultural produce which it could not afford to buy.

Due to lack of money, the livestock were taken from the populace by making out a very succinct inventory, for example: “one black cow was taken on behalf of the third company, from Mahmudjanov. Signed, artilleryman Ivanov,” on bits of paper which the populace later showed in order to be reimbursed.⁹³

Already in 1919, the Turksovnarkom had instigated the State’s monopoly on wheat, thereby beginning the cooperation between the Basmachi of Madamin Bek and the peasant army of the Russian settlers to attempt its abolition. In March 1921, as in Russia, a “tax in nature” was established, a modest term evoking the requisitions the peasants were obliged to provide.

Absolutely indispensable, this system of setting aside started a discontent amongst the peasantry, and prevented the Russian power from organising the large masses of working *dehqans* and served as a pretext for all sorts of provocations against the Russian power. Added to which, the system of setting aside of agricultural produce brought a big disadvantage to the development of agriculture, pushing the *dehqan* to reduce the seeded area of land simply because of lack of interest on his part.⁹⁴

The presence of the Red Army in Turkestan represented an additional heavy load for the peasantry, in conditions which were already bordering on famine,⁹⁵ and the requisitions only served to reinforce the hostility felt towards the Russians.

The soldiers were not only badly fed, but it also seems that their equipment was far from being perfect. For example, boots were theoretically made to be worn for four months, but only lasted two to three months in summer and one to three weeks in winter, as they were made of local leather.⁹⁶ One can easily imagine the administrative problems resulting from the bad quality of boots!

In addition to these material difficulties, the Red Army had to cope with the climate: its ranks were ravaged by malaria.⁹⁷

One last point, and not the least important, horses were a source of worry. In 1921, the “workers of the equine section” painted an eloquent picture of the situation:

The speakers denounced with one voice the difficult conditions in which they worked, in corners which were sometimes a distance of more than eighty-five *versts* from the next village. The lack of forage and absence of co-ordination in provisioning are sources of constant anguish when the fate of State property is concerned. Steps have to be taken which border on heroism that the horses might not die from hunger or illness, and an important part of the day is lost in running to the right and to the left in the hope of finding forage.⁹⁸

It appears that the Basmachi also stole horses that were destined for the Red Army, if one can judge by the quasi ultimatum of

Turkbiuro addressed to the Revolutionary Council of the Turkestan Front demanding the protection of horses against the Basmachi.⁹⁹ In attacking the horses, a task which was seemingly easy given the isolation of the centres of horse-breeding, the rebels put a serious obstacle in the way of military operations.

The Red Army lived in miserable conditions. In 1922, the Central Executive Committee of the Republic of Turkestan created a permanent commission made up of responsible men in civil and military organisations, who were ordered to ameliorate the soldiers' lot.¹⁰⁰

The month of April was declared "the month of the Red Army", in order to accomplish the following tasks:

- (1) Ameliorate the material situation of the Red Army.
- (2) Ameliorate the daily life of the invalids of the civil war and the imperial war, and to bring real help.
- (3) Help the ill or wounded soldier.
- (4) Attend to the families of soldiers.¹⁰¹

The commission also asked that efforts be made for forage and provisions. This same article states that a system for allotments was established to be made available to all the soldiers. Perhaps this was an attempt to compensate for the deficiency in provisions.

No information is to be had at all on the conditions of accommodation. One can, however, imagine without too much difficulty that they would have been precarious.

THE PROBLEMS OF DISCIPLINE

The Red Army, which was created in 1918 by the Turksovnarkom, committed a great number of atrocities against the Muslims. The sacking of Kokand is one of the bloodiest examples. In 1921, G. Safarov, who was sent as observer by Lenin to Central Asia, denounced the troops of the Turksovnarkom:

At this time, the Red Army recruited to a large degree from the lower classes, as is shown at Kokand and Bukhara by the pogroms, and elsewhere, by drunkenness, pillage and acts of brigandage.¹⁰²

B. Lavrenev reported on this subject:

The exploits of Gerzhod¹⁰³ and similar men have had the effect that, in the steppes of Kirghizia and in Ferghana, the word "Bolshevik" produces panic amongst the population.¹⁰⁴

The Red Guard Militia also perpetrated numerous crimes.¹⁰⁵

The Russian Red Army commanded by Frunze, which was a lot more disciplined and charged with a mission of bringing peace, behaved less wildly, but there were always a few "smudges", severely

reprimanded:

In the heart of the Red Army, a struggle was also taking place against rapists. . . At the 1920 assizes, an end was put to violations and extortions committed by the Red Army in the *otdel'* [see Glossary] of Amu Darya. Two cases were organised in the place of the ex-Khan of Khiva, at which were present a large number of Turkmen and Uzbeks. The accused, who belonged to the commanding officers of the troops of Amu Darya, were condemned to death.¹⁰⁶

The presence of numerous Turkmen and Uzbeks during the case makes one think that the victims' parents were there or even Muslims who wanted justice to be done; therefore, the severity of the punishment was exemplary. The Red Army of the Turkkomissiiia was expecting to re-establish its respectable image, little altered by the many atrocities committed by the troops of the Turksovnarkom.

