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EASTERN NATIONALS AS
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GERMAN ARMY

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Hans SERAPHIM, Dr Phil, Major,
Reserve Status
Born 21 December 1903, Koenigsberg,
Prussia, Germany

After serving sixteen months in the 1st Pioneer Battalion, Dr Seraphim, who at present is an associate professor lecturing on International Law in the Goettingen University, left the Army on 15 August 1924. He was re-inducted in 1937 as reserve lieutenant in the 1st Infantry Regiment and promoted Oberleutnant in July, 1940, Hauptmann in 1943, Major in 1945. In these eight years he served as platoon and company leader, adjutant to signal and intelligence officers at divisional level, supply officer of the Armenian Legion in Ukraine, company leader and later battalion commander in the 303rd Infantry Regiment of the 162 (Turk) Division, Commander of the 827th Volga Tartar Battalion and finally in OKH as Inspector of Foreign Units.

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Ralph von HEYGENDORFF, Generalleutnant
Basic Arms Infantry
Born 15 August 1897, Dresden, Germany

Ralph von Heygendorff joined the infantry immediately after the outbreak of war in 1914 and in April 1915 received his commission as lieutenant. At the end of World War I he was taken over in the new Reichswehr, the 100,000-man army Germany was allowed to maintain in terms of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1923-25 he underwent a course of training in Dresden for service as assistant chief of staff. After several assignments with field units and two years as officer guide to Soviet Russian officer delegations during German maneuvers, he was appointed liaison officer between the Fourteenth Army and the Red Army in the 1939 Polish Campaign. Following this he was detached as military attaché attached to the German Embassy at Moscow as military member of the Central German-Soviet Demarkation Commission. From September 1942-February 1944 von Heygendorff, now Generalmajor, commanded the Eastern Legions, composed of foreign volunteers of Eastern nationalities, serving with the German forces. After three months as Commander of Volunteer Units under the Chief of Army Armaments and CIG of the Replacement Army Branch of OKH he assumed command of the 162 Turk Infantry Division, controlled first by the Tenth Army, then by the Fourteenth Army, and finally by the XIV Panzer Corps. It was during this last assignment that Heygendorff was promoted Generalleutnant on 30 January 1945.

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Ernst KOESTRING, GSG, General der Kavallerie
Born 20 June 1876, Moscow, Russia

As a natural consequence of his intimate knowledge of the character of East European peoples, due to the fact that he spent most of his youth in Russia and other eastern countries, General Koestring frequently was employed by the German Army in its relations with foreign armies of those parts. Joining the cavalry in 1898 he had reached the rank of Rittmeister, Cavalry Captain, by 1904 and in 1917 was appointed Imperial Ottomanian Major*, a special rank created for service with Turkish forces. In 1923 he was promoted Major in the Reichswehr, Germany's 100,000-man army after World War I, in 1935 Generalmajor in the new Wehrmacht, 1937 Generalleutnant and in 1940 General der Kavallerie. His foreign assignments included service as special staff officer in the German staff under Generaleberst von Seeckt attached to the Austrian Archduke Karl and Archduke Joseph Army Groups in 1916-17, adjutant in the German staff under Seeckt attached to the Turkish Army High Command in 1917, on the German Military Mission to Ukraine in 1917-18, as Military Attache in Moscow in 1931-33, Military and Air Attache in the German Embassies at Moscow and in Lithuania in 1935-41. In addition he held an assignment from 1919-23 in the Russia Branch of the Reich Defense Ministry and in 1942 was appointed Commissioner for Caucasian Affairs in Army Group A, 1943 OKH Inspector of Turkeman units and in 1944 General of Foreign Volunteer Units of Eastern Nationality, a post he held in the OKH. On 4 May 1945 General Koestring was retired, and on 20 May 1945 he was taken prisoner by US forces and held until 22 August 1946, during which period he was temporarily transferred to Washington for interrogation.

* Kaiserlich Osmannischer Major

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FOREWORD

In wars involving vast land masses in which the available manpower of a nation is severely taxed it may be expedient and necessary to use "volunteer" forces. It is gathered from this treatise that the basic mistake of the planners was that no provisions had been made for the use of this type personnel which resulted in two basic errors. These errors would appear to be

- (1) that the possibility of the use of "volunteers" had not been considered previously and
- (2) that experience in "recruiting" and developing them was gained in the expensive and time-consuming school of experience.

It is entirely possible that a large and efficient body of troops could have been developed with timely plans and methods.

While in no way related to the Prisoner of War Project (Project #14, Manuscript Number P-031) the manuscript to a certain extent deals with the German method of achieving similar results, i. e. inducting former members of the enemy forces and population to assist you.

Students of psychological warfare will also find this manuscript valuable in the study of the characteristics of the various subdivisions of people mentioned as well as the stimulus that motivates their action.

LOUIS M. HANROCKY
Major, Cavalry
Chief, Operational History
(German) Branch.

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C O N T E N T S

CAUCASIAN AND TURKIC VOLUNTEERS IN THE
GERMAN ARMY

Author: Dr. Hans G. SERAPHIM

COMMANDING FOREIGN PEOPLES

Author: von HEYENDORFF,
Generalmajor

COMMENTARY ON THE REPORT OF DR. SERAPHIM
CONCERNING TURKIC UNITS

Author: Ernst KOESTRING
General der Kavallerie & General
of the Volunteer Units

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Control Group

Keenigstein 18 Nov 48

Ref: Special Report Concerning Alien Volunteers.

To: Historical Division

c/o Major D. Murphy

Enclosed find two reports dealing with alien volunteers from among Eastern peoples who were employed in large numbers in the German Wehrmacht during the last war.

Both reports are based upon experiences of proven commanders and organizers. They contain many suggestions which would also be of value in the future in case able-bodied men from among foreign peoples are employed.

A special commentary by the former "General of Volunteers of the Eastern Units," Gen Keestring, who is considered the best German expert on this subject, is also enclosed.

(Signed), Franz Halder
Generaleberst
formerly Chief, Army General Staff

Encl.:

Report Dr Seraphin
Report Gen v. Heyendorff
Commentary Gen Keestring

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Caucasian and Turkic Volunteers
in the German Army.

Prefatory Remarks

The following report is based on my own personal experiences gained during my tour of duty in the volunteer units (from 1 September 42 to the end of hostilities) in various units and command posts among the volunteer detachments. It is written from the point of view of the lower level command. As judged from a higher level, the situation may at times have appeared in a different light. Difficulties may have been encountered of which the troops were not aware. The endeavors and the desire to assist us in the execution of our missions, which in the beginning were frequently almost too difficult to accomplish, were perhaps much greater than we believed at that time.

I can only describe the events as I have personally experienced them. The reader must bear this in mind if, in his opinion, the outlines appear too severe or the criticism too harsh.

Munernberg 9 August 1948

The Author

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Introduction

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The problem of foreign volunteers, as encountered during the last war, is raised by and conditioned by two factors. One is the fact that the method of warfare has changed to a certain extent. Mass army formations have taken the place of armies operating in the field and seeking individual battles. The forming of compact front lines is usually preceded by a war of movements of short duration. The new boundaries thus established by the army replace the political boundaries of a nation. Consequently, it becomes imperative to reinforce the personnel as the occupational forces at the disposal of a country will no longer suffice under the circumstances, especially if large areas must be occupied and secured, as for instance in the East during the last war.

The other factor might be more important, namely, war as a conflict of contrasting ideologies. For this conflict offers the greatest possibility of deluging large masses with propaganda. If this opportunity were non-existent, there would be no incentive and the circles which could be reached by propaganda would be too small. It would be limited more or less to certain types of adventurers or mercenaries which, numerically speaking, would hardly be of importance.

These ideological motives will, of course, gain impetus if they are in line with national interests, especially if supported by propaganda slogans emphasizing the liberation of tyrannized peoples or promises of deliverance from ideological and political oppression.

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This may enable a country engaged in war to contrive powerful slogans helpful in the recruiting of volunteers, especially if military successes can be cited in addition indicating victorious conclusion. The latter, however, is not essential. The course of the Spanish civil war, in which volunteers played an important part on both sides, serves as an example. Despite the official non-intervention policy, the clash of ideologies -- Germany and Italy on one side and the Soviet Union on the other -- became manifest and was a decisive factor in the final outcome of the war.

Judging from the foregoing it is not surprising that the volunteer problem during the second World War did not become acute until after the beginning of the Russian campaign. Up to this time, volunteers had appeared on a large scale only on the French side. These were the red Spanish volunteers who now continued their ideological, anti-fascist hostilities farther and fought against Germany. During the first phase of the war, volunteers had not as yet appeared on the German side.

Germany's war against the Soviet Union is, judging from its motives and disregarding many other aspects, without a doubt, a conflict of two ideologies. The war was proclaimed as such and conducted as such by both sides.

Not until the conclusion of the summer battles of 1941 did it become evident that the German estimates had been erroneous. Instead of a Blitzkrieg of a few weeks' duration, a tough war of several years had to be anticipated. This fact made the activation of volunteer units on

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the German side imperative.

The first initiative was taken by the troops fighting at the front. They began very soon to select and retain certain Russian prisoners for labor duties instead of transporting them to the rear. This usually took place with the consent of the prisoners who for some reason feared the treatment in the prison camps and therefore preferred to remain with the German troops. It must, however, be strongly emphasized, that these actions were not officially sanctioned and did not constitute a deliberate recruiting of volunteers. What induced these so-called Hiwi*) to cast their lot with the German troops was better treatment and something like a comradely "esprit de corps." Former Red Army soldiers sometimes took the place of wounded or killed Germans in difficult situations, picked up their rifles and participated eagerly in the defense against Russian attacks.

The German Reich did not officially begin recruiting volunteers and activating local units until 1942. German troops were no longer able to occupy these vast Russian areas. Thus, recruiting was set in motion under the slogan: Crusade against Bolshevism. The population of the non-Slavic border peoples of the Soviet Union, such as Caucasians and the people of Turkic stock, were especially chosen for recruiting purposes. A propaganda program emphasizing the liberation of their homelands from Russian tyranny could be launched which would thus couple ideological and national interests.

A description of the volunteers recruited from these tribes is contained in the following report.

*) Hiwi (Hilfswillige) were persons who voluntarily accompanied the German army to render any necessary service.

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1. Our Volunteers

The proclamation urging men to enlist in the German Wehrmacht to support it in its fight against the Bolshevik enemy was very well received by the captured members of the Caucasian and Turkic tribes. Armenian, Azerbaijan, Georgian, Northern Caucasus and Turkestan volunteers enlisted and were assigned to the new legions.

After having seen these flocks of new volunteers as they arrived at the legions, it was very difficult to visualize that these very same people with their drawn, sunken or puffed-up faces, their eyes registering either deep-rooted suspicion against everybody and everything or complete indifference and fatalistic resignation, could become valuable and enthusiastic fellow-combatants. The strange shape of their faces, among them many Mongolian types, the unpleasant obtrusive smell of strange races must have had repulsive effect upon the Germans. In addition, their clothes -- mostly Red Army uniforms -- were torn and dirty. While on march, they walked in close formation; during their rest periods they huddled close together along the road. Individually unimpressive but stirring in the mass would be perhaps the first impression gained by the Germans who were to work with these volunteers.

Unintentionally one felt that they were in complete contrast to anything imagined. Volunteers were expected to be full of idealism, since they had severed their ties with old affiliations; they would be people no longer bound by oath, as it had been taken under duress and was against the interests of their own country. These presumptions

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gave rise to the expectation of strong personal participation and an eagerness to serve. And now, this horde of men arrived who seemed to lack vitality and emotion. Intelligent faces could be noticed among them but the impression created by the bulk was predominant.

Then we came to know these volunteers: the individuality, the character, the peculiarity of the particular tribe of which each was a member began to become more distinct. More and more, a completely new world opened before our eyes, difficult to comprehend, never to be completely understood.

The reason behind their enlisting as volunteers was of primary interest to us. It would enable us to determine their intentions, to form an opinion as to what could be expected and requested of them and how to approach them. Our presupposition which we had carried with us since the day of our transfer to these volunteer units was obviously completely erroneous. After having carefully studied the problem, we could differentiate between two distinct groups. Our first question: "What prompted the volunteer to enlist in the German Wehrmacht?" aided us in this observation. There were a few "true idealists" but most of them had made their final decision for manifold material reasons.

The idealists were men who combined a pronounced anti-Bolshevik attitude with a fanatical love for their own people. During the many years of my service in the volunteer units I met many who belonged to this group. Any sacrifice or service could be demanded of these men as long as they were sure that it was in line with their ideas and served to attain the common goal. They were extremely harsh toward fellow-countrymen who failed to share their ideals or had only material and

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egotistical motives. In dealing with undependable individuals they were so severe that we frequently had to intervene. They harbored an irreconcilable hatred against Belahevism and the Russian way of life.

This attitude was usually not based upon theoretical deliberations but was rather the result of sad experiences. The slaughter, deportation, or persecution of close relatives, impoverishment due to expropriation, and other similar reasons were repeatedly cited as reasons for enlistment.

Men of the above type could be found among all the various peoples and at all social levels, to a greater or lesser degree. As regards the various peoples, I must state that the Armenians had the smallest amount. Then came, according to my experience, in increasing degree the Northern Caucasians, the Georgians, the Azerbaijanians and the Turkestanians.

As regards the social grouping, peasants should be named first and working men second. The intelligence of these peoples was not very high, a fact which will be discussed later. Young students were, however, a welcome exception.

In contrast to this small group was the bulk of the volunteers, who, I am convinced, did not enlist to fight for the cause but solely for the purpose of gaining personal advantages, immediately or within the near future. Many of these men attempted to demonstrate strongly an idealism which neither existed nor governed their actions. Distress, simply, prompted most of them to change sides. The horrible conditions prevailing in most of the camps induced them to consider this last hope, with complete

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disregard for all possible consequences. The prospect of good food, clothing and all the privileges of a German soldier as compared to the hunger, cold, and sickness which were certain if they remained captive for a longer period of time, was the motive for their enlisting.

The intellectuals hoped, in addition to the above-mentioned advantages, to be hailed as heroes liberators after the victorious return to their respective countries and thus to gain important leading positions in the future states. To-day, I still cannot help but smile at the thought of a wild brawl between Armenian volunteers in the fall of 1942, which started over their disagreement as to the allocation of positions in the future Free State. The legionnaires took matters very seriously. They were counting their chickens before they were hatched.

