

Brevet Colonel Dobrynin of the Staff
(former chief of the information bureau and operations bureau of the Staff of the Army of the Don)

The Fight Against Bolshevism: in Southern Russia

The Participation of the Don Cossacks in the Fight

(March 1917 - March 1920)

Translated from the Russian by A.G. [and translated rather loosely from the French by Mark Plant]

1920

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[index items in italics not translated by me]

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Enumeration of Documents Consulted:

1. Summary of the political history of the Grand Voisko¹ of the Don. Ed. by the Quarter-Master General's bureau of the Don Army Staff. 1919.

¹ The Russian term "Voisko" means army. Independently of this sense it takes, when applied to Cossacks, a much larger scope and designates the whole body of the Cossack community. This is why we have kept the term throughout this text.

2. Summary of the geography of the Grand Voisko of the Don. Ed. by the Department for Public Instruction of the Grand Voisko of the Don.

3. Account of the activity of the Executive Committee of the Don region from 15 March to 15 May 1917. Published by A Petrovski.

4. Instruction of 8 June 1918 to the Delegates sent by the 1st Division of Don Cossacks to the Don Krug.

5. Resolution of the Don Cossack Congress. May 1917.

6. Resolutions adopted by the first session of the Don Cossack Great Krug. Period 8 June to 1 July 1917.

7. Resolutions of the second session of the Don Cossack Great Krug from 18 to 27 September 1917.

8. Resolutions of the third session from 18 to 28 December 1917.

9. Resolutions of the non-plenary session of the Deputies of the Krug from 12 to 18 February 1918.

10. Resolutions of the General Assembly of the members of the Provisional Government of the Don and the delegates of the stanitsas and the military formations from 11 to 18 May 1918.

11. Regulations for the elections to the Voisko Great Krug for 1918.

12. Compendium of Decrees and Orders of the government of the Grand

[Page 8] 13. Report of the Commander of the Don Army and the Section Chiefs of the Great Krug. 18 May to 27 August 1918.

14. Resolutions of the fourth session of the Great Krug 28 August to 3 October 1918.

15. Compendium of laws voted by the fourth session of the Krug.

16. Account of the Chief of the Military and Naval Department and the Commander of the Army and Navy of the Don (August 1918 to January 1919).

17. Minutes of the meetings of the second session of the Great Krug in 1918.

18. Documents brought there.

19. Account of the Commander of the Army of the Don on the military situation towards the end of September 1919. Short résumé of the fight of the Don against the Soviets during the period from February to October 1919.

20. Daily journal of the military operations of the Staff of the Don Army (October 1919 to April 1920).

21. Mission to Piliuk and to the "Green" formations. Report of a delegate (6 to 19 March 1920).

22. Documents on the organisation of the Soviet Red Army forces from the data recorded for the period November to December 1918 put together by Brevet Colonel Dobrynin of the Staff, Information Bureau of the Staff of the Grand Voisko of the Don. Ed. 1918.

23. Ataman of the Don, General of Cavalry P. N. Krasnov. May to September 1918. Ed. 1919.

24. The Don and the Volunteer Army. Account of the recent past by M. Volin. 1919.

25. The Leaders of the Volunteer Army and their Opinions on the Goals of this Army; by K. Borin. 1919.

26. The Journal "Donskaïa Volna" 1918 to 1919.

27. Memories of the author.



[Huge great snip of stuff about the Don.]

[Bottom of page 26]

The single navigable river is the Don and only from its mouth to the crossing of the Tsaritsyn to Likhaia railroad: but navigation is prevented in summer by the enormous number of sandbanks, which do not allow obstacle-free transit until Spring. In the last few years the construction of locks from the mouth to Kamenskaia stanitsa has been started to improve navigation, and steam boats travel up to this town, but the civil war has prevented the complete execution of these works.

The lack of rail network is characterised by the fact that the Don only has 2,310 versts of rail line. Moreover, the network serves the outer region almost exclusively.

The rail lines are:

- 1) The line following the eastern border from Novorossisk to Griazi and Kozlov via Tsaritsyn.
- 2) The line from south-east of Rostov to Voronezh serving the western border.
- 3) The line which follows the south-western border between Rostov and Bakhmut with a small network in the mining district of Makeievka.
- 4) Along the southern border between Torgovaia and Rostov is a line linking the two first major lines.
- 5) the Tsaritsyn to Bakhmut line with the Likhaia to Zverevo junction is the sole line crossing the centre of the Don territory.
- 6) and 7) Other than the lines above there is the Millerovo to Bakhmut line and the northern end of the Uriupinskaia to Alexikovo line which only has a local interest – giving a communication link between Uriupinskaia stanitsa (the Khoperski administrative centre) and the rail line from Griazi to Tsaritsyn.

