

Russian Liberation Committee

The Volunteer Army of Alexeiev and Denikin

A Short Historical Sketch of the Army from its Origin to November 1/14, 1918

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PREFACE.

The history of regeneration and re-establishment of Russia is indissolubly connected with the formation of volunteer armies in different places. All over the whole of the territories infected with Bolshevism, military organisations are constantly springing up in various places. Generally they have two aims in view: the re-establishment of a sane authority and the continuation of the struggle with Germany. These have been sporadic efforts of heroism, but badly organised. There were numberless victims. In the punishment of their opponents, the Bolsheviks raised their brutality to a dogma.

The common, illiterate masses, unaccustomed to political life, supported the Soviet authorities, believing in their promises, in every slander spread by the Bolsheviks against the educated classes, especially the officers. To many the struggle between the patriots and the Bolsheviks seemed hopeless, but those who were strong, bold and devoted to Russia managed to preserve the nucleus of the Russian Army, in spite of all obstacles. As early as November, 1917, immediately after the Bolsheviks *coup d'état* in the North, legends began to circulate about the so-called "Kornilov's men." The Reds spoke of them with hatred and alarm, others – with hope and expectation. No one knew exactly either their numbers or their importance. But Alexeiev and Kornilov were there, and that was enough to make people trust and hope, and, as far as possible, help the cause. It was like a distant beacon glimmering through the dark, stormy night.

Eighteen months have passed. An endless, weary time – for individuals. But for history, for the nation, it is but a moment. And already a change has come over the spirit of the scene. The Bolsheviks are retreating; they are being surrounded, their reign is everywhere drawing to an end. The people are inimical to them, are rising against them, are trying to shake off the yoke of their oppressors. The Volunteer Army, from a handful of brave men, has turned into a real army.

Another Russian army, led by Admiral Kolchak, is advancing from Siberia, stronger, more numerous, better equipped, and with a vast and friendly territory behind it. The forces are rallying round Kolchak. The Russians acknowledge him as their ruler. It seems as if the dawn were breaking for the Russian people. But the nearer the aim in view, the greater the gratitude for the heroic start made by the Volunteer Army and its leaders. They gathered together, and, to a certain extent, preserved the nucleus of the army – the officers. More than that: they preserved the traditions and honour of the Russian Army, as never, under any inducement, did these people enter into any compromise with the foes of Russia – the Bolsheviks and the Germans.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." *The Gospel according to St John.*

"Be Conservatives or Socialists, as you like, but love our much-suffering native land." *GENERAL DENIKIN.*

I.

FORMING THE ARMY.

On November 2, 1917, when the all-destroying wave of Bolshevism was pouring over the whole of Russia and the orderly Don and Kuban territories were like solitary islands in a heaving ocean of disorder, an unassuming, grey-haired old man, on whom a worn civilian suit, evidently not made for him, sat somewhat awkwardly, stepped out of one of those trains which twice a day disgorged at Novocherkassk a crowd of refugees escaping from the delights of the Soviet regime.

This old man was General Alexeiev. He had come to gather together a Russian army, and to lead it to do battle for the salvation and re-establishment of a united Russia.

The formation of an army in the conditions then prevailing seemed to everyone an impossible dream. Few thought of the salvation of Russia. Most thought only of saving themselves.

Alexeiev thought otherwise.

The idea of forming a Volunteer Army had first occurred to him as far back as August, at the time of the Moscow Labour Conference, when it had become clear that, thanks to the work of Socialists of various creeds and to the weakness of the Provisional Government, the Russian army was on the eve of complete disruption and ruin. But it was only in November that Alexeiev succeeded in beginning its formation. He believed in Russia and in the Russians. He raised the rallying cry, and his call was answered by all in whom a Russian heart still beat.

Gradually, from all parts of Russia, generals, officers and cadets began to gather in Novocherkassk. The majority came

in civilian attire, many were disguised – some as soldiers, some as workmen, some as chauffeurs. There was no other way of escaping and reaching the Don. The journey was a dangerous one; all who undertook it did so at the risk of their lives.

Many, very many, never reached their journey's end – recognised on the way for what they were, they were immediately shot. Immature youths, almost children, volunteered for the army – cadets and schoolboys. They all came penniless, ragged and starving, exhausted physically and depressed in spirit. All had to be clothed, fed and drilled. The task was not an easy one. At first Alexeiev had to work alone. Later, in the beginning of December, came assistants – the escaped prisoners from Bykhov: Generals Kornilov, Lukomsky, Erdeli, Eisner, Denikin, Markov and Romanovsky.

About the middle of December the whole of the military organisation was handed over to Kornilov, while all questions of a political or financial character remained entirely in the hands of General Alexeiev, and these latter questions were by far the most difficult.

In addition to this, the surroundings amidst which work had to be carried on grew more complicated. Public opinion on the Don drifted strongly to the Left. Kaledin, the Hetman of the Don Cossacks, though he sympathised from the bottom of his heart with the idea of a new army, could do but little to help Alexeiev; he could give neither men, nor arms, nor money. The fever of revolution was spreading among the Cossacks; there was a tragedy in every family; the children were Bolsheviks, while the fathers were “counter-revolutionaries.” The Cossack units returning from the front gradually deteriorated and broke up, carrying the infection among their families.

Fighting with the invading bands of the Reds was already in progress all along the borders of the Don territory.

To put it briefly, civil war had broken out on the Don also. and every succeeding day the tide of Bolshevism rose.

Again it was the officers and cadets who had to defend the territory, occasionally aided by some of the older Cossacks.

It was under such arduous conditions that the army was brought into being. There was but little money; its organisers were always in want of funds. But the colossal energy of General Alexeiev (he worked eighteen hours a day for what he often called “my last task on earth”), the iron will of Kornilov, coupled with the witchery of his name, did their work. In spite of obstacles, an army was formed.

The first unit to be got together was the company of Captain Parfenov. consisting of cadets, military and naval, who had come to Novochoerkassk after the bloody October and November days in the capitals, and a body of officers who had come to the Don at different times; four hundred of them had already taken part at the end of November in putting down the rising at Rostoff.

Later, an expedition was arranged against Tsaritsyn. The expedition was carefully planned and prepared, but at the last moment it was found that the Cossacks were on the side of the Bolsheviks. and declined to set out. The enterprise had to be abandoned.

In the early days of December the formation of a St. George regiment was begun, and at the same time the nucleus and supplies of the Kornilov fighting regiment arrived from Kiev, its commanding officer, Colonel Nezhintsev, having managed to attach men and stores to Cossack units proceeding in echelon formation from the front towards the Don.

Then followed the formation, successively, of the naval and first engineer companies, of the Chekho-Slovak battalion and, after the suppression of the rising at Rostov, of the second officers' battalion and of the cavalry and artillery divisions.

Simultaneously a number of small guerrilla units were formed. They consisted exclusively of officers, of educated men.

On January 14, on account of political complications at Novochoerkassk, the Volunteer units were transferred to Rostov. Kornilov rode there on horseback. This precaution was not superfluous, as the axles of the railway carriage in which he was to have travelled caught fire on the way, and the train barely escaped being wrecked; it turned out that sand had been poured into the axle-boxes.

Kornilov was eager to proceed at once from Rostov to the Government of Stavropol or to Astrakhan, whither the Astrakhan Cossacks had invited him. But Kaledin, realising to the full the terrible condition of the Don, held him back, and it fell to the young army to be the first to defend the Don territory and the town of Rostov.

Meanwhile the fighting at the front was increasing, and, moreover, the army had to carry on a struggle with the local Rostov Bolsheviks. who were preparing for open rebellion. Bands of the Reds gathered in large numbers on the borders of the Don territory, and in December began their advance on Novochoerkassk and Rostov. Closer and closer pressed the ring of assailants. The influx of volunteers was impeded, and by February had ceased altogether, and the army, although suffering terrible losses at the front, could receive but scanty reinforcements.