It must be strongly emphasized that this grouping refers only to the determining factor as far as the individual was concerned: a love of the fatherland in its most pronounced form as well as national pride, which were prevalent among all the members of the above-mentioned peoples in a very high degree. The type of the true mercenary, who serves whoever pays the highest wages, could hardly be found among them.

In addition to these two groups of volunteers, the legionnaires should be mentioned who, although numerically unimportant, enlisted because of their convinced Bolshevik leanings which prompted them to pursue their underground activities from within or to escape at the first opportunity. I have met men of this type during the Armenian conspiracy of 1942 as well as within the ranks of the Turkestan replacements in 1944.

Any German who endeavored to solve the mystery surrounding the volunteers at once came across these characteristics of distrust which we had

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already noticed on their faces at the time of their arrival. They not only distrusted us but also their fellow-countrymen and comrades. We soon discovered that they also kept their names and places of origin secret, which fact indicates how much they mistrusted each other. After a while it became evident that this peculiarity was not a part of their make-up, but was to be ascribed to conditions in the Soviet Union. Being subjected to spying by the GPU, caution had become their second nature as a matter of self-preservation in the daily battle for life. The experiences gained during captivity may perhaps have had a still more detrimental effect. Slowly and gradually, over the course of years, this distrust became less noticeable with some, but it never disappeared completely. For a trivial reason, this suspicion could be aroused again to its former intensity.

I have cited these characteristics because they best illustrate the most deeply rooted peculiarities of these peoples from among whom our volunteers originated. In the same manner as instinctive mistrust had grown in them and rapidly reappeared time and again as the result of their emotions and not as the result of reasoning and long deliberation, all of their actions were likewise prompted by their emotions. Frequently, reasoning could influence this in a corrective manner.

Whoever strives to understand or undertakes to command the members of these peoples must continually take into consideration these peculiar characteristics. But there is also something else of importance, which perhaps is a consequence. These people are only happy if they can stay close together. They fail to understand the desire for privacy.

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Individualism is, generally speaking, alien to them; they are typical collectivists. Thus, to cite an example, their billeting in single rooms would never be appreciated, whereas the so-called "stink huts" were immensely popular -- small rooms in which they could gather to talk, whose windows were hardly ever opened, so that the air became thick enough to cut with a knife, and in which they all talked at the same time. This was their ideal.

Anyone attempting to judge these volunteers by our European moral standards would do them an injustice. Their conceptions are entirely different, they are absolutely and naturally "self-centered." They appreciated truth and honesty as long as it did not affect them adversely. They were, however, ready to commit perjury if it served their aims. They reasoned that it was not their fault if the other person believed them!

Without having a specific aim in mind, these volunteers embellished their reports to such an extent that the true account was hardly recognizable. Their Oriental phantasy made them imagine things which, according to our conception, are unbelievable. Without realizing it, they would call black white, and vice versa.

The same self-righteous attitude which prevailed as far as truth was concerned also prevailed in the case of private property. It is an established fact that soldiers of any army "swipe" things, but in this case it was carried too far. To educate these men along our way of thinking was one of the most difficult tasks.

In complete contrast to these conceptions and hardly compatible

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with the European ideas was the volunteers' almost oversensitive feeling in matters involving their honor. This applied not only to their own persons but also held true where their nation was concerned. Any disrespect in this regard was the worst mistake that could be made.

Among such errors, for instance, was the conception of the particular native people as inferior to the Europeans, which was in fact not true, even though many of their ways were incomprehensible to us and their lack of many of the outward marks of civilization was to say the least disturbing.

To offset their negative assets, the volunteers also possessed many positive ones. Their conduct toward women was considerably more natural and reserved than the attitude of our own soldiers. The influence of the latter, however, had a detrimental effect upon the volunteers. As soon as the natural restraint of the Turkomans and Caucasians was removed, which was caused -- in Germany for instance -- by the more friendly attitude of the women, they immediately overstepped all bounds. This was, however, not their general behavior. On the whole, they behaved respectably as long as they met with restraint. If strongly emotional people are given an inch they will take a mile.

If their confidence and friendship was once secured, the volunteers were very loyal and extremely devoted. They could be depended upon without exception even under the most difficult circumstances. Their devotion went so far as to steal things for German superiors and comrades to whom they had taken a liking. I know from my own experience that very strong measures had to be applied in these cases to prevent them from

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stealing. The volunteers failed to understand our attitude and believed that "we were too stupid."

On the other hand, their perseverance and tenacity was unbelievable as far as hatred and craving for vengeance was concerned. Anyone who had aroused their wrath or punished them bodily had better disappear as fast as possible. Blood vengeance was still prevalent among these tribes, and claimed many victims among members of the volunteer units.

The following briefly describes the volunteers' qualities as soldiers.

As already mentioned, these recruits did not come up to the standards of the German soldier. Formal discipline was not a part of their make-up. Although they were not unwilling to accept it, it was so strange and contradictory to them that they looked like caricatures whenever they attempted to adopt Prussian discipline. The sternest and most fanatical German army sergeant was unable to keep a straight face under the circumstances. There was also a lack of cleanliness which was noticeable in their clothes and weapons. Their general indolence was called laziness by some.

On the whole these could only be regarded as minor flaws and had no decisive effect upon the combat efficiency of the volunteers. A German superior officer had to get accustomed to this and disregard more or less such mere superficial irregularities. Many officers were unable to amend their ways. Any officer in charge of the volunteers' combat training in the field realized very soon that he could learn a great deal from these people who were reared much closer to nature. Their

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sense of location, their rapid way of getting themselves adapted to ground work, as well as their camouflaging, were exemplary.

Despite their excellent eyesight, the efficiency of the volunteers with the rifle was far below the standard of the German soldier. This is not based upon my own experience alone but has been confirmed to me by various unit commanders who were unable to explain this fact. Even careful training with relentless patience and care resulted in very minor improvements.

Judging by his natural faculties the volunteer is of no value as a single combatant. However, as soon as he is together with comrades and even in large scale operations, he has proven to possess a surprising staying power. Completely on his own, he soon weakens.

2. Command Problems

There are a number of factors which are decisive as far as the command of volunteer units is concerned. The word "command" is not being used in this case in a limited tactical sense but should rather be regarded as comprising everything that must be considered and co-ordinated to form a basis for the activation and employment of such units.

First, there is the evaluation of the volunteers as soldiers, especially officers and other ranks. This evaluation must be based upon their future employment and the missions to be accomplished by these new formations.

This leads up to the problem of organization and command in the narrower sense, the problem of deciding between an indigenous or a German

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command or a combination of both possibilities. In addition, the problem of an eventual interspersing with German personnel, necessitating a continuous supervision for security reasons, had to be solved.

Finally, the topic of the enforcement of discipline, as well as that of basic disciplinary principles and their application (power of disciplinary action) and the right to punish must be made a point of discussion. This, however, is not feasible without simultaneously discussing the question of the legal status of the volunteers, that is, their rights and obligations as compared to those of the soldiers of German nationality.

I am firmly convinced that many problems which are now being regarded in retrospect, appear after many years of experiences considerably less complex to-day than at the time when we were confronted with them and were more or less inexperienced; that many mistakes which, without a doubt, were made, are now less difficult to recognize in short, that hindsight is better than foresight. I must point out, however, even if only for the sake of historical accuracy, that many errors were rapidly adjusted by the German Command which, as the result of its close contact with volunteers, perhaps saw them more realistically than some theorist at a conference table or a self-styled expert who, working from a pre-conceived opinion, would necessarily never consent to modify his viewpoint. Many reverses could have been avoided if the reports and proposals of those, actually commanding volunteers, had been studied and taken into consideration.

How matters were evaluated and what decisions were rendered by the authorized commands can only be ascertained by studying the historical

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course of events. I, personally, had the opportunity of analyzing the contents of the orders which at that time passed through my hands.

First a few basic facts which will tend to facilitate the study and evaluation of decisions rendered at that time.

The activation orders for the volunteer units of the Caucasian and Turkman tribes prescribed two command staffs as top level organization, one attached to the Government General and the other in the Ukraine, the latter being the staff of the 162nd Infantry Division. The legions, cadre formations in the approximate strengths of brigades of six to eight battalions on the average were under their command. These were regarded as the training units.

The volunteers were to be committed at, as well as close behind, the front to participate in combat and security missions as well as in the war against partisans. The tactical unit was the battalion. It was to be attached to and intercalated into German units. The training was to take place in the legions which were to discharge the units after the completion of the training period, prior to their departure for the point of commitment. In the future these legions served only as replacement units.

The legions were to continuously activate other battalions, as long as volunteers were available. The original program included a number of such activations.

The legions thus became stationary and had to have cadre personnel

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whose mission it was to activate, equip, and train the battalions without accompanying them to their point of commitment.

The battalions amounted to approximately 950 volunteers and 27 Germans, according to the T/O. The battalion staff was predominantly German (commander, adjutant, special missions staff officer, medical officer and paymaster official.) The lower command from the command down was in the hands of indigenous officers and NCOs. German advisers (NCOs and PFCs) were assigned to commanders and platoons. The battalions comprised four rifle commanders and one heavy weapons commander.

The German personnel for the field battalions was to be supplied by the units which were to receive the details for commitment. This personnel arrived mostly long after training had started.

The volunteers were dressed in German uniforms but equipped predominantly with Russian weapons. Vehicles, horses, and other equipment had to be requisitioned. The activation of volunteer units was not to interfere with the German war machinery. This basic principle was strictly adhered to but put the legion command frequently up against problems which were difficult to solve. These difficulties could only be surmounted by establishing manufacturing plants, e.g. for vehicles, harnesses for horses, etc. OKH was very reluctant to sacrifice any materiel, and furnished personnel on a very limited scale although extremely high combat efficiency was required of the battalions.

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Based upon the above-mentioned facts, I would first like to discuss the following question which must be regarded as the basis for further discussions: What are the consequences arising from the solution chosen by the leading German commands, in regard to their intentions, the evaluation of the volunteers, their dependability, and combat efficiency?

The intentions are obvious. An attempt was being made to gain another troop unit in order to tide over the great scarcity of units, to relieve the German formations and still have enough men available to carry out the numerous missions. The vast extent of the area and the peculiar quality of the war in the East made this arrangement imperative.

The fact that the battalions were to be assigned to field divisions was enough evidence to prove that it was furthermore intended to create combat units which, besides being employed as security units, could also be committed at the front lines.

These volunteer units were only regarded as replacement units for the German troops; in other words, the activation was restricted to infantry battalions with the appropriate heavy weapons, ignoring all other arms. The creation of compact combat units, in the true sense of the word, had apparently never been taken into consideration.

As evidenced by the brief training period allowed these units, it seems that the activation was to be carried through as quickly as possible. Equipping the units with captured weapons, which also permitted a reduction in the training period also points to this fact.

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This last fact indubitably illustrates also that no sacrifices were contemplated to support these new units as far as materiel was concerned. The volunteers, so to say, were almost required to bring their own weapons and equipment or requisition them in the occupied territory.

The fact that the activation of the volunteer units was not only planned along those lines, but actually carried out, proves again how little authorized commands valued the dependability and combat efficiency of the volunteer units. I am not in position to state to what extent these problems were actually thought through by them and the solution should be regarded as the result of such deliberations. The lower level commands, the only ones I had contact with at that time, were under the impression that the actual problems were not realized at the higher level or perhaps were deliberately disregarded, and left it to experience, in order to react to the suggestions, proposed by various commands independently from each other. Our own investments were not heavy; thus our risk was small. If everything progressed satisfactorily, a considerable advantage could probably be gained.

This entire problem should also be regarded from another angle. If a large number of volunteers is desired from specific peoples, the recruiting slogans should be appropriately and impressively chosen. They must contain among other things a promise -- of a material or ideal nature -- which in itself will constitute a sufficient inducement. It was rather difficult to find such inducements in dealing with real Russians, because hardly any of them were prepared to support the ideas

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and plans of annexation, which were part of Hitler's political aims, for the sole purpose of fighting and destroying the Bolshevik system: General Vlassov could be cited as an example. It was much less complicated so far as non-Slavic border peoples were concerned, for they were forced to live under the rule of the "Fatherland of the proletariat." They could be promised national self-determination or perhaps tribal statehood under their own tribal colors, without interfering with Hitler's plans. One could speculate with a national feeling which actually existed, and incorporate appropriate slogans in the recruiting propaganda.

I am, however, firmly convinced that many a soldier on the German side transplanted his own exaggerated nationalistic feeling into the minds of the members of the Caucasian and Turkic peoples and expected them to be imbued with an idealism which to such an extent could never be accepted as a norm for all of these peoples. While this conception was regarded as a basis and a natural hypothesis as far as the activation of volunteer units is concerned, it constituted the first grave mistake which was automatically followed by further errors in the evaluation of the volunteers.

The reasons and motives which induced the volunteers to enlist have already been discussed in the preceding chapter. I have pointed out that ideological and national idealism had been the determining factor in only a few cases and that material interests had played a predominant part. If one reviews the differences in opinion and intention on the German side as well as the behavior of the volunteers is it then

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surprising that the expected results were never attained?

The most obvious misjudgment occurred at the time when indigenous officers and leaders were screened prior to their employment. It is difficult to understand how it was possible that patriotism and an anti-Bolshevik feeling were expected of the volunteers as a matter of fact. The basic principles of Bolshevism as taught in the Red Army were only too well known. It was an established fact that the officers' corps was always subject to supervision by the political commissars. Since members of border tribes in particular were not considered to be reliable, it should have been assumed that they would have been extremely carefully screened as to their political leanings before they were promoted to officers. If not found completely trustworthy, they would never have been commissioned.

In many cases, men of this type were employed as officers and put in command of volunteers. Although screening of the volunteers had taken place prior to their enlistment, not too much value should be attached to this processing. Not even the complete elimination of politruks (political commissars), which was the easiest task, could be successfully accomplished, according to my experience. Security was therefore extremely limited. Such incidents as the forming of cells and conspiracies were rather numerous.