The guerilla tactics used by the Basmachi rarely mobilised the soldiers into heavy battles, at least in Ferghana; and they were often left with nothing to do, in unenviable conditions, in a country where there were few distractions for soldiers, who were foreigners in the large majority. The journals reflect a certain amount of boredom amongst the men, as well as a slackening in the general behaviour of the troops.

When arriving at a unit of men, everyone is playing at heads or tails or cards, and the political militants close their eyes to it for the most part, or else join in themselves with these games. When one says to the soldiers: "This is not good, comrades", they reply with these exact words: "We are bored, there is nothing to do, there are no books, no newspapers, no clubs." One remembers in fact with what pleasure our soldiers of the Red Army invaded the reading room which had been organised in a poor little village — they immediately sat down and played heads and tails or four hundred and twenty-one!¹⁰⁷

Finally, desertions seemed to have been important enough, as commissions existed at all levels charged with studying this phenomenon.¹⁰⁸

THE RESEARCH INTO THE REASONS FOR FAILURE

Right at the beginning of the 1920s, the powerful Red Army, which had been able to conquer the White Armies, showed itself unable to reduce these "bandits", who were badly armed and ten times fewer in number. The Russian regime in Turkestan applied itself to these difficulties and in 1921 the "Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia" was created, which seemed to be dependent on the military faculty.

The tasks of the Society are the following: the study of the experience of class war, the study of Turkestan in all aspects, the study of the wars of the XIXth and XXth

centuries, the research of historical documents concerning the organisation and development of the Red Army. . . The Society achieves its aims by studying the archives, as well as all the documents collected in the Republic of Turkestan. . . Compulsory members were all the students of the General Staff and the Communists of the other sections of the faculty.¹⁰⁹

In April 1922, an account appeared on the work done during the course of the year:

- (1) The principles of historical-military work.
- (2) The expedition of Hissar.
- (3) The principles of organisation of military convoys in Central Asia.
- (4) The war of the mountains.

Other titles were:

- (1) The tactics of the Basmachi.
- (2) Memories of famous participants in the civil war.
- (3) The influence of the climate on military operations.¹¹⁰

In September, a second list of subjects appeared, amongst which featured for a second time the tactics of the Basmachi.¹¹¹

The Red Army therefore seriously studied the terrain and its adversary, and this initiative also spread to the civil authorities:

We are currently in the middle of organising, under the auspices of the Soviet of the People's Commissars, a "scientific commission" charged with studying the way of life of the indigenous population in Turkestan.¹¹²

Thus, the Red Army commanders were very quick in realising what an obstacle the total lack of knowledge of Turkestan proved to be, and were attempting to remedy it in a concrete way:

. . . it is important to realise that, because of the absence of workers familiar with local life and its particularities at the heart of the Red Army. . . , it is often the case that unwished for misunderstandings are produced between the population and the Red Army units; and that is why a sufficient number of workers who know the people and the customs of the country well should be rapidly mobilised, and incorporated into the ranks of the army.¹¹³

The Red Army therefore undertook to reflect somewhat theoretically on its difficulties in conquering the rebels, as well as on the attitude to adopt towards the indigenous population — this seems to indicate a desire to bring peace to Central Asia without committing great mistakes in consequence.

II. THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

Military action was not the only weapon used to batter the rebellion. The Russian regime had also to gain the benevolence of the Muslims, whose loyalty would have ineluctably put an end to the revolt. The

Muslim population and the authorities had to be brought together in order to integrate the former in the struggle against the Basmachi, an undertaking that would equally facilitate the Sovietisation of the society.

THE CONCESSIONS MADE TO ISLAM AND THE NEP

The extreme brutality of the attitude of the Soviet of Tashkent towards Muslim institutions and their representatives (mosques were closed, mullahs shot, and the *waqf* property secularised) provoked very lively indignation amongst the population, of which one part joined the Basmachi. In 1919, the end of War Communism and the taking in hand of the situation by the central powers modified this violently anti-Islamic policy, in order not to alienate the Muslim masses irremediably. From 1921, the *charei* tribunals were re-established, and the Quran schools and mosques were reopened. In 1922, however, these measures were applied from then on in places where the authority of Russian power was really exerted, that is essentially in the town.

In order to root out the libellous propaganda against the Russian authorities, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan, in complete agreement with the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party has decreed: (1) Measures in Ferghana to adapt the Russian legislation to the conditions of local life, to return the *waqf* property to the Muslim community, to re-establish the tribunals of the *qadis* and the beys, to recruit a number of representatives from the population to fight against the Basmachi. . . All these measures should be heard in the furthest *oblasts* of Turkestan.¹¹⁴

These concessions, which deprived the population of their main motive for discontent, indisputably obtained results:

As soon as the Russian authorities made concessions and recognised the tribunals of the *qadis* and the *waqf* property and allowed the existence of traditional Muslim schools, the Basmachi lost their influence over the population; and at the present time, the *dehqans* are helping the authorities against the Basmachi as best they can.¹¹⁵

No doubt the author of this article tends towards too much generalising, but it is always to be remembered that this is not a negligible part of the fight which the Russians were leading against the Basmachi, of which these journals were the echo.