The Cossacks were now breaking up altogether. Kaledin called on the army to help him to defend Novochoerkassk, but Kornilov refused, saying to the Hetman:

“To lay this task upon the army would mean to destroy it, and I cannot agree to that.”

The triumph of the Bolsheviks at Novochoerkassk seemed inevitable, and the situation of the Don hopeless. Having, finally, lost all trust in his Cossacks, Kaledin shot himself. The week which began with his suicide was the army's last week in Rostov. The days that followed were anxious and trying. To remain in Rostov had become dangerous, and it was decided to leave the city. The departure was fixed for February 9.

At 5 p.m. a number of men in travelling kit gathered in Paramonov's house. They consisted of Kornilov's field staff. At the door were several sacks containing small packets of bandages for first aid, and each man took one, "because it might be useful." The word of command rang out, all formed ranks, and Kornilov, resting on his stick, led his staff in person, marching the entire eighteen versts to Aksai on foot.

They were followed by the army, numbering about 3,500 men. The infantry presented a picture never seen before. It consisted almost exclusively of officers. There were many colonels, and even generals, who had seen service, and beardless cadets and other boys. The rifles they carried put them all on an equal footing.

Pressed by the Bolsheviks, leaving a large, wealthy, brightly illuminated city, every moment expecting a treacherous volley from behind, it was not an army, but a handful of bold "Kornilov men" who set out on their unknown and dangerous wanderings, full of sorrow and privation, over dark, snow-covered, desert roads – set out without supplies, munitions, baggage-train, rearguard or sanitary organisation, carrying their wounded with them.

Such was the beginning of the volunteer campaign for the salvation and regeneration of Russia. The fire of love for their native land, the idea of a united Russia, illuminated the solitary, thorny, path of the army, whose faith in its leaders, Kornilov and Alexeiev, was boundless. And this army knew neither defeat nor retreat. Full of enthusiasm, it set out to fight a foe ten or twenty times its number. The Reds at that time already numbered over 200,000. They had all the necessary material at their disposal: railways, stores, a wealth of supplies, artillery, ammunition in quantities scores of times greater than what the Volunteer Army had. What the latter needed it had to take from the enemy by main force, sometimes all but unarmed. Each day wove new laurels into its crown of thorns. Its legendary feats of arms and epic marches are the only bright pages in the gloomy history of the last year in the tortured and outraged land of Russia.

Unfortunately we are unable to tell the story of the army in all its details, and must confine ourselves to a description only of the most characteristic episodes of its campaigns. These may be divided into three periods: (1) Kornilov's march on the Kuban (February and March); (2) the march back to the Don (April); and (3) the second Kuban campaign (June to October).

II.

KORNILOV'S MARCH ON THE KUBAN.

1.

On February 9 the army left Rostov and directed its course towards the *stanitsa* of Aksai (18 versts). Several versts from Aksai it was met by its scouts, who reported that the Cossacks of Aksai had declared themselves "neutral," and declined to receive the army. But the prestige of Kornilov's name quickly produced the desired effect, and the army was able to pass the night at the *stanitsa*. On the following morning it crossed the Don and marched to the Olginskaya *stanitsa* (nine versts).

There it remained for two days, checked, and made an inventory of such articles as had been forgotten, but brought on later by the wounded from Rostov, and did what was possible for those needing medical attention. Notwithstanding the absence of any sanitary organisation, the almost complete want of drugs and the scanty supply of dressings, not one of the wounded was willing to remain in Rostov; those who failed to set out with the Army overtook it at Olginskaya; a few even struggled along on foot from Novochoerkassk. Altogether these numbered about eighty.

There, at Olginskaya, on February 12, a council of war was held. Where were they to go next? Besides the representatives of the army – Alexeiev, Kornilov, Romanovsky, Denikin, Markov, Niezhintsev, and others – General Popov, Field Hetman of the Don Cossacks, was also present; he had at his disposal a body of 2,500 men, which had left Novochoerkassk after its occupation by the Bolsheviks.

Three opinions were expressed at the council, General Kornilov wished to proceed to Astrakhan; the majority of the staff was for awaiting events at the Zimovniki (steppe farms), near the borders of the Stavropol Government; General Alexeiev was strongly in favour of marching to Ekaterinodar, in the Kuban territory.

The Cossacks of the Kuban were also touched with the revolutionary ferment, but not to the same degree as those of the Don, though there were already such nests of Bolshevism in the territory as the Tergovaya, Tikhoretskaya, Kavkazskaya and Armavir *stanitsa* and other places, while thousands of propagandists and millions of Bolshevik pamphlets were beginning to infect the Cossacks with their virus. Nevertheless, the attitude of the mass of the Cossacks to this movement was a passive one, and there were hopes of recruiting troops from the local population. The mountaineers were especially calm, and even "counter-revolutionary." They had personal accounts to settle with the Bolsheviks. The Circassians were the only race among the local population who from beginning to end had shown themselves rabid opponents of Bolshevism: the Reds had treated them with unheard-of cruelty; the auls (villages) had been sacked and burnt, and all the inhabitants, from old women down to babies at the breast, had been slaughtered. The thirst for

vengeance which raged in the breasts of the Circassians may easily be imagined.

The least reliable element of the population were the so-called “uitlanders” – i.e. the Russian immigrants. They possessed no land, or possessed it in quantities incomparably smaller than the Cossacks, and they naturally found the promises of the Bolsheviks to equalise them a great temptation. The local Government, headed by Hetman Filimonov, still, however, remained in Ekaterinodar, notwithstanding the proximity of the newly-formed “Socialist Black Sea Republic,” which claimed as its own the Black Sea and Stavropol Governments and the Kuban and Terek territories, with its capital at Novorossiik, whence it kept up relations with such revolutionary centres as Odessa and Sebastopol.

In the Kuban territory, principally in the mountain districts new units were formed for the Kuban and Volunteer armies. It was on these units that General Erdeli and General Pokrovsky worked, There were rumours also of special detachments, such as those of Colonel Shkuro, Bicherakhov and Baratov, which operated somewhere in the mountains. Finally, there were hopes of coming into touch, one way or another, with the British, who were said to be on the Caspian coast and at Baku.

General Alexeiev’s view, supported by these arguments, prevailed, more especially as the other proposals were difficult to carry out.

So it was decided to make for the Kuban, with Ekaterinodar as the ultimate goal.

The whole army consisted of the following units:–

The First Officers’ Regiment, commanded by General Markov; the Kornilov Shock Regiment, commanded by Colonel Niezhintsev; the Guerrilla Regiment, commanded by Major-General Bagayevsky; and the Czecho-Slovak Battalion, commanded by Colonel Kral. The Officers’ Regiment included the Cadet Battalion (the cadets and students of the town of Rostov), while the Kornilov Regiment included Simanovsky’s detachment and Colonel Korniyenko’s detachment of Knights of St. George.

The cavalry consisted of an Officers’ Regiment, Colonel Glazenap’s Division, and Colonel Kornilov’s cavalry detachment.

There were eight guns with six hundred shells. Altogether the army consisted of about 3,500 men.

The journey the army had to face was a long one – about 300 versts, the first hundred being through the Don territory – that is, through a population whose sympathies were wholly with the Bolsheviks. The first day’s march to the Khomootovskaya *stanitsa* (seventeen versts) was uneventful, but the evacuation of the wounded was carried on under the fire of the enemy. The first victim was a nurse, killed when helping to load the wounded.

At every *stanitsa* General Kornilov called a general meeting of the landowners, made a speech, explained the aim of the army and the purpose of the campaign, and tried to persuade the Cossacks to join. Some did so, but very few, and even those dropped out afterwards.

