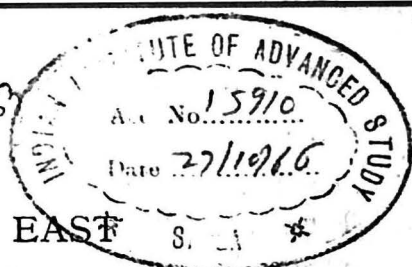


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THE NEW EAST

[The purpose of this new section is to give to our readers a series of pictures of the changed conditions prevailing in Asia since, and largely as a result of, the war. The articles will be written by experts personally acquainted with the countries they describe.]

TURKESTAN SINCE THE REVOLUTI

THE first important act of the Revolution in Tu was the deposition in the month of March, 1917, of Kuropatkin, who until then had held the post of Governor-General. The control of affairs throughout the country was thereupon vested by the Provisional Government in the so-called "Turkestan Committee," an administrative body which was directly subordinate to the Provisional Government itself. This Turkestan Committee had as its President one Nikolai Schepkin, an adherent of the "Cadet" or Constitutional Democrat party. Other members of the Committee were Yelpatievsky, Lipovsky, Paul Preobrazhensky, Shkapsky, a Kirghiz engineer named Tinishpaieff, Major-General Darlichin (a Bashkir), and Maksutoff, a Tartar and ex-member of the Third Duma. Schepkin resigned soon after the formation of the Committee, and his example was followed by Darlichin and Maksutoff. The new President was one Nalifkin, a well-known specialist on Turkestan, who remained in power as President until the abolition of the Committee in September, 1917.

The main reason impelling the Provisional Government to do away with the Committee was the unpopularity of the latter among the native population. The Turkestanis were at that time very enthusiastic over their newly-won freedom, and their feelings were hurt by a proposal of the Committee to institute two distinct local administrative bodies—one for Russians, the other for natives. Feeling against the Russian authorities was also intensified as a result of the



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bad behaviour of the troops returning in a state of utter demoralization from the front. In September, 1917, the Turkestan Committee was deprived of its powers as an independent administrative institution, and was reduced to the status of a mere local advisory body attached to the newly appointed Commissar-General for Turkestan. The latter post was given to General Korovichenko, a personal friend of Kerensky, who prior to the Revolution had been Commander of the Kazan Military District, and subsequently had been deputed to carry out the examination of the private papers of the late Tsar. The Commissar-General was given two assistants for military and civil matters respectively, while Muslim interests were looked after by a so-called "Muslim Regional Committee" (Kraevoi Soviet), whose president was empowered to bring up all Muslim questions before the advisory committee attached to the Commissar-General.

Such was the form of government which remained in force until the overthrow of the Provisional Government of Russia and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in October, 1917.

Soviet troops were despatched to Tashkent soon after the Bolshevik *coup d'état* had taken place, and after a struggle succeeded in overcoming local opposition, and established Soviet rule in the Turkestan capital. An Executive Committee was formed under the presidency of Comrade Fedor Kolesov, a minor railway employee. This committee contained no Muhammadans, but was only formed as a temporary measure. At the end of November a People's Commissariat (Sovnarkom) was established under the leadership of Kolesov, and the Bolsheviks settled themselves down to rule Turkestan.

The Bolshevik Government celebrated the establishment of Soviet control over Turkestan with a proclamation asserting the right of the people to determine their own future, promising them national independence, and undertaking to withdraw Russian troops from the country. The

people of Turkestan had at that time no great desire to sever themselves from Russia, and contented themselves with declaring their country to be a national autonomous state forming an integral part of the Russian Republic.

So much for the proclamations of the Russian Government. It was with the Soviet of Comrade Kolesov, however, that the people of Turkestan now had to deal. From the beginning, the new rulers in Turkestan showed clearly that, despite the fair-sounding promises of the Central Government, it was they, the Tashkent "Sovnarkom," who were going to rule the country. There would be no question of the native Muslim population having any real voice in the control of affairs, and in order to impress this fact upon the local Muslims with as little delay as possible, the Bolsheviks shot down in cold blood some thousands of the native inhabitants who were profiting by a religious festival to celebrate the newly won autonomy of Turkestan.

Although the Muhammadans in Turkestan represented some 95 per cent. of the total population, only two of the nine seats in the Executive Committee were given to natives, while the Sovnarkom itself remained entirely Russian. A cry of protest was raised, and was answered by the explanation that "We Bolsheviks know best what is good for you, and are we not after all the true friends of Islam, who intend freeing Turkey and Constantinople?" The wretched Turkestanis could merely make rejoinder with the old Kirghiz proverb: "Of what use is the vastness of the world to a man whose shoes pinch him."