The new class situation (the accord between the proletariat and the peasantry) did not mean discontinuing these means of fighting, (military action, the Cheka, and propaganda), but it brought another way: the cutting off of the Basmachi movement from the population, and the commitment of this latter to the fight against the Basmachi by creating a militia.¹¹⁶

To integrate the Muslim population into the fight against the “bandits” would be from now on one of the objectives of the Russian authorities, who, although the revolt was at its highest point in 1922, succeeded thanks to the Turkkomissia in taking the situation in hand.

THE INDIGENOUS MILITIA

In 1922, the Russian regime introduced a new element in its struggle against the rebellion by including the native population in an indigenous militia.

The task which imposed itself on the Red Army and its commanders was the crushing of the large bands of Basmachi, the hunting of the little bands and the engagement of the indigenous population in the armed struggle against the Basmachi.¹¹⁷

Besides the ideological aspect which contributed to the creation of the indigenous militia, the Muslims had to be brought over to the side of the Russians against the “counter-revolutionaries” — one could ask oneself to what extent tactical considerations were also determinant? Who better than the natives to know the land and the enemy? The militia was the ideal frame for these future auxiliaries of the army as it meant the peasants could be regrouped.

By using the experience gained in Ferghana in the struggle against the Basmachi, [we should] continue with the greatest energy to attract large sections of the population by calling on numerous conferences of non-partisan *dehqans*, by attracting the Muslim cultural forces (the jadids) and by organising, under the financial auspices of the population, a militia of volunteers whose political education would be assured.¹¹⁸

In this article extract, a certain vision is given of the coming together of the authorities and the population in the fight against the Basmachi: the peasants, already very impoverished, alone supported the financial weight of the militia (the buying of arms and loss of working hours), whereas the Bolsheviks were responsible for their political education. Nevertheless, this project of a militia was only viable where Russian authority had a real hold:

If in Ferghana, the organisation of a militia was the best way for the population to cooperate with the Red Army's operations, the reverse was true of the situation in the *oblast'* of Samarkand. In Ferghana we are present at the revolt of the population against the Basmachi; whereas, in the *oblast'* of Samarkand, when they can no longer hold off the rebels, we are confronted with the people's passivity due to the terror inspired by the rebels.¹¹⁹

Thus, although the Ferghana was the first hearth of insurrection in 1918, four years later the situation was reversed, and the militia was

really participating in operations against the Basmachi.¹²⁰

Practically, this means that the militia (without class distinction) of *dehqans* which we have set up merits our confidence, which has already been justified by their fighting pitilessly against the Basmachi. But it now behoves us to take steps which will preserve this militia from a counter-revolutionary degeneration of the lower middle-class.¹²¹

The ideological frame and the political education of the Muslims seemed to be a constant worry for the Russians authorities, that they might not fall into the grasp of the Muslim nationalists. It was also to be avoided that these militiamen should turn against them and join the rebels once again.

PROPAGANDA

Faced with meagre military successes, the Russian authorities decided that from 1920 they would use another weapon in Ferghana, less radical but sometimes as successful, propaganda.¹²²

The result of the military struggle was not in doubt. . . . But victory would not be quick and easy unless a political campaign was developed amongst the peasantry on the subject of the fight against the Basmachi and Enver Pasha.¹²³

Set up on entry level, the propaganda had a double objective. Firstly, it was to incite the population to fight against the rebels, but it was also to struggle the nationalist aspirations of the Muslims. Appropriately, the presence of Muslims relieved the problem of political action amongst the Muslim units.¹²⁴

Even at the centre of the Party, propaganda itself to be necessary because "some tendencies tainted with narrow nationalism had appeared amongst the indigenous Communists."¹²⁵

The Communist Party decreed therefore a veritable mobilisation (*partiinaia mobilisatsiia*) devoted to propaganda, and the most important members took part in it.

The 9th Congress of Soviets had nominated, at the head of all those mobilised in Ferghana, a "troika" made up of comrades Rakhimbaev, Peters and Okuniev. The delegates stayed for one whole month and organised a large political campaign which was combined with the start of the military campaign against the Basmachi brigands. At present only twelve delegates of the congress remain. . . . After the return of comrade Rakhimbaev, it was comrade Ryskulov who was sent to Ferghana with the president of the Turkkommissiia, Sokol'nikov.¹²⁶

Propaganda was not only entrusted to the Russian communists — the Muslim "militant founders" were also invited to participate actively no doubt because of their potential influence with their co-believers. However, this initiative did not have great success:

A special mobilisation was decreed of fifty Muslim Communists of Tashkent and the organisation of the *uezd*. However, the decree was not put to use. Tashkent supplied twenty-eight men and the *uezd* sixteen. But the possibility of such a modest mobilisation would have been previously out of the question in a practical sense. Even though those mobilised comrades revealed themselves to be the most mediocre (the Ferobkom even sent us the following telegram: "If this is all you can send, do not bother; we have the same type here"), the experience of a break between simple Muslim Communists and their families and their natural surroundings is in itself a revolution.¹²⁷

The author of the article, unfortunately, does not give the reasons for the ineffectualness (or unwillingness) of the Muslim Communists, apparently little convinced by the subjects or even the methods of propaganda.