As a result of the absence of a major road network, localities distant from the railway lines are completely isolated from the outside world, above all when one notes the insufficient telegraph net and the complete absence of telephones. ...



[huge great snip]

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2. Wakening of the Don, fall from power of the Bolsheviks and the first evacuation of Don by the Bolsheviks. March to November 1918

The first matter for “Campaign Ataman” General Popov was to enter into talks with the Volunteer Army, in order to establish working together. [page 53] The Don troops unfortunately went to the steppes in the Sal area, while the Volunteer Army went to the Kuban; nevertheless, the same desires guided them.

The motives which led these armies to choose different directions will be clarified by history; General Popov explains in his memoirs his decision by his strong desire to be as close as possible to the Don when that country awakened. We will see later that his desire was realised.

We will now see what happened in the Don after the Bolshevik revolution.

The primary reason for the Cossacks turning away from the Reds was the repulsion they felt for the thirst for devastation and brigandage which animated the Bolshevik bands and whose effects they saw from the first contact. Soviet propaganda had taken care to make the all riches which were on offer in the Don territory known to its troops. The Reds could profit by rushing in to take the Cossacks' goods. Thus the terrible pillage commenced, the executions and murders, which seemed as if they would never end. History will later make known to the world the terrifying release of hideous passions, whose victims were mostly from the working Cossack class led into error by the promises of the Bolshevik propaganda. The Cossacks rose up against their so-called “benefactors” due to these horrors, and a silent hostility between Cossacks and Reds was immediately established which, at the start of Spring, changed and broke into open rebellion.

While the Red bands were in the stanitsas shooting not only the Cossacks but also their women and children, the small band of General Popov, surrounded on all sides by Bolsheviks, was undertaking an unequal struggle to resist in their difficult “Steppe March” until Spring. With their excited cries of alarm the Reds were able to raise the mass of the peasants against the “Cadets” (as they called all those against them) in the south-east of the Don where General Popov's troops were. The peasants were persuaded that the “cadets” were even massacring infants – and the simple and ignorant people believed these tales until General Popov, on 13 March 1918, entered into talks with the peasants of the neighbouring counties and showed their representatives that the propaganda was false. These talks improved the very difficult position of the General somewhat. [Page 54] But the events of the end of March in the Don obliged the General to head to the centre of the region, which ended the peace talks.

He crossed the valley of the Manych River, fighting continuously, and found himself in the south-east of that region, then headed north to the area around the source of the Sal River.

General Popov's troops were unaware at that time of the battles of the Volunteer Army to the south of Ekaterinodar, which the Kuban Cossacks – 3,200 soldiers and 2,000 non-combatants – had already abandoned for refuge in the mountains, and they were unaware of the volunteers of Colonel Drozdovski, who were fighting to head towards Melitopol with the aim of joining with the Volunteer Army.

The “Steppe Troops” with General Popov felt completely isolated from a strategic viewpoint and only their faith in an awakening of all the Cossacks supported them; those on their side had need of some outside help in order to act efficiently.

When men find themselves in adversity the idea that they are not the only ones suffering is consoling and their hopes are raised by the fact that others are perhaps facing still worse fates. And often these hopes are consoling to those others who are suffering. General Popov's “Steppe Troops” were a consolation in that way, and perhaps that was their greatest merit.

But how was the awakening of the Don achieved?

The discontent of the Cossacks in the Novochoerkassk region against the Bolsheviks was to grow such that on 31 March the Cossacks organised in the Manych stanitsa, 25 versts from Novochoerkassk, a congress of the Cherkassk delegates with the aim of protesting against the Bolshevik horrors. The essence of the Bolshevik revolution was examined, along with the relationship between the Cossacks and the peasants, who had taken a frankly hostile attitude to the Cossacks from the arrival of the Red troops and who had aided in the pillage and destruction of the Cossack farms. It should be noted that this left great bitterness with the Cossacks who, after the revolution, had made all sorts of concessions to the peasants, up to that of recognising equal rights before the law.

The insurrection started on 31 March at Suvorovskaia Stanitsa. [page 55] On 8 April General Popov was already receiving information on uprisings all along the Don up to Nizhne-Chirskaia stanitsa. He decided to head towards the Don; all the more since the neighbouring stanitsas were requesting his help and sending their troops to reinforce him.



One of the determinant factors in the uprising, as we have seen above, was the mixing of outsiders to the country in purely Cossack affairs.

The Cossack protest followed from the reign of terror and the destruction of property.

From the facts presented by a special commission for the period when the Don for the first time witnessed the Bolshevik régime, 7,800 farms were completely destroyed. This figure does not include the southern region, where fighting did not cease and the commission evaluated the farms destroyed at 10,000. It must be noted that most of these cases were not produced by military action but by fires lit by the Reds.

Notably, the Cossacks rising against Soviet power, spontaneously sought aid from the partisan troops. It was the same in all parts of the Don. The mass of Cossacks asked for support from the active enemies of Bolshevism whom they had previously been fighting themselves.