The native population now had their first glimpse of the evils of Bolshevik government, but they had yet to experience the full ruthlessness thereof. Tashkent was the centre of Soviet power, but the Bolsheviks had not yet made their force felt in the more outlying districts. The Muslim Regional Committee, with the co-operation of the leading Mullahs and Ulema, determined to defy the Soviet Government. They convened a Conference at Kokand on November 26, 1917, the object of which was to protest

against the usurpation of power by the Bolsheviks, demand the recognition by the latter of the autonomy of Turkestan, and insist on the establishment of a Turkestan Constituent Assembly. The actual resolution passed at this conference was worded as follows :

“The Fourth Extraordinary Regional Muhammadan Conference, while expressing the desire of the peoples of Turkestan for self-determination, hereby declares Turkestan to be an autonomous state united to the Federative and Democratic Russian Republic. The drawing up of an autonomous constitution will be left to the Turkestan Constituent Assembly, which latter must be convoked without delay.”

The Conference further drew up a scheme of parliamentary election, whereby two-thirds of the seats would be allocated to Muslims. The elections were eventually carried out in Kokand, and the nucleus for a Provisional Government was got together. The following month, December, 1917, a Congress of Provincial Muhammadan Landholders (Dehkans) was convened, which forthwith demanded the recognition by Moscow of the Provisional Government of Turkestan based on a National Council elected in the country.

These demands on the part of the Muslim organizations were used by the Bolsheviks as pretexts for further repression. Moscow became concerned at the new “national movement” among Turkestan Muhammadans, and the Tashkent authorities were given a free hand to deal with the situation.

The measures adopted by the Tashkent Soviet were as prompt as they were ruthless. Reinforcements of Siberian and Magyar troops were drafted into the country, and in February, 1918, the newly-elected National Council and Provisional Government were forcibly dispersed, while the town of Kokand was laid waste with attendant brutalities hitherto unparalleled even in the Russian civil war. Some 15,000 of the population were massacred. The mosques and shrines of this ancient Islamic centre were profaned,

and the famous library was burnt. Chief Commissar Kolesov and his Communist comrades decided that the Muhammadan population had got out of hand, and needed a lesson. Ruthless persecution of the leading Muslims followed, and was succeeded by the infamous "Starvation Blockade," when the Soviet authorities deliberately prevented grain from Aktiubinsk and other fertile areas reaching the famine-stricken population of Ferghana. Over 1,000,000 Kirghiz alone are said to have perished from this famine, which lasted until the following harvest.

Such was the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the native population of Turkestan during the first few months of their rule. The famine was a disaster from which it will take the country many years to recover. Not only was there a dying off of the native population, both settlers and nomads, but the cattle and camels also perished in thousands. The cotton cultivation ceased altogether, and, economically, Turkestan became a dead country.

As one brief example of the terribly impoverished state to which the country had been reduced, the Soviet Tashkent paper, *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* (October and November, 1920), published a statement showing the pre-Revolution total of yoke oxen in Turkestan to have been 4,311,100 head, whereas the present existing total in 1920 was only 561,531. Sheep and goats which had originally totalled 15,399,200 now only numbered 2,116,836 head.*

Realizing that no representations or appeals to Commissar Kolesov would have any effect, efforts were made by the Muslim leaders to appeal to Moscow. Appeal after appeal was made to the Central Government, but without avail, and it was only when a number of insurrections broke out in different parts of Turkestan that Moscow began to pay any attention. Instructions were thereupon sent to Tashkent demanding a moderation of policy with greater sufferance for the native population. No notice was taken of these instructions until, in the early spring of 1920, the

* These figures are quoted for Kirghiz alone.

Moscow Government really awoke to the fact that, in persisting in a policy of extreme persecution, the Bolsheviks were not only creating a dangerous situation for themselves in Turkestan, but were ruining their own Eastern policy, and were furthermore playing into the hands of the British. A special commission with wide powers was sent to Tashkent under the control of G. I. Broido, with orders to "cleanse the Augean Stables of Turkestan." This commission appears to have acted with great thoroughness. In its report it stated that the principles of nationalization and socialization in Turkestan were being utilized for no other purpose than as a convenient cover for the systematic plundering of the Muhammadan population. The land belonging to the poorer class of Kirghiz (notably in the Semirechia province) had been almost entirely seized and handed over to the more well-to-do Russian colonist.

Among the actual reports of the Commission it was stated that famine relief had been limited to the Russian population. Only such of the Muslim community received this privilege as permitted themselves under the threat of starvation, and against their conscience and convictions, to be registered as members of the Communist party. As a result of this system, the total number of Kirghiz alone who are known to have perished from hunger or at the hands of the Bolsheviks during the year 1918 exceeds the fantastic figure of one million persons.

