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THE VLADIKAVKAZ OPERATION

“White Guard” Almanac, №8. Cossacks of Russia in the White movement. M., “Posev”, 2005, pp. 107-114 .

In a long series of events that shook the Terek in 1918, the Terek Cossack revolt against Soviet power occupies a special place. The uprising covered almost the entire Terek region and the neighbouring counties of Stavropol province and it had the character of a popular struggle. In Soviet historiography, this uprising is called a performance and is referred to as “bicherakhovshchina”, after the name of one of its organisers, engineer Georgiya Bicharakhov.

The Cossack uprising on the Terek was in many ways caused by the Soviet authorities themselves, who from the very beginning sent the more than 200,000 Cossack population of Sunzha and Terek into the camp of their enemies. The active collapse of military structures, hints of a possible land limit, and then legalised resettlement and even the destruction of villages, flirting with mountaineers and *inogorodni* [non-Cossacks] who claimed Cossack lands – all this did not add to the Cossacks’ sympathy for the new government. From the beginning of 1918, discontent began to manifest itself almost openly in the villages. The clashes with the mountaineers on the Sunzha River turned into a real war, and if they could at least somehow cope with this misfortune if they stayed united, the Cossacks were much more pressed to fight off the deserters who poured into the region from the Caucasian front. Thousands of large and small detachments of these ever-drunk “fighters”, creeping around the area while they robbed, burned, raped and killed.

Skirmishes with deserters and mountaineers kept the Terek in constant tension. The disunity and confusion of the Cossacks, caused by anti-war agitation and fatigue from the war, made it possible for the Bolsheviks to take power at the local level into their hands without much effort. Masterly conducted by Kirov, the Congress of Peoples of Terek in Pyatigorsk, legally sanctioned the triumph of the power of the Soviets, and finally convinced the Terek Cossacks that they should rely only on themselves. The delegates who came back from the congress told the villages how fiercely the Mountaineers had defended their position and how their allies from the “left” bloc fought for them, ready for any concessions to retain power. About the *inogorodni*, better to say nothing – hoping for the redistribution of Cossack holdings, they were ready to go with anyone, and were even louder than others accusing the Cossacks of “backwardness and secret counterrevolution”.

A murmur ran through the *stanitsas*. While the Cossacks fought the Ingush on the Sunzha, in the Pyatigorsk department – with the help of semi-anarchist gangs – half of the villages were disarmed in three days. Following this, violent requisitions began, accompanied by murder and robbery, and then they began to shoot officers and atamans. From the villages of the Pyatigorsk and Mozdok departments, messengers went out: “Wait, brothers, the hour will come soon.” They started talking loudly about Colonel Shkuro, who had gathered Cossacks in the Burgostan Forest, about the troops of Agoyev and Gazheev, mercilessly smashing deserters and sailors. The Cossack uprising had been in preparation since the beginning of the spring of 1918, but there were few chances that it would be supported everywhere. Since the



beginning of summer, the “performance” of the Cossacks has become inevitable. The last straw was needed ...

In the first days of June, the 39th Infantry Division arrived from the Caucasian Front by rail, and engaged in requisitioning grain and cattle in Alexandriyskaya, Podgornyy, Nezlobnaya and Georgiyevsk villages. To be exact, this was not requisitioning, but simple robbery. Soldiers, accustomed to acting with impunity, did not stand on ceremony with either the Cossacks or their wives. For which they paid – driven to the extreme, the residents of the villages took up arms ...

Almost with a 24 hour period, Georgiyevsk, Nezlobnaya, Podgornyy and Mar’inskaya rebelled. At the other end of the Pyatigorsk department, the Borgustanskaya region rose. On 18 June, the bells in the Mozdok District rang out – the Cossacks of Lukovskaya took Mozdok after a short bloody battle. Combat *sotnias* [squadrons] began to form in the villages.