To crush the insurrection, the Soviet government took certain measures, but it met with enormous problems due to the discontent of the Cossacks.

So it was that Krivianskaia village, 3 versts east of Novocherkassk, units of sailors were forced to leave an armoured car in Cossack hands, to the encouragement of the insurgents; who sent terse messages to the villages in which they described Red atrocities and massacres, announced that they had risen up and insisted on the necessity of urgently mobilising 20 classes. The revolt spread. On 12 April Golubov, so popular up until then, fell victim to general indignation. He had put himself forward during Kaledin's time at the head of the Bolshevik Cossacks; he was proud of the death of that leader and those of Bagayevski, Volochin and Nazarov; now he was going to be the first to receive a bullet from his former admirers, woken from the Bolshevik nightmare.

[page 56] In the north of the Don the discontent also showed itself. In the Upper Don district a council formed which was the most passionate enemy of the Soviet government. The Cossacks of the Ust-Medveditski district could see disarray among the Bolsheviks, but could not determine the reason. On 14 April, following an assault on the suburbs by the Cossacks, Novocherkassk fell. The Red Guards and the "Sovdep" fled to Rostov. The same day in Manychskaiia stanitsa a second congress was held. Having proclaimed a call to arms, the congress elected an executive organ, which was followed by a Defense Committee for the whole Don. A sudden Bolshevik attack against Manychskaiia failed, undertaken by units coming by boat from Rostov, but their offensive against Novocherkassk forced the Cossacks to evacuate the Don capital and retire 17 versts to the east to Zaplavskaiia stanitsa, where they started to form an army.

At this moment the "Steppe troops" of General Popov had reached the right bank of the Don [ie the western side, since one looks downstream when deducing left and right banks] near to Nizhny-Kurmoiarskaia stanitsa and there General Popov also started organisational work. He named Colonel Mamontov commander and defence chief for the 2nd Don District, gave him part of this army and charged him with provoking an insurrection in the northern Don. General Popov then decreed general mobilisation and formed defensive sectors for 4 or 5 stanitsas, in which he left small detachments.

This was how Popov's army made itself useful in the Don.

Konstantinovskaia stanitsa, only learning at this time of the taking of Novocherkassk by the insurgents from an aviator, then joined the movement.

General Popov headed to Novocherkassk by boat; he was able to witness the disorderly flight of diverse Bolshevik units leaving Rostov to head up the Don. At this time Staff Colonel Denisov was at Zaplavskaiia; he had 8 infantry regiments, 3 cavalry regiments and 8 batteries under his command.

So, around 26 April we could see two groups forming on the Don and two in the Zaplavskaiia sector against the two important Bolshevik centres (Alexandro-Gruchevsk, to the North, and Novocherkassk, to the South) with, [page 57] in the rear, the Northern group. On the left bank of the Don, between the river and the Rostov to Tikhoretskaia railway another group was forming. General Popov, as campaign ataman, was in overall command.

Information was received, uncertain and incomplete, concerning movements towards Novocherkassk by German or Ukrainian troops coming from the north (Voronezh) and the west (Bakhmut). This added with the certain news that the Volunteer Army was approaching from the Kuban, raised the morale of the Don Cossacks. This was how General Popov thought the situation was. But on 29 April he learnt of the German occupation of Cherkovo station on the railway south-east some 200 versts to the north of Novocherkassk.

A first German group cut off from Voronezh the Reds who were approaching from Bakhmut in the direction of [page 58] Millerovo and against whom the Migulinskaia stanitsa insurgent Cossacks had decided to engage. Two other German groups headed from Bakhmut towards the Don following the rail lines towards the junction of Zverevo and Likhaia and towards Rostov. The latter of these German groups met by luck the detachment of Colonel Drozdovski, who was coming from Romania and who arrived at Mariupol on 28 April.



So towards the end of April, the insurgent Cossacks had conquered a narrow band of land along the right bank of the Don and two small islands – one on the left bank, the other to the north near Migulinskaia stanitsa – all the rest was still in Bolshevik hands (map 2).

The start of May was marked by stunning success for the insurgents.

The Migulinskaia Cossacks annihilated the Red detachment of Millerovo (1 to 2 May), giving the signal for insurrection in the Verkhne-Donskoi district and reversing Soviet power. Following the same example, in the Ust-Medveditski district a “council of free farms and stanitsas” was organised to counter-balance Soviet power.

On 6 May General Denisov’s group occupied Novocherkassk, having received the reinforcement of the Drozdovski detachment at the critical moment (they also brought with them the information that the Germans were approaching Rostov).

On 8 May the Cossacks entered Rostov from the east at the same time as the Germans entered from the west. That was where news of the defeat and flight of the Bolsheviks at Taganrog was learnt. About the same time the Volunteer Army entered the southern Don, occupying Egorlitskaia stanitsa on 4 May.