If these facts and this figure had been quoted by circles known to be hostile to Bolshevism, or if they had been merely published in the pages of the non-Bolshevist Press, it would be easy to throw doubt upon the impartiality of the source. This is impossible, however, as the facts and the figure "one million" are quoted from the Moscow newspaper, *Pravda*, which is the organ of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist party.*

As a result of the Broido Commission, Kolesov was removed for ignoring the orders of the Central Govern-

* *Vide Pravda*, Moscow, No. 133 of 1920.

ment, while the remainder of the Commissars were also dismissed. Thus ended the first phase of Bolshevik rule in Turkestan.

With the end of the Kolesov régime, hopes ran high in Turkestan that the country was on the eve of better times. The policy now laid down by Moscow, and carried out by Broido, was certainly less severe than that of Kolesov, but, although much was promised, very little was actually done, and this second phase of Bolshevik rule can best be described as one of superficial compromise. The Moscow Government was anxious to avoid open trouble in Turkestan, and therefore resolved that Muslim feeling must not be trampled on, and, where already seriously ruffled, must be pacified. This was to be done by a show of pretended sympathy for Muslim national feeling, to which colour would be given by the admission of a greater number of native Muslims to the revolutionary committees and Soviet institutions. This policy was doomed from the first to be a farce, for, while there had been numbers of officials under the Tsarist régime who had sincerely worked for a closer *rapprochement* between Russians and native Muslims, there were now none of these old officials left, and while the new kind of Soviet official was certainly an improvement on the Kolesov type, he was, nevertheless, totally unfitted to administer a country of mixed races and complex problems such as Turkestan.

Meanwhile, it soon became apparent that the changes hoped for under the Broido régime were entirely superficial. Such natives as had been given appointments were one and all undesirable individuals who ought in no circumstances to have been admitted to official posts. A storm of protest again arose. To the political discontent was now added a general feeling of consternation at the economic chaos reigning throughout the country. Turkestan had always been a country of big enterprise, and as such had boasted a large number of prominent experts and public workers. The last two years had cleared the country of all its best elements, and without them a return to normal conditions

was impossible. Bolshevik methods had depleted the livestock of the country, while the absence of grain had necessitated the conversion of cotton lands to the culture of cereals. Thus was the staple product of Turkestan totally lost. General discontent voiced itself in renewed protests to the Moscow Government, and eventually assumed concrete form in fresh insurrections in the remoter parts of Ferghana. Thus ended the second phase of the Soviet régime in Turkestan.

The outbreak of armed insurrections was too serious to be entirely overlooked, wherefore the Central Government again reconsidered its attitude towards Turkestan. It was all the more impelled to do this by a number of other considerations. The summer of 1919 was fraught with grave danger for the Bolshevik cause, and the whole fabric of Soviet Government was shaken by the Korniloff, Denikin and Kolchak campaigns, followed by the defence of the Crimea by Wrangel, and the subsequent outbreak of guerilla or "green" movements throughout the greater part of Southern Russia. With all these dangers demanding constant attention, the Moscow Government dared not risk further complications with the Muhammadan population of Turkestan. A policy of reconciliation had therefore to be adopted, and stress was laid on the necessity of demonstrating somehow or other the compatibility of the principles of Communism and Islam. On the advice of the Eastern Secretariat more attention was to be paid to utilizing the Mullahs, Ulema, and other spiritual as well as political leaders.

It has been frequently argued that Communism and Islam are irreconcilable, and that no conscientious Muslim will ever become a genuine adherent of the Communist party. Although this may be strictly true as far as genuine convictions go, there are nevertheless numbers of Muslims who have not only joined the Communist party, but have actually become active and enthusiastic members of it for ulterior reasons of their own. The following extract from

a letter* written by a prominent Kirghiz Communist in Tashkent to a friend affords an excellent example of this. As will be gathered from the tone of the letter, though a genuine member of the Communist party, the writer is a Turkestani first, and a Communist afterwards. The letter runs :

"In the old Tsarist days any administrative official had the right under Statute 64 of the Turkestan Legal Code to place us in confinement. During the Kerensky régime in Turkestan, the officials kept aloof from us, and allowed us to take no part in public matters. Now, however, under the Bolsheviks, after suffering the most horrible treatment meted out by them, we are slowly but surely moving towards our goal, viz., to be masters in our own country. All that the Bolsheviks require of us is, firstly, to refrain from causing risings against the Soviet, and secondly, to do everything possible to crush the Imperialists.