On 23 June, which became the official date of the beginning of the uprising, a Cossack-peasant congress gathered in Mozdok, which passed a resolution to completely break with the Bolsheviks. At the congress a Terek Cossack-Peasant Council was elected, which was headed by an old revolutionary, engineer Georgiy Bicherakhov. His Social Revolutionary [moderate Socialist] program could not satisfy the demands of the Cossacks, who wanted to establish the previous order, but no one was interested in political slogans – Bicherakhov was against the Bolsheviks, and that was enough. Grigory Vertepov, a close friend of the late Military Ataman M.A. Karaulov, became a companion to the head of the Cossack-Peasant Council, and he enjoyed great respect and authority among the population of the Terek region.

On the same day, at the congress, the following commanders were appointed: Mozdok – Colonel Vdovenko, Kizlyarsky – Colonel Urchukin, Sunzhensky – Colonel Dolgov, Vladikavkaz – Colonel Danilchenko, and for Pyatigorsk – Colonel Vladimir Agoev. Major-General Elmurza Mistulov became the commander of the Terek forces, and Colonel Vladimir Belogortsev became his Chief of Staff.

A step from political confrontation to armed struggle had been made. The parties began to prepare for war. The first armed clash occurred near the village of Prokhladny in the last days of June, and ended with a victory for the Cossacks. The *Tertsy* were inspired and began to prepare for more decisive actions in the fight against the Soviets.

Vladikavkaz was the centre of Bolshevism in the Terek region, and voices were raised repeatedly among the Cossack officers that the Bolsheviks should be expelled from there, as had already been done in Mozdok. But, for all the heat of the moment, the Terek Cossack-Peasant Council did not want this. Leftist views prevailed in the Council. It was believed that the occupation of Vladikavkaz by the Cossacks would turn the Mountaineers against them. Bicherakhov repeatedly declared that the Terek Cossack-Peasant Council was fighting not against the power of the people, but only against the Bolsheviks. But many officers thought otherwise. The chief initiator of the occupation of Vladikavkaz was the commander of the Vladikavkaz line, Colonel S. Sokolov.

Preparations for the march on Vladikavkaz took place in the village of Ardon, where the officers who were most dissatisfied with the policies of Soviet power began to gather. There the Cossacks negotiated with Ossetian officers. The bulk of the Ossetian officers supported the fight against the Bolsheviks but, on the whole, the Ossetians were neutral.



The plan for the capture of Vladikavkaz was as follows: Colonel Sokolov, with a detachment of Arkhon and Ardon Cossacks, was to enter the city and occupy the Sovdep [Council of Deputies]. At the same time, the self-defence detachments of Vladikavkaz, led by Colonel Belikov and the Ossetians of the Ossetian suburb, led by Colonels Ivanov and Gorshkov [do something?]. The Cossacks of the Cossack villages of Sunzhensky and Tarskoye were to occupy the Vladikavkaz railway station. The Zmeyskaya Cossacks were to cut the railroad in the Elkhotovo area, so that reinforcements could not reach Vladikavkaz. In addition, Ossetian detachments of Colonels Kibirov, Goliyev and others were to come out in support of the Cossacks. The total number of people involved in the operation was not more than 1,000 people.

The plan was developed, but coordination with the Cossack-Peasant Council was needed, before they were to be prepared to take on Vladikavkaz. For this purpose, Colonel Danilchenko went to Mozdok.

Now, it is difficult to say whether Colonel Danilchenko actually received permission to occupy Vladikavkaz. Different sources contradict each other. Most likely Bicherakhov decided that if successful he would support Colonel Sokolov, and in the case of failure he would accuse him of amateur dramatics. Colonel Danilchenko himself did not arrive back in time for the beginning of the Vladikavkaz operation (there is not a single mention of his participation in the fighting there).

At this time the city of Vladikavkaz, witnessed the 4th Congress of the Peoples of the Terek Region, including the Extraordinary Commissioner in the North Caucasus, G.K. Ordzhonikidze. As a representative of Moscow, Ordzhonikidze had unlimited powers and played a prominent role in the events in the Terek in 1918.