The mass organisations, affiliated with the Communist Party, were also instrumental in diffusing propaganda. Thus, in the *oblast'* of Fergana:

All the activity of the Union of Communist Youth in Turkestan is placed under the mark of the fight against the Basmachi. (128)¹²⁷

The Red Army, "the advanced guard of the Revolution beside the masses" was also urged to take action.

Meanwhile, the propaganda was coming up against a major obstacle that of the language of communication, since the natives did not understand Russian. The activists were therefore advised to learn the local languages:

In order to fulfil this very responsible task, the workers of the Red Army must keep close contact with the indigenous population, which is impossible to do without knowing the language. It is vital that all the responsible workers, all the Communists and all those who have business with the population, learn one of the local dialects (Uzbek, Kirghiz, or Turkmen).¹²⁹

On top of this, it was also recommended that the activists showed their talents in the *chaikhanas* (see Glossary), where they were certain of having an audience (130).

The languages therefore posed a real problem, and a government press existed which wrote in the local languages. In the whole of Central Asia, about eight newspapers could thus educate the native masses.¹³¹ However, this press could not have had many readers if one can judge from the Bolsheviks' own appreciation of the situation.¹²⁷

What immediately leaps from the page is the absence of clarity and the dryness of the language in our newspapers. In the majority of cases, the contents are difficult to understand, and even totally incomprehensible for the *dehqan* and the artisan in the towns.¹³²

Besides the press, which was not an infallible instrument of

propaganda, tracts were produced, although destined mainly for the soldiers as is demonstrated by those distributed in the *oblast'* of Samarkand in 1922:

Subjects of tracts published by the *politotdel'* [political department] in July:

- (1) The struggle against the Basmachi at Bukhara and the victory of the Red Army
- (2) The history of the Basmachi movement
- (3) The popularisation of the directives from military high command and political organs on the struggle against the Basmachi; how to behave under the conditions of Muslim life
- (4) The main slogans of the struggle against the Basmachi and our attitude towards the peaceful population
- (5) A Muslim tract destined for the peaceful population on communal actions and getting together with the Red Army
- (6) The grand ideas of the adventure of Enver Pasha
- (7) A Muslim tract destined for the peaceful population concerning the new methods of fighting against the Basmachi. ¹³³

Now, despite the means put to use and the “mobilisation”, certain people deplored the ineffectualness of the propaganda, which was accused of being too far from everyday reality and hampered by poor co-ordination in subject-matter, to which was added total incoherence of choice (one week all the effort would go into the subject of Lenin, whereas the next week would be devoted to the cholera, without any kind of transition). ¹³⁴ The methods used did not show great finesse either:

Our activity amongst the peasantry, in the best of cases, often assumed the character of high school propaganda in the guise of raids by illiterate propagandists who often knew nothing about the life of the *auls* and the *kishlaks*. ¹³⁵

Here also the efforts made were ruined by ignorang of the country and its customs. F. Dingelstedt, on the other hand, states that, since the beginning of the NEP, propaganda work clearly slowed down ¹³⁶ because the slackening in tension had made it less urgent. There is not one article which truly gave information on the results of this propaganda on the population.

CONCLUSION

The study of these military journals shows that, right at the beginning of the twenties, the Russians, despite being perfectly informed of the facts and the acts of their adversary, could not clearly define the causes and nature of the uprising by those men they called the “Bas-

machi". To them, this revolt was nothing more than a "counter-revolutionary front" in a different guise from the ones they had until then fought. Nevertheless, even though the authors avoided writing about it too explicitly, it appears that the Russian authorities knew that the majority of the natives for better or worse supported the rebels, while the government was extremely isolated.

These journals also largely take into account the multiple difficulties encountered by the Red Army in Turkestan. The men and equipment had to adapt to mountains and desert. The military command had to give up large battles and submit to a new form of combat, guerilla warfare, which asked for immediate appropriate tactics. However, what does emerge from these reviews is the very obvious willingness to know Turkestan in order better to wage war and facilitate sovietisation of the area.

But the most numerous articles are those devoted to the various material problems, of which the principal one was the provision of food. In a land which was the victim of famine, this point was crucial as the requisitions of foodstuffs engendered anger amongst the native peasantry, who were forced to feed a foreign army.

Finally, along with articles on the military struggle against the rebels, these journals mentioned the ideological struggle aimed at the whole population. Several articles reveal the ineffectualness of Soviet propaganda, which was poorly planned and poorly applied to the natives.

Thus, we have unique testimony about the installation of the Red Army in Central Asia (far from being described as a heroic day), and about the Basmachi actions against it. Two years later, the victories gained over the rebels gave more triumphant tone to these journals. It would be particularly interesting now to research these same journals for the period of the last great outburst of the revolt in 1928.