Parallel to the army, to the east, as had been agreed at the council of war at Olginskaya, marched General Popov’s forces. His 2,500 men were a valuable support for the little army. Unfortunately, on February 18, General Popov refused to co-operate with the army any further. This decision was attributed partly to the influence of one Rosen (afterwards he turned out to be no colonel, but a shady character, and was shot), partly to the intrigues of the Cossack Leonov, who had acted as intermediary between Kornilov and Popov. Popov refused to go to the Kuban, and the army had to proceed alone. After the battle of February 24, at Lezhanka, with the soldiers of the once famous 39th Caucasian Division, the army entered the Kuban territory.

The hopes of at once meeting with better conditions of transit than in the Don territory were not fulfilled. The army found itself in enemy country. True, the Kuban Cossacks did not attack it, but seeing the smallness of its numbers, and fearing the vengeance of the Bolsheviks, they remained passive, and, with few exceptions, gave it no support. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks began to move. From all the *stanitsi*, along all the railway lines, countless masses of sailors, soldiers and peasants gathered against the army, having at their disposal an unlimited amount of munitions, armoured trains and all means of transport for the troops. The enemy constantly barred the way, surrounding the army with a close ring, and forcing it to fight every day and all day long. It constantly had to carry on vanguard actions simultaneously with rear-guard actions. It was only General Kornilov’s talent and courage, and his deep knowledge of his unwieldy foe that brought the army out of situations which seemed hopeless, and more than once saved it from imminent destruction.

Kornilov marched at the head of the leading column, covering dozens of versts with his confident stride; thousands of times, like the other fighters, he stood amidst a hail of bullets and of bursting shells. But he went on alert and bold, instilling his confidence into each and all. The army followed him blindly, capturing rebellious settlements, crossing railways, fording and swimming the rivers of the Kuban.

The Bolsheviks could not hold their ground when the officers’ battalions, erect, in open order, coolly, without firing, often with their rifles slung on their backs, advanced on their dense ranks. The enemy would then run, leaving supplies, shells, boxes of cartridges and rifles, wherewith the army renewed its scanty stores. But the fighting was no child’s play; the ranks of the army grew thinner, yet continued to move towards its goal.

The advance was seriously hampered by the wounded: they were not left behind; there was no one with whom to leave them, and their numbers kept increasing, and therewith the difficulties of accommodation and transport. The ambulance carts were placed in the middle of the army. Surrounded, as it was almost continually, on all sides, the army had to cover its wounded with a strong rear-guard. Kornilov led it so capably that the train of wounded was never once under gun or Maxim fire. At first the wounded were few, no more than about one hundred, but towards the end of the march they numbered over a thousand. The train then consisted of nearly as many carts, and covered only 8 to 10 versts daily; as roads were non-existent, the path lay through deep mud. This wounded train was a terrible encumbrance to the army.

But what else was to be done with these unfortunate men? As it was, many of those wounded who could not move from the field of battle perished, and they either shot themselves or asked their comrades to shoot them, lest they should fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks alive. The latter did not spare even the dead; they mutilated them, cut them in pieces, or burned them.

The care of the wounded, not only in the ambulance train but on the field of battle as well, lay mainly on the sisters. Each regiment had several of these devoted, self-sacrificing women with it. Many of them did the work of regimental doctors, and often one might see their frail figures bending under the weight of their medical cases, running under fire from ditch to ditch to apply the first dressing to the wounded. There were no male orderlies; the sisters did their work as well. Many of them were killed in battle, many were brutally done to death and mutilated by the inhuman Bolsheviks. All these martyrs were wives, sisters, or daughters of the Volunteers.

2.

ATTACK ON EKATERINODAR AND DEATH OF KORNILOV.

In the beginning of March, when the army was seventy versts from Ekaterinodar, news came that the town had been surrendered to the Bolsheviks, and that the Kuban Government (which was friendly to the Volunteer army) had taken refuge in the hills. Here were new disappointments, new complications. This news had a depressing effect on the spirits of the army, and changed the whole plan of campaign. In Ekaterinodar they had hoped to find all that they needed – enormous supplies of artillery, munitions, reinforcements, and rest. All this had fallen to the enemy. Again the question arose, “Where to go?”

Alexeiev wished to continue the march to Ekaterinodar and storm the town, but General Kornilov was anxious for the safety of the army. It had been on the march for two whole months, amidst constant fighting and arduous conditions. It needed rest before such an assault, and reinforcements and ammunition. All this could only be found beyond the Kuban, among the foothills of the Caucasus, in the hospitable villages of the mountaineers. There, too, they might meet the detachments of General Erdeli and General Pokrovsky. And there they decided to go.

On March 4 they captured the Korenovskaya *stanitsa*.

There was a characteristic episode during this battle.

The *stanitsa* was taken after an obstinate defence by the Bolsheviks. Kornilov rode out into the principal square and up to the Government offices of the settlement, and mounted on to the roof to survey the disposition of the enemy. At this moment an officer sent by General Bogayevsky, commanding the rear-guard, galloped up to report that the Bolsheviks had received strong reinforcements to the number of eight to ten thousand men from Tikhoretskaya on the east and Ekaterinodar on the west, that they were advancing in dense masses, and that large reinforcements were necessary.

General Kornilov sent a reinforcement of twenty men. When the messenger replied that this was not enough, General Kornilov answered: “It is enough, against this band it is enough.”

At the same time he gave orders to silence the battery which was covering the advance of the Bolsheviks, but allowed *only ten shells* to be used for this purpose. The result was the silencing of the battery and the flight of Bolshevik hordes before a handful of daring men. The bullets were still whistling through the streets of the *stanitsa* when Kornilov went in to receive bread and salt from the inhabitants.

From Korenovskaya they turned aside from Ekaterinodar, and moved to the south-east, towards the Ust-Labinskaya *stanitsa*, beyond the Kuban.

By this manoeuvre Kornilov led the army out of the danger into which it was thrown in consequence of the surrender of Ekaterinodar. But this march, especially after Ust-Labinskaya, was a trying one – perhaps the most trying which had fallen to the lot of the long-suffering army.

At night, after a short rest at Ust-Labinskaya, the army directed its course to Nekrassovskaya, where it had to pass two days, nearly all the time under the fire of the enemy, as it had no more shells with which to silence the enemy’s battery.

On the morning of March 7 the army crossed the Kuban, partly by ford and partly by ferry. Thereafter fighting continued for six days in succession, from March 6 to March 11, until the Volunteers reached the mountain villages, where they were able to rest. The Circassians, though despoiled by the Bolsheviks, greeted the Volunteers hospitably, and gave them all they could. They were exhausted and uneasy. And no wonder. Two days earlier, in a neighbouring village, the Bolsheviks had driven together some 250 boys, placed them in a row with their faces to a fence, and shot

them all.

The old Circassians treated General Alexeiev with especial respect. The oldest of them approached him and bowed low, placing his hand on his heart. Alexeiev responded in the same manner. Then the old man unexpectedly stroked him on the cheek as a sign of especial respect and good-will.

At last the army could rest, and there was a rumour, too, that Erdeli was not far off.

All connections with him had been lost since the departure from Rostov: Whither his detachment and the Kuban units under Pokrovsky had turned their steps after leaving Ekaterinodar was absolutely unknown; scouts were sent out to find them, but the search was unsuccessful. One can imagine the rejoicing when on March 11 a rumour ran through the baggage-train that a liaison body of cavalry had arrived from Erdeli's detachment. Cheers were heard, followed at once by shouts: "Silence, this is Bolshevik provocation" – i.e. a rumour circulated by the enemy.

As a matter of fact, Erdeli's detachment, along with the whole Government of the Kuban and Pokrovsky's forces, was some forty versts away at the Kaluzhskaya *stanitsa*, where on March 11 they had had an engagement with the Bolsheviks. Their combined forces consisted of 2,500 men, who were worn out by the unequal struggle with the enemy. They were eager to meet the Volunteer Army, but did not know where it was, though they tried by every possible means to find it from the very beginning of the campaign, i.e., since February 26. During the night preceding March 7, the wireless apparatus erected in the Shendji aul (village), hundreds of versts away, had been sending call after call: "Kornilovtsi! Kornilovtsi! Volunteer Army!" But there was not, and could not be, any answer. They did not know that Kornilov had no wireless installation.