"As far as we are concerned, we join the Communist ranks with the one idea of working out our national salvation, and we and the Bolsheviks are pleased with one another."

The Soviet Government now made its first really serious effort to ingratiate itself with the Muslims by means of propaganda, and with this new experiment commences the third phase of Bolshevik rule, which incidentally marks the real beginning of propaganda on a wide scale in Turkestan.

The first object aimed at by the Bolsheviks was to discredit the supporters of the Kerensky régime, together with the idea of the Constituent Assembly. This latter was still a bogey, inasmuch as the desire for a Constituent Assembly was strongly held by all the adherents of the Democratic or Young Sart and Young Kirghiz parties, who, though scattered, were nevertheless numerous.

Encouraged by a certain amount of success in their incipient stage of agitation, the Bolsheviks went further, and instituted a much wider system of propaganda, which

* This letter was written to a friend of the present writer in the spring of 1920. It is interesting to note that the author of the letter is now in prison in Moscow for having been too outspoken in the interests of Turkestan independence.

was not only quasi-Islamic in character, but was also anti-British. Henceforward the Soviet "Eastern Policy" came to be regarded as a factor of primary importance in the general scheme of world revolution.

It is obvious that whatever may have been the original arguments impelling the Bolsheviks to take up an active policy in the East, that policy was bound, sooner or later, to come into direct conflict with British influence and interests. The Bolsheviks were well aware of this. The "Comintern" in Moscow had long since convinced themselves that the quickest and possibly the only way of causing a revolution in Great Britain was by destroying British influence in the East, and notably in India. By causing a general conflagration in the East, the British could be burnt out of Asia, and the world revolution would be materially assisted. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks themselves are very much alive to the dangers of an Asiatic conflagration, and realize that only by continuously directing its force against the British can they prevent its turning and burning themselves. Hence it is that the Soviet Government *dare not* cease its anti-British propaganda in Asia. Dire necessity based on fear compels the Bolsheviks to continue their activities against the British in Asia, and this in itself explains why no Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, however binding its terms may be, will ever induce the Bolsheviks to abandon those activities, unless, indeed, Russia should become a real friend of Britain, a state of affairs which would be extremely desirable, but which is out of the question so long as there is a Communist Government in Moscow.

In September, 1920, the Soviet Government inaugurated its anti-British campaign in Asia, by convening the notorious Congress of Eastern Nations at Baku, and thereby endeavoured to advertise itself as the champion of all oppressed Eastern peoples. The Congress proved a farce, and the experiment is not likely to be repeated. A few months later, however, the Soviet Government was afforded

an opportunity of proving itself to be the ally of Islam in an extremely practical manner. The Angora Government, sorely pressed by the Greeks, turned to Russia for assistance, and by the Treaty of Friendship, signed in Moscow on the 16th March, 1921, the Bolsheviki showed themselves to be diplomatically and militarily the friends of Islam and the enemies of Britain.

SYSTEM OF PROPAGANDA.

Before leaving the subject of propaganda, it may not be superfluous to quote a few examples showing the different lines of agitation involved. The cleverness and adaptability of the propaganda will then become apparent.

The earliest form of all tended to show up Bolshevism, or rather Communism, as applicable to Islamic principles. It is curious that one of the first arguments adopted by the Bolsheviki in propagating the cause of revolution among the Muslims of Turkestan was a direct equivalent of the slogan of the Peasants' Revolt in England in the fourteenth century :

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then ye gentleman?”

In other words,* the peasantry were reminded that the world and all that therein is belong to Allah. All men are born equal in the sight of Allah. Whence come, therefore, the Pashas and Beys, Rajahs and Maharajahs, Maliks and Khans? Here in this or that village there is Allah Verdi who possesses twelve horses and does no work, while in the same village there is Abdulla, who possesses no horses and works twelve hours a day. This is not right. Communism does not permit this injustice, hence Abdulla must become a Communist. This kind of argument was used with great effect in propagating the revolution in Bokhara.

Later on the argument was persistently driven home that the interests of Islam require more than a mere expression of sympathy between the various Muslim states,

and the Turkestan Muslims in particular were urged to remember that their interests and political future were closely bound up with those of the outer Muslim world. "Brother Muslims—the Muhammadans of the whole world must either perish together, or, by uniting all their forces, win for themselves a prosperous political future. Join the Russian proletariat. The Russian proletariat will free you from every yoke," etc., etc.

As a typical example of the superior class of Bolshevik Islamic rhetorical propaganda which was let loose against the idea of the Constituent Assembly, the following extract can be quoted from the speech of a "communized" Muhammadan agitator specially deputed to Turkestan from Moscow in November, 1919. This individual enjoyed great success as an orator, and thousands of people used to collect to listen to his speeches.