Despite the fact that units of the Red Army of the Terek Republic were fighting on several fronts, the Vladikavkaz Soviets could rely on considerable forces. First of all was the 1st Vladikavkaz Infantry Regiment (800 men). Most of it guarded the 4th Congress, which was held in the building of the former cadet corps on the outskirts of the city, and the rest were at SovDep (at the former headquarters of the 21st Infantry Division) and the former barracks of the Absheron Regiment. In June 1918, a detachment of Georgian Bolsheviks headed by Gegechkori (300 men) arrived in Vladikavkaz. In the city there were also: the Red Army Chinese Detachment (400 people), the Ossetian Kermen detachment (200 people) [Kermen was an Ossetian revolutionary party], part of the Belenkovich Detachment, a self-defence unit of workers from the Kursk and Molokan suburbs and an artillery section. In addition, there was an armoured train at the station, on which Ordzhonikidze had arrived in Vladikavkaz.

The leaders of the Terek Republic were warned that the Cossacks were planning to seize Vladikavkaz, but the attack itself caught them off guard.

At 4 o'clock in the morning of 24 July (6 August new style), Colonel Sokolov passed the Vladimirskaia suburb at the trot with three Cossack sotnias (the fourth sotnia was in reserve), crossed the wooden bridge and headed towards SovDep. Capturing the ground floor of the First Technical School, and seizing the rifles there, the Cossacks brought into the courtyard of the Absheron barracks the sleepy Red Army men. Some of them, thinking quickly, slipped into the building of the Second Technical, which was also occupied by the Reds. The tenants



of the upper floor were woken up, looked around and quickly found out what was going on: they tied hand grenades onto ropes and began to bombard the lower floor (through the windows), others drilled through the floor and threw bombs down the holes. Small groups of Reds appeared on the street and opened fire on individual Cossacks; the groups grew and began to press the First Technical School in a vice. Several Chinese Red Army men climbed onto the neighbouring school bell tower and began shooting the vicinity with a machine gun.

At the wooden bridge, Colonel Sokolov's sotnias were greeted by Colonel Litvinov, who had gathered a detachment of officers and non-Cossack volunteers. Along with the Cossacks, Litvinov's squad took part in the attacks on SovDep and in the subsequent battles in the city.

On the first day of the operation, the square in front of the SovDep building became the scene of fierce fighting. According to eyewitnesses, the entire area was covered with the bodies of the dead Cossacks and Red Army men. Several dozen Red Army soldiers (including 50 Chinese) were taken prisoner by the Cossacks.

The building of Sovdep was seized by the 3rd sotnia (about 50 Cossacks), led by Khorunzhim Sagaydakov. Caught surrounded, and not receiving support, when the ammunition ran out Cornet Sagaydakov and the 17 surviving Cossacks surrendered at 11 a.m.

After Colonel Sokolov crossed the wooden bridge, some of the Cossacks went to SovDep, the rest to the city centre – and the bridge was left unguarded. He was occupied by Red Army men, and the 4th sotnia Army Sergeant Savchenko could not cross it. Among the Cossacks who remained in the city centre, panic set in. Meanwhile, Ossetian self-defence forces led by Colonel Ivanov and Gorshkov, as well as Ossetians from Gizel led by Colonel Goliyev, came out in support of the Cossacks. Throughout the first day of the operation, small detachments from Cossack villages (Arkhonskaya, Sunzhensky, Tarskoye, Ardon, Nikolaevskaya, Zmeyskaya) and Ossetian villages (Gizeli, Humalag, Vladimirsky, Ardon) approached Colonel Sokolov. By the end of the day, the rebels controlled almost the entire left-bank part of the city and the centre. The southern outskirts of Vladikavkaz (Molokan suburb with the cadet corps building) and the north (station, military hospital, SovDep and Kursk suburb) remained in the hands of the Bolsheviks. In the south, the defence of the city was headed by Sovnarkom, and in the north G. K. Ordzhonikidze, the head of the military department of SovDep S. Martynau and the head of self-defence of Kursk suburb P. Ogurtsov. In the first days there was no connection between the southern and northern centres of defence.