The taking on 11 May of Alexandro-Gruchevsk to the north of Novocherkassk definitively assured the Cossacks their possession of the Don capital. On the same day a tribunal met on the initiative of the insurgents to judge and execute Podtelkov, the “President of the Soviet Republic of the Don”, who had been captured the evening before.

So after a month of struggle the Cossacks had freed – part of the 2nd Don District, almost all the 1st, and the bulk of the districts of Cherkassk and Verkhne-Donskoi. The assistance of Colonel Drozdovski’s detachment and the Volunteer Army in the south must be mentioned here. The Taganrog and Rostov districts [page 59] were freed of the Reds by the Germans from the west and the Donetz district (in its eastern portion) by the combined efforts of Cossacks and Germans. Certain stanitsas did so on their own initiative with the help of those approaching from the Don. This was the only chance of salvation from those Cossacks deprived of arms.

A fact to note: the stanitsas who best learnt about the horrors of Bolshevik tyranny had shown afterwards a remarkable firmness in combat and had as their popular hero General Guselchikov. While the insurrection was spreading, it was decided to organise a central power by way of elections, but as the bulk of the territory was still occupied by Reds and the Krug deputies were lacking on 11 May in Novocherkassk the delegates of the neighbouring stanitsas and the members of the Provisional Government (130 people in all) met, calling their meeting the “Don Salvation Krug”: this assembly deliberated until 18 May.

The first matter for the Krug was to send an embassy to the Ukraine to establish relations with that country and to find the goals of the German entry into the Don. Ataman General Popov received the mission of organising a permanent army, and was to take command of all troops in Don territory without exception and to direct them in all military operations.

It is possible that this was the first reason for the retreat of the Volunteer Army to the Kuban.

The army took back its former uniforms, the stanitsas re-established in their functions the previously elected authorities, the former calendar was re-established, five classes of Cossacks were mobilised and the resolution was taken *to admit at once among the Cossacks all those that had participated in the defence of the Don*.

On 16 May General Krasnov was elected provisional ataman by 107 to 13, with 10 abstentions; this general had been well-known from his time in the European war and his literary works. Absolute power was confided in him until the Krug met and was charged with defence of the Don.

The Krug then recompensed all those who had been eminent in the Don’s defence, Cossacks or not; and then took care of the families of combatants who fell during the defence. They left a “Collection of Natural Laws”[?] which was later perfected [page 60] and closed the session by deciding that the elections to the Great Krug would take place on 28 August.

Ataman Krasnov, in his first Order of the Day of 17 May, recalling all the horrors of the time, demanded complete obedience to his orders and a peaceful attitude to the Germans, uninvited guests as they were.

In the “Collection of Natural Laws” it is useful to mention: the responsibility to the Krug of the government named by the ataman; liberty of conscience; the inviolability of house and goods which could only be requisitioned by payment; liberty of association and speech “within the limits of the law”; the creation of a Don flag blue–yellow–red (the colours of the Cossacks, Kalmycks and peasants) and a seal and coat of arms for the Voisko of a naked Cossack, armed, with a large fur hat and sitting on a barrel – which comes from an ancient legend that the Cossack may commit any folly, but would remain true to his arms. The collection also mentioned a national hymn.

Ataman Krasnov confided in Colonel Denisov, commander of the Zaplavskaia group, the command and organisation of the army – a staff was organised and set to forming a permanent army with the young classes which had been called up on 2 June.



Enthusiasm was great at this time in the Don. And while the south organised, the north continued to set itself up again – the Verkhne-Donskoi district Cossacks had already aided the neighbouring Ust-Medveditski district to reverse Soviet power.

In the middle of May, the Don command already disposed of 17,000 Cossacks, with 21 cannons and 58 machine-guns taken from the Bolsheviks – the total taken in April had been 44 cannons and 119 machine-guns. This considerable quantity was sufficient for the Cossacks' needs only; arming themselves at the start just with what fell into their hands, the insurgents only had enough rifles for a small number of them.

The Bolsheviks had 70,000 men with 200 cannons and 400 machine-guns. They occupied the principal rail lines with detachments concentrated at the following places: Azov, Velikokniayeskaia, Kotelnikovo (south of Tsaritsyn), Tsaritsyn and Mikhailovka (north-west of Tsaritsyn).

The operation thus forced on the Don command was the liberation of the Tsaritsyn to Likhiaia railroad so as to [page 61] communicate with the insurgent Cossacks to the north of the Don who were pressing the Reds towards the Griazi to Tsaritsyn railway and the south-east corner of the Voronezh district.

Towards the middle of June, the Bolsheviks were repelled to the north towards the Tsaritsyn to Povorino railway. Only a group of 15,000 men remained on the right bank of the Don, who served to cover the work of repairing the bridge over the Don necessary for the transportation of the booty looted at Tsaritsyn.