"The Russian Constituent Assembly is neither able nor desirous of giving Muslims equal rights with Christians, and not only will it never give you independence, but on the other hand will populate your territory with Russian colonists. Bolshevism, on the contrary, has made its object the freeing of the downtrodden Muslim world from the yoke of the European peoples, in particular from the British, the most bloodthirsty enemy of Islam. Our salvation lies with the Soviet Government, which is actually creating our independence, and which promises to give our country into our own hands. Islam must support the Soviets."

Later, much capital was made out of the support of the Turkish Nationalists by the Soviet Government, and here again opportunities of showing up Great Britain as the oppressor of Islam were never wasted.

The above are sufficient examples to give a clear idea of the form of propaganda let loose by the Bolsheviks among the unsophisticated Muslims of Turkestan, and it will be readily understood that once having embarked on a deliberate campaign of such propaganda, it is impossible for the Soviet authorities to desist from it.

II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE MUSLIM POPULATION.

Having traced briefly the attitude and policy of the Bolshevik rulers in Turkestan towards the Muslim population, we will now turn to the attitude and activities of the Muslim population themselves.

The outbreak of the Russian Revolution took the native population of Turkestan at a disadvantage, and found them totally unprepared to face the new situation which it created. Under the Tsarist régime natives had been rigidly excluded from all public and political life. They even played no part in the local urban and district organizations. In Tashkent, where the population is 75 per cent. Muhammadan, a few natives were permitted seats in the Municipal Committee, but their number was strictly limited to one-third as opposed to two-thirds Russians. Turkestan had no electoral rights for places in the Imperial Duma, and the Tsar's Government discouraged the native Press. In these circumstances it was naturally impossible for the native population to have any properly organized political parties with clearly defined political programmes. Nevertheless, in spite of this enforced backwardness, there were in existence two distinct movements or schools of thought among the Muhammadan population. These were the Radical-Democratic party, on the one hand, and the Conservative party, favouring strict adherence to the *Sheriat*, on the other.

The former of these two movements comprises the so-called Young Sarts and Young Kirghiz, and aims at the democratization of Muhammadan society on the lines of European culture. They are the direct opponents of Muhammadan *archaïsism*, and in this respect are just as revolutionary as are the Turkish Nationalists, who have now gone so far as to abolish the temporal powers of the Caliph. Politically the Radical Democrats aim at establishing a wide autonomy for Turkestan, based on federation

with Russia more or less on the lines of the British dominions.

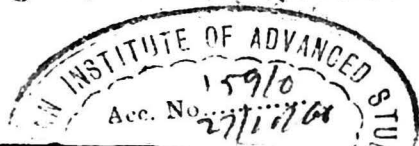
The second movement, that of the conservative adherents to the *Sheriat*, is centred round the Sart Mullahs, Ulema, and other spiritual leaders. Their aims are naturally to restore the old Muhammadan social and religious order, which would result in the restoration of power to the Imams. Their idea of the future structure of Turkestan is that of an independent Emirate, in which the Emir would be the temporal ruler on the strict lines of the *Sheriat*, under the supreme spiritual leadership of the Imam.

Such are, briefly, the two movements which on the outbreak of the Revolution appeared in the arena of political activity in Turkestan, and now assumed the character of definite political groups.

The Radical-Democrats, by conviction more or less moderate Socialists, adopted as their base of activity the existing "Regional Muhammadan Council," which now numbered among its adherents all the educated representatives of the Sarts and Kirghiz. As some of these individuals are probably destined to play more or less prominent rôles in the future history of Turkestan, it may be worth while mentioning the names of the more important among them. These are the President of the Regional Muhammadan Council, Mustafa Chokaieff, a Kirghiz lawyer, who had already come to the fore as Representative of the Muhammadan Council on the original Turkestan Committee; Obeidulla Khojaieff, the Vice-President; Shagi Ahmedoff, Shah-ul-Islam, Tashbulat Bek Narbutabekoff, Pashabek Palatkhanoff, Ali Muhammad Kutebaroff, Munavar Kary Abdurashidoff, and others. The majority of these individuals had been educated at one or other of the Russian universities, and were, generally speaking, enlightened people. During the régime of the Provisional Government the Muhammadan Council had exercised a certain influence upon the Turkestan Committee and from the first had adopted an antagonistic attitude towards the

Soldiers' and Workmen's Deputies in Tashkent, who represented, of course, the future Bolshevik rulers. The Council enjoyed considerable prestige and influence in the different centres of Turkestan, and also carried appreciable weight with the Turkestan Committee. This latter fact, in particular, brought it into direct antagonism with the Bolshevik party, which was daily growing stronger in Tashkent. From the first, the Council made no secret of its aim to establish an effective autonomy in Turkestan through the medium of a Russian Constituent Assembly—a fact which again was sufficient in itself to incur the hostility of the Bolsheviks, to whom the word Constituent Assembly was anathema.