But on March 11, when the engagement at Kaluzhskaya was scarcely over, when the cheers had scarce died away with which the troops had greeted General Erdeli, the leader in the fight, a report ran along the line that certain Circassians had galloped up crying "Kornilov, Kornilov!" and bringing the news that his army was making a forced march to join up with their detachment.

These rumours, too, were judged to be of a provocative character, and when in the twilight the baggage-train, quartered in a wood, was approached by a scouting party of fifteen men with white badges on their caps, they were taken for spies, surrounded and taken to the staff. The scouts turned out to be messengers from Kornilov, and on the following day the *stanitsa* was ringing with joyful shouts: "Hurrah, Kornilov! Hurrah!" A detachment of the Volunteer army was marching down the street.

Such was the long-hoped-for and yet so unexpected junction of the forces. The rejoicings were general. Everyone, both great and small, was reassured. All the units were now combined under the command of Kornilov.

It was decided to march on Ekaterinodar and take it by storm. On the way to that town, from March 16 to March 24, six engagements took place.

Most characteristic was the engagement of March 17 at the Novo-Dmitriyevskaya *stanitsa*, where a difficult task fell to the First Officers' Regiment.

It rained from the early morning, at first slightly, afterwards heavily. For eighteen versts the Volunteers had to march knee-deep in water, across swampy ground. They were all soaked to the skin. At 4 p.m. came frost and wind. The men were covered with ice. Their coats and cloaks were as stiff as if they had been starched; men and horses could scarcely move. Then came a storm of something between snow and hail, and at 5 p.m. the troops came to a river, separating them from the *stanitsa*, a torrent some 70-85 feet wide, swollen with rain and snow. The frozen detachment halted, uncertain what to do. Then their commander, General Markov, rode up, and, shouting "Forward! Follow me!" plunged into the river. The officers plunged in after him, holding their rifles high above their heads. "Rather damp," jested the general, up to his breast in water, and striking out against the swift current. A portion of the troops were taken across on horses, two by two. On the other bank they had to be lifted off half-frozen, as they were unable to dismount. Kornilov himself also rode across. Soaked with water, he entered the *stanitsa* along with the troops. The Bolsheviks did not expect an attack in such weather, and had settled comfortably in the houses. Few of them escaped alive. The *stanitsa* was occupied almost without loss, and late in the evening, Kornilov, stiff with ice up to the waist, but rejoicing, was counting the booty.

In the annals of the army the engagement at Novo-Dmitriyevskaya is called the "Icy fight." It is under this name, too, that it will pass into history.

The other *stanitsas* on the way to Ekaterinodar were not captured so cheaply. The engagement at Smolenskaya lasted twelve hours. The Bolsheviks had enormous supplies of shells, and did not spare them, firing even at solitary horsemen. To every fifty shells of the enemy the army could reply with only one. Nevertheless, one *stanitsa* after another passed into the hands of the Volunteers.

When Alexeiev and Kornilov rode into Elizavetinskaya, the last *stanitsa* before Ekaterinodar, the Cossacks greeted them with a ringing of the church bells and a procession of all the priesthood with their banners. Old men and young besought them with one voice:

"Save us from the Bolsheviks, we cannot bear them any longer!"

On the very first day the *stanitsa* gave the army eight hundred Volunteers. The enthusiasm was immense. All went confidently to the coming storm of Ekaterinodar; no one doubted or could doubt its success, though to the 17,000 Bolsheviks who at first were in the town with thirty guns, the army could oppose only 3,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and eight three-inch guns with 700 shells.

The first assault was made on March 26. The town was all but taken on that day. Unfortunately, the newly-formed Kuban units defending the railway line, who had never yet been engaged in battle, failed to stand the enemy's fire and retreated. This enabled the Bolsheviks to bring up reinforcements. They drew all their reserves into the town and continued to hold it in spite of their enormous losses.

The attack continued till the fifth day, and every day it seemed as if the town must fall, yet the final victory could not be secured. The Bolsheviks rained shells upon their foes: light and heavy guns thundered day and night. According to a modest estimate, during the first four days no fewer than 40,000 shells were fired; this against the 700 shells of the Volunteer Army.

The losses of the Volunteer Army were severe; the average per regiment was 70 per cent.; the regiment of St. George was reduced to less than a company; in the Kornilov and the Officers' regiments there were left but 25 to 30 men per company. The number of wounded already amounted to 1,200 men. Experienced fighters were replaced by raw recruits. Colonel Niezhintsev, the commander of the Kornilov regiment, and a favourite with Kornilov and the whole army, was killed.

The scanty ammunition was coming to an end. On the morning of March 31 the last 10,000 cartridges were issued. On the preceding day the Bolsheviks had received new reinforcements. Yet no one had any doubt of final victory; the belief in victory was inspired by Alexeiev and Kornilov, who insisted on continuing the assault. The staff lived in the "farm" – a little wooden house in a copse on a hill, whence a bird's-eye view of the town could be obtained. The copse was constantly under fire, which increased in volume, especially on March 30. On that day the shells fell alongside the farm buildings, and everyone advised Kornilov to change his quarters, but he was preparing a final blow for March 31, and so remained there.

Fate decided otherwise. The army received a blow which no one expected. On the morning of the 31st Kornilov was killed by a shell which burst in his room.

His death fell like a thunderbolt. No one could believe it, and when the fact could no longer be doubted, all were afraid to speak of it; the Cossacks did not say "Kornilov is killed," but pointed upwards, saying "He is there."

The spirit of the army was broken at once. Though, by the wish of Kornilov himself, the command passed into the hands of General Denikin, who was popular, and an experienced leader – yet to continue the engagement under the circumstances was too great a risk. At a council of war it was decided to break off the attack, and extricate the remnants of the gallant army from the grip of the Bolshevik hordes.

III.

THE RETURN TO THE DON.

Ekaterinodar had not been taken. The Reds were jubilant, the local Soviet papers were in raptures: "Kornilov's bands are finally defeated ... the whole Army is destroyed ... the counter-revolutionary hydra exists no longer in the South ..."

These rejoicings, however, were unwarranted. True, the goal of the campaign – the capture of Ekaterinodar – had not been reached, but the army had done its work, and the storm of the town, though unsuccessful, dealt a fatal blow to Bolshevism. The Bolsheviks themselves confessed that the defence of the town had cost them 14,000 men, while deserters who overtook the retreating army, certified that even on March 30 the Soviet authorities were preparing for evacuation. This campaign showed everyone quite clearly the impotence of the Red hordes before a handful of disciplined fighters. The Volunteer Army of 3,000 men had boldly marched against 200,000. The losses of the Bolsheviks were always ten times those of the Volunteers.

In the course of this campaign, *i.e.*, in the course of fifty days, the army had been in forty engagements; the fame of its victories preceded the Volunteers as they returned to the Don, and strengthened men's faith in the success of its work of salvation. On its way the local population almost everywhere welcomed the army, and helped it as far as they were able. The intoxication of the revolution was already passing away, while the delights of the Bolshevik regime had cost the Kuban population dear. During the advance on Ekaterinodar the *stanitsas* had given the Army some scores of unreliable recruits (the Circassians and the suburban *stanitsas* were exceptions), but on the way back trustworthy fighters joined its ranks in hundreds. The further the Volunteers marched the more they were welcomed, and the more willingly men joined them. But the first steps of the retreat from Ekaterinodar were trying.

The Bolsheviks, as always, carried on operations exclusively along the railway lines; therefore, the first task of the officers in command was to lead the army with its train ten versts in length, and its 1,200 wounded out of the network of the railway system. Southwards, towards the Caucasian mountains, there was no road; the way was barred by the enemy; the passages over the Kuban river were destroyed. Only northwards was retreat possible. So it was decided to go to the government of Stavropol, on the north-east borders of the Kuban territory, where there was an exit, free of



railways, into the Kalmuck and Astrakhan steppes. But before reaching them the railway had to be crossed in three places. It was necessary, therefore, to deceive the enemy by night marches, as his armoured trains were scouting in all directions in search of the abhorred “Cadets” and “Kornilov’s men.”