Initially, success was on the side of the rebels. Cossacks arrested and executed several dozen Bolsheviks. Soviet historians speak of more than 100 people shot by the Cossacks and there is a standard list of the dead: N. Kesayev, F. Kamalov, I. Nikitin, F. Serobabov, S. Shmulevich, Ognev, Chhubiani. The names of others are not mentioned, and it is difficult to say who they were. But it is known that a number of prominent Bolsheviks (some of whom were on a black list Colonel Sokolov had prepared for execution in the first place) avoided execution despite being taken prisoner. These were members of the Terek Council of People's Commissars: Y. Figatner, A. Andreev, K. Digurov, Chairman Y. Pashkovsky, the leader of the Georgian delegation A. Gegechkori and others. There are several versions of why they were released. Some sources write that they were arrested not by the Cossacks, but by Ossetians from Colonel Ivanov's detachment. In this account Ivanov and Digurov grew up together, so Ivanov released Digurov and the others. Others believe that as those arrested were members of the Congress of the Peoples of the Terek region, they were let go at the



request of the Congress. What actually happened is unclear, but the second version is more likely, since leftist views prevailed among the civilian leaders of the uprising.

On 27 July (9 August), the Cossacks and Ossetians on the right-bank part attacked more vigorously, and the Red Army evacuated the Singer store and SovDep. The rebels advanced to Leo Tolstoy Street, crossing the wooden bridge under the machine-gun fire of the enemy. It was impossible to advance to Hospital Street without adequate artillery preparation, since it was well-equipped for the defence with the insane asylum, the old prison, the hospital fence and the city hospital.

The next day, the fighting was not so vigorous. There was only the advance of the lagging right wing of Colonel Roshchupkin and a partial advance up Hospital Street. On the Molokan front, the Cossacks held a highly advantageous (“pincers”) position. They were prepared to attack at any time, but for some reason neither the Upper-Ossetians nor the Gizels went for the decisive attack. Meanwhile, the Molokans began talking about peace, which affected the mood of the Molokan front because their statement was certainly insincere and yet they were believed, mainly in Colonel Sokolov’s headquarters.

On the fourth day of the fighting, Ordzhonikidze decided that it was impossible to keep the city and gave the order to leave Vladikavkaz. His armoured train and the Red Army soldiers defending the station went to Beslan. On the way out, the armoured train fired all its remaining shells into the city. Ordzhonikidze later recalled: “An armoured train commanded by Avtonomov smashed the city with guns for four days. And when it was decided to leave, the order was given to fire off all the remaining shells. So the train put 200 shots into the city during the night”. You can imagine what was happening on the streets of Vladikavkaz after these shelling. After all, they didn’t shoot at targets, but simply at the city itself. To this, it should be added, that the city was also shelled by howitzers from the Cadet Corps.

Leaving the city, Ordzhonikidze ordered all those arrested to be shot. During the battles dozens of Cossacks, Ossetians, officers and volunteers had been captured by the Red Army. They were all taken to the Commandant's office. People arrested on suspicion of mutiny or simply suspicious were gathered there. The Red Army soldier, R. Bitimirov, recalled how in search of rebels they found a carbine and a name tag in one of the apartments. The carbine belonged to the apartment’s owner, General P. Helmitsky. There were also three colonels in the apartment, the son of the general and the son-in-law. No evidence of their participation in the rebellion was found (the carbine was in oil) and the soldiers did not know what to do with the detainees. Then, by order of Commandant Martynov, they were taken to the his office “just in case,” interrogated, and put in a cell. For this “heroic deed”, Martynov presented the General's carbine to Bitimirov, and General’s sabre to his comrade Akhsarov. “On 8 August,” Bitimirov remembers, “Martynov ordered everyone to head to the station and continually rushed us. General Helmitsky declared that he was sick, could not walk, and asked to be allowed to go home. But he was refused and was carried between their arms. At the station, the convoy was stopped and Martynov entered the armoured train. Less than five minutes later he came out and ordered all the captives to move further north along Vokzalnaya (now Markov) Street to Bazorka Road (now Chermenskoye Highway).” Subsequently, all the prisoners were shot at the Hospital Cemetery, allegedly for attempting to escape. Interestingly, a squad of Chinese, who met a convoy of prisoners at the exit from the city, helped to do the shooting. Not knowing that the prisoners would “run”, they went along with



the Red Army "for the company". How many prisoners there was is unknown, and there is only evidence of 20 captured Cossacks. How many were arrested as hostages, such as General Helmitsky? It is known that among the hostages shot was *Esaul* Alexei Serikov, holder of the Order of St. George (Grade 4). He was also arrested just for being an officer. Another victim of the Red Terror was Joseph Bigaev, the director of the Vladikavkaz Boys Gymnasium, respected by the whole city.