The Conservative "Sheriatists" were also not idle, and they formed a central committee which they named the "Ulema Committee" or simply "Ulema." The president of this committee was a Kirghiz named Serali Lapin, a private solicitor by profession, and previously interpreter to the Governor-General. The members of the "Ulema Committee" included all the leading Mullahs of Tashkent. They aimed at the reconstruction of Muhammadan society on pure *Sheriat* lines, beginning with the nomination throughout the country of Qazis or Muhammadan judges, and the abolition of all existing institutions which did not conform to the conditions laid down by the *Sheriat*. Realizing, however, that they were not in a position to take up a directly hostile attitude to the Russian authorities, the Sheriatists adopted a policy of passive resistance, based on the idea of the non-cooperation of Muslims with non-Muslims, and after the Ferghana Conference, which paved the way for a Constituent Assembly by establishing an electoral system, the Sheriatists commenced an active campaign of propaganda to persuade Muslims to vote for none but Muslim representatives in all local administrative bodies. It was obvious from the first, however, that with the great majority of influential Kirghiz and Sarts already adherents of the Radical-Democrat party, the Sheriatists could not make much progress, and their influence has.



never succeeded in penetrating much beyond the town of Tashkent.

In Trans-Caspia, where the population is almost entirely Turkoman, the situation is slightly different in that there is no particular feeling for the *Sheriat*. Here, however, there are two distinct movements, the Democratic or Young Turkoman party, and the Conservatives, or supporters of the old tribal families, such as the aged Khansha of Merv, with her numerous relatives, some of whom, still living, took part in the defence of Trans-Caspia against the original Russian invasion, and survived the massacre of Geok Tepe.

The attitude of these old families is one of pure conservatism, free from all religious fervour or fanaticism. They have an exact counterpart in the better class of our old Indian pensioners, the Sardars, Raïses and Maliks of Northern India. They deplore the passing of the old Russian régime, and they deprecate still more the advent of the Young Turkomans.

It is scarcely probable that Trans-Caspia will ever play a salient rôle in the inner history of Turkestan, and her political development will doubtless follow the same lines as the more central portions of the country.

As regards the present status and activities of the Radical-Democrats, there is not much to be added. At the Congress of Ferghana they publicly proclaimed the autonomy of Turkestan, and they convened a body which they named the Provisional National Government of Turkestan. There is little doubt that, had circumstances permitted it, the party would have demanded the complete independence of Turkestan rather than mere autonomy ; but the political situation was against them, and no sooner had the Bolsheviks come into power, than they immediately dispersed the infant Turkestan Government. From that time onwards the party had no fixed centre of activities. A number of the leaders, including Mustafa Chokaïeff, were compelled to leave the country, whilst most of the

remainder became scattered or fell victims to Bolshevik repression. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of four years of this repression, the Radical-Democrat party still exists in Turkestan, and scattered as are its members, it has nevertheless proved itself a factor which the Moscow Government have repeatedly found it necessary to take into serious consideration.

During the last two years the attitude of the Moscow authorities towards the Muslim population of Turkestan has vacillated between repression and reconciliation. The reconciliation, however, has never been more than superficial, and consisted in repeating the original declaration that Turkestan is an "autonomous Soviet Republic," a phrase as meaningless as "the free self-determination of peoples," with which it is supposed to go hand in hand.

As to the real meaning and character of the so-called "Soviet Republic," no better explanation can be given than that furnished personally by Stalyn, the "Commissar for Nationalities," who himself signed the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia."

In this document it was stated that the Soviet Government accepted the basic principles of its national policy :

1. "The equality and the sovereignty of the different races forming the Russian people.
2. "The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the extent of separation from Russia and the formation of entirely independent states."

In direct contradiction to the above "Declaration," Stalyn subsequently made an authoritative statement* to the effect that "Soviet autonomous republics were in reality nothing more than "a new administrative division of Russia, based on the idea of regional autonomy in the form of administrative communes." The Bolsheviks' ideas

* *Vide* article by Stalyn, "The Policy of Soviet Government in Connection with the National Question," published in the Moscow *Pravda*, and reprinted in the *Communist Gruzii*, Nos. 6 and 7, and also the Baku publication *Narodnoe Khozyaestvo*, No. 9, December, 1920.

on the subject of Turkestan are very definite. Its primary importance in their eyes is the fact of its being their most convenient field for Asiatic propaganda and intrigue against Britain. It is the very last portion of the Russian Empire that the Bolsheviks would ever dream of surrendering, and there is evidence on record to show that, even if the Soviet Government were overthrown in European Russia, they would retire eastwards, and would look for a refuge in Turkestan.