TRANSCRIPTION

We have chosen the English transliteration of the Russian in order to give clarity to non-Russophiles, and we have kept the best known orthography of names. However, where the "Turkish" names are concerned, we have decided to respect the customary transcription adopted by the Arabic alphabet.

NOTES

1. cf P. G. Galuzo, *Turkestan-kolonii* (Turkestan is a Colony), (Moscow, 1929).
2. P. Baranov, "Polozhenie Turkestanskoi respubliki i reorganizatsiia Krasnoi

- armii" (The Situation in the Republic of Turkestan and the Red Army), *Voennaia mysl'* (May–July 1921), p. 86.
3. G. Skalov, "Sotsial'naia priroda basmachestva" (The Social Nature of the Basmachi Movement), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 21.
 4. *ibid.*, p. 24.
 5. Dervish (pseudonym of Nazir Tiurakulov), "Ferganskaia problema" (The Problem of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'* (May–July 1921), pp. 109–110.
 6. B. Lavrenev, "Gornaia voina" (The War of the Mountains), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (March 1922), No. 1, p. 23.
 7. P. Baranov, *op. cit.* p. 88.
 8. V. Kuvshinov, "Ferganskii raion" (The Region of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 259.
 9. On this subject, cf Turar Ryskulov, *Chto delali Dashnaki v Fergane* (What the Dashnaks Did at Ferghana), (Tashkent, 1925), republished in 1985 at Oxford by the Society for Central Asian Studies.
 10. Dervish, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
 11. cf Nazir Tiurakulov, *Iazy provintsial'noi zhini* (The Scourges of Life in the Provinces), *op. cit.*
 12. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
 13. M. Shkliar, "Iz putiovykh vpechatlenii po Fergane" (Travel Impressions of the Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 278.
 14. G. Skalov, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
 15. For the social composition of the *kurbashi*, cf M. Broxup, "The Basmachi", *Central Asian Survey*, (July 1983), p. 61.
 16. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
 17. With reference to the different tactics according to the regions of Turkestan, cf M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 18. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
 21. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. "In Ferghana, there is no Soviet power except in the towns with Russian population. But in the Muslim countryside, it does not exist." T. Ryskulov, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
 24. "Rabota voennogo nauchnogo obshechestvo" (The Work of the Military and Scientific Society), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 74.
 25. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
 26. V. K., "Voennyi obzor" (The Military Situation), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 222.
 27. "Rabota voenno-nauchno go obshechestvo", *op. cit.*, p. 74.
 28. No. Berezin, "Basmachestvo v Bukhare" (The Basmachi Movement at Bukhara). *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 44.
 29. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 30. V. K. *op. cit.*, p. 222.
 31. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. "The Devil's machine".
 34. V. K. *op. cit.*, p. 222.
 35. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 36. A. Gornyi, "Deiatel'nost' revoliutsionngo voennogo Tribunala" (The Activity of the Revolutionary Military Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'* (January–April 1921),

- p. 311.
37. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. I. Sol'ts, "Anglo-enverskaia avantiura i osvobozhdenie narodov Vostoka" (The British-Enver Venture and the Liberation of the Peoples of the East), *Kommunist*, (April-May 1922), p. 8.
 40. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *Kommunist*, (June-July 1922), p. 2.
 41. Ts. K.K.P.T., "Ko vsem chlenam Kommunisticheskoi Partii Turkestana", (To All Members of the Communist Party in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (April-May 1922), p. 3.
 42. I. Sol'ts, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
 43. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
 44. N. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
 45. *Ibid.*
 46. *Ibid*, p. 40.
 47. See Appendix II, No. 1.
 48. G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naiia revoliutsia-opyt Turkestana* (The Colonial Revolution, the Experience of Turkestan), (Moscow, 1921).
 49. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
 50. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 51. P. Baranov, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
 52. N. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
 53. T. Skalov, "Novyi dekret o zemle" (The New Decree on the Land), *Kommunist*, (August-September 1922), p. 47.
 54. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
 55. L. Mariasin, "Rezul'taty primeneniia NEPa v promyshlenosti i torgovle i blizhashchie meropriatii" (The Results of the NEP in Industry and Commerce and the Next Steps), *Kommunist*, (April-May 1922), p. 13.
 56. M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
 57. I., "Neskol'ko slov o snabzhenii v Turkestane" (A Few Words on the Question of Provisions in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 372.
 58. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
 59. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
 60. N. S. Lykoshin, "Narodnosti Turkestana, kak voennyi material" (The Peoples of Turkestan as Military Material), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 372.
 61. See Appendix II, No. 2.
 62. N. S. Lykoshin, "Lokot' k lokt'iu" (Elbow to Elbow), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May-July 1921), p. 27.
 63. *Ibid*, p. 30.
 64. *Ibid*, p. 26.
 65. Priezhhii, "Vtoroe sovesnanie oblastnykh voennykh kommissarov Turkestanskogo Fronta" (The Second Conference of the Military Commissions of the Oblast' of the Turkestan Front), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May-July 1921), p. 270.
 66. P. Baranov, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
 67. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
 68. D. Z., "Osobennosti oboznogo dela v Turkestane" (The Particularities of Convoys in Turkestan), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana* (April 1922), pp. 52-53.
 69. *Ibid.*
 70. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
 - M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
 72. V. K., "Voennyi obzor" (The Military Situation), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January-April 1921), p. 220.

73. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
74. Dervish, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
75. See p. 7.
76. See Appendix II, No. 3.
77. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
78. S. Gusev, "Blizhashchie perspektivy bor'by s basmachestvom" (The Next Perspectives in the Struggle Against the Basmachi), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 10.
79. V. K., *op. cit.*, p. 220.
80. M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
81. "The Devil's machine."
82. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
84. V., Denisev, "Bukhara", *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 5.
85. "The Devil's car."
86. Al Tasin, "Obzor raboty vozdushnogo flota v Turkestane za 1920" (Aircraft Operations in Turkestan During the Year 1920), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 187.
87. P. Seminov, "Krasnyi vozdushnyi flot v Turkestane" (The Red Air Fleet in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 201.
88. Al Tasin, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
89. P. Seminov, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Priezshii, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
92. V. Iudovskii, "Markisistoe vospitane chlenov partii" (The Marxist Education of Party members), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 11.
93. I., "Neskol'ko slov o snabzhenii v Turkestane" (A Few Words on Provisioning in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 373.
94. Agitprop Ts.K.K.P.T., "Tezisy po prodnalogu dlia agitatorov" (A Few Ideas for Agitators Concerning the Nature Tax), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 59.
95. Cf. requisitions, see Appendix II, No. 4.
96. Priezshii, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
97. N. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
98. A. Dobrynin, "S'ezd rabotnikov po konozavodstvu i konovodstvu" (The Congress of Workers of the Equine Section), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 298.
99. I. S., "O profesional'nom dvizhenii v Turkestane" (The Trade Union Movement in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (December 1920), p. 16.
100. D. Perkin, "Mesiats pomoshchi" (The Month of Help), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 2.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
102. G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naiia revoliutsia-opyt Turkestana*, (The Colonial Revolution, the Experience of Turkestan), (Moscow, 1921), p. 84.
103. A Bolshevik descending from Lithuanian princes, shot (1920?) by the revolutionary tribunal of the Front of Turkestan for his crimes which cost the lives of some thousands of Kirghiz.
104. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
105. See Appendix II, No. 5.
106. A. Gornyi, "Deiatel'nost' revoliutsionnogo voennogo tribunala" (The Activities of the Revolutionary Military Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 311.

107. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
108. Prizzhii, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
109. Kh., "Sredne-aziatskoe voenno-nauchnoe obshchestvo" (The Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 295.
110. "Sredne-aziatskoe voenno-nauchnoe obshchestvo" (The Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 107.
111. "Rabota voenno-nauchnogo obshchestva" (The Work of the Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 74.
112. Z. "Izuchenie byta narodnosti Turkestana" (The Study of the Daily Life of the People's of Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 300.
113. Ts.K.K.P.T., "Ko vsem chlenam kommunisticheskoi partii Turkestana", (To All Members of the Communist Party in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 3.
114. Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 3.
115. G. Markov, "Antireligioznaia propaganda narodov Vostoka" (Anti-Religious Propaganda Amongst the Peoples of the East), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 40.
116. S. Gusev, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
117. "Pervaia partiinaia frontovaia konferentsiia" (The First Conference of the Front of the Party), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 104.
118. Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
119. Sredne-aziatskoe Biuro Ts.K.K.P., "Ko vsem kommunisticheskim organizatsiam Srednei Azii" (To All the Communist Organisations of Central Asia), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 2.
120. K. T., "Na mestakh, Samarkandskaia oblast'" (In the Provinces, Samarkand Oblast'), *Kommunist* (August–September 1922), p. 146.
121. S. Gusev, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
122. Ispolbiuro Ts.K.K.P.T., "Otchiot Ispolnitel'nogo Biuro Ts.K.K.P.T." (Report of the Executive Bureau of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (December 1920).
123. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
124. V.L. Lopukhov, "Iz istorii politicheskoi raboty v krasnoi Armii" (History of Political Work in the Red Army), *Voennaia mysl'* (January–April 1921), p. 98.
125. VI Konferentsiia K.P.T." (The 6th Conference of the P.C.T.), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 106.
126. Ispolbiuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 20.
127. *Ibid.*
128. "Itogy raboty Ts.K.K.S.M.T." (Account of the Activity of the C.C. of the Union of the Communist Youth in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (1922), No. 2, p. 39.
129. S., "K izucheniiu vostochnykh iazikov v voennom vedomstve" (For the Study of Eastern Languages in Military Service), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 307.
130. F. Dingelstedt, *Agitatsiia i propaganda pri NEPe v usloviakh Turkestana* (Propaganda Under the NEP in the Conditions of Communist Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 56.
131. Kasym S., "Gazety na mestnykh iazikakh" (Newspapers in Local Languages), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 69.
132. *Ibid.*, see also Appendix II, No. 6.
133. "Politrabota na mestakh, Samarkandskaia oblast'" (Political Work in the Provinces, the Oblast' of Samarkand), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September