Despite their successes, the rebels were unable to fully coordinate their actions. There were constant disagreements between the Cossack and non-Cossack officers on the question of who was to obey whom. Each detachment fought on its own, sometimes not knowing what was being done in the neighbouring area. The Ossetian detachments also acted independently.

Organizing the campaign on Vladikavkaz, Danilchenko and Sokolov formed horse and foot sotnias of Ardon and Arkhon Cossacks. They were united in the 1st Vladikavkaz Horse Regiment, commanded by *Starshina* Nikolai Savchenko, and in the 1st Vladikavkaz Infantry Battalion, commanded by Colonel Pavel Zolotarev. Cossacks of the Sunzhensky, Tarskoye, Fel'dmarshalskaya and Vorontsovo-Dashkovskaya *stanitsas* were led to Vladikavkaz by Colonel Nikolai Roshchupkin. The Cossack artillery was commanded by *Esaul* Vladimir Antonov. These men led the Cossacks, but other formations participated in the battles in the city.

The self-defence detachments of the central part of the city were led by Colonel Ivan Belikov. Disliking Cossacks, he left memoirs in which he blamed them for the failure of the Vladikavkaz operation.

A squad of Colonel Boris Litvinov actively participated in the battles on the streets of the city. This detachment consisted of officers and non-Cossack volunteers. In his memoirs, Belikov does not mention Litvinov at all, greatly exaggerating his own role in organising the uprising.

Describing in some detail how he raised the Vladikavkaz Ossetians to fight the Soviets, Belikov does not even mention Colonels Gorshkov and Ivanov. But it was they who led the Ossetian troops in the city. We can't believe that Belikov was unfamiliar with them. Colonel Mikhail Ivanov (Ossetian by nationality) knew the whole city. For some time he was Vladikavkaz police chief, before being transferred to the same position in Rostov-on-Don. And in 1916 Ivanov was appointed commander of a battalion in the Ossetian foot brigade, with which he returned to Vladikavkaz.

Belikov knew Colonel Konstantin Gorshkov even better. They served in the same regiment – the 81st Apsheron Infantry. In 1914, leaving Vladikavkaz for the front, both Gorshkov and Belikov were captains. In February 1918, when Belikov was commander of the Vladikavkaz garrison, Colonel Gorshkov was appointed head of the Ossetian district, replacing Colonel Koliev.

Colonels Ivanov and Gorshkov were very actively engaged in the organisation of the self-defence units, and then in the preparation against an armed attack on the Ossetian settlement. By order of Colonel Ivanov, various fortifications were erected in the Upper Ossetian suburb. With his money (more than 12,000 roubles) he bought weapons and ammunition for Ossetian self-defence. Belikov is silent about all this.



Belikov constantly clashed with the staff of Colonel Sokolov and his closest entourage: Colonel Lavrov, and *Starshina* Morozov. Those, in turn, did not always find a common language with the commander of the Molokan Front, Colonel Goliyev, and the Ossetian commander in the Upper Ossetian suburb, Colonel Zembatov.

Up until the end of the Vladikavkaz operation, the differences between the combat units remained unresolved which, of course, affected the success of the entire operation. Issues of civil administration were more coordinated. After the Cossacks entered the city, members of the Terek People's Council and delegates of the Congress of the Terek region formed a temporary executive committee headed by SR [Socialist Revolutionary] I. Semenov and a People's Council, which was headed by the SR V. Polukhov. The People's Council included 17 Cossacks, SRs and Mensheviks and 7 Chechens led by J. Arsanov (son of the former Sheikh of Chechnia D. Arsanov). City authorities were formed: the city government headed by I. Tsurulnikov and the city militia headed by Podagov. The new authorities tried to act lawfully. So, during the time the Cossacks were in the city, the State Bank, the treasury and other institutions remained intact. When the People's Commissar of Finance Figatner was arrested, a large amount of money was seized. Subsequently, former members of the interim Executive Committee reported this amount on several occasions.