Needless to say, the Russians have no intention of relinquishing their hold on the country. While still professing to recognize the autonomy of Turkestan, and admitting an increased number of natives to the administrative councils, these native officials are still in such small minorities that they can have no controlling vote whatever.

On the other hand, the Bolsheviks have embarked on a policy of complete Russification. The railways are entirely worked by Russians, even down to the lowest ranks of employees. This alone has caused great hostility on the part of the Turkestanis, who protest with justice that their own people are dying of starvation in thousands owing to lack of employment, and that, instead of giving them work on the railway, the authorities were drafting in workers from Russia. The feeling of hostility is further aggravated by the Bolshevik policy of colonization. Large numbers of Russian peasants have been brought into the country, and settled on land forcibly taken from the Kirghiz settlers. The result of these measures has been to create feelings of bitter hatred between Russian and native Muslim—feelings which were unknown under the government of the Tsar. From time to time insurrections break out, and guerilla bands, locally known as "Basmach," or robbers, organize themselves in the inaccessible highlands in the east of the country, and for a time keep the Soviet forces busy in repressing them. During the past year these insurrections assumed even more serious dimensions than hitherto, and efforts were made to amalgamate the various scattered

bands, and create one undivided movement against the Soviets. The Bolsheviks, however, again proved too strong for the insurgents, and the Basmatch found that they were themselves playing into the hands of the Bolsheviks by affording the latter the very excuse they wanted for retaining strong garrisons in Turkestan.

In view of all these repressive measures, together with the ever-present fear that one day the forces which they are at present controlling may break their bonds and overwhelm their present masters, it is not surprising that the Bolsheviks feel themselves compelled to continue their propaganda, showing up Britain as a much bigger tyrant than themselves, and emphasizing the fantastic lie that if the Bolsheviks relinquish their hold on Turkestan, the British will immediately take possession of it, and will drive the inhabitants into absolute slavery.

Briefly it can be said, therefore, that Turkestan is being held by force, and will continue to be held by force so long as the Moscow Government has an army wherewith to garrison it.

LIMITARIS.

THE NEW ORGANIZATION OF THE INFANTRY OF THE INDIAN ARMY

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THE new organization of our Indian Army, the details of which were made public recently, is noteworthy as the first occasion of the adaptation to any of the military forces of the British Empire of this system which has served as the standard military organization for the armies of all the Powers of the European Continent for the last hundred years.

The different social and geographical conditions obtaining in our Island Kingdom and its widely scattered dependencies have hitherto prevented the assimilation of our military system to that of other nations, and the new experiment in the case of our Indian Army will be watched with interest by the military world. The native Indian Army has already undergone more than one change in its organization during its eventful history; but the present change constitutes a more complete departure from custom and precedents than has ever yet taken place.

It is now one hundred and seventy years since the Honourable East India Company began to train and equip Indians after the manner of European soldiers in imitation of their French rivals, who had already made good progress in "training the miserable Kafirs of Telingana to fight in ranks, and to perform evolutions that are truly wonderful."* The first sepoy levies were organized in companies under their own officers, the whole body of sepoys with the Army being commanded by an Indian General of Sepoys, assisted by English adjutants and sergeants. In 1763 these independent companies were collected into battalions; in 1796 two of these battalions were united to form a double-

* Meadows Taylor's "Confessions of a Thug."

battalion regiment, and this organization lasted in the three Presidency armies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay until the year 1824, when the double-battalion regiments were divided into single-battalion regiments for two reasons. One reason was the desire to assimilate the organization to that of the British Army, the infantry regiments of which had all been reduced to single-battalion regiments in the great reductions that followed on the general peace in 1815. Another reason was the need for accelerating the rate of promotion of the British officers of the Honourable Company's service, which had become intolerably slow since the cessation of the state of continual war formerly prevailing in India. The doubling of the number of regiments doubled the number of regimental colonels, and so gave a run of promotion throughout the whole Army. This change necessitated the re-numbering of all the regiments, but the Indian is averse to change, and for years afterwards the 28th and 39th regiments of Madras Infantry were colloquially known as the 1st Martin's and 2nd Martin's, they having been the first and second battalions of Colonel Martin's regiment; while many of the Bengal Infantry regiments added to their title the prefix of "Dahina" (right) or "Bayen" (left), according as they had been first or second battalions in the former organization.