By this time the Cossacks had about 40,000 men under arms, with 56 cannons and 179 machine-guns while their opponents had fallen to 65,000 men, 170 cannon and 350 machine-guns. We are talking here only about Cossacks enrolled in the army, but the rear services were assured by the whole population, including women, children and old people who attended to this while still doing their normal work.

Seeing the menace pointed at Tsaritsyn, the Soviet government sent emissaries there from the centre. This changed nothing – the Cossacks wished to dispose themselves freely of the Don as their communication line to the Tsaritsyn front, and threw the Bolsheviks from the right bank into Tsaritsyn while at the same time around 5 July cleaning out the enemy on the left bank, pushing back its forces here in the directions of Stavropol district and Tsaritsyn.

In the middle of July the Cossack forces were already 50,000 men with 92 cannon and 272 machine-guns, against 63,000 men with 198 cannon and 372 machine-guns. During the two months of the fight organised against the Reds the Don forces had tripled, which led to brilliant results.

In the middle of August 1918, all the Don territory save 5 stanitsas in the eastern part of the Sal district had been liberated from the Bolsheviks. The Volunteer Army had brilliantly co-operated in the south, where it had arrived on 21 April in the rear of the Rostov group.

As a result of this situation the Don government found the means to relax slightly and demobilised the older classes and so around the middle of August there were at the front around 40,000 combatants, with 93 cannons and 281 machine-guns against 40,000 combatants with 132 cannons and 260 machine-guns.

This was the situation then at the time of the meeting of the Great Krug, ruler of the country, which lasted from 28 August to 3 October.

[page 62] The Krug had 265 Cossack deputies elected by the stanitsas according to the formula of the four fundamental principles, and 74 deputies from the troops at the front. It should be noted that *the suffrage was extended also to non-Cossacks who had participated in the fight against the Bolsheviks and were admitted as Cossacks by the stanitsas.*

So the Cossacks who had suffered the animosity of the peasant and worker population took the firm resolution to give electoral rights to those who had fought against the Reds.

At the same time those Cossacks who had taken arms against the nation were deprived of the right to vote.

Each stanitsa whose population did not exceed 5,000 inhabitants sent one deputy, those with 5,000 to 10,000 sent two deputies, those with 10,000 to 20,000 three etc.

The degree of education of the deputies was: 56% primary instruction, 18% secondary, 11.4% higher level schools and 15% a private education. By profession: 65% were farmers [or at least in agriculture], 12.6% officers, 5.4% political men, 4%[lower level] teachers, 3.6% jurists, 2.3% professors, 1.4% ecclesiastics, 0.9% engineers, 0.6% students, 0.6% commercial men, 0.3% veterinarians, 0.3% men of letters, and 0.8% without occupation. By age they were: from 21 to 30 – 23.3%; up to 40 – 37%; up to 50 – 25%; up to 60 – 13.3% and up to 64 – 1.4%.

At his inaugural address Ataman Krasnov described the European war – a war between England and Germany, stressed the merit of Russia, which had saved France in 1914 and had supported it during the Verdun offensives by attacking “without cartridges or shells”. Then speaking of the current struggle, the Ataman first raised the issue of the German invasion into the Don and stated that they had been called by the stanitsas of Gundorovskaia, Mitiakinskaia and Luganskaia, who were subject to the Bolshevik yoke. He then indicated that, seeing the danger menacing the Don and the impossibility of help in the Tsaritsyn direction from the Volunteer Army (occupied in the Kuban) he had been



obliged to enter into talks with the Germans. These, in exchange for wheat and wool, had supplied the Don with needed arms, cartridges and shells and supported them in the delimitation of the border with the Ukraine, [page 63] who wished to take from the Don the westernmost portion of its territory (Treaty of 9 August OS).

Responding to the accusations on that subject, he showed the impossibility of an active struggle of the Don against the Germans; they were moreover covering the left wing of the Don Army who otherwise would be completely open [?] and added: "Russia tottering and broken apart is no longer able to defeat them at the moment".

The ataman then asked the Krug for extended powers, to guard against the errors of the "party" system; he *insisted on the need for agricultural reform and the development of a law regarding admission to the title of Cossack*. "Recall," he said in finishing his speech, "that neither the Germans nor the Japanese will save Russia, nor will Russia herself. It will be saved by the Cossacks. It will be the Volunteer Army and the free Cossacks of the Don, Kuban, Terek, Orenburg, Siberia, the Urals and Astrakhan who will free Russia."

The head of the Foreign Affairs department, General Bogayevski (brother of the late M P Bogayevski, Ataman Kaledin's collaborator) then refuted the accusations of Germanophilia and said to the Krug in his speech: "all our efforts are aimed at securing the independence and security of the Voisko which finds itself in a difficult position. It is obvious that it has not been a question of choosing between our eventual friends or allies."