- 1922), p. 67.
 134. E. Zel'kina, "Formy i metody agitatsii v Turkestan" (The Forms and Methods of Propaganda in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, p. 44.
 135. *Ibid.*
 136. F. Dingelstedt, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

APPENDIX I

GLOSSARY

- Arba* (Uzbek): cart with two big wheels pulled by a horse.
Basmachi (Uzbek): brigand or bandit, name given to the rebels by the Russians.
Chaikhana (Tajik): literally, house of tea; plays the role of cafe.
Dehqan (Tajik): peasant.
Desiatina (Russian): unit of measurement equivalent to 2.7 acres.
Djuta: slick glazed frost.
Izba (Russian): peasant hut.
Kishlak (Uzbek): originally winter encampment, today, the Russians use this word to describe all Muslim villages.
Kurbashi (Uzbek): military leader.
Oblast', Otdel, Uezd: administrative divisions. Until 1924, Turkestan kept the administrative divisions of the ex-Government General of Turkestan which consisted of five oblasts: the Transcaspian *oblast'*, the *oblast'* of Ferghana, the *oblast'* of Samarkand, the *oblast'* of Semirechie, the *oblast'* of Syr Daria, and one *otdel*, that of Amu Daria, as well as several *uezds* which are sub-divisions.
Saklia (Russian): word describing the mountain habitations of the Northern Caucasus.
Verst (Russian): unit of measurement, equal to approximately 2/3 mile.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- Djani Bek*: Kirghiz Basmachi chief of Pamir.
Djunaid Khan: Chief of the Turkmen tribe of the Yomud, and principal *kurbashi* of the Turkmen steppes. In 1916, he seized power for the first time at Khiva, putting the Khan Isfandiyar at his mercy. The rapid intervention of Russian troops did not allow him to savour victory for long. Declared enemy of the Russians, then of the Soviets, he re-seized Khiva in 1918, then lost it again shortly afterwards. In January 1920, he fled into the desert of Kara-Kum, from whence he led operations against the Soviets. In 1923, measures which directly hit at Islam in the constitution of the new Soviet Republic of

Khorezm, provoked a lively reaction in the population; and in January 1924, Djunaid Khan, strong with the support of the merchants and the clergy, retook the town. One month later, it fell once again into the hands of the Soviets. Djunaid Khan fled once more into the desert, from whence he made periodic raids against the Soviets, until 1927, when he took refuge in Iran. However, in 1928, he crossed the frontier again to organise resistance against collectivisation. There were violent battles until 1931; and it was only in 1933 that the Soviets definitively took the matter in hand. In 1933, Djunaid Khan left for Iran again, where he died in 1936.

- Irgash:* Bandit condemned to twelve years penal servitude, and freed in 1917 when the amnesty was decreed by the provisional government. In 1918, he became the head of the order to defend itself against the troops of the Turksovnarkom. After the sacking of Kokand by the turksovnarkom he organised the most powerful band of Basmachi in Ferghana. A fanatic conservative Muslim, he had the support of the *ulemas*, and in 1918 he did not hesitate to proclaim himself Khan of Ferghana in the holy place of Hazrat, according to the enthronement customs of the khans. In March 1919, he sought to unify the movement and convened an assembly which reunited forty *kurbashi*. The same year he suffered a severe defeat and signed a treaty of peace with the Soviets, but this proved only temporary.
- Khal Hodja:* Sheikh belonging to the Yasawiya Sufi brotherhood, he was a powerful *kurbashi* in Ferghana, and died in October 1920 under an avalanche.
- Madamin Bek:* Principal Basmachi leader in Ferghana with Irgash, and rival of the latter.
His true name was Amin Ahmad Bekov; he was son of a merchant of Margelan and was 23 years old in 1917. Deputy under the provisional government, and ex-member of the Soviet of Margelan, he was also chief of the militia of the town; he later went over to the side of the rebels.
In June 1919, he made an alliance with the "peasant army" of Monstrov, and in September, convened an assembly which proclaimed an ephemeral government which was provisional in Ferghana of which he was the president. In March 1920, he gave himself up, and was killed on 24 May by the *kurbashi* Kurshirmat, who considered him to be a traitor.
Much more open and liberal than Irgash, he has the support of the moderates, and gathered the Tatar and Bashkir nationalists together, who joined the revolt.

APPENDIX II. JOURNALS' COMMENT ON SELECTED TOPICS

NO. 1. ANECDOTE: IN THE KISHLAKS, IT WAS THOUGHT THAT "BOLSHEVIK" MEANS "BANDIT"

“The incident takes place in a town in Ferghana in 1919. The tribunal judges several bandits guilty of acts of brigandage in the *kishlaks* round about. The defendants are sitting on the bench of the accused. The president interrogates one of their victims, an old man, who is acting as a witness. To the president’s question: ‘Who committed these thefts?’, the witness points a finger at the accused and says completely naively: ‘it is the Bolsheviks.’ The president asks with astonishment: ‘who are you saying are the Bolsheviks?’ The witness replies: ‘you see, I have been living in my *kishlak* for nearly forty-five years. I do not know and I have never known the land. How do you expect me to know who the Bolsheviks are? That is why I call them the Bolsheviks, and I demand that they be punished immediately!’”