In the year 1903 the three separate Presidency armies were merged in one Indian Army, and the regiments of infantry were again re-numbered on one consecutive list, the only exception being the ten double-battalion regiments of Gurkha Rifles, which were numbered in a separate list.

During the Great War the Army was largely augmented, mostly by the addition of second and third battalions to the infantry regiments; but after the conclusion of peace all these new formations were disbanded, as well as some old ones, so that the post-war strength is less than the pre-war by some twenty battalions. Moreover, under the new organization twenty of the battalions are depot or training battalions and so not available for service in the field.

It now remains to be seen whether the recent introduction of the Continental system of infantry organization into our Indian Army will prove of practical benefit and result in any increase of military efficiency.

France is no larger than a single province of our Indian Empire, but the French Army musters half a million of men on a peace footing. India is five times as large as France, but her Army is only one-fifth of the peace strength of the French Army and only one-twentieth of its war strength.

It is thus evident that the conditions and circumstances of military service are totally different in India from what they are on the Continent of Europe. Instead of large armies capable of automatic and indefinite expansion garrisoning a limited extent of territory, we have in India a numerically small army spread over a geographical area almost equal in size to the European Continent, and inhabited by 300 millions of people. Will it be practicable to keep the new large regiments assembled in one body in quarters and in the field, and so secure the maximum of efficiency and economy which is the aim of the new system? It remains to be seen whether a system based on conscription and on the automatic expansion of an army on mobilization from a peace to a war footing can be satisfactorily worked in an army recruited by voluntary enlistment and unprovided with any machinery for rapid expansion.

It has hitherto been the custom to augment the British and Indian Armies on occasion by the addition of fresh battalions to existing regiments, these new formations being composed of newly enlisted recruits; but this hand-to-mouth expedient places us at a disadvantage in modern warfare, and in the late war it was long before we could make our full strength felt. The provision of permanent depot battalions goes some way towards remedying this defect. Large cadres generally result in slower promotion, but this will not affect the British officers of the Indian

Army whose rank is regulated by length of service ; it may, however, retard the time of their succession to commands.

The change of organization will no doubt be unpopular with our Indian soldiery, as all such changes have hitherto been ; because the Oriental temperament is essentially conservative and averse to change of any kind ; and the Occidental pursuit of progress and restless experiments in reform are regarded by Eastern peoples with suspicion and aversion.

Another new experiment is the "Indianization" of eight units of the Indian Army ; that is to say, eight units are to be officered exclusively by natives, without any British officers. It is not made clear whether the units are to be regiments, or squadrons and battalions—probably the latter. When our sepoy force was first raised it was organized in independent companies officered by natives, and the whole body was commanded by a native Indian "General of Sepoys," with the title of Subadar, who was assisted by a staff of European adjutants and sergeants. Later on the companies were assembled in battalions under a native officer called Comidan (commandant). But experience soon proved that European leadership trebled and quadrupled the value of the sepoy as a fighting man, and the Comidan was replaced by a British captain ; and this process went on until the native officers were all reduced to the status of subalterns in the troops and companies, which were all commanded by Englishmen.

It was no doubt assisted by the natural inclination of the Directors of the Honourable East India Company to increase their influence and extend their patronage ; and it went on until every native Indian regiment had a full complement of British field officers, captains, lieutenants, and cornets or ensigns. But there were some irregular regiments, mostly of cavalry, to which only three British officers were allotted as commandant, second-in-command, and adjutant, and the squadrons or companies were commanded by Indians. These regiments, owing to the

absence of pipeclay and routine, were most popular, and were filled by a much better class of men than served in the Regular Army. Many of their Indian officers were men of birth and wealth, and some of the risaldars owned all the horses in their squadrons. The Imperial contingents of the Native States of the Indian Empire are now entirely officered by Indians; and it is only fair that our Indian fellow-subjects should be given a fair chance of attaining to the highest military rank in the service of the King-Emperor. In the Egyptian Army some of the regiments are officered entirely by native Egyptians, while in others the field officers and adjutants are English; and in the French regiments of Spahis and Turcos in Algeria there are native squadron and company commanders. Racial and religious differences interpose many obstacles to the social intercourse of Europeans and Asiatics, but these can be overcome by goodwill and common sense*; and the admission of Indian gentlemen to commissions in the Army on an equal footing with their British comrades has so far been a success. The new experiment will be so gradual in its operation that it will be a long time before any conclusion can be drawn from its results which, it is to be hoped, may justify the expectations of its promoters.

* In the old Madras native regiments, of which few have survived, recent changes in the Army, Christians, Mussalmans, Hindus, and Pariahs all lived and served side by side in complete peace and harmony.