On the night of March 31 the army started from Ekaterinodar, bearing with it the bodies of its heroes – Kornilov and Niezhintseff. On April 1 it reached Nemetskaya Kolonka, where it fought a stubborn battle, and after driving the enemy off went on its way, it having decided to attempt the first crossing of the railway at Medvedinskaya. In a lonely spot in the steppe, away from the main road, they buried Kornilov and Niezhintsev, and levelled their graves with the earth, to save their bodies from the sacrilegious mockery of the Bolsheviks.

The following night they reached Medvedinskaya. By a sudden attack some of the staff of this little station were killed, and others were arrested, and then the army train began to cross the line. At that moment the telephone-bell rang. General Markov went up to the apparatus. The next station enquired:-

“Are there any signs of Kornilov’s men? According to information received they should be near.”

Markov replied:

“No one to be seen, all is quiet.” “All the same, in case of eventualities we have sent you an armoured train,” said the Bolshevik.

General Markov ordered a gun to be wheeled on to the track (there were only a dozen shells left); sharpshooters took their places on the embankment on both sides of the line; the movement of the army-train was stopped, all lights were put out, except the station lamps, and then the troops settled down to await their visitors. Lights were seen in the darkness, and the puffing of a locomotive with the rumble of a slowly travelling train reached their ears. General Markov, *nagaika* in hand, stepped out to meet the train at the crossing and by shouting:

“Pull up! You will run down the wagon, comrade!” made the driver stop the engine. Then Markov quickly stepped aside; a report rang out, and a shell exploded among the wheels of the engine. The driver attempted to back it, but it was severely damaged, and would not move. A second shell, fired point-blank, overturned the armoured car. The Bolsheviks, who were peacefully slumbering in the carriages, and had been awakened by the firing, opened a desultory fire with machine-guns. But their assailants were out of the line of fire, close up to the carriages, and greeted them with a shower of bombs. A panic ensued amongst those in the train, and the uninjured Bolsheviks fled in disorder, leaving all their munitions to the victors. “Carts to the train!” ordered Markov, and cases of cartridges, shells and rifles were transferred from the goods van; a gun also fell into the hands of the Volunteers. In the bright light of the blazing cars the long baggage-train and the little army safely crossed the first of the dangerous railway lines.

The inhabitants of the Medvedinskaya *stanitsa* greeted the army in a friendly manner, and supplied it with everything it could, while at the next *stanitsa*, Diakonovskaya, which was occupied the next day without resistance, the first reinforcement of the army by means of conscription was made.

With the staff of the army travelled the Kuban Government and the members of the Rada. They called a general meeting of the *stanitsa*, at which they explained the purpose of the campaign to the Cossacks and called on them to fight the Bolsheviks, and announced the necessity of conscription. This method of filling the ranks of the army corresponded with the wishes of the people more than any other, as the Cossacks were afraid to volunteer, fearing the vengeance of the Bolsheviks on their families. The proposals of the Government were greeted with delight. Thus began the gradual reinforcement of the army by soldiers drawn from the local population. A day later, on April 4, the army reached the Zhuravskaya *Stanitsa*, near the railway, and General Erdeli’s cavalry occupied the station Viselki by a sudden night attack, and in the morning the crossing of the line was unopposed. The last wagon of the baggage-train and the rear-guard had left it far behind when the smoke of an engine appeared on the horizon, and shortly afterwards the explosions of shrapnel shells were heard in the rear.

There remained but one more railway – the Tikhoretsk-Kavkazskaya. They reached it on April 7, having evaded the watchfulness of the Bolsheviks by a clever manoeuvre, and at night the long baggage-train crossed the line near a signal-box. The signalman, with a revolver at his head, kept replying to the enquiries from the neighbouring stations: “All is well; there are no signs of the Cadets.”

The army had now emerged from the railway system, and on April 9 it entered the Ilyinskaya *stanitsa*, where it enjoyed a three days’ rest.

On April 12 they occupied the Uspenskaya *stanitsa* on the borders of the Stavropol Government and the Don territory. While the army halted here a small contingent made a raid on the Razshetovskaya *stanitsa*, returning with ammunition and machine-guns captured from the Bolsheviks. Here, too, the mobilisation passed off brilliantly. The army was visibly increasing as it advanced. Moreover, many of the Bolshevik prisoners begged to be taken into its ranks. They were tried and proved to be useful material.

At Uspenskaya the first news was received of the changes which had taken place in the Don territory. For two whole months the Army had been cut off from the outer world, and knew nothing of what was happening in Russia or in the world in general. On April 13 a body of Don Cossacks arrived, being a delegation from fourteen of the southern

stanitsas. They had heard of the approach of Kornilov's men, and hastened to beg them to assist the Cossacks against the Bolsheviks. They said that it was rumoured that Novotcherkassk was now freed, and that there was a new and lawful Government there. Denikin sent messengers to the *stanitsas* to verify this report. In three days' time the messengers returned and confirmed the rumour. This was good news; the revolt was spreading, one *stanitsa* after another was rising against the Bolsheviks – the Reds were flying and throwing down their arms.

At a council of war it was decided to proceed to the Don territory to help the Cossacks and to march towards the Metchetinskaya *stanitsa*. The Kuban Government gave up the idea of marching on the Don; there was quite enough to do at home on the Kuban territory.

On April 15 the army started on its journey. It had to pass through several Bolshevik settlements in the Stavropol Government. The appearance of the Volunteers in the settlement of Gorkaya Balka was so unexpected that they were supposed to be Bolsheviks, and the mistress of the house in which the staff took up its quarters boasted that she had lately betrayed three officers who had sought shelter with her. No papers were yet obtainable, but "news" was to be had at the tobacconist's – Rostov and Taganrog were said to be occupied by the Germans. This rumour, however, met with no credence.

On April 20 the army entered the Don territory, and had to give the Cossacks immediate assistance. Egorlitskaya, Metchetinskaya, and other *stanitsas* had just been occupied by the Bolsheviks. The Volunteers drove them out, and the Cossacks were able to celebrate Easter at home, with their families and their liberators.

The army reached Metchetinskaya on April 25. Here, for the first time for many weeks, they found newspapers, and learned news of their country, and became aware of the dreadful truth. Russia completely disrupted, the disgrace of the Brest treaty, the triumph of Germany, the opening of frontiers, the German occupation of the Ukraine, the Crimea, the coasts of the Black Sea and of the Sea of Azov, the invasion of the Don territory by the Germans, and, lastly, the ascendancy of the German orientation, which, under the hypnotic influence of the victorious German arms, was extending its influence widely and deeply throughout Russia. But at the most critical moment of the international situation, when Germany had already begun her victorious advance in the West, and the whole of the East, with some rare exceptions, believed that she would triumph in the end; in the days of great trial of faith and honour the Russian people, as typified by the Volunteer Army, remained loyal to their engagements.

A complete revolution had taken place on the Don. The southern cities, Taganrog, Rostov, and others, the whole coast of the Sea of Azov and the adjoining railway lines; were firmly occupied by the Germans. "The Circle for the Liberation of the Don" elected General Krasnov as Hetman, and on April 22, before Easter, Novotcherkassk was finally cleared of the Bolsheviks. One *stanitsa* after another joined the movement, and Krasnov with the now sobered and suffering Cossacks, but with the support of the arms of Germany, bought at a high price by concessions of an economic nature, began gradually and systematically to clear the territory of the bandit hordes. He invited Alexeiev and Denikin to work with him, but this was impossible. Though the aim was the same, the means were different.

