

Kapchigai Defile

**The Journal of
Paul Nazaroff**

EDITED BY E. M. TURNER



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Editor's Note

PAUL NAZAROFF was born at Orenburg in the Ural Mountains into a cultured family of mine owners circa 1890. At the age of six he moved with his family to Tashkent where they lived for the next twenty-five years.

Much of Paul Nazaroff's early childhood was spent among the ancient Kirghiz people from whom he learned their language, customs and skills with horses. As he grew up he devoted a great deal of time to the study of the natural history of Turkestan. Qualifying as a mining engineer and geologist Paul Nazaroff became a loved and respected citizen, well known among the scientists in his own country and in Europe.

In common with many Russian intellectuals of the period he was deeply shocked by the widely reported July 1918 massacre of the Romanoffs—Tzar Nicholas, Tzarina Alexandra and their five children—at Ekaterinburg in the Urals and shortly afterwards joined the White Russian Army as a cavalry officer. His subsequent experiences and observations of life in Russia and "neutral" China were recorded in his personal diaries from which this narrative was compiled.

E.M.T.

Introduction

FOLLOWING the October 1918 revolution, engineered by the Bolsheviks with the aid of German agents and money, it was quite clear that our country's social life, culture, law and justice would be trampled under foot by the savages who had come to Turkestan from Central Russia. The moment had now come when every self-respecting citizen was forced to embark on a life or death struggle.

Several influential people, mostly White army officers, had begun secretly to organize a revolt against the powers of the Soviet. In a short time our numbers had increased substantially. Those taking part were divided into small groups and although we did not know each other we were organized in such a way that when the time came we were ready to obey the orders of our commander who was well known by his war-time activities.

At any instant we could throw off the yoke of the local Bolsheviks but to protect Turkestan from the Red army, which could always be sent from Central Russia, was, needless to say, beyond our power. This caused us to delay our activities and seek allies.

By now the plan of the Germans at headquarters was made clear. With the help of 40,000 prisoners of war already in Turkestan they intended to take it and bring in Turkish troops through the Caucasus thus making Turkestan the base for an attack on India. The Bolshevik leaders, who were merely servants of the Germans, helped them zealously to carry out their plan. In Tashkent the German staff worked almost openly. This induced us to enter into communication with the British

and they decided to send a military expedition to Turkestan to help us to break the power of the Bolsheviks.

At this time when the British troops were already in the Transcaspian provinces and we were busily engaged in organizing the native cavalry regiments in the deserts and in Ferghana, a single act of carelessness ruined the whole campaign!

The organizer of the cavalry regiments in Ferghana sent me a quite unnecessary letter about expenses. His messenger was arrested by the agents of the *Cheka** and everyone mentioned in the letter was seized by the Bolsheviks or forced to flee for his life.

Although deprived of its leaders following our arrest the anti-Bolshevik movement still carried on but it was now unfortunately guided by people with socialist leanings who, contrary to our own principles, were seeking the support of the "workers".

With several of my anti-Bolshevist friends I had been languishing in prison for more than three months awaiting execution. . . .

* The word "Cheka" means "The extraordinary commission for the fight against counter revolution". The *Cheka* had the power to arrest whomsoever they wished, shoot them without trial, and also to take all possessions from anyone who incurred their displeasure.