I have stated above that officers were to some extent employed to fill the same positions. However, there were not enough openings for all of them, so that some officers had to be demoted to NCOs and some to the rank of private. The idealism of these men must have been very highly

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thought of if such procedure was expected to remain without consequences. There is no doubt that this degradation was the cause for dissatisfaction and the reason for many an unfortunate incident. Disregarding all other psychological aspects, the fact that the position of the officer in the Red Army had been raised considerably above that of the common soldier by reintroducing the old ranks and insignias remained unobserved, especially during the last few years.

Thus, a second important error was committed by responsible German commanders at the time when volunteer units were activated: the complete disregard of the simplest psychological prerequisites. The oddities of the Caucasian and Turkic peoples were completely ignored, even if they were recognized at all, and thus a very sensitive matter, their sense of honor, was abused. The example, regarding the treatment of officers perhaps proves this point most fully. I could mention numerous other cases but shall confine myself to a discussion of the position of the German skeleton personnel.

The independent battalion, which I have previously described, was the framework in which the volunteers of the border peoples were activated during 1942. On the whole, this also applied to other Eastern volunteer formations. Units of regimental strength, which also existed, generally had no connection with the above-mentioned activations but were merely concentrations within an Army (Armee) area or an area of a similar formation. The battalion command was staffed with German officers while the volunteers held the lower positions.

The basic conception of the German commanders seemed to indicate

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That tactical deliberations had played a decisive part in this matter. It would have been entirely feasible to leave the command of the battalion in the hands of indigenous officers. In this case, the battalions would assume the characteristics of an allied unit rather than that of the German Wehrmacht. Considering the evaluation of the volunteer by the Germans and the trustworthiness ascribed to him, a solution in line with the above should have been expected and perhaps would have produced the most satisfactory results.

This course, however, was not pursued. An extremely small number of skeleton personnel was assigned to these battalions in order to retain the tactical command. This constituted a grave mistake. I do not mean the assignment of German battalion commanders but the fact that German NCOs and PFCs were attached to indigenous company commanders as "advisers." The negative result produced by this measure, as well as the detrimental effect it had upon the honor of the indigenous commanders is obvious.

The company adviser was by no means the actual company commander although in many cases he was regarded as such. His low rank, no doubt, was a disadvantage and produced a detrimental effect, and moreover the volunteers regarded him as a "supervisor." A great deal of tact was required on both sides to make this essential arrangement a successful one. This leads up to the problem of the German skeleton personnel, which merits a thorough discussion. One must differentiate between the cadre personnel of the legions, which comprised the personnel of the training and initial organization units, and the skeleton personnel

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which was assigned to the battalions and accompanied them whenever they were committed.

The basic prerequisites remain the same for both. Leadership and a sense for co-operation are essential faculties which those must possess who are to work with volunteers. In addition, a true liking and initiative for the work, an understanding of and ability to handle foreign people, a great deal of tact, modesty and patience are of vital importance. But this alone does not suffice unless accompanied by a well-founded military education coupled with skilled military leadership as well as a feeling of responsibility as a representative of one's own people and the Army.

Unfortunately, the attitude of the commanders as far as saving men and materiel is concerned must again be mentioned in this connection. They were principally concerned with seeing to it that the correct number of soldiers was assigned to the volunteer units, or paid insufficient attention to their qualification for this difficult task, which differed considerably from that of any other military assignment. Can a more striking example be cited than the fact that the cadre personnel for the legions of the 162nd Infantry Division was recruited from PW transit camps? Was it their belief that the men most of them older types unfit for combat, who, ever since the beginning of the war, had been guarding PWs, would have a special understanding for the volunteers and their problems, or perhaps were specially gifted to deal with their peculiarities? Did nobody ever conceive the idea that it would be especially difficult for these men, who had always been in contact with PWs, to adjust themselves so that they could regard the former PWs as German

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fellow-combatants? Apparently not. Nobody seemed to visualize either that the missions with which the cadre personnel of the legions were charged required not only experience gained during the First World War but a knowledge of modern warfare and combat experience. PW camp officers were almost exclusively officers of the First World War who could no longer be employed at the front. They had no conception of the requirements of this war, especially in the East. Yet they were charged with the responsibility of training these volunteer units.

The attempt was made later on to surmount these difficulties by assigning younger disabled officers. But the life of the two or three officers of this type in the officers corps was not a pleasant one among these PW camp gentlemen. According to my experience -- perhaps it was especially bad -- these disabled officers always remained the "younger gentlemen" who could not be taken too seriously.

On the other hand, it never occurred to the higher command that it would make a bad impression upon the volunteers if the same men were assigned to them as training personnel against whom they might possibly have carried a grudge ever since the time of their entrance into captivity. Although conditions were mostly responsible for many hardships, the PWs always blamed the guards for any shortcomings. It was quite a disappointment to them to meet these very same men again in the role of training personnel instead of the German front soldiers for whom they felt great admiration.

In all fairness it must be stated that many men among the training personnel assigned to these volunteer units took great pains and displayed

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a great interest in the volunteers. Despite their honest efforts, these men also had difficulties in adjusting themselves.

The cadre personnel for the field battalion was furnished by those field divisions, which had requested such units. This personnel came directly from the front lines. They had no inhibitions nor did they have a bad reputation such as the cadre personnel had. These officers and men generally displayed a more positive, perhaps more idealistic, attitude toward these volunteers. Sometimes their attitude was perhaps somewhat too idealistic as they regarded the volunteers as combat efficient idealists rather than men who had enlisted in the volunteer units to escape hardships and bad conditions, men who enlisted only for strong material reasons.

It was however true for the entire personnel that no one had taken the pains to issue the appropriate instructions needed for successfully accomplishing the new mission. Without any experience along these lines, without being familiar with the peculiarities of the peoples, these men faced other men whose language they were unable to understand, and who had heretofore been described by German propaganda as being inferior in every respect.

What should have been done to avoid this? There was in the German army no one with experience with volunteers. I can give two answers. First, there were enough men in the German Wehrmacht who at least knew the Russian language and had some knowledge of Eastern conditions. These men were not employed to the best of their abilities, as is evidenced by many examples. Secondly, it would have been much better to

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recruit personnel for these units on a voluntary basis. There is no doubt that enough men would have been available. This type of cadre -- as well as skeleton personnel -- would not have approached their mission reluctantly and with an inner reservation. It cannot be expected that everyone who has been assigned to such a mission will put his heart into it. Efficiency will fall off proportionately and the work will suffer.

If it was not the intention to assign a large amount of personnel to a doubtful enterprise, or if it was desired to make a quick trial on an improvised base, in either case there was always time enough to recruit German personnel on a voluntary basis. This course was not pursued, and no attempt was made in this respect. The fact that the proven military rule of order and obedience was applied shows clearly that responsible commands failed to realize the difficulties of this mission.

For this reason the results were also less gratifying. Admittedly, some battalions were readied for action and proved themselves more or less during their commitment, but this was in no comparison with anything that could have been accomplished if time had been taken to think things through beforehand. In reality, much time was lost because of this accelerated operation.

Just a few words concerning the position of these volunteers within their volunteer units. What was the legal status of the volunteers as compared to that of the German soldiers? What rules applied in the maintenance of the discipline without which a military unit cannot exist?

At the time of their enlistment the volunteers had been promised that they would be treated on a basis of full equality with the German soldiers. This took it for granted of course, that they were equal to the German as

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human beings that they were not to be regarded and treated as second-class humans. The best promise is of little value if it remains but a theory.

As is usually the case with us Germans, extremes prevailed. Either the command was exercised by persons who expected that the volunteers would be 100 percent idealists and who themselves lived up to every promise of legal equalization without reservation, and failed to realize that the regulations of the German Wehrmacht were meant for Germans only, and in many regards did not fit with the mentality of the volunteers and had to be revised for them. Or the Command regarded these volunteers as former PWs or even as inferior humans and issued for them special rules which were not in line with the basic promises.

In short, in nothing concerning the volunteer units did there exist a greater sense of insecurity than in the interpretation of equal rights, a fact which was of decisive importance.

According to my experience, the legal equality of the volunteers was basically recognized by the courts martial. The evidence of a witness, e.g. that of an Armenian legionnaire was of equal weight with that of a German soldier. The volunteers greatly appreciated this fact, while many members of the cadre personnel seriously resented it, as was proven on many occasions. This however did not occur too frequently and did not play such a decisive role as for instance the use of the authority to impose disciplinary penalties. The authority was never vested, as far as I can recall, in indigenous commanders. Only German officers had this privilege, which was reserved for battalion commanders and their

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officers. It still remains a question whether or not this was the proper solution since the maintenance of discipline especially presupposes understanding on the part of subordinates, and recognition of their peculiarities.

For instance, a sentence of confinement, which is generally effective with Germans, made no impression on the volunteers, who on the contrary thought it was wonderful to be able to sleep in peace for a few days instead of performing their tiresome duties. In order to be effective, other measures had to be devised which were not listed in the German penal code, such as depriving them of their food rations or binding them during confinement. Because of these experiences several regulations were issued during the fall of 1942 and a special penal code for volunteer units was issued much later.

In close relation with the above was the supervision of volunteers as regards their political dependability. The necessity of such measures was the result of several incidents which proved very clearly that screening before enlistment in the legions was in no way sufficient to eliminate elements friendly to the Bolshevik-Bolsheviks. Such security measures were carried on in connection with propaganda, which naturally was of utmost importance. An attempt was made to convey to the volunteers the marked differences between European culture and conditions in the Soviet Union in order to bolster their anti-Bolshevik attitudes. For this purpose so-called trustees were utilized, who were officially charged with the distribution of written propaganda material. In addition, these as well as other picked legionnaires were sent to visit Germany to acquaint them with conditions there, in order to give them

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the necessary education so that they would spread what they had seen with their own eyes, among their fellow countrymen and comrades.

These trustees were also made use of to get a picture of the attitude of the troops and to find out about any Bolshevik cells already in existence or in process of formation. This type of spying may be condemnable but it was impossible to do without it, since it was virtually impossible for the Germans -- not only because of the differences in language -- to penetrate into this strange world of the volunteers.

Thanks to such security screening, the assaulting and killing of German cadre and skeleton personnel by the numerically far superior volunteers, whose emotions frequently got out of hand, was kept at a minimum. How dangerous the situation was, was proved for instance by the Stalinskaya conspiracy case in the Armenian legion and, to a far greater extent, by the great conspiracy of October and November 1942, which had its roots in Bolshevik elements who had infiltrated into the Armenian Legion and had taken clever advantage of the peculiarities and ambitions of the Armenian commanders for their own aims. These cases especially illustrate the helplessness of the German personnel, due simply to their lack of suspicion and understanding.

Finally the only possible conclusion was drawn from these facts, and the volunteers were placed on a basically equal footing with the German soldiers, but special penal regulations were devised for them, based not on any racial inferiority but rather on the difference between their nature and that of the Germans.

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In this connection, I must mention again the position of the indigenous officer and NCOs in regard to their legal status and their relations to the Germans. I have already mentioned that the authority to impose disciplinary measures rested with the Germans. The fact that these indigenous commanders had positions rather than service ranks may have been one reason. Thus, they were not captains, lieutenants, or corporals but company, platoon or group leaders. Rank insignias were chosen to fit the position. They did not have the German rank insignias. This automatically put a halt to all intercourse between indigenous officers and German NCOs and enlisted personnel and created a completely ambiguous situation, since on the one hand the indigenous volunteer officers insisted upon their status while on the other hand the German enlisted personnel failed to recognize them as officers and indeed could not recognize them as such according to the general German conception. At best, they were regarded as something like special leaders, whose task has always been a very difficult one in the German army.

In this respect as in others the promised equality of the volunteers was not carried through in the desired manner and therefore became a source of many difficulties.

3. The Turkic Division.

The above description illustrates in a limited way the development of the volunteer problem as far as the Caucasian and Turkic peoples are concerned, up to the end of 1942. By this time all the difficulties which have been mentioned had developed. They would have seriously

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endangered the entire program if they had not been remedied. However, important successes were never achieved nor could this venture be regarded as a noticeable aid to the service under the circumstances.

Theoretically speaking, further development was principally possible in two directions. Either the limited authority of the indigenous officers could have been broadened and the battalion command added to their responsibilities, whereby the unit would assume the character of an allied group, perhaps with a German liaison detachment. Or the volunteers might have been assigned to a formation much more heavily interspersed with Germans and placed them on a basis of complete equality with the Germans.

In practice, only the second possibility was feasible. Therefore, all recommendations made by the command of the 162nd Infantry Division at that time followed this trend of thought.

During the first half of the year, a great deal of experience was gathered which gradually led to the conviction that further activations of field battalions along previous lines was inappropriate and would never justify the effort. However, the idea of activating volunteer units was never entirely given up as it was believed that better results could be obtained by a different approach. The following considerations, which deviated considerably from those adopted by the higher commands at the beginning of the activation of the volunteer units and described above, were of a decisive nature.

The activation of a combat unit in line with the original plans is entirely feasible. However, not all the peoples heretofore employed

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in the legions are suitable for this purpose, but only those of Turkestan and Azerbaijan, who have proven to be the most dependable.

The utilization of volunteers in pure by volunteer units with a limited German skeleton personnel under indigenous command is inadvisable due to the confirmed unreliability of indigenous officers. Such organizations do not produce the desired results and merely endanger the German personnel, can even bring about a result contrary to German aims by going over to the partisans. This fact was borne out by the conspiracies in the Armenian legion at Stalinskaya and Lakhvitsa which were not the only occurrences of the kind.

The utilization of volunteers in a unit commanded by German officers in which at first only about 50 percent of the overall strength is made up of indigenous volunteers seems to be a happy solution of the problem, provided that these volunteers have been very carefully chosen and that they are treated and regarded as on a par with the German soldiers.

This means also equal possibilities for promotion. Thus, the custom of appointing volunteers to a position as heretofore practiced, becomes obsolete. Instead, regular promotion to German military ranks must take place on the basis of the same principles as those applicable to Germans.

Whether a superior officer is a German or an indigenous volunteer must be completely disregarded. His promotion should establish him as a full-pledged superior.

The same care must also be used in selecting personnel for the German

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part of the unit. Allowances must be made during the time taken for activation for the exchange of unfit and inefficient men of all ranks. Only the best personnel should be good enough for such a unit.

The same principles must apply in equipping and arming this unit. Not any kind of captured materiel should be used, but German weapons exclusively.