At a council of war held at Metchetinskaya it was decided not to go to the Don, but to leave the army where it was, keep the Bolsheviks at bay in case of attack, and prepare for a second march on the Kuban. Denikin, with his staff, remained at Metchetinskaya, while Alexeiev moved to Novotcherkassk to work at the formation of new units, and to accumulate the supplies required by the army for its new campaign.

IV.

THE SECOND MARCH ON THE KUBAN.

1.

The whole of May was passed in preparations for the campaign, filling up the ranks of the existing units and forming new ones. General Alexeiev worked in Novotcherkassk, having agents in Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, and other cities. Communication could only be carried on secretly by means of special messengers; there was always great danger of the messengers being arrested or shot.

The Petrograd and Moscow organisations worked under the watchful eyes of the Soviet Special Commissions, and it would be premature to say much about them at present. It may, however, be remarked that they succeeded in evacuating from Petrograd all the cadets of the Pavlovsky, Michailovsky and Konstantinovsky schools and a portion of those of the Nicolaievsky cavalry school. Moscow was the main source of monetary supplies, and connection was kept up with politicians and public organisations in that city.

At the head of the Kiev agency, which covered the whole of the South-West, stood V. V. Shulgin, member of the State Duma, and General A. Dragomirov. Their task, too, was no easy one. Under the rule first of the Ukraine Rada, next of the Bolsheviks, and finally of the Germans, they had to mask their work and live in hiding themselves. Shulgin, who had twice been under arrest, was obliged to live away from his home until at last, in August, he fled, along with Dragomirov, to the army.

All those who wished to proceed to the Don found obstacles in their way; obstacles which increased as the successes achieved by the army became known.

Renegades from the Volunteer Army began to form other armies, such as the Astrakhan, Southern, Northern, Saratov and National armies; everywhere staffs, nuclei of officers and political representatives, etc., were gathered. These officers were given equipment allowances and paid at a higher rate than that which the scanty funds of the Volunteer Army permitted, but all had to sign a pledge that they would not exchange into the Volunteer Army. As none of these "armies" ever went beyond the primary stage of formation, they could not, of course, be fighting units and a real force (with the exception of a few small guerrilla units). But this did not matter; it was important for the Germans to carry out their plan of confusion and derision, and they carried it out brilliantly. The truth about the doings of the Volunteer Army was concealed, lies and slander about it were circulated, thousands of officers were enticed away from it, and one section of the population was hounded on against the other. It is interesting for us to note that all these efforts of the Germans proved that they were well informed themselves, that they realised the strength of the Volunteer Army, and knew what a healthy national spirit, inimical to them, was developing under its banner.

In spite of all these obstacles, the Bolshevik barriers and threats, the German *cordons* and devices, the men of Russia came thronging from all quarters in response to the call of Alexeiev and the wizardry of the posthumous fame of Kornilov. Alexeiev worked harder than ever, beginning at five o'clock in the morning and finishing at eleven o'clock at night. His staff, under General Elsner, had its quarters in Novotcherkassk at the Central Hotel, and there every morning numbers of newly arrived Volunteers appeared. These consisted of generals, officers, cadets and schoolboys. Every day from one to two hundred were registered. The whole day long newly armed units passed through the streets of Novotcherkassk singing songs as they marched. They did not remain long in the town, but as soon as they had finished their course of instruction they were sent on to the army, at the Metchetinskaya *stanitsa*, to their respective contingents.

Towards the end of May Colonel Drozdovsky arrived at Metchetinskaya with 2,000 officers, eight guns with their ammunition, and two armoured cars. This contingent had made its way from the Rumanian front, having marched two thousand versts, and experienced a series of trials and had numerous tussles with bands of the Reds.

The formation of the Astrakhan army was begun at Rostov, and continued at the Velikokniazheskaya *stanitsa*. Officers proceeding to join this army had to remain some time in Novotcherkassk. There they learned the truth about the Volunteers, which had been concealed from them in Kiev and many joined the Volunteer Army.

"No one can leave the Ukraine who does not volunteer for the Astrakhan army," they said. "All we need is to assemble and arm ourselves; after that we shall find our way." A whole echelon of two hundred men passed over into the ranks of the Volunteer Army.

By the beginning of June the numbers of the army had reached 12,000, and in the course of its victorious march south the Kuban *stanitsas* reinforced it with their Cossacks. The Bolshevik units which surrendered consisted almost wholly of local inhabitants who had been conscripted by the Reds; these begged to be taken into the army, and fought splendidly. After the action at Belaya-Gleena (on June 25) about 5,000 such "Bolsheviks" surrendered, of whom half were received into the Volunteer ranks.

Thus by October the army had gradually increased to about 100,000 men, occupying a front of 250-300 versts.

The growth of the army and its ever-increasing success could not but disturb the German military authorities, who were watching it from Rostov. Owing to the insistence of the Germans, officers were forbidden to leave the Ukraine for the Don territory. This order remained a dead letter, as the officers avoided the main railway stations, where the Germans were watching for them. At the beginning of July an order was issued forbidding Volunteer officers to remain longer than three days in Rostov or Novotcherkassk, so Alexeiev migrated from Novotcherkassk to the Tikhoretskaya *stanitsa*, which had just been occupied by his army.

All the agents of the army in the Crimea and the Ukraine were forbidden by the Germans to carry on their work. The recalcitrant or suspected were deported without explanation to some place unknown. But all these measures were fruitless; the army continued its work.

.Whenever the German military authorities attempted to enter into direct communication with the staff of the army, Alexeiev and Denikin gave the same unvarying answer: "The strategic situation does not allow us either to absent ourselves for the purpose of negotiation or to receive anyone at the General Headquarters of the Army."

The enemy was strong. After the occupation of the Ukraine, Odessa, Sevastopol and the Crimea by the Germans all the rabble which had fled from these places gathered in the Kuban territory. The Bolshevik navy was concentrated at Novorossiisk with all its guns and ammunition. The "pride" of the revolution – the sailors and the Letts – settled down as masters at Ekaterinodar, Eisk, Armavir, Stavropol, and other towns; they were joined by several thousand Chinese, who had run from their work on the Black Sea railway, and decided to defend "their native Kuban," as they explained when taken prisoners. How many Bolsheviks there were it is difficult to say, probably not less than 250,000, as they forced the local Cossacks into their ranks, showing no mercy to the recalcitrant.

Enormous stores of ammunition, armoured trains and motor-cars and all the railways fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Deserters stated that there were about forty German instructors attached to the Bolshevik staffs; two German officers were found among the slain after the first engagement at Armavir. With shame it was learned that there were Russian

officers of the General Staff among the Bolsheviks; one of them was taken prisoner at the capture of the Tikhoretskaya *stanitsa*, tried by court-martial and shot.

The task which lay before the army was to dispose of this group of Bolsheviks, break through to the Black Sea and the Caspian, safeguard its rear and ensure its supplies, so that it might afterwards turn northwards toward Tsaritsin. This task was expected to be fulfilled by September, but the enemy proved to be more stubborn and a better fighter than was supposed, and operations dragged on until November.

2.

At the beginning of June, when the army numbered about 12,500 men, an attack was made southwards along the railway lines, which were no longer avoided as they had been in the trying days of the first campaign; on the contrary, the railroads were an attraction, they had to be taken possession of. In the course of the first month the following junctions were captured:- Torgovaya, Kavkazskaya and Tikhoretskaya, and the town of Stavropol. Driven from these points, the Bolsheviks lost the initiative, the movements of their troops were hampered, and large military stores passed into the hands of the Volunteers. The occupation of Tikhoretskaya was of especial importance. The position had been considered "impregnable," and its fall was the cause of much mortification to the staff of the Red army at Ekaterinodar. Enormous military spoils fell to the Volunteers – whole trains, a number of railway cars, and a variety of supplies; clothing for the whole army, a thousand pounds of wool, sacks to the value of several million roubles, etc., etc.

The joy at the capture of the Torgovaya *stanitsa* was damped by the death of General Markov, the hero of the first Kuban campaign.