Ataman Krasnov had also tried to enter into talks with the Soviet government in order to obtain the withdrawal from the Don of Soviet troops: but these talks did not have the desired result. Krasnov had to busy himself with everything. He put all his effort into creating a model army and when this young army was presented to the Krug on 29 August and 8 September it was really something to be proud of. There was the admirable Russian infantry, such as that of Russia's great victories, there was a new and magnificent cavalry and a brilliant Cossack artillery which the Don had been rightly proud of in other times. In this period of complete ruin for Russia, when the existence of the Don was in danger, the peoples representatives saw marching in front of them, well-equipped and instructed, 4 infantry and 12 cavalry regiments, making up a "plastuni" (infantry) division and 3 cavalry divisions [page 64] with the required number of specialist troops; in all close to 15,000 men without counting the troops that were at the front.

And these young regiments arrived at an opportune moment when the former ones having lost hope of Allied assistance were succumbing in the unequal combat against the Soviet troops and were starting to hesitate.

At the time of the greatest victories of the Don Army which threatened the Bolsheviks in Tsaritsyn, the Cossacks allowed themselves again to be taken in by Bolshevik propaganda; they refused to cross the Don's borders making use of the worn-out cliché "no annexations" in order to prove their pacifism and hope that the Bolsheviks would no longer enter the Don. The young regiments were needed to support the front which was starting to weaken, but it was already impossible to take Tsaritsyn. However, at this precise time it would have been possible by the occupation of some important points outside the Don territory to help the organisation of the peasants who were groaning under the Bolshevik yoke and who would have risen to defend their own interests, because unlike the Don peasants they had no contest with the Cossacks.

Aware of this situation the Krug ordered (1 September) the occupation of the following points close to the Don border in order to protect it: Tsaritsyn, Kamychin, Balachov, Povorino, Novokhopersk and Boguchar. The command proceeded to execute these orders, albeit that it was difficult due to the fixed idea of the Cossacks that crossing the border was not required.

The work of reconstructing the other branches of normal life in the Don was no less difficult. Having been given a report of the government activity the Krug noted the work of Ataman Krasnov, named him General of Cavalry and kept him in his functions by 234 votes out of 338, with 36 abstentions.

Then it voted on the "Natural Laws" following the wording proposed by General Krasnov: the ataman was given great power. By these laws the Great Voisko of the Don (ancient term) *was recognised as an independent state, not with the aim of separatism, by due to circumstances and until order was re-established in Russia*. The Voisko was until then to be a state governed by the principle of popular sovereignty; a single chamber system with the principle of the separation of powers was adopted. Legislative power was to belong to the Great Krug composed of Cossack deputies [page 65] and executive power to the elected ataman, head of the government.

To guarantee the legality of the judicial and executive powers a Senate was created – a Supreme Court to act as a check.

Concerning the agricultural question, the Krug decreed *the alienation of private land and goods of the church including the forests and subsoil for the benefit of poor Cossacks and peasants of the land*; the land which before had been acquired before by way of purchase were taken back for an indemnity established according to the value on the acquisition contract.

From 20 September *transactions of private goods were stopped*. At the same time the law concerning authorisation to leave the Cossack community was revoked.

Concerning the relations between the Cossacks and the peasants it should be noted that *numerous peasant communes sent sympathetic addresses to the Krug, making offers for the needs of the army and indicating their willingness to*



support the weight of the civil war like the Cossacks. The Krug returned to the idea that all those who took part in the war against the Bolsheviks should be admitted as Cossacks – it had even admitted into itself a peasant, deputy for a mixed peasant and Cossack regiment, and recognised in him all their prerogatives.

Then, on 2 October, *there was a vote on the law which would permit among the Cossacks not only the individuals, but entire communes of peasants;* this right was accorded to the ataman. In this way, the peasants received the right *to participate in the legal redivision of the land.*

As for the question of the workers, the Council decided to work on projects for laws to be discussed at the following session. Between other issues, there must be mentioned the decision to enlarge the forces of the permanent army and to subdivide it into larger and more easily commanded units.

The same Krug confirmed the choice of flag and national hymn, but it replaced the coat of arms with another equally historical one from a later date showing a stag wounded by an arrow, which showed that even the deer as agile as it is could not hide from a Cossack's arrow.

[page 66] When it acted to put into practice the decisions of the Krug, the military command ran into a series of difficulties: a great weariness among the Cossacks, disappointment from their wait for Allied aid and the enormous organisational work done by the Soviet government, which was scared by the force of the Don and above all the progress realised towards the organisation of this new state.