Not the field battalions but the combat division should be framework in which this unit is to be activated. The division should be activated along the lines of a regular German infantry division.

Special disciplinary rules must be devised for the volunteers to maintain discipline. These, however, must not be based upon the imagined inferiority of the volunteers but rather upon their own characteristics insofar as they differ from European customs. Under no circumstances should these rules be contrary to the volunteers' conception of honor.

It is very important that the volunteers, during their period of activation, be kept away from the influence of the Russian civil inhabitants, as this may have a detrimental effect, as was demonstrated beyond doubt during the investigation of the conspiracy case. The population was greatly disappointed in the Germans due to their policy regarding Eastern labor as well as the method of administration practiced by the German civilian departments, which must result in an unfriendly attitude toward the Germans with a direct reflection upon the volunteers in their intercourse with the population.

The Division's proposals were accepted and the transfer of the legions from the Ukraine to the troop training grounds at Neuhammer was

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ordered. The activation of the 162nd Inf Div (Turkic) commenced on 1 June 1943. The organization of this Division was an experiment. The activations of the previous field battalions by Legion Headquarters in Poland were not discontinued. The 162nd Infantry Division transferred members of tribes who were undesirable -- Georgians, North Caucasians, and Armenians -- to these battalions. Thus, the old and the new forms of volunteer units were permitted to exist side by side and remained so until the end of the war.

The activation of the Turkic Division was preceded by very careful preparations. The compilation of the T/O's and the establishing of the numerical balance between Germans and volunteers was the personal work of the officers of the Division. Contrary to conditions prevailing at the beginning of the activation of volunteer units, a greater number of actually experienced officers were now available to the Division. These were mainly the commanders, officers, and training officers of the field battalions activated in the Ukraine and which remained unassigned, rather than officers of the cadre personnel of the legions. They had learned a great deal through daily contacts with the volunteers. The proposals of the Division had been largely based on their reports. They were also scheduled to form the cadre of the officers corps of the new Division. The older gentlemen from the headquarters of the PW transit camps could not be considered for a field division because of their age, and disappeared one after another as special assignment officers, which was rather fortunate as far as the units were concerned.

The cadres of these new regiments were formed by the Turkestan and

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Azerbaijan field battalions mentioned above. The reduction in volunteers to 50 percent of the T/O and the feeding of new volunteers into an assembly camp made it possible to eliminate all the elements which the German officers found unsuitable. The results of this screening, to which indigenous officers and the more intelligent privates were especially subjected, were very gratifying. Such incidents as had occurred in the field battalions were never repeated in this new division.

The selection of German personnel from German replacement troop units by a representative of the Division was another important factor. By this method the troop units which usually furnished such personnel could no longer transfer undesirable elements. Although the much favored principle of having men volunteer for such service could not be put into practice. The new troop units of the Division were given the right to release unsatisfactory Germans immediately and transfer them back to the replacement troop units, which in turn had to furnish new men. The fact that men who were unsatisfactory in the volunteer units because of their attitude and reluctance could soon be singled out, made it possible to replace them before their departure.

Many officers expected that the greatest difficulties would result from living together with these foreign peoples. It soon became apparent that this uneasiness was generally unfounded. Admittedly, there was a critical transition period during which the Germans had to get accustomed to the peculiarities of the volunteers. However, the latter accepted surprisingly fast the mode of living of their German comrades.

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A feeling of good comradeship developed which proved itself on many occasions and prevailed until the end of the war.

The promotion of volunteers never caused any friction with the German troops according to my experience. Later on, there even were Turkic officers who had a very good service record with the Division.

The system of having Germans command these units proved itself. It was, however, of great importance that experienced officers who knew what was required formed the nucleus of the officers corps. Volunteers cannot be commanded in the "Prussian" manner applicable to German units. They came to us to fight in the ranks of the German army for their native country. As reverses occurred in the East, expectations in this connection above began increasingly to disappear. It would be foolish to believe that the volunteers were slow to realize this fact as well as the deterioration of the general war situation as far as Germany was concerned. It would have been a great mistake to attempt to conceal the true facts. The comradeship which they never experienced in the Red Army as well as the relationship to the unit commander were factors which induced them to stay with the unit.

As time went on, it became more and more apparent that volunteer units should be handled in the same manner as a volunteer corps. It was senseless to emphasize idealistic aspects, which meant nothing to them, but if they were made to idolize their commander and if they constantly sensed both the love and care of their superiors and the comradeship and respect of their German comrades, they were never discontented. The entire command problem in the units of the Turkic Division, as is probably

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true for all volunteer units in general, was the problem of the personality of the commanding officer.

If a unit was headed by men who had succeeded in gaining the respect and love and thus the confidence of their volunteers, no difficulties were encountered.

On the other hand it was also completely erroneous to assume that the volunteers had to be handled with kid gloves. To the contrary, they liked to be handled with firmness, they wanted to feel the guiding hand of a master, but they expected him to treat them in an absolutely just manner. The least semblance of injustice or of preferential treatment for the Germans could do great harm. They felt themselves to be German soldiers, and rightfully so.

In order to safeguard the interests of the volunteers and to assist the German unit commander, Turkic special-missions staff officers were assigned to the battalions and independent regimental companies. They were, for instance, to be consulted in cases involving disciplinary action. They were intended to be mouthpieces for the volunteers before the unit commanders. According to my experiences, they never played any important part simply because there was no necessity for such intermediaries.

The language difficulties, which were an important factor as far as the command was concerned and which had played an important part in the field battalions, were not noticeable in the same degree in the Turkic Division. Through their contacts with the German NCO's and men, these volunteers managed to learn enough German in such a short time that both

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parties could make themselves understood without difficulty.

The solution of the volunteer problem as demonstrated by the Turkic Division proved itself to the utmost. The Division was committed in Croatia, Istria, and Upper Italy during battles against partisans and in Central Italy in major combat, and had accomplished its missions. The Division was in combat until the last days of the war. An incident of any kind resulted in complaints by German commands which generally failed to realize that similar incidents -- such as stealing, or annoying women -- also occurred in other troop units. If criminal cases within the Division were compared as between Germans and volunteers, the volunteers would not show up too badly. The intention of the German commands to secure by means of volunteers an auxiliary armed force of real value was best realized by the formation of the Turkic Division.

4. Military and Political Education and Welfare

Anything that is expected to thrive and attain durability needs a certain amount of care. The fact that the volunteers answered our call for enlistment and chose our side did not mean that our task was completed. It was most important that those who had enlisted primarily for material reasons should also be won over in spirit. The difficulties which were encountered have been mentioned in the preceding pages. Because of military reverses the recruiting slogan based on nationalism could not but lose their power of attraction in spite of their unestimable value. Consequently considering the peculiar character of the volunteers, there remained only two possible courses of

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actions to satisfy their desires regarding treatment and care and to establish spiritual bonds with their superiors and their German comrades.

All these matters were generally neglected during the first period of activation. Neither propaganda and the distribution of pamphlets, nor gifts of merchandise sufficed to produce any tangible result. Regarding propaganda the volunteers were very skeptical as a result of being over-fed with it in the Soviet Union. An attempt should have been made to gain their affection, to understand them, and to learn how to treat them properly. But in the beginning the necessary prerequisites for such an attempt were lacking, as the German personnel, completely ignorant in this field, were confronted with the task of painstakingly orienting themselves and getting experience.

The best way of seeing to their needs was to treat them on a basis of equality with the German soldiers. Not only were the ambition and desire for honor of the volunteers satisfied but they also gained material satisfaction. Equal pay, rations, equal FX supplies, promotion and equal decorations -- such things had a tremendous effect. But this did not take place until about the time of the activation of the Turkoman Division. For instance, the awarding of decoration especially to members of the Eastern tribes did not have the desired significance as long as they were not also worn by the Germans.

Important progress was made by permitting the volunteers to apply for leaves. Some were sent to leave centers while others were invited by German comrades to spend their leaves with them in their home country. Frequently volunteers went on leave to Germany by themselves. Broad-mindedness in this respect was very appropriate. I have never experienced

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a single case where the conduct of the volunteers on leave in Germany gave reason for complaint.

But of greater effect upon the attitude of the volunteers than all these welfare measures was the example set by their German superiors and comrades, and the desire of the latter to get an insight into the way of life of those entrusted to their care. If this was successfully done, everything else was of secondary importance.

As regards the Turkic Division, I attribute its efficiency to the fact that it possessed a cadre of officers and men thoroughly trained by the legions regarding the treatment of volunteers. They in turn were able to gather additional experience and to pass it on to the new German personnel which was gradually being assigned. Any directives issued by higher quarters in the form of instructional pamphlets were of no avail, no matter how well they were prepared. According to my experience these were collected and carefully filed away without having been read. Even personal instruction failed to produce results. Nothing but the practical example and the background of the individual was of decisive importance.

A company commander who arranged an evening gathering for good fellowship between the Germans and the volunteers, where Turkestanian songs and dances were furnished by the volunteers and other attractions offered by the Germans; one who succeeded in seeing to it that no one went too far and that no bad taste was left; one in whose company the Germans sang the songs of the volunteers along with them while on march -- which was very easy to do on account of their lack of melody -- and the volunteers

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in turn sang the songs of their German comrades -- such a commander certainly was the most effective in looking after their needs.

Any attempt by the Germans to live separately and to have separate parties had to be suppressed. In view of the uncannily good secret service maintained by the volunteers, it could never have been kept secret regardless of effort. Things of this nature would only have sufficed to arouse their suspicion in regard to their equality. This should under no circumstances be tolerated.

It was not at all necessary to overdo fraternization with the volunteers. As soon as they sensed the constant effort to look after them and the just treatment, they themselves made the overtures. The limits were then drawn automatically. It was merely a matter of tact in which the Germans were more frequently the offenders than the volunteers.

In conclusion a few words concerning religious care. These matters have frequently been overrated and their value overestimated, according to my experience. Admittedly, there were among the volunteers, especially among the Mohammedans, many who adhered strictly to the rites of their religion, especially as far as the celebration of their holidays was concerned. But although I from my own interests have watched the matter carefully, I could find little evidence that religion had a strengthening or lasting effect among the volunteers. The spiritual leaders had very little influence and, unfortunately, this influence was often detrimental to our cause. The first and for a long

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time the sole case of desertion in my unit was that of my mullah.*) This case, however, was not the only case in the history of the volunteer units. It reminds me of the case in the Ukraine period, of the division mullah of the 162nd Infantry Division, later regimental mullah, who deserted near Timini, his pockets well filled with money, and went to St. Marino to open up a bar. The money came from collections which the volunteers had taken up for religious purposes.

It is obvious that there should be no interference with their religious customs because this would have represented disrespect toward their religion and toward the volunteers themselves. It would, however, be equally erroneous to expect positive advantages from cultivating their religious customs because such advantages would never materialize.

sig. 8 Dr. Hans-Guenther Seraphim

*) Expounder of Mohammedan law and teachings.

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Commanding Foreign Peoples

(A study in military psychology based upon three years of experience with some forty tribes of the Soviet Union. Their training, education and battles on the German side during the Second World War).

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Commanding Foreign Tribes

(A study in military psychology based upon three years of experience with some forty tribes of the Soviet Union; their training, education and battles on the German side during the Second World War).

1. In order to wage war, a nation's principal need besides the necessary materiel and raw material, is manpower. Every nation at war strives to secure as many men as possible, either at the expense of its own resources of human beings or by making treaties with other nations and also by recruiting volunteers from neutral and even from enemy countries. Whether or not a future atomic war will materially change this remains to be seen.

During the Second World War, members of numerous tribes of the Soviet Union were fighting on the German side together with Spaniards, Walloons, Dutchmen, Danes, even Frenchmen and Indians. The French and Dutch maintained foreign legions for some time. Japanese have been fighting on side of the Americans. Whether or not the formation of the Seydlitz Army on the side of the Soviet Union has propagandistic or other significance remains to be seen.

Obtaining volunteers from the enemy's side is always connected with a great risk. There is always a chance that these volunteers, at an opportune moment, may turn around and create a catastrophe during a critical situation. It is therefore of extreme importance that the reasons prompting a change of sides should be carefully checked prior to employment.

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II. It is essential to ascertain whether hunger forced the individual to enlist as volunteer, if he volunteered although he was well fed, or if mass suggestion played a part. Want and desperation frequently induce people to make decisions which they later on regret. Men if bound only by oath will easily become subject to inner conflicts, if conditions which prompted them to change sides, are reversed. It should be realized that only few men made a change for idealistic reasons, many, however, had materialistic aims at heart. Ubi bene, ibi patria.*)

As hundreds of thousands of volunteers from all the tribes of the Soviet Union began to arrive from the PW camps to enlist, it became immediately clear to us that their desire to fight Bolshevism, or as far as the Turkomans and Caucasians were concerned, to fight Russian imperialism, was only a false pretence. More primitive reasons were behind their voluntary enlistment, such as a longing for freedom, better food rations, better quarters and clothes, relations with women, a longing for their home country to which they hoped to return soon with our help or even through desertion. Besides these true materialists there was a group of opportunists, people who were impressed by the superiority of our arms at the beginning of the war, who believed in our final victory and who, because of personal advantages which a timely change of sides would bring, chose to join our ranks. The third and by far not the largest group was the one of the true idealists. These

*) A Latin proverb meanings: My country is where I prosper.

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were men who themselves or through their families had suffered under the Bolshevik regime or who disavowed it for religious, ethical, or other reasons. Furthermore there were members of border tribes from the Caucasus territory and Turkestan who regarded the Russian regime as one of oppression and wanted to liberate their countries.

This triple division into materialists, opportunists and idealists has always existed in a similar form with all foreign volunteers of earlier wars and will remain so in the future. It is advisable to bear this uppermost in mind if one is to become commander of volunteer units in critical times. The opportunist is the poorest risk. As soon as he realizes that he has put his money on the wrong horse, he regrets his mistake and attempts to bail out at the opportune moment, either through desertion or by joining the enemy or the partisans. If at all possible, he will prior to his desertion commit acts of sabotage or treason, in order to be well received when he turns. The materialist is not different from the mercenary who only does his part willingly as long as he is personally satisfied. Higher ideals, for which one would sacrifice his life, are of course lacking. Only the idealist possesses such faculties. It is, however, difficult to ascertain how deeply his feeling is actually rooted, if he is strong enough in his convictions to weather possible doubts.