Thanks to its junction with the Kuban forces, to the influx of new Volunteers, and the mobilisation which was carried on in the *stanitsas*, by the middle of July the army had become a force of 30,000 men, and consisted of three divisions of infantry and three of cavalry; there were twenty batteries as well as several armoured trains and motor-cars.

On August 2 Ekaterinodar was taken after a three days' battle.

The capture of this town signalled a great change in the position of the army. For five months the capital of the Kuban had been in the power of the Bolsheviks; the inhabitants were groaning under their despotism. The Bolsheviks spread rumours among the population about their imaginary victories, and the rout of the Kornilov men and the Cossacks; the citizens grew tired of waiting for their liberators, and ceased to believe in the possibility of their liberation – they hardly believed in victory even when the first cavalry detachments of the Volunteers broke into the town. The Bolsheviks had begun evacuating; the town three days earlier, removing their supplies, their heavy artillery and their plunder. The Bolsheviks departed, but threatened to return again soon.

It was only when, on the following day (August 3), General Denikin and Hetman Filimonov with the members of the Government entered the town that all doubts vanished. They were received with enthusiasm, and flowers were showered on them. Behind them, one after another, the regiments of the Volunteer army came into the town. Some remained in it, others at once marched on farther to their positions.

On August 5 General Alexeiev rode into the town. The troops were drawn up in the Cathedral Square and the neighbouring streets. Alexeiev rode down their ranks, thanking them for their services; he was followed by his escort, before which waved the national tricolour. The troops and the citizens greeted him with indescribable enthusiasm. The review came to an end, and in the Cathedral Square the local bishop held a service of thanksgiving and of prayer for the souls of the glorious Volunteers and Kuban Cossacks who had laid down their lives for the liberation of their native land. When the Cossack choir began the "Memoriam reternam," the bishop's mitre, shining in the sunlight, bent slowly to the earth, and with him the whole of the "Christian warriors" and the people flooding the square prostrated themselves. After the service was over, Alexeiev took the salute during the march past of the troops. These fine men were not distinguished by brilliancy of uniform or arms, or even by any special military bearing; all of them, in their worn, motley garb, were equally covered with grey dust, but everyone of them – commanders, officers and privates – was fired with that *conscious* military spirit which is born and lives only in the surroundings of war.

Alexeiev, Denikin, and the whole of their staff settled down in Ekaterinodar, and the work of the staff was now carried on amidst calm and normal surroundings.

The burial of Kornilov was appointed for August 8. It was proposed to transfer his remains from the place of their temporary interment – at Nemetskaya Kolonka – to the vault in the Cathedral of Ekaterinodar. Large numbers of people had come to the city for the funeral, deputations from Novotcherkassk, Rostov, and other places, as well as relatives and admirers. But when the Volunteers reached the spot where Kornilov and Niezhintseff had been buried five months earlier they found only their empty, desecrated graves. Whose traitorous hand pointed out these graves to the Bolsheviks is yet a secret. The disappearance of Kornilov's remains seemed to cast a yet brighter halo round the memory of this national hero: the farmhouse where he was killed became a place of pilgrimage and a spot for prayer. A chapel is now being built there.

The month following the fall of Ekaterinodar witnessed the successive occupation of Armavir, Maikop, Novorossiisk, with the Black Sea coast and Eisk, with the Kuban coast of the Sea of Azov. Everywhere the Bolsheviks suffered enormous losses, everywhere they fled in disorder, generally directing their course eastwards. By the middle of

September the army numbered over 60,000 men, and occupied a front of 250 versts.

By the occupation of Novorossiisk the Volunteer Army opened a road for Russia to the sea, and so got in touch with the Allies, from whom Real Russia had been so long cut off by Germany, the Ukraine and Bolshevik Russia.

On September 25 the army suffered an irreparable loss by the death of General Alexeiev. The trying conditions of the campaign, combined with the effects of overwork, broke down his health, and he passed away after a short but painful illness. He was not fated to live to hear the joyful news of the beginning of the Allies' triumph, of which, indeed, he never had any doubt (Bulgaria collapsed on September 26), but he died with the full consciousness of having done his duty towards his beloved native land. He had regenerated the Russian army, created a nucleus for a future Russia, and saved the honour of his native land.

One of Alexeiev's last orders was to forbid the crews of German vessels to land in ports occupied by the Volunteer army, such as, for instance: Novorossiisk, Anapa, Eisk, and others. Under Bolshevik rule they had been complete masters there; now they had to submit to a new master.

After Alexeiev's death the supreme command of the army passed to General Denikin, while questions of a political nature and those concerning civil administration were referred to a "Special Council attached to the Commander-in-Chief," which had been formed at Ekaterinodar during Alexeiev's life-time, under the presidency of General A. M. Dragomirov.

This Council became a centre round which men of political experience and representatives of public organisations grouped themselves. Some of them had long ago attached themselves to the army, had given their money for its formation, and shared the fatigues of its campaigns. Others joined it afterwards, when the staff had taken up its quarters at Ekaterinodar. Among them were the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonov, and his assistant Neratov. It is interesting to note that Sazonov, who had left Yalta in the middle of September, was detained by the German authorities at Kertch, and could not leave for a whole month. The Council attained to especial importance when, after the breakdown of Germany, the way to the army became free to all. The Volunteer Army, with its military, civil and public organisation, naturally became the centre of the State.

.After the occupation of Novorossiisk, the coasts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, Armavir, Maikop, and all the railways of the Kuban territory, the fate of the nest of Bolsheviks was settled. The Bolsheviks had only the Vladikavkaz railway left at their disposal, their only path of retreat was to the north-east, towards Astrakhan, across the steppes, where there was no railroad. The approaching autumn rains were bound to ruin the country roads, and the amount of loot was very great. Tens of thousands of carts with refugees and their families retreated with the Bolsheviks. There was no room in the trains, and so along the railway long lines of carts crept in several parallel files. Some of them were proceeding to Mineralniya Vody (Mineral Waters), some to the terminus at Holy Cross, whence it was said a railway to Astrakhan was being built. Some again were making their way into the steppes or lumbered up the stations along the Vladikavkaz railway, waiting for something to turn up. The situation of the Bolsheviks was hopeless, and their final defeat seemed near. But this very hopelessness made them fight more stubbornly and the struggle was long drawn out.

The commissaries, the sailors, the Letts, the Chinese – all these miscreants knew well that they would have no mercy shown them, and so fought desperately and made their troops fight, too, cheering them with false reports that Ekaterinodar was retaken, and that a "Soviet army" of a million men was coming from the north to help them, while another was coming from Tsaritsin, which had already defeated the Cossacks of the Don, etc. The orders of the Commander-in-Chief Sorokin bristled with such lies, so that, as was stated in one of these reports, "the fighters should not bolt with eyes bulging out of their sockets." All this "news" was supported by the partial successes which attended the arms of the Bolsheviks. Armavir changed hands twice – the Nevinnomisskaya *stanitsa* several times. When a large force had to be concentrated to drive the Reds out of Armavir and take final possession of it, a section of the Bolsheviks made a dash at Stavropol, captured it on October 13, and settled down there for a short time. September and October were passed in constant severe fighting; but the heroic spirit of the Volunteers did not sink, in spite of the fatigue entailed by daily engagements.

On September 4 Nevinnomisskaya was taken. Two battalions of the Kornilov regiment, with two guns, attacked the 30,000 Bolsheviks entrenched there with eight guns. The officers went against the enemy trenches with their rifles slung at their backs. The attack was so unexpected that the Bolsheviks and their staff ran away. Sorokin himself was there dining to the music of a band: he barely managed to escape, but the band was captured. The spoil left by the Bolsheviks was great.

In the beginning of October a series of severe engagements took place at Armavir, where ten days were spent in driving out the Bolsheviks. They were driven out at last, but at the price of heavy losses. The First Officers' Regiment lost 50 per cent. of its men, and the newly-formed combined Guards Regiment, 80 per cent.; the colonel, the second in command, and twenty officers were killed and thirty officers wounded.