The Bolsheviks were forced to reorganise their army according to military principles, abolishing the ridiculous innovations which had ruined the former Russian army. They concentrated against the Don new forces which amounted to 66,500 men with 233 cannons and 430 machine-guns against the 31,000 men of the Don armed with 79 cannons and 267 machine-guns; they took every care with their principal arm, propaganda, following their favourite theme of “no annexations”.

Nevertheless the Don Army had some success on its left wing: it occupied the village of Kalatch on 8 September and the town of Pavlovsk on 5 October. Having then beaten a Red counter-offensive, the Cossacks occupied consecutively Talovaia station, Bobrov town and on 23 November the crossing point of the Don, Liski station on the south-eastern railway. They headed then eastwards and seized (1 December) the town of Novokhopersk, advancing thus on all parts beyond Don territory.

On the Novokhopersk to Tsaritsyn front all the enemy attacks were repelled and towards the end of November it was thrown back on the whole front into Saratov district. But then the forces had to be increased at the expense of the Voronezh front, which was considerably denuded as a result. In the principal direction towards Tsaritsyn, the prime Cossack thrust, on 22 August the Bolsheviks undertook an offensive along all the rail lines and again approached the Don. The Cossacks engaged their new regiments and succeeded in re-establishing the situation in the middle of September and even to approach Tsaritsyn. The enemy received new reinforcements and with the aid of the Jloba group, come from Stavropol, it pierced the southern Cossack front, succeeded in throwing it back to the Gniloaksaiskaia to Liapitchevo to Kalatch line, on the Don river up to the confluence of the Ilovlia.

The Cossacks during this period cleared all the Bolsheviks from the eastern corner of the Sal district and pushed them back to Tsaritsyn.

[page 67] When the revolution broke at home, the Germans left the Ukraine, uncovering the left wing of the Cossacks. Another division of the young army was required to be placed against the Ukrainian bands.

During this time the Soviet government concentrated great forces against the Cossacks, up to 131,000 men with 379 cannons and 1,087 machine-guns. The winter period of 1918 to 1919 marked the maximum intensity of Bolshevik efforts on the Don by number of men sent to the front. They seemed to wish to crush the Cossacks by sheer numbers and started a large offensive accompanied by intense propaganda, still on the same theme of “no annexations”.

It can be added that the Allies never consented to support the Don and still preferred to support Soviet Russia.



New hesitations by the Cossacks and the second invasion by Bolshevik troops. The Don Cossacks enter the AFSR. November 1918 to April 1919

At the start of December, profiting from its large numerical superiority, the enemy commenced a concentric offensive against the northern Don Cossack group and all along the western border. This offensive was checked quickly enough by a concentration of assault [shock?] troops taking the enemy in the flank; which allowed them to be pushed back to the border again. The Don troops, led by their popular hero Gusselchikov, showed daring and marvelous bravery in executing an incomparable manoeuvre and occupied Borisso-Glebsk and Povorino in the Voronezh district.

In the hard-fought Voronezh region the Bolshevik authorities sensed the lack of firm commitment in their troops and added fresh pressure by flooding the front with propaganda pamphlets and posters. "Show us just one of your Allies," said the sheets, "and we will put down our arms." What arguments could the Don government make to counter this propaganda? The Allied troops were not there; as for the military missions, the Soviet press stated that they were Russian officers in French uniforms.

[page 68] However, on 8 December, delegates of the Entente arrived at Novocherkassk led by the Englishman Captain Bond and the Frenchman Captain Cachin; they were received in a very friendly manner, as is Don tradition.

Capt. Bond explained the aim of the mission was to study the position of the Don from a military, political and economic viewpoint, in order to make a report "without criticizing". The Englishman then expressed his desire to see "a free and unified Russia" reborn, stressing the importance of this union and recalling the example set by the Allies during the war in accepting Marshal Foch as Supreme Commander.

This all had little effect. The Cossacks were still inclined to listen to the Bolsheviks, who promised peace and said that they only wanted to make war on the officers, government and bourgeoisie.

The Cossacks who abandoned the Voronezh front were nevertheless deaf to Soviet appeals to deliver up the officers. On the contrary, they separated on good terms from their officers, who went southwards for the most part. The Cossacks excused their capitulation as fatigue and loss of hope in possible success. Who knows, perhaps the Cossacks already felt doubt in the justness of their decision.

But it was already too late. In December the men of the Verkhne-Donskoi district, without consulting the High Command, started peace talks with the Soviets, abandoned the front and returned home, which left an enormous hole (7 January) for the Soviet troops to pass through.

Nevertheless the Soviet army, recalling the Cossack insurrection and feeling that loss keenly, advanced slowly and prudently into the Verkhne-Donskoi district. But there was a group of Red troops whose morale remained intact in positions in front of the north-east portion of the district: they knew how to profit from the favourable situation and violently attacked the Cossacks causing disorganisation in the Voronezh area which rebounded into the centre. The Don command around 2 February was forced to evacuate [page 69] all the land north of Cossack territory and retire the rest of its troops to the Don. (Map 3).