The changing of sides by the volunteers of the Eastern tribes who joined our side during the Second World War had the following consequences: With their decision to enlist, they burned all bridges behind them. In the eyes of the Russians they were traitors. If they were

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captured by the Russians they were tortured to death, their relatives were sent to concentration camps. Entire tribes which had contributed an especially large number of volunteers were deported. If by chance volunteers and Eastern workers met on German soil during leave, the former were often insulted by the latter. They did not mind this as long as they believed in the final German victory and were convinced that they had bet on the right horse. With the dwindling chances for victory, their moral depression increased. Now was the time for the Germans to see to it that these people found a piece of their own home country within the organization where they could be happy.

III. Unfortunately, the attitude of many German commands and individuals, mostly outside of the volunteer units, toward our Eastern volunteers was completely wrong up to the last. They regarded them as former PWs who should deem it a favor to be allowed to fight for us. They should have realized that under these difficult circumstances everyone was welcome who wanted to cast his lot with our side. Others, influenced by bad Nazi propaganda, regarded them as inferior people who should be treated with a certain amount of superiority. They also resented them as deserters, misjudging the aspiration of the Turkomans and Caucasians to gain freedom, instead of supporting them in their efforts. Our foolish racial propaganda had a most detrimental effect. Members of the Turkestan and Tartar tribes of Mongolian type, which we disliked most, were very numerous in the volunteer units. They were depicted in the illustrated newspapers and weekly journals as "the scum of the earth" and "Stalin's most devoted friends." However, Stalin's

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most ardent enemies could be found especially among these people. It is obvious that such newspaper prepaganda would have a detrimental effect upon the volunteers.

Selecting and training skeleton personnel.

The efficiency of every volunteer unit depends upon the friendly attitude of the skeleton personnel toward the volunteers. It must be based upon mutual respect and confidence. Commanding foreign tribes is one of the most important and finest missions to be accomplished by a soldier. An officer who succeeds in capturing the hearts of the foreign people entrusted to him not only scores a temporary success but accomplishes something of a lasting value. The goodwill which was spread by the skeleton personnel of the Prussian Jgr Bn 27 during the First World War while they were charged with the training of Finnish volunteers was still remembered twenty-five years later during the Second World War. May this feeling of goodwill live on in the future and tend to wipe out the hatred among peoples, may pleasant contacts established during the war serve to create a better understanding in peace. Unfortunately, the skeleton personnel selected was often very bad in the beginning. Some units failed to realize that the few Germans assigned to each volunteer unit represented the German people as a whole, that they would serve as an example under all conditions. They took this opportunity to rid themselves of unscrupulous elements, which caused incalculable damage in the volunteer units.

Only men with tact and intelligence who were fully conscious of the responsibility and the importance of their mission should have been

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selected as skeleton personnel. Especially useful were men who had lived and gained experience abroad. Men who could handle foreign people, understood their deviating conceptions, morals, and customs and were able to display a positive attitude toward their subordinates. The knowledge of their language was desirable but not absolutely necessary.

As commander of the Eastern legions and 162 (Turkoman) Division in Italy, I concentrated my efforts upon the training of the German skeleton personnel for this special mission. The following measures proved themselves:

- a. An introductory course of six days for new personnel;
- b. Handing out thousands of printed booklets dealing with
the treatment of volunteers
military political guidance
handling of discipline
directives concerning training
duties of the medical officer, the interpreter, etc.;
- c. Opening special files on "Treatment of volunteers" by each battalion to collect the above-mentioned booklets and other pertinent material;
- d. Monthly publication of newly gained experiences. Reporting mistakes made in the treatment of volunteers, keeping in mind that one can profit by mistakes.
- e. Briefing of the German personnel by the division commander personally;

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- f. Monthly success reports of all troop units to the division concerning briefing of skeleton personnel. Special emphasis to be put on the fact that any kind of mistreatment, physically or mentally, or tacit consent to it, was strictly forbidden;
- g. Publication of a special news bulletin by the General of the Volunteer Units for the German personnel, to create an exceptional esprit de corps and pride in their mission.

It may seem as if matters were overdone but such was not the case. The repeated mistakes made in treating the volunteers which perhaps were principally due to thoughtlessness rather than to lack of goodwill proved this fact. The task of the skeleton personnel assigned to a unit of foreign volunteers is considerably more difficult and thankless than that in any other unit. At the end of the day, when off duty, one can become ones own self again. In volunteer units the individual must remain the exemplary soldier at all times. He must display interest in the welfare of the men entrusted to him even while off duty. The best possibility for exerting influence and educating his men is during off-duty hours. The Eastern volunteers valued it very highly if German comrades devoted some of their free time to them, especially when they felt that it was done voluntarily rather than upon orders. The volunteers loved to entertain them with their homemade string instruments, the Georgian jeagure, the Usbek tantom, etc., with songs of their homeland and with dances. They rejoiced when their performances were appreciated. Why should we not grant them this pleasure? Why should we not indicate that we liked their

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unmelodic music to which we were not accustomed? Many of us were unable to do that. They felt that they were physically not in a position to endure the strange smell of their bodies, their monotonous songs, their slant-eyed faces, their often repulsive customs, the strange sounds. From their personal experiences on the Eastern front they recalled the dreadful atrocities committed against their comrades and suddenly believed that they recognized the culprits or their brothers among the volunteers. They had the best intentions but were unable to accomplish their mission. Believing them was the only solution. Besides these sensitive men there were the lazy ones, who were only interested in making life easy for themselves at the expense of the volunteers. In addition there were the stupid ones, who only cursed instead of helping to educate and who, instead of displaying a willingness to serve, undermined all effort. However, I am happy to be in a position to conclude this chapter with the statement that the great majority of the German skeleton personnel splendidly accomplished their mission through understanding, patience and love, which became increasingly difficult toward the end of the war. The fact that the volunteer units stayed on our side when our last ally had deserted us, the fact that during the last hours not a single shot was fired by an Eastern volunteer against one of his German comrades, proves the correctness of my statements.

IV. Peculiarities of Eastern Volunteers

One who intends to command men must understand them. He must perceive their troubles and tribulations, their dispositions, desires and

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expectations. The majority of our Eastern volunteers joined our side via a PW camp, having either been captured or having deserted. The greater part had spent the severe winter months of 1941-42, with all their hardships, on our side, behind barbed wire. This had made a deep impression upon them and produced the following consequences: distrust and the urge to steal. Conditions in the camps in Germany during this winter were extremely poor. I am only mentioning this fact, because we had to take this into consideration without being in a position to judge whether these tremendous problems of bringing back, supplying, and sheltering these masses, as well as giving them medical attention could have been solved in a better manner. The plain Russian people looked up to the Germans in silent admiration prior to 1941. They regarded their technical and cultural achievements and the direct effect upon Russia with appreciation. Russian PWs who had returned to their homeland from Germany after the First World War were in most cases enthusiastic propagandists for the German cause and the German way of life, German colonists on the banks of the Volga and in southern Russia, German engineers and technicians everywhere had demonstrated German efficiency to them. The beginning of hostilities in 1941, their severeness /and rigorous persuasion as well as the experiences gained in captivity during the winter of 1941-42, destroyed every feeling of respect and created disappointment, hatred, and mistrust. When Turkic and Caucasian tribesmen were released from the PW camps and had the choice between fighting for us with or without weapons or working for us, the Reich government had not as yet indicated the specific political purpose behind this

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employment, so that the volunteers suspected that they were only wanted as cannon fodder. This conception was strengthened when they began to feel that they were regarded as inferior people. Their efficiency, which is essential if a soldier is to discharge his duties properly was thus impaired.

(It should be pointed out that our Eastern volunteers had not ^{already} acquired this feeling of mistrust in captivity but that it ~~existed~~ and had only been strengthened during that time. It was simply a part of their make-up resulting from experiences in Bolshevik Russia where promises were made but never kept.)

The second aftereffect of their captivity was, at least during the first few months, the almost diseaselike epidemic for obtaining additional food rations. They were trading blankets or uniforms and began to steal despite the fact that sufficient food had been provided as they readily admitted. It is possible that this urge was the result of previous winters of starvation in the Soviet Union.

Members of the Eastern tribes have very little in common with the people of West-European countries. While the latter are predominantly individualists by inclination, the majority of the former are emotional ^{who} people/under the influence of alcohol or due to bloodthirstiness often become unmanageable and undisciplined. The loss of freedom often means more to them than life. They fail to understand the desire of the West-Europeans for isolation and privacy. They like to live close together. They feel strong as a whole but lonely if alone. Hence, they fight close together despite heavy casualties resulting from this peculiarity, and are inefficient when left alone. They are people of a

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changeable disposition and behave in the manner in which they are talked to. They can easily be influenced, for good or evil. It was therefore necessary, to appeal to their honor in order to make them less attentive to the enemy's whispering campaign. Their sense of honor was generally very strongly developed, which made them very sensitive as far as minor insults were concerned. They sometimes remembered injustices for a long time. Once a German sergeant took a good horse away from a Kabardin platoon commander because he wanted to ride it himself. While the former begged not to take it away from him the sergeant replied: "Go and get yourself a horse from Stalin." He followed this advice by deserting one month later, to avenge himself.

Their sense of honor, however, did not prevent the volunteers from lying during court hearings. Lying was one of their most reliable means of defense. They did not hesitate to denounce or falsely accuse a third person. Unfortunately, many a German believed them. It happened frequently that an "Eastern Battalion," due to some denunciation to the effect that one of its volunteers had made pro-Bolshevik remarks, transferred the culprit to a "U-Camp" (a camp for politically unreliable people) only to realize later that this man actually was an honest and reliable person who had threatened to report the real culprit, who in turn had beaten him to it. Sometimes such mistakes could be rectified, but frequently such mistakes went by unnoticed. Each battalion strove to rid itself of all unreliable elements which possibly could form a Bolshevik group by sending them to a "U-camp" upon the least suspicion, especially, as life in these camps was quite tolerable. Sad experiences

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gained during the time of commitment prompted commanders to effect such transfers when a few instigators threatened to spoil a whole unit or when German commanders took the desertion of but few volunteers too seriously. They believed that their entire unit was bad, not realizing that this was but a wholesome purifying process. A superior officer was always in a quandary whether or not he had transferred the right person. There was always a possibility that he had transferred an honest man who had openly spoken his mind while the wrong person, the sly individual, had been retained. I recall vividly a case where a battalion commander requested the transfer of a volunteer because he was said to have made the following statement: "Conditions on Stalin's side are much better than over here." I requested a thorough investigation to learn if the man was not right in his assertion -- and he was right. It was not he who was transferred but members of the German personnel. This volunteer later faithfully did his duty to the last.

In characterizing the men of the Eastern tribes it must be added that the members of the more primitive tribes failed to share our concepts of punctuality, cleanliness, order, and devotion to duty. "Haste is the work of the devil" is one of Mohammed's sayings which is strictly observed. This does not hold true when these people are on horseback. The poor horse is driven to give his last. The majority of them grew up without a watch. Any volunteer who possessed one was more interested in it as a toy than as a timepiece. It was not important whether or not it kept accurate time but rather that it ticked loudly.

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From a military point of view it must be stated that the Eastern volunteers were physically stronger but psychologically weaker than the Western European soldier. The former did not bear up in major combat, under strong artillery fire or fighter bomber or tank attacks. The urge for self-preservation was greater than the will to fight. Some single praiseworthy deeds confirm the rule. This was not surprising. A clear conception as to the necessity of extreme effort was completely lacking. The maintenance of close contact with his homeland through leave and the use of postal facilities, one of the strongest motives behind the German soldier, was of no importance to the volunteers. They had not been in contact with their families for many years and had every reason to be uneasy as to their welfare.

Their close contact with nature facilitated their agile movements in the terrain, especially at night and in the woods. Their eyesight was excellent, which permitted them to make out planes in the sky at night. They were also good marksmen and excellent in the use of entrenching tools. Some displayed an unusual eagerness to learn and also possessed a great mental capacity. Being very gifted as far as languages were concerned, they quickly learned German as well as French and Italian while they were stationed in these countries. Being greatly interested in technical things they grasped the handling of weapons quickly. As stragglers or while running for air cover, they did not part with their weapons as easily as the Western European soldier. This was confirmed time and again by the staffs in rearward positions. Nothing could raise the morale of the volunteers more than equipping them with good modern weapons while

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nothing could lower their spirits more than having these weapons suddenly taken away from them and given to some German unit. Their firing discipline was very bad. Our endeavor to get a hit with every shot and to use ammunition sparingly was never completely understood by the volunteers. Their senseless shooting during each fight led to an unbounded squandering of ammunition. My attempt to stop this dangerous mania by depriving the volunteers of their food rations in order to bring them back to their senses was in vain. They began to pool their food supplies and divided them evenly among their comrades. The commander of the especially shot-happy North Caucasians, who after duty hours were merrily firing into the air the ammunition which they had put aside during their training period, personally brought another box of ammunition to their quarters and informed them: "When you are through shooting off this ammunition, there will be no more." It is especially important to keep ammunition locked up during a train ride. It should, however, be handy in case of danger. An equal lack of understanding for rationing prevailed everywhere, especially as far as food was concerned. Planned economy was unknown to them. A two-day ration was consumed in one single sitting. Careful rationing was therefore in order.

The attitude of the Eastern soldier toward his superior deviates completely from our conception. He regards his superior as his master who without a question has more rights than himself. Eastern tribe officers fetched double rations from the mess for themselves and demanded the best quarters without any of his men giving it as much as a thought. The German officer, however, who according to our conception, was the last one

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to go to the field kitchen after all of his men had been taken care of, or who shared his quarters with them, did not enjoy greater respect but was treated with a condescending smile.

Every Eastern volunteer regards it as a special honor if he could do a favor to a superior to whom he had taken a liking. He is full of pride if he is permitted to carry his coat for hours in the heat and feels greatly rewarded if given a word of thanks or a handshake. It would have been a great mistake to offer him a cigarette. His pride would have been greatly hurt, feeling that he was being paid.