Dervish, “Ferganskaia problema” (The Problem of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 112.

NO. 2. USING THE “NATIVES” TO BEST ADVANTAGE

“Natural curiosity, the ability to adapt quickly to a situation, the habit of listening attentively . . . and a memory which is well enough developed together with the natural spirit, to which should be added a good amount of guile, make the nomad the ideal scout . . . The services of transmission and order, the guard posts and the engineering works in the fighting units can without hesitation be entrusted to those soldiers who have come from towns, on the condition, of course, that serious educational work is undertaken. Thus, the significance of the Red Army will be appropriately understood and assimilated by these workers . . . In the mountains, the Tajiks must particularly be used.”

N.S. Lykoshin, “Narodnosti Turkestana kak voennyi material” (The People of Turkestan as Military Material), *Voennaia mysl'* (September 1920), pp. 42 and 44.

NO. 3. REQUISITIONS (OR PILLAGE) FROM THE NATIVES

“The revolution had an urgent need for foodstuffs. Bread and meat could only be had from the indigenous peasants. Because of the lack of State machinery with regard to provisions, one had to proceed to disorganised requisitioning. Often it was armed detachments of soldiers who took the initiative, taking not only wheat from the peasants, but also all the diverse objects used for work or in the home. Under the old regime, one did not mind pillaging the natives, but it was, one might say, done in a systematic way, organised, which allowed the natives to adapt their economic resources to the pressure exerted by the colonial power. The new power pillaged without any system at all, and without any order.”

V. Iudovskii, “Marksistoe vospitanie chlenov Partii” (The Marxist Education of the Party Members), *Kommunist* (June–July 1922), p. 11.

NO. 4. ALLIANCES AND DEFECTIONS

“Meanwhile, the negotiations with Djunaid Khan by our representative did not end in peace. To the contrary, during the last negotiations, Djunaid Khan behaved in such a suspicious manner, that he was asked to disarm immediately. Djunaid Khan and his escort, visibly prepared for this eventuality, opened fire on our detachment, wounded four men, and, on seeing help arriving, fled into the desert. A little later,

we learnt from our reconnaissance service that Djunaïd Khan was to be found in the region of Sheikh-Uvas-Kurganchik, where he was distributing up to fifty carbines to the Mesherik tribe, and led them in an uprising against those men we had acquired, the tribe Yomud of Kosh-Hamid Kha, which meant this latter had to side with Djunaïd Khan. Added to which, Djunaïd Khan knew how to attract our old allies Bakshi and Gulian.”

S. Mikhailov, “Khivinskii front”, (The Khiva Front), *Voennaia mysl'* (September 1920), p. 252.

NO. 5. THE EXTORTIONS OF THE MILITIA

“Pillage without precedent, affairs of the wine jug and thefts committed by members of the militia — which was the case at Samarkand, where the chief of the militia of the third district (today shot) was at the head of a band of militia horsemen which terrorised the population with its acts of brigandage — did have an echo in the military revolutionary Soviet whose competence in treating this type of affair was legalised.”

A. Gornyi, “Deiatel 'nost' revoliutsionogo voennogo tribunala” (The Activity of the Military Revolutionary Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 312.

NO. 6. THE LOCAL PRO-SOVIET PRESS

Kzyl bairak, Uzbek newspaper of the *krai* and organ of the C.C. of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of Turtsik.

Appears three times a week. Attempted to be serious, but still published many articles of no interest.

“This newspaper focuses a lot of attention on the struggle against the Basmachi. It associates the fight against the Basmachi with restoring the economy.”

Ak Zhol, Kirghiz newspaper of the *krai* and organ of the C.C. of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of Turkistik.

Appeared three times a week.

A quick look shows that it did not have a good editor-in-chief. Numerous articles on the famine, particularly in Kirghizia, few articles on international subjects, and nothing on the NEP and the Party.

Ferghana, Uzbek newspaper of the *oblast'*, organ of the Committee for the *oblast'* of Ferghana of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of the Revolutionary Committee of the *oblast'*.

Appearing in an *oblast'* where the Basmachi movement was rife, it understood its task perfectly, by bringing a lot of attention to it and recording the least act. All the questions are linked with the Basmachi movement. The fight against this phenomenon is present from beginning to end in all the articles.”

Turkmenistan, Turkmen newspaper of the *oblast'*, of the Communist Party in Turkestan and the Executive Committee of the *oblast'*.

International policy is the principal theme of the articles.

Kashtagaliar-Taush, Uzbek newspaper of the *oblast'*, organ of the Central Committee of the *oblast'* of Samarkand.

“Not one word on the Basmachi movement, which is taking on a menacing character in the *oblast'*.”

Kasym, S., "Gazety na mestnykh iazikakh" (Newspapers in Local Languages), *Kommunist* (June–July 19??), pp. 69–73.