On October 6 the Cathedral square in Ekaterinodar witnessed a scene which was sad but majestic in its modesty and simplicity. Twenty-one funerals took place at once. The rough wooden coffins, made of unplanned boards hastily put together, and the plain crosses of pine branches tied together, and the attendant burial parties could scarcely be accommodated in the Cathedral. Denikin with his staff and a great crowd of citizens gathered to pray for the souls of the

fallen. The coffins were brought forth and one was placed on a gun-carriage, three on hearses, the rest on ordinary carts. The mournful procession slowly drew out. It was accompanied by the solemn, beloved, long-forgotten strains of "How Glorious is our Lord in Zion," the weeping of a few relatives and friends, and the blessings of the crowd as they piously crossed themselves.

Scarcely a day passed in Ekaterinodar without the citizens accompanying the remains of several of their beloved Volunteer protectors along the path from the Cathedral to the cemetery.

After the capture of Armavir, by a whole series of brilliant actions of the cavalry units on the right flank of the army between the Caucasian hills and the railway, all the bands of the Bolsheviks with their military trains were driven beyond the railway on to the right bank of the Kuban. At this time the army had united with Colonel Shkura's contingent, which was acting from the Mineral Waters side. The whole railway line, as far as the Nevinnomisskaya *stanitsa*, was in the hands of the Volunteers, and the Bolsheviks were fleeing towards Stavropol. About 35,000 of them had gathered there with an enormous train of 30,000 wagons.

By the end of October Denikin succeeded in surrounding the town. He called on the Bolsheviks to surrender, promising to spare all but their leaders and the criminals amongst them. 25,000 of them were ready to surrender, but 10,000 sailors of the "Taman" contingent refused to do so, and threatened to shoot down the rest with machine-guns. General Denikin, who superintended the operations at Stavropol in person, gave orders to begin the bombardment and assault on October 31.

On November 1 he left the field of battle for a few hours and went to Ekaterinodar to attend a special meeting of the Rada. In a heartfelt speech, instinct with fire, he recalled all that the Volunteer Army and the Russian officers, "those great martyrs," had done for the Kuban; by the first day of November the last *stanitsa* of the territory had been freed from the Bolsheviks. He was unable to finish his speech; he received a telegram which he read out to the meeting on the spot. It reported that "the first cavalry division of the Volunteer Army has broken into Stavropol."

The ovations in honour of the army were without end: Denikin was greeted as the liberator of the Kuban, as a national hero, while he called on all to create a united Russian army, and to continue the fight along one front for the honour and existence of Russia and lead her, as he put it, "as our own beloved, worn with sickness, to the Court of Justice of the nations, that she might say, if even with low and weakened voice, what it was that the Russian people wished and called for."

Stavropol was taken; the Bolsheviks rushed in one mass north-eastward. Their losses were immense; what was left of them was pursued by the cavalry; their days were numbered.

There were two more small Bolshevik groups left, one at the Mineral Waters, the other at Holy Cross. It would not be difficult to deal with them.

In any case it may be said confidently that by November the second Kuban campaign had attained its ends; the nest of Bolshevism in the South of Russia had been destroyed. the Kuban territory and the Stavropol and Black Sea Governments liberated.

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As I come to the end of this sketch of the army, I find it difficult to suppress a feeling of regret that I have been able to say so little about the exploits of the army, to bring forward so few of the individual names of heroes. I am forced against my will to confine myself to descriptions of a general nature. It is not easy to speak of individuals when the army, which had lived as a family, united by daily warfare during nine months, had developed a special breed of fighters of a peculiarly heroic character. To mention all by name would be impossible; to name some only would be an injustice to the others.

General Denikin asked one officer who had taken part in forty-seven actions, "How many cartridges have you used all this time?" "Seven," replied the officer modestly. This answer means but little to the civilian, but he who has been in battle knows how calm a man must be, with what contempt for death he must be inspired, to stand against an attack in silence, without a cry, without firing a shot.

Their contempt for death simply bordered on recklessness. A new sport was invented. An officer would step out of the trenches, alone, without his rifle, and walk coolly towards the enemy trenches. The Bolsheviks would look on in silence waiting to see what would come next; the officer, without hurrying, would approach their trenches, whip out his revolver, empty it into the stupefied Bolsheviks and calmly return to his comrades. Then only would they begin firing at him.

The spirit of the troops was high and worked miracles. What are we to say of those *cadets*, those schoolboys who could scarcely carry their heavy rifles, yet in moments of danger would rescue their weary elder comrades by a dashing charge? The officers, those experienced fighters, could only wonder whence they gathered their strength. It was these children who were the personification of the terrors of the "counter-revolution" to the Bolsheviks. It was in their honour that the Bolsheviks gave the common name of "cadets" to the hated Volunteer army. Nearly all these youths perished. Of the Volunteers who left Rostov with Kornilov in February not 10 per cent. remained alive by November.

Altogether 30,000 of the Volunteers laid down their lives.

Military history and the history of Russia will long discuss the singular campaigns, in which battles were fought, not according to the rules of military art, but frequently in direct opposition to them. Almost daily fighting in the course of a whole year gradually brought to the front such leaders as Denikin, Erdeli, Drozdovsky, Niezhintsev, Kutepov, Markov, and others. Their names will pass into history. I say nothing of Alexeiev and Kornilov – their names have gained immortality already.

I must say a few words also with regard to the unfounded reproaches from which the army has suffered at the initiative of the Germans.

What they all amount to is an accusation against the army of setting forth no definite programme, marching under no distinctive banner, refraining from any declaration of its political faith, and so forth.

Let its supreme leader, General Denikin, answer for me in the words which he addressed on August 26 in Stavropol to the representatives of the city and of its public organisations assembled to greet him:–

“Together with an attitude towards it which is frequently enthusiastic, the army has more than once met with complete misunderstanding and abuse. The reasons for this are many. The Volunteer Army has set itself the task of re-creating a united sovereign Russia. Hence the murmurs of the centrifugal forces in the land and of local diseased ambition.”

“The Volunteer Army cannot, even temporarily, bow the knee to the foreigner, and still less hamper in any way the free course of the Russian ship of State. Hence come murmuring and threats from without.

“Advancing on its path of thorns, the Volunteer Army seeks the support of all the loyal elements of the nation. It cannot become the tool of any political party or public organisation. If it did it would not be ‘the army of the Russian State.’ Hence the dissatisfaction of the intolerant and the political struggle over the army. But though there are definite traditions in the army, it will never become the oppressor of the thought and conscience of others. It says plainly and honestly: ‘Be Conservatives or Socialists as you like, but love your tormented motherland and help us to save it.’

“In just the same way, while turning all its forces against the corrupters of the soul of the people and the dissipaters of their wealth, the Volunteer Army knows nothing of class and social war. Amidst the painful circumstances in which we live, when nothing but tatters are left of Russia, it is not the time to undertake the solution of social problems. Nor may the parts of Russia undertake the reconstruction of its life, each according to its own ideas.

“Therefore those officers of the Volunteer Army whom fate has entrusted with the heavy burden of its direction will in no case forcibly change the fundamental constitution of Russia. Their task is only to create surroundings in which it will again be possible to live and breathe in an atmosphere of toleration until the legislative institutions of Russia, representing the reason and the conscience of the Russian people, direct its life along a new channel towards light and truth.

“The day will come when the cup of Russia’s long-suffering will overflow, when the tocsin will toll all over Russia, ‘clanging indignantly and calling to battle,’ all the armies – the Volunteer Army and the Cossack forces, the armies of the South and of Siberia, and the front of the Constituent Assembly – will all join forces.

“The rivers, great and small, will all unite in one Russian sea, which, stormy and powerful, will wash away all that scum – home and foreign – which has now settled on the wounded, tortured body of our native land.”

November, 1918.