One of the principal characteristics, especially of the most primitive of our Eastern volunteers, was their willingness to serve and their gratefulness toward the master who treated them well. He could entrust them with everything he owned, they would never steal a thing but would rather steal something for him. Placing confidence in them improved their honesty; distrust, however, led them astray. I recall a very long and strenuous day of fighting. Being very hungry when I arrived at an Azerbaijan battalion which was about to distribute food rations, I asked for a slice of dry bread. I stepped back into my car and slowly drove off again when I suddenly noticed a volunteer running after my car. He handed me some butter and a piece of cheese, his entire supper ration. I would have offended him if I had rejected his offer or had compensated him with some favor.

They never spared their horses. When the Germans dismounted and led their horses uphill or downhill, they acted very surprised. Although the Turkestanians displayed a great love for animals it was their

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conception that the purpose of the horse was to spare the men. The Turkestanian reconnaissance battalion of my Division gave excellent proof of this in Italy.

Conclusions drawn from the above indicate that it was allright for an officer of an Eastern volunteer unit to go first to the field kitchen to fetch a single portion but he must be mindful that the last man of his unit was also taken care of. He should dismount, going uphill or downhill, but should be mindful that all riders follow suit.

Many of our Turkestan volunteers were orthodox Mohammedans. As faithful followers of Islam they could under no circumstances be Bolsheviks. It was therefore obvious that we took great pains to further Mohammedanism in our volunteer units in any way possible. This was accomplished in our unit in the following manner:

1. By selecting suitable men as mullahs and having them trained by especially picked men at the mullah schools at Goettingen and Dresden-Blasewitz.
2. By establishing positions of chief mullah and mullah positions at the division staff, lower staff, company level, etc.
3. By designating the mullahs with special insignias (turban and half-moon) and rank (chief mullahs had officer rank).
4. By issuing Korans (in miniature as talismans).
5. By permitting prayer hours in the morning, noon, and evening, and instruction periods by the mullah, as long as it did not interfere with duty.
6. By keeping Friday afternoons free of duty, also the important

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Mohammedian holidays (Ramadan, Kurban-beiran, Mohammed's birthday, etc.).

7. By adjusting the bill of fare in accordance with their fasting customs.
8. By reserving mutton and rice for the celebrations.
9. By lining up the graves with a compass in the direction of Mecca. Erecting of grave markers with a half-moon instead of the cross.
10. By respecting their religion and their rites.

It was regarded as exceedingly tactless to stare at them during prayers or even to photograph them. The distasteful slaughtering of sheep is a rite based upon climatic conditions and should not cause anyone to make disparaging remarks. Orthodox Mohammedans never drink alcoholic beverages and are very sensitive as far as women are concerned. One should never ask about the female members of their families. Their sense of hospitality is very pronounced. They feel obliged to present the guest with their best possession if he displays a fondness for it, even if it breaks their heart. Care therefore should be exercised in the exchange of conventional courtesies so that no unintended force is exerted.

Any faithful Christian will always get along with a faithful Mohammedan. The unfaithful men of the skeleton personnel caused much damage through disparaging remarks and tactless actions and thus harmed the prestige of the German people. Unfortunately, many Western-European women acted in the same manner. Their modesty, dress conduct, and behavior compares unfavorably with that of their Oriental sisters.

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The relation between sexes differs greatly from that of Western Europe and the entire Soviet Union. Due to the fact that people in the Soviet Union live and work closely together, their relations are rather natural. The women are usually of a more rugged constitution than those in the West, do not mind heavy work, and in some cases, as customary in the Orient, do the heaviest work. In addition, they give birth to a great number of healthy children. The woman never expects any kind of consideration from her husband such as his seat in an overcrowded streetcar or asking her to step ahead while standing in line. Flirtations are unknown to them. If one looks at a pretty woman admiringly for a long time she is apt to ask if there is a spot on her nose. She restrains herself greatly and does not indulge in erotic adventures before marriage. The depicting of nude people as art objects or in magazines is frowned upon. The volunteers, while stigmatized in Western-European countries, regarded the lack of modesty by the woman as a kind of encouragement which entitled them to overstep their bounds. They were later on greatly surprised when called to account. Our laws which were to safeguard "the purity of the German blood," thus forbidding marriages between volunteers and German women, created resentment. They were always happy when together with women and courted them in their own manner by performing their powerful tribal dances. I recall a case where men of the German personnel or perhaps also the girls who wanted to get rid of them because of their undesired competition, reminded them of the curfew hour and wanted to send them back to their barracks. The ancient instincts -- the fight for the women -- was aroused and a fight started. The conclusions: start a party together and finish

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it together or arrange a party inconspicuously without the volunteers.

V. How Can Inferences and Requirements Derived from a Better Understanding of the Characteristics Peculiar to Eastern Volunteers be Utilized as a Guide for Relations Between them and the Skeleton Personnel?

A. Inferences

1. Volunteer units are chance formations whose combat efficiency decreases in the same ratio as the chance for victory deteriorates.

2. Their utilization however is limited. They are not suitable for commitment in large scale operations. Only heavy interspersing with skeleton personnel will permit their employment in major actions. The identity of a volunteer unit will be lost if an excessive amount of skeleton personnel is employed. The volunteers will become auxiliary volunteers and lose their chances for promotion. Unsatisfied ambition creates dissatisfaction. If Germans were employed in a unit at an excessive rate chances are that their selection would be less careful. Thus mistakes in the treatment of volunteers will become more numerous. One man can do more harm in this case than ten can do good. One single mistake might be discussed for several months while good treatment is always accepted as a matter of fact.

3. Committing volunteers against their own country cannot be recommended. It is only feasible if advances are successful, a fact which cannot always be guaranteed. Fighting their own fellow-countrymen or

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er perhaps their blood relations, in countries where polygamy is permitted often leads to inner conflicts as far as the volunteers are concerned. Gruesome acts of vengeance will occur on both sides, but predominately against volunteers. As a result the latter were careful in exposing themselves to danger during combat to avoid being captured and tortured. They had also to be mindful that their next of kin would be held co-responsible for their acts. This was frequently the reason for making false entries in the papers. The possibility that they might fall into the hands of the enemy had always to be reckoned with.

4. Since the quality of the unit and not the number of men is of decisive importance in combat it behooves the skeleton personnel to treat the volunteers in such a manner that they will become fullfledged fellow combatants. The following requirements are the result of the above inferences, which apply to all who come in direct contact with Eastern volunteers.

B. Requirements (in addition to those mentioned on page 62)

The following question should be asked: "What do the volunteers mean to us and what do we mean to them?" For our sake, they burned all bridges behind them, they gave up their homeland, their families, their past and, without our final victory, also their future. Thousands sacrificed their lives and their health. Therefore, it was our primary mission to make their present life as pleasant as possible. They should feel completely at home in their volunteer unit and enjoy life there. Besides, in case of physical incapacitation, they should be taken care of on German soil. Based upon these deliberations, the general of the volunteer units,

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Gen Keestring, arrived at a conclusion to put the volunteers on a par with the German soldiers, that is, to give them equal rights with equal obligations.

1. Just treatment is the best means of removing old distrust, providing it covers all phases of the life of a soldier. This sounds relatively easy but only too frequently did violations occur. Subterfuges were always handy to circumvent this equalization. When clothing was issued, the skeleton personnel picked the best pieces, giving the excuse that the volunteers were less careful. It must be admitted that they treated old clothing badly, instead of using needle and thread for necessary repairs they even used a knife in order to get into possession of new pieces sooner. However, only after they had demonstrated that they fail to take proper care of new clothes should they be disregarded when new things are issued.

When it becomes evident that the volunteers like to get intoxicated when alcoholic beverages were issued, the total quantity should be given out, but in small portions. If they are not interested in certain PX sales items (e.g., coffee) or if they are not permitted to receive tobacco rations because they are hospitalized, it would be absolutely unjust to distribute their rations among the skeleton personnel without giving them something in exchange.

It would also be a mistake to give them only makherka cigarettes and to reserve the better brands for the skeleton personnel. This should have at least been discussed with them beforehand and some agreement on this issue should be reached.

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Special-missions staff officers from each battalion from the tribe of the volunteers, should be present when rations are issued so that all distrust is removed from the very beginning.

The volunteers should also be treated on a par with the Germans as far as quarters and leaves are concerned. Also in case of illness, when they are wounded or disabled, and especially when the use of artificial limbs becomes necessary or their re-education for new civilian jobs becomes imperative. As in the latter case military authority overlapped with civilian authority, a thorough re-orientation was sometimes in order to remove any prejudices against the Eastern volunteers which frequently were the result of party teachings.

2. Up to this point the equal rights of the volunteers have been discussed, now I shall relate the equality of their obligations. Since the majority of the volunteers were unable to fulfill even the smallest duties without supervision, they had to be taught to do so. A good example is always the best means of education. The performance of duties must be rigidly policed in a volunteer unit so that nobody gets accustomed to any bad habits. The volunteers had already been used to strict discipline since their time in the Red Army. However, one who expects much must himself perform well. He must be kind-hearted as well as strict. To be kind does not mean to be weak, a fact which was always misconstrued and taken advantage of.

3. The main object was to gain the confidence of the volunteers, as already mentioned, by treating them fair and square. It was entirely wrong to make clumsy approaches. Despite all feelings of comradeship, the

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skeleton personnel had to observe a certain distance in order to preserve respect. It was a great mistake if a superior, attempting to gain their confidence, acquiescently tolerated excesses toward the population. He thus undermined all discipline and found himself unable to act in a critical situation. Joint violations of regulations by Germans and volunteers seriously imperiled the prestige of the skeleton personnel in the eyes of the straight thinking, better class of volunteers.

Confidence is based upon respect. The soldier always has great respect for a superior who is efficient. The best conditions, as far as confidence is concerned, prevailed in volunteer units where mutual respect prevailed. The Germans in this case realized that the volunteers were sons of ancient civilized tribes and that they had sacrificed much, and that their capabilities were limited but their eagerness to serve should be regarded as an achievement. They maintained a good comrade-like attitude toward the volunteers and served as an example of punctuality, cleanliness, order, and the performance of duties.

The volunteers were always deeply impressed by the demonstration of true German comradeship and assured us time and again that such close contact between officers, non-commissioned officers, and men never existed in the Red Army. They were always very enthusiastic in their letters to friends and other comrades stating, e.g., "Yesterday, we celebrated Ramadan. My sergeant and also my first lieutenant were sitting next to me. He knew every one of us by name, knew where I came from, and even drank once out of my glass."

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Evenings must be arranged with the purpose in mind of fostering good comradeship and getting better acquainted. A joint drinking orgy never serves this purpose as very few behave in a becoming manner. Joint singing fosters friendship. Volunteers sang German songs and Germans sang Turkestan and Azerbaijan songs in my Division staff headquarters. Many a prize contest was conducted jointly.

4. Delicacy of feeling as far as their sense of honor is concerned must be tactfully observed. Any offense or neglect in word or deed must be avoided. Curses and pet names, foolish talk and constant criticism create displeasure and do not make for better performance. That their performance could not be compared with that of the German soldiers is obvious for above-mentioned reasons.

Rudeness was regarded as lack of culture and had no effect. The greatest insult was physical punishment. The Red Army had abolished this and propagandized it as a great cultural achievement maintaining that this type of punishment was an everyday affair in the German Wehrmacht. Anyone employing this forbidden practice proved the correctness of the Bolshevik propaganda and the volunteers deduced that if the propaganda was correct in this point it must also be right in others. There were also cases in which Eastern non-commissioned officers offered the German personnel their help in bringing some stubborn volunteer to his senses. To tolerate such retribution quietly was a measure which should also be condemned. At times punishment was administered under the pretense that it had been ordered by the Germans. It served the purpose of Bolshevik-ically inclined non-commissioned officers who attempted to undermine the

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volunteers' eagerness to serve and thus spelled the unit. The use of the familiar "Du" by superiors was also frowned upon. The Red Army had abolished it and a re-introduction would be regarded as a step backward.

5. The principal difficulties in mutual understanding were the differences in languages: We, on our side, had as good as no Turkmen interpreters. We therefore tried to make ourselves understood in either Russian or German. The command language was German, but beyond that, only very few understood the language. Russian was the language of the common foe and therefore was not used too frequently by Turkestanians and Caucasians; besides it was not understood by the majority of the volunteers. Comrades had to translate the Russian language to the latter but the translation could very rarely be checked as to its accuracy. It was therefore imperative to speak simply, to form short sentences, to symbolize everything that was said and above all to have patience. Failure to carry out orders was often due not to unwillingness but rather because the order had not been correctly understood. Frequently a speech missed its purpose because the interpreter made a bad job of it. Instead of being given the speech beforehand to prepare himself, the interpreter was compelled to give a running translation, which only very few can do satisfactorily. It is always a make-shift arrangement to make oneself understood through the medium of an interpreter as the personal effect of the commander is lost. The volunteers learned to speak German faster than we were able to learn the Eastern languages. I had instructional pamphlets printed under the captions "You must be able to say this in

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Turkestan or Azerbaijan." These were words and sentences used in daily intercourse with volunteers. They were to demonstrate to them that we were eager to converse with them in their mother-tongue. Thus, these pamphlets served the purpose of establishing a still closer contact.

6. The volunteers were very critical and compared any measure with that of the Red Army. They preferred to carry out orders whose meaning they understood. Blind obedience is not one of their habits. Therefore, orders should be explained to them if their purpose is not immediately discernible.

VI. The Soldiers' Topics of Conversation

If an officer is interested enough to see his soldiers happy in their field unit during war, he should listen to their "topics of conversation" and ascertain whether or not their problems have been satisfactorily solved. Frequently, varying as to the order of discussion, the topics were:

- Topic 1 Leave and women
- " 2 Eating, drinking, and smoking
- " 3 Promotions and decorations

It is doubtless of interest to learn how these problems were solved in our volunteer units.

A. Leave.

Every year the German soldier was allowed to go home to his family. The volunteers, however, were without a country and had lost almost all members of their family. With or without the aid of the Eastern Ministry (Ministry for the occupied Eastern Territories) the legions and other troop units began to establish leave centers for volunteers. My 162

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(Turk) Jgr Division, e.g., had their leave center at the Lido in Venice where they could live in peace and rest. Capable directors arranged small trips and evenings of entertainment to offer some diversion and stimulation.

Unfortunately, the number of vacancies and leave centers was not commensurate with the demand. All grades of the skeleton personnel co-operated to a great extent by inviting some volunteer to spend his leave with him and his family. The establishing of leave quarters in barracks located in beautiful surroundings in medium sized cities as well as the taking care of volunteers by replacement troop units had been planned but was too late to be put into effect. It would have been unjust to grant the Germans leave every year and the volunteers every two or three years. Some units solved this problem by sending the volunteers far to the rear into the supply areas, where they were not required to live by the clock, had no superiors, and could take it easy, a life which every soldier appreciates. In close relation to the above is the subject:

B. Women

The longer the war lasted the more remote became the possibility of the volunteers' returning to their homeland. Therefore, the practicability of marrying in Germany or in other occupied countries became a point of discussion. If a volunteer had wife and child on our side, there was little chance that he would run away. Within the Government-General Area there were many Polish women who married volunteers. Our laws, however, forbade such marriages with German women. For this reason,

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attempts were made to have female Eastern workers meet the volunteers, and quarters were made available in the camps of the former where married volunteers could spend their leaves. Those who had no intention of marrying got acquainted by themselves. Many, however, attempted to use force when women, because of the language barrier or perhaps for racial or other reasons, failed to co-operate. In order to protect these women or girls and to maintain the prestige of the troop, the establishing of brothels in the camping area, under medical supervision, was found advisable. The mullahs were strictly against such an institution but I disregarded their protests for the above-mentioned reasons.

C. To the topic of eating, drinking, and smoking which have already been discussed on page 67, I should like to add that this contributes a great deal toward the maintenance of good spirits. Cooking in a volunteer unit should be different from that in a German unit. The taste of the volunteers must be taken into consideration. I gave the order that on certain days Eastern tribal dishes were to be served in my units. The best recipes were then sent to other troop units.

Whenever alcoholic beverages are dispensed in Mohammedan units, it must be borne in mind that an orthodox Moslem never drinks and that some hard-drinking individual could grab his portion. Due to climatic conditions, Eastern people have a strong craving for concentrated alcohol. Bad elements of the population in our occupied areas took advantage of this time and again. They got the volunteers intoxicated, dragged them over to the partisans, or robbed them. Alcohol issued in small portions every one or two days reduces the craving for excessive use. Nurses in charge of the service clubs of the legions had a very beneficial influence

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upon the volunteers during their training period. As far as their conduct is concerned, volunteers actually competed with each other and were very grateful when one of the German nurses was kind to them. They followed every one of their directives willingly.

D. A very difficult chapter is the one dealing with promotions, especially when units had a strong complement of German skeleton personnel. In this case, volunteers could become superiors of German soldiers. For this reason, promotions were not made too frequently. The ambition of the best of soldiers thus remained unsatisfied and many good volunteers ran over to the partisans. The German skeleton personnel frequently failed to realize that eagerness displayed by the volunteers must occasionally be rewarded with promotions. Some envied them and uttered their resentment openly by saying: "He was promoted although he is not as proficient as I am." They even told a newly promoted volunteer this to his face and spoiled his pride and joy. Some could not grasp the idea that promoted volunteers were to form the future skeleton of a Turkoman, Armenian, Azerbaijan or similar army within the German Wehrmacht. In the beginning, difficulties were avoided by issuing special rank insignias for volunteers. The order stating that the volunteer grades had no general superiority over German soldiers also helped to preclude friction. Nobody observed these insignias nor paid any attention to the bearer. For this reason, the volunteers disliked wearing them. The basic principle of equal rights and equal obligations led to the introduction of the German insignias up to the rank of a general. That the efficiency and appearance of a promoted volunteer was

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often below that of a German of equal rank was to be expected. The higher ranks naturally grasped the situation much faster than the lower ranks, who were especially on the lookout for Germans or envious volunteers who expressed their disapproval by refraining from saluting.

The promotion of volunteers was a necessary procedure, as numerous former Red Army officers and non-commissioned officers were among them, who could not be expected to serve many years in the German Wehrmacht as common soldiers. When captured such officers had discarded their insignias and kept their rank secret. They expected that it would have some bearing upon their treatment. As soon as it is found out in the volunteer units, that they had been officers, special attention should be paid to them. They should be kept under close supervision to ascertain if they could be trusted. Trustworthy men should be selected from the masses and assigned to special jobs, such as interpreters with special insignias, after adequate training. As Division commander, I always carried the names of former officers of the Red Army with me and took every opportunity to talk to them when I visited the troops. I took them into my confidence and listened to their wishes and suggestions.

Intellectuals and especially medical officers were unreliable to a very high degree. Having been trained at the expense of the Soviet State, they felt that they owed the State a certain amount of gratitude. As soon as they realized that conditions began to deteriorate they left our side and deserted.

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This regulation made the bronze medals less desirable in the eyes of the volunteers. As they could be awarded the next higher grade only after having been awarded the lower grade of the medal three times, it occurred quite often that the brave German clerk of the Division staff, without having ever experienced the difficulties and hardships of living and fighting together with the volunteers, wore the silver pin-cross, which a volunteer could hardly ever receive.

Wounded and disabled volunteers were too often forgotten. I gave the chief medical officers of my hospitals a number of decorations which should be awarded in serious cases, e.g. after an amputation, to support the volunteer morally and make him happy, perhaps for the last time. Bravery is easier to evaluate than merit. I have always maintained the opinion that the medal of merit, which has numerous degrees, should be awarded according to the length of service in the Wehrmacht, e.g. after one year of faithful service a bronze medal, after two years a silver medal, and after three years a gold medal. I was, however, unsuccessful in obtaining a general directive along these lines from higher authorities. When in 1944 the awarding of German decorations and insignias to the volunteers was finally ordered by Gen Koestring, the volunteers were very well pleased and wore these decorations with pride.

VII. The Prevention of Offenses and their Punishment

After discussing the rewarding of good performances in Chapter IVd and e, I shall now endeavor to report on the prevention of offenses and their punishment in the volunteer units. It is the duty of every superior authorized to take disciplinary action -- no matter what his unit or nationality -- to see to it that the men entrusted to him keep out of trouble. The

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prevention of offenses is one of his principal tasks. It tends to reduce the number of disciplinary actions. The best preventive method is the strict handling of all duties, the checking of idleness and unsupervised loitering. To occupy off-duty hours with sports, games, crafts, building of musical instruments, singing, improving of quarters, etc. is especially advantageous. Frequent clothing inspections should be held to ascertain if all items issued are still in the possession of the individual. Alcoholic beverages should be dispensed in small portions. Further precautionary measures should be taken if the behavior of the individual makes it imperative.

In case of punishment, one was confronted with a dilemma. Putting the volunteers completely on a par with the German soldier made it necessary to apply equal punitive measures. It soon became evident, that Asiatics, Turkomans and Caucasians are not affected by the German disciplinary code in the same manner as the Germans. For in the first place their sense of justice differed greatly from ours and our mild penalties had no effect whatsoever. The falsification of leave orders to obtain larger food rations, e.g., was not regarded by them as forging documents. If successful, it was regarded as a clever deed. The individual never felt responsible towards the State to the same extent as we did especially in case of loss or damage to government property. Cases of homosexuality were regarded by the Kazakhs as an offense to be punished by death. Culprits were tied to a pole by their own tribesmen and stoned to death. A young Kazakh who had been approached by one of his superiors in this respect committed suicide. Other tribes did not look at this offense in such

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a severe manner. Some of the mountain tribes of the Caucasus and Turkestan lived under the laws of blood vengeance.

In order to gain the volunteers' confidence it was imperative to respect their tribal customs. In the case of blood vengeance, the offender could not very well be regarded as a murderer and judged according to German laws. The volunteer was taken into protective custody and transferred to the front where the Lord could pass judgment on him. The principal mistake in passing sentence was made by delaying disciplinary action through tedious investigations or delaying the execution of a sentence because of our basic principle in administering justice that one night had to expire between the pronouncement and the execution of a sentence. Another reason was the sometimes overcrowded conditions at the jail. All this is contrary to the mentality of the Eastern people. Although forbearing by nature, their feelings are suddenly aroused to a pitch. Frequently, the oldest of the volunteers or the mullah called on the German commander and asked for the head of one of the volunteers for some offense. If he was not decapitated at once and several days were allowed to pass with investigations, their rage would subside. Groups would gather taking sides, for or against the man. Sympathetic feelings were aroused more and more and the possibility of setting a warning would have passed. The most important rule in dealing with Eastern volunteer units should be: "Speedy justice is good justice." Speed, however, must not influence the thoroughness of the investigation and the complete clarification of circumstances.

At the front, summary courts-martial, staffed with officers having some legal background and an army judge, proved their value. Death

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sentences concerning volunteers could of course never be carried out by German skeleton personnel, but only by volunteers, another unit or a mixed group of Germans and volunteers. Death sentences were only pronounced in very severe cases (robbery, rape under especially severe circumstances, desertion if arms were taken up against the former unit) principally to frighten the unit, to maintain discipline and to protect the population. The next severe penalty was expulsion from the Wehrmacht and transfer to a penal camp, to be employed as laborers for a definite period of time, or transferred to a U-camp (for the politically unreliable). As long as these camps were under the jurisdiction of the commander of PWs, the inmates of these camps were treated according to international law. The transfer to a U-camp was the final step after all other methods had failed. The volunteers were afraid of such a transfer and any threat uttered along these lines had a tremendous effect. Sentences of confinement were less effective as they carried only short terms of confinement. They were considered a welcome diversion, as the volunteers could sleep as long as they liked. For this reason punishment had to be made more severe. Marching in a circle with full pack or depriving volunteers of food rations was very effective. Before the adoption of the German penal code, some volunteer units devised their own systems. They applied certain degrading punishments, such as tying the offender to a pole with a sign around the neck stating, e.g., "I have stolen watches from two of my comrades and have sold them, and have thus disgraced my people." To be tied to a pole for several hours, being insulted by comrades and in addition being deprived of food rations was a very effective

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procedure but hardly compatible with our sense of justice. The possibility existed that the insulted volunteers would avenge themselves personally. Sentences of confinement must be carried out on the same day. In case of reduction in food rations one should watch closely that no subsidizing by comrades takes place. Court procedures on a large scale with defense attorneys and spectators from the ranks of the volunteers always made a deep impression because of the accuracy and thoroughness of our Wehrmacht jurisdiction. It is advisable to have the oldest volunteer (special missions staff officer of the unit) or the mullah present to consult him in the meting out of penalties. In most cases they asked for more severe punishment than the German disciplinary code intended or prescribed. Nothing affected the confidence of the volunteers more than unjust application of disciplinary actions. E.g., a German and a volunteer must equally be called to account for the same offense and also punished in like manner.

Volunteers regarded it as an injustice if the entire unit was punished for the offense of a single man, who could not be found out. They felt that it was not their mission to help educate other comrades. They left the educational part to their superior.

VIII. Military and Political Guidance

In chapter VI I discussed the possibilities of gaining the volunteers' confidence by appropriate treatment. I will in conclusion deal with its most important prerequisite. The volunteer must be convinced that he is fighting on the right side. Volunteers who have broken their oath of allegiance by changing sides must believe steadfastly in our

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fighting aims so that no feeling of remorse as to their disloyalty will enter their minds, not even during critical periods. To acquaint them with the final objectives of our fight is an assignment for a political guidance committee which must honestly, clearly, and distinctly state future aims; in this case the reorganization of the Eastern area. The unit commander in turn serves as the mouthpiece of the political leader whose duty it is to arouse enthusiasm in his volunteers to the point where they will gladly sacrifice their lives for the cause. Such an aim must be a positive one. Love gives more inspiration than hatred. Unfortunately, our leaders from 1941 to 1944 were unable to state clearly our mission in the Eastern area. For this reason and because of lack of incentive millions of volunteers refrained from enlisting on our side. Finally in 1945, when the Russians were on German soil, Hitler decided to promise Azerbaijan its independence.

Under these circumstances the German skeleton personnel was confronted with a seemingly insoluble problem as far as the military and political guidance of volunteers was concerned. The following was regarded as our fighting aims: Fighting Bolshevism and Russian imperialism for a free and independent Turkestan (or Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, or North Caucasia). This sounded good to the Turkic border tribes east and west of the Caspian Sea and the Armenians and Georgians from the southern part of the Caucasus, which had been annexed by Russia only during the last century. But what was one to tell the Volga Tartars from the area between the Volga and the Ural mountains who had been Russians

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for several centuries and had no intention of becoming independent Tartars as our Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories wishfully thought? One must tell the Crimean Tartars a different story than the Cossacks, who were not members of the same tribe but of a distinct caste (free peasants under military obligation). In the Turkestan area (excluding Chinese Eastern Turkestan) there lived six tribes of which two at least, the Kazabeks and the Uzebeks, were hostile toward each other and enjoyed the breaking-up of all tribes which the Soviet Union had brought about. They were not very fond of the idea of forming a united Turkestan. The freedom which we promised them did therefore not mean anything to them. The volunteers who had listened frequently to the foolish bragging of the Germans, and thus had become suspicious, asked if we ever intended to withdraw from the conquered Eastern areas or if they were to live henceforth under the German rule instead of the Russian. Bolshevism had given the otherwise neglected border tribes a great deal of incentive. The volunteers represented the youth of the country who could hardly recall earlier and better times. They had nothing to compare their condition with and regarded Bolshevism as a cultural achievement. The Soviet Union granted their numerous peoples greater freedom than the former czarist Russia as far as the development of their language and literature etc. is concerned. The Georgians considered themselves, for the greater part, as the favorite children of the head of the state, their great fellow countryman, Joseph Stalin, who had given many leading posts in Moscow to Georgians. Anti-Bolshevist Georgians, former emigrants, especially those from Poland who

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joined the Georgian legion, were resented by them. Within the Georgian Committee in Berlin there were several members who represented diverse tendencies. When visiting the troops they prepagandized their ideals and caused much unrest. The Armenians were hostile toward the Turks but felt very grateful toward the United States as well as the Soviet Union for the building of orphan homes and the support of tens of thousands of their children whose parents had been killed by the Turks.

The description of the above conditions tends to illustrate the fact that each tribe had to be handled in a different manner and that the principal point, conveying the aim of our fight, had to be revised in every case. This rendered guidance in a military and political sense extremely difficult. For instance, ten volunteers from different tribes who were put in one hospital ward and read the newspapers printed by us in their respective languages could not help but notice the divergence when discussing the contents among them. This, of course, would create doubts in their minds as to our honesty.

I expressed my thoughts to the subordinate commanders concerning military and political guidance, with the following few words:

1. Not words, but deeds count.

The Soviet citizen has been flooded with propaganda and is therefore tired of it. Propaganda is always necessary for bad things, while good things will stand on their own merit. More than one intelligent volunteer had assured us: "You may be smart people but your knowledge of propaganda is rudimentary." Volunteers returning from a trip to Germany which

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was arranged by the Eastern Ministry, told me, after I had asked them what had most pleased them: "The fact that we were not requested to listen to propaganda speeches."

2. The best medium of propaganda is a German victory. It keeps everybody -- materialists, opportunists, and idealists -- in line. If I can show them a map on which I can pin little flags, moving them continuously ahead into enemy territory, I do not have to make any speeches. The little flags do the talking for me; they suffice to illustrate to them that the reorganization of their homeland depends upon the degree of support they give us with their weapons.

3. Speeches are, however, of the essence as soon as the advance stops or retreating movements take place. Such speeches should be:

- a. Short and clear, without excuses,
- b. Made as soon as possible, and
- c. Concluded with something positive.

The volunteer must be informed of reverses by his commander and not by way of the population hostile to us. He will otherwise be subject to unfavorable influences and his suspicion will be strengthened. It would have been completely wrong to publish only the good OKW reports and not the bad ones.

4. Never talk badly about a foreign form of government unless you are well acquainted with it. Instead of slandering it, prove that we do it better. Visual things have a more convincing effect than stories which have been overheard.

One who wants to convince somebody by deeds should first ascertain

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the other person's wishful thinking and then show him. Applied to our Eastern volunteers this would mean:

Better treatment and comradeship than heretofore within the unit. Within Germany, a greater contentment of the German population, based upon greater personal freedom, the undisputable right of the little man to own property, adequate and sufficient means to assure good living quarters, food clothing and other items used in daily life.

If all this was shown to the volunteer, there would be no doubts, and even the least bit of suspicion as to his deception would have disappeared.

Leaves spent together with German comrades and their families in villages and smaller towns, the impression which the clothing of the farmer and his wife would create, the shed of the small livestock, and even a walk through a department store would have a much better effect upon the volunteer than a visit to the Olympic Stadium or the Zoo, since these exist in his own country and perhaps in a much better style.

5. If one wished to differentiate between the border peoples of Russia, one should refrain from calling them Russians. Everything possible should be done to strengthen their national feeling, by furthering their language through newspapers, books, and radio broadcasts, arm insignias in their native colors, battalion flags, naming battalions after their national heroes. Reviving their own history, music, folkdances, songs and native arts through trained volunteers, furtherance of their religion and ancient rites.

6. Certain language regulations had to be effected in dealing with specific problems in order to avoid varying interpretations. The German

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soldier, however, was often confronted with an insoluble problem. Our treatment of the Poles, forced conscription of laborers and other radical war measures, could be compared with similar Bolshevist practises. However, we maintained that we were handling matters much better. But how could we justify the treatment of the Jews, when the Soviet Union strictly forbade the persecution of any race? Two questions were uppermost in the minds of the volunteers: the treatment of the Russian PWs and the Eastern laborers. As the efficiency of our volunteers was greatly affected by a good solution of this problem, the general of the Volunteer Units exerted every effort before the proper authorities and finally succeeded in adjusting this matter. I can pride myself on having contributed a great deal toward this success.

7. The volunteers were to be constantly reminded that they were fighting for their own cause and not for ours, as our aims were only similar as far as the final outcome was concerned. For this reason, I rejected the request to have the volunteers give the "Heil Hitler" salute and always greeted the volunteers in their native language, "Salaam" (Mohammedans), "Gamardshoba" (Georgians), "Wechdshuin" (Armenians), etc.

8. Concerning the practical application of military and political education within the unit, it must be stated, that on account of its importance, only well trained people should be entrusted with it. Most suitable were volunteers from the same tribe or a special leader who completely mastered the language. Even the unit commander could have his speech translated to his troops by an efficient interpreter. Running translations were never satisfactory. Only a very powerful speaker who completely masters the

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subject can permit discussions. A great number of politically well-trained men could be found among the volunteers who could embarrass a speaker with apparently harmless questions.

True confidence will replace distrust only in units where official or unofficial questions can be discussed and solved openly.

The propaganda detachment of my Turkic Division under the leadership of Lt Schuele, who later was killed at the river Etsch, greatly furthered the mission of the Division by training propagandists, offering courses to Turkic special-missions staff officers and mullahs by issuing directives, etc.

IX. Concluding Remarks

I am at the end of my discussion. It was my intention to briefly discuss the existing problems which confront us while commanding foreign tribes and their solution. In summarizing, it must be said: For this responsible task during war or during the period after the war within the scope of the Wehrmacht or while employing laborers or in the administration of occupied areas, men are needed who thoroughly understand psychology. They must possess two things: Intelligence and understanding. To possess one of these does not suffice. However, intelligence is of secondary importance. Unfortunately, smaller and bigger party members who were employed in the civil administration of the occupied territories lacked both faculties. They helped to create a wave of hatred which will not be forgotten for many decades. Many mistakes were also made in the treatment of our volunteers. However, within the volunteer units we endeavored to learn by our mistakes and tried to improve methods from

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month to month. We finally succeeded, which was manifested by the fact that the majority of our partners from the East still stuck by us when everything was lost.

Those who today in Germany are about to pass judgment upon us should demonstrate to the world that they possess and make use of the true faculties of a good psychologist -- understanding and intelligence. Success will be their reward.

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Ernst Kesting

Bichlhof 21 Oct 48

former Gen Kav and

Gen of the Volunteer Units

Commentary on the Report of Dr. Seraphin
Concerning Turkic Units

Dr. Seraphin states in the preface to his report that his experiences are based upon observations made within the scope of the lower command and that the higher levels, no doubt, encountered difficulties of which the troops were not aware.

This inference indicates the wise and distinguished character of the author.

I am able to evaluate his performance and efficiency as battalion commander -- toward the end as regiment commander (?) -- inasmuch as I was Inspector of the Turkic units in 1943 and, beginning with 1944, Gen of all the Eastern volunteer units. In this capacity I was the adviser to the Chief of the General Staff of the Army.

In commenting on this report, conditions among the many hundreds of units made up of other peoples of the Soviet Union must also be taken into consideration. The Turkic Division made only a small percentage of the volunteers committed in the Leningrad - Spanish border - Crete - Caucasus area.

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Since most other military authorities were not familiar with the complex problems involving the volunteer units, I shall endeavor to explain the situation briefly.

Due to lack of manpower, it became necessary in 1942 to form Units from PWs and deserters who had until that date only been utilized in rearward services, where they were employed due to lack of manpower. They were also used for police and guard duties.

The Organization Department of OKH began to organize these units toward the end of 1942 as follows:

- a. Auxiliary volunteers (Hilfswillige, Germ abbr. "Hiwi") who served as non-combatants with the troops behind the lines.
- b. Combatant volunteers who were to take an active part in the fight against Bolshevism.

Both categories were recruited from among volunteers. Recruiting of PWs was only permitted in those camps containing members of Turkic and Caucasian peoples.

c. The formation of such larger units as battalions from among Russian PWs was forbidden (due to Hitler's distrust of everything Russian). The only larger units were the Turkic Division 162, in which Dr. Seraphin served, and the Pannewitz Cossack Corps. In addition to these units, several Turkestan and Caucasian combat battalions and "Hiwis" were recruited into the army. The Navy and Air Forces also employed many thousands of "Hiwis" who were members of Eastern tribes.

The organization of the "Vlassov Army" which was so much talked about even after the war (I reported on this unit many times during

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my internment) was started only in November 1944, after the strong opposition of OKW had been overcome. One Division was ready for commitment by April 1945. The second one lacked weapons and equipment. Tens of thousands of Russians had volunteered for these units.

Over half a million Russian volunteers from the Eastern area were serving in the army.

In general, I am in accord with the estimate and conception of Dr. Seraphim but repeat, that he could not have been aware of the problems which were solved by higher levels despite extreme difficulties.

I should like to point especially to the mistakes and deficiencies encountered during the initial organization of the volunteer units, which have been correctly described by Dr. Seraphim:

Despite Hitler's assurance that war would only be waged against Bolshevism, the battle was actually fought against the Russian people.

The volunteers, especially the Russians, were never clearly informed as to our political aims: they sensed very soon that the Soviet Union was to be regarded as a colony to be exploited.

The poor treatment which the PWs and the population in the occupied territories received from the Party and the SS became known on the other side of the front. The number of Russian deserters, which was very high at the beginning of the campaign, decreased, while desertions of volunteers across the front lines and to the partisans increased.

Our propaganda continued to speak disrespectfully of the Russians as inferior people. The effect which this propaganda had upon the millions of badly needed Eastern workers, and upon their brothers in the

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army, was extremely bad.

A press conference was called at the Propaganda Ministry in the summer of 1944, when the General of the volunteers explained the purpose and aims of the volunteer units to more than a hundred representatives of the press. He asked for their support. The discourse was enthusiastically received, as most of the members of the press were unfamiliar with the importance of the volunteers. Propaganda support was pledged but very little was actually done.

Seraphim describes correctly the many difficulties which were encountered in training and educating the volunteers and in displaying the right attitude toward them. As far as the German skeleton personnel is concerned, it seems that in the beginning the most inefficient officers and non-commissioned officers were just about good enough as instructors and leaders.

Equipment issued them consisted of captured Russian weapons with insufficient ammunition, few heavy weapons, poor clothing. The food was even worse and the handling of disciplinary actions was unjust and unintelligent.

Thus equipped, poorly trained by second-class German leaders, language difficulties, their battalions were sent into battle. Higher levels sometimes strongly rejected the Eastern battalions because of their failure in the beginning, although these failures could have been easily explained.

This is not meant as reproach toward the army commands, especially not against my predecessor General of the Volunteers, Gen. Hellmich.

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It is possible that this straight forward soldier was unable to get accustomed to the frequently tangled channels through which one had to pass to attain objectives.

Although our army had excellent training, the personnel had no opportunity to acquire the necessary experiences for treating and commanding foreign peoples. Other European nations were in a much better position because of their colonies. Staffs and officers and men of the volunteer units only gradually gained experience which they applied to advantage ⁱⁿ training and utilization of Eastern troops.

I would like to state that any accomplishments attained during 1944 by the Supreme Command of the army or at government level contributed materially toward a favorable development.

The most important achievements were: complete equalization with the German soldier as far as promotion, equipment, food, pay, dependency benefits and medical care is concerned; care of disabled volunteers and their dependents in the same manner as the German soldier; and constant endeavors to better the condition of the Eastern workers.

It is obvious that the Russian, when wounded or ill, would prefer to be hospitalized in familiar surroundings, if only because of language difficulties. For this reason the following were established: 21 base hospitals with 25,000 beds for Eastern troops. At the end of 1944, these were occupied by 15,000 wounded and sick volunteers (proving the extent of commitment of Eastern troops in combat). Homes for invalid and disabled volunteers were established. Eight hundred Russian doctors, who were in captivity, were selected and further educated at a medical

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academy for employment at the Russian hospitals. About six hundred Russian nurses were also employed.

Leave centers were built in the Reich, France, Italy and Denmark, in order to offer some recreation to these homeless people.

One especially clever member of the Staff of the General of the Volunteers succeeded in "Squeezing out" from the Propaganda Ministry several million marks. This money was used for financing front theater groups, front libraries, gift parcels and recreational homes for the Russian volunteer units.

It should also be mentioned that toward the end of 1944 a disciplinary code for the Eastern troops was devised by some military lawyers in conjunction with Eastern unit officers who had had experience at the front.

Taking into consideration the peculiarities of the Eastern tribes and eliminating all arbitrary interpretations the disciplinary code contributed materially toward establishing rights for members of the Eastern troops equal to those of the German soldier.

The regulations affecting all Eastern troops and the difficulties under which they were accepted were not known to the front officer Seraphim, as he himself admitted.

The capability of the unit commander was a most decisive factor as regards the aggressiveness and dependability of the Eastern battalions. Unfortunately not all commanders were "Seraphims."

The dependability of the units was measured by the number of volunteers deserting to the partisans or across the front lines. The rate fell from 8 - 10 percent in 1943 to 2 - 3 percent in 1945. Large scale

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revolts like the one in 1942 mentioned by Seraphin, never occurred again.

Smaller disturbances will always occur in such mixed units. Stalin's agents who had infiltrated into the ranks saw to that. In their common fight and activities, German and Eastern soldiers got to know each other better and began to respect each other. Even many of the higher commanders began to realize that volunteers could be useful.

During 1945, the lack of manpower was the reason that newly organized divisions were at the outset interspersed with a certain percentage of Eastern volunteers.

Upon my request to organize larger units from among members of Eastern peoples, an officer in a responsible position at OKW told me, "We will never permit the bringing-up of our own executioners."

Dr. Seraphin as well as many other German unit commanders told me: "We prefer to command Eastern battalions," which indicated that the front officers had come to realize the value of these units.

In conclusion, I would like to cite the statement of a high US Army officer who asked me how it was possible to induce Eastern battalions to fight for us at Avranches. I replied that their resistance had probably been weak because of their poor captured equipment. To this he answered: "If they had been better equipped, they would have fought much better than the German battalions."

Enclosed please find a report of the former Genmaj. Heygendorff, who was commander of the legions (replacement formations) of the Turkic, Caucasian and Azerbaijan volunteers in 1943, and from 1944 to the end of

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the war commander of the Turkic Division, in which Seraphim served as battalion commander. The report covers in detail all questions pertaining to the Turkic and other volunteers. In general I am in accord with his concept. During 1939-40, Heygendorff was my aide in Moscow in my capacity as military attache. I had asked him to participate in negotiations with the Russians toward establishing a German-Russian boundary in Poland, a task with which I had been charged. Through his skillful manner in treating and dealing with his Russian counterparts, he succeeded in establishing a borderline up to the last frontier-post in less than a year.

As to his character and military ability, Heygendorff was an outstanding personality.

Kindly return Heygendorff's report.

Signed, Ernst Koestring

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