On 2 (15) August, G. Bicherakhov arrived in Vladikavkaz. Speaking at a meeting of the temporary Executive Committee, he once again stated that he personally was against the attack on Vladikavkaz and that the Cossack-Peasant Council was at war only with the Bolsheviks, and not with the peoples of the Terek region. Then the chairman of the temporary Executive Committee I. Semenov briefly described the tasks of the new government: "The Regional People's Council singled out a temporary executive committee whose tasks are to immediately establish peace and create order in the region necessary for convening the 5th People's Regional Congress. and will be the complete master to judge all our actions. We do not know whether we will be able to finish the job, but we will take all measures to accomplish the task entrusted to us. We will not be included in the evaluation of the actions of the Cossack-Peasant Council, for, I repeat, this is the case of the 5th Regional People's Congress. Now we need to find all the means to get out of this situation in order to save the cause of all democracy in the region."

Bicherakhov arrived with the new commander for all combat forces in Vladikavkaz, General Madritov. This candidate did not suit the Cossacks, since for them Madritov was an outsider, and meanwhile the position of the opposing forces began to change dramatically. The Cossacks still lacked ammunition, the only gun of *Esaul* Antonov had only three shells, the armoured car of the *Sotnik* Grigoriev broke down and fell into the hands of the Reds: the Cossacks and volunteers were noticeably tired. Ossetian troops began to rob more than fight – this noted in many sources. But to add to this the Ingush came out for Bolsheviks.

As mentioned above, G.K. Ordzhonikidze departed for Beslan, from where he went to Ingushetia and urged the Ingush to support the Soviets, for which they could receive the lands of Cossack villages on the Sunzha River. The Ingush liked the sound of that, and 400 Ingush horsemen under the command of former Colonel Mussa Sautiev and the full Cavalier of St. George Khizir Ortskhanov moved to Vladikavkaz. Sautiev and Ortskhanov's sotnias, advancing to the station and Shaldon suburb were repulsed, because the Ingush were poorly trained in street fighting. But more significantly, grey Ingushes began to surround the stanitsas of Sunzhensky, Tarskoye, Vorontsovo-Dashkovskoye and Fel'dmarshalskaya. The latter fact was decisive in the fall of Vladikavkaz. The Cossacks began to leave the city to



protect their native villages. Seeing the Cossacks are leaving, the morale of the self-defence units and the volunteer detachment fell.

A detachment of 300 workers, under the command of a former officer of the General Staff M. Lewandowski, arrived from Grozny to help the Reds. Detachments of Kermenists (Ossetian Bolsheviks) from the villages of Zamankul (400 men) and Salgi (400 men) were approaching. Ordzhonikidze's armoured train took the Vladikavkaz station. In addition, another armoured train began to fire on the Arkhonskaya village, creating an impression that an offensive was being prepared against it. This forced the *Arkhons* to leave the city. The situation became critical, there was no way to hold the city.

On 4 (17) August at night, all the [White] participants of the Vladikavkaz operation, led by the temporary Executive Committee, left the city. So the eleven-day battle for Vladikavkaz ended sadly, later receiving the name of the "August events". The main mass – Cossacks, officers and volunteers – left with weapons in their hands to the village of Arkhonskaya near Vladikavkaz.

It is difficult to judge the total number of dead. It is only known that the Arkhonskaya Cossacks lost 100 men. Several dozen Cossacks from the village of Ardon were killed. Many Ossetians were killed (including *Poruchik* Alexei Dzampaev, *Pod-Purochik* Alexander Dzakhsorov, *Praporshchik* Tsaloev). Among the dead, should be noted Colonel Alexander Ivanov, *Pod-Esaul* Vyacheslav Izyumsky, court counselor Ivan Bychkov. There were many civilians casualties in the city. Red Army men fired howitzers from one street to another. In order to knock the enemy out of their homes, they were set on fire. Thus, entire streets were burned out (the skeletons of some houses stood until the mid-1930s).

Among the victims were foreign citizens. On August 15, the head of the British mission, Colonel D. Pike, was killed by one of the stray (or maybe not) bullets.