It should be noted that the disorganisation of the Cossack army in the Voronezh area was aided by the attempt of the Don ataman to organise a "Southern Army". Elements of the former Russian army who dreamed of re-establishing the old regime flocked there, as the result of a special request, but they sought to assure a living rather than show good military qualities. Many members of this army were in a so-called "work organisation" but really did very little other than show their arrogance to the peasants and treat them in a disgraceful manner. The result was that the good idea of the ataman – to put the territories won outside the Don into the hands of purely Russian and non-Cossack organisations – [page 70] failed due to the unfortunate nature of the "Southern Army". (At a conference on 8 January 1919 with the Don Army command, General Denikin expressed his opinion on the creation of this "Southern Army". According to him, only the desire to give a "counter-weight to the Volunteer Army gave birth to this idea." Perhaps that was correct.)

It is regrettable the name of old Russian patriot, commander-in-chief of the South-west Front, General Ivanov, was mixed up in this affair of the "Southern Army". His great age did not allow him to put an immediate end to this error. When all the details were clear, this army was dissolved.

The situation was entirely different on the extreme wings of the Don Army front.

On the left flank the last reserves of the permanent army entered into action; they bravely repelled the enemy offensives and held the western frontier solidly. In the Tsaritsyn direction, the Cossack offensives started on 3 December with the aim of conquering this city. The combats were unceasing until the middle of January, with constant success for the Cossacks. The army was outside Tsaritsyn by 18 January and had to stop to prepare to assault the fortifications. At this time there was great discontent in the Red Tsaritsyn troops and it was only the success on the other front and the action of the Dumenko cavalry division (which later transformed into two corps – Dumenko and Budienny) which saved them from complete disorganisation. On 25 January, following super-human efforts from the Soviet command who terrorised their troops, the Red Army commenced a counter-attack in the Tsaritsyn sector. By now the Cossacks of this district were also affected by the contagion which had already affected the whole front and the Don Army had to retire, losing all that it had gained at the price of numerous sacrifices.



The Cossacks retreated, worn out by a war that exhausted their forces, deceived in their efforts to obtain Allied aid, conquered more by the Bolshevik propaganda than by force of arms.

During this fateful period for the Don, in the Caucasus the Volunteer Army, supported by Cossacks from the region and “mountaineers” had brilliant success. The large role played by cavalry, whose importance was controversial in the European war, should be noted. [page 71] If previously its use was restricted by the great density at the front and the power of the technical means, here it had wonderful field for action.

On 8 January, at Torgovaia station Ataman Krasnov and General Denikin signed a convention whereby the latter took command of all the forces of south Russia. This agreement was very important for both parties: the unification of forces directed towards the same goals. One aim, one single will.

There were large divergences of opinion on this matter: but it was done by people who at the time were in a position to know the facts; let us just say that the union was purely military and did not touch the political independence of the Cossacks.

Soon (10 January) General Poul, head of the British Mission, and French Captain Fouquet arrived at Novocherkassk, and were greeted as cordially as the Bond mission had been.

General Poul remarked that the English had not forgotten their debt and still desired to aid Russia; and that in three weeks it had already sent 50,000 rifles with many thousands of cartridges, large supplies of pharmaceuticals and other material. He expressed the certainty that in London his reports would be read with great interest and sympathy and that he had large hopes on the success of Admiral Kolchak.

When the British Mission visited the front grave events were happening in the Don. Not only among the simple Cossacks but also in the intellectual class there was a growing hope for a possible peace with the Soviet government. Only later, after the occupation of most of the Don, did the Cossacks understand the extent of their error. The result of these hesitations was to force the retreat of the remainder of the Cossack troops. In February 1919 they found themselves behind the Donetz. The last forces of the Don conserving any discipline were assembled there: some new units of partisans and a new partially formed guard division. Later it was learnt that the Caucasus Cossacks had reinforced one of the best corps of the Volunteer Army, which was guarding the western flank of the Don Army, and who had saved the situation after the German retreat.

[page 72] The Don Krug met again on 14 February and sat until 14 June.

Ataman Krasnov, in his opening address, explained the loss of morale among the Cossacks by great tiredness and exhaustion due to the great extent of the front which had gone from 800 to 1,200 versts. The loss of confidence in the Allies was one of the other causes. He assured the Krug with the news that the Volunteer Army was approaching and that Allied aid, while invisible, nevertheless existed in the form of all sorts of technical means. This speech reassured the Krug a little, but as a scapegoat was needed it accused the commander of the Don Army, General Denisov, whose explanations were considered insufficient and from whom it withdrew its confidence.

To be fair, it must be recognised that responsibility for military defeats can only be laid upon the command in a normal war, when supplies are adequate and troops obey their commanders. Unfortunately, the Don Army no longer had any discipline and