But the main tragedy for the residents of Vladikavkaz began when the Cossacks and volunteers left the city. Searches and arrests were made of all suspected of involvement in the rebellion. The chairman of the Terek Cheka, K. Tsintsadze, wrote: "Several dozen leaders of the counter-revolutionary uprising were shot." It is difficult to say who was among these "dozens of leaders", because everyone who was involved in the uprising left Vladikavkaz, and only those who did not feel guilty stayed. Tsintsadze himself says: "It should be noted that almost all the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries from the Terek government fled along with the counter-revolutionaries." Naturally, prominent counter-revolutionaries did not wait to be arrested. All the organizers of the rebellion in Vladikavkaz remained alive and participated in the White movement later. They were colonels Ivan Belikov, Stepan Sokolov, Nikolai Roshupkin, Alexey Danilchenko, Boris Litvinov, Mikhail Ivanov, Konstantin Gorshkov, Pavel Zolotarev and others. Vladikavkaz was abandoned by all who feared the vengeance of the Bolsheviks. After the city battles, entire streets became empty after their residents left Vladikavkaz.

The executions behind the hospital cemetery, which began during the August events, continued afterwards. In the diary of "Half a year in Vladikavkaz," an anonymous author wrote: "September 16 - ... in the corn, there are the corpses of dead people, barely covered with earth, so that their limbs are visible. November 18 - Today, they say, 13 counter-revolutionaries were shot. Tomorrow, another 60 were sentenced to death. November 19 - the



bodies of 16 people who were executed were lying behind the Alagir factory (now Electrozink - FK). December 2 — not 13 Cossack officers were shot, but 167.”

When the units of the Volunteer Army approached Vladikavkaz, the shootings increased. And when the Whites occupied the city, a mass funeral was held. We read in the church books: the date of death is July 24, August 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and the date of burial is February 16, February 24, March 1, April 18, 1919. This is the situation both in the city and in the *stanitsa* of Arkhonskaya . This is another of the mysteries of the August events. If the arrested were shot back in August 1918, then why did relatives of the relatives hurry to bury their bodies in February 1919, when the whites had almost occupied the city? And if they were shot only at the beginning of 1919 (which explains the haste in the funeral), then why are the dates of the August events indicated in the dates of death? All this has yet to be sorted out.

The events of August were a great tragedy, but one of the organizers of the Terek uprising, Colonel Nikolai Bukanovsky said: “I believe that the events in Vladikavkaz brought a lot of grief. They might have worsened things by 80 percent, but I never for a moment doubt that Colonel Sokolov and Colonel Danilchenko did what had to do” . Now we understand that he was right – it was necessary for them to fight for their rights.

When discussing the reasons for the failure of the Vladikavkaz operation, we can note it was primarily poor organisation and poor coordination of all forces involved in the operation, with a lack of unity of command and no specific plan of action for after Vladikavkaz’s occupation. Lastly, the rebels were not united because among them were supporters of left-wing views (Bicherahov, Semenov, Polyuhov and others) but also Cossack officers who wanted to join the Volunteer Army.

Exactly these reasons for the failure of the Vladikavkaz operation were noted by one of the participants in the Terek uprising of 1918, G. Gorbach, “From the very first day it became clear that the operation was going to have a protracted nature and this is due to the reasons that ultimately led to our complete failure. The Ossetians turned out to be weak allies, because they would not take orders, were in no hurry, and at night even left positions. The Cossacks, too, were not aware of the urgency of the operation. Their energy dropped day by day and, as soon as the rumour spread (which turned out to be true) about the Ingush attack on the Tarskoye and Sunzhenskaya villages, even those whose stanitsas were not attacked, were only interested in defending their homes and showed no interest in the operation which had started so brilliantly. The burden of the struggle fell on the shoulders of the volunteers, mainly officers, who came out in arms at the very first shots. From the very first days of the fighting, they performed tasks that could not be entrusted to anyone else, invariably demonstrating outstanding courage and dedication.”

In our opinion, the Vladikavkaz operation – and the Terek uprising as a whole – demonstrated the short-sightedness and passivity of the majority of the Cossacks, as well as the courage and heroism of those who were not afraid to oppose the violation of their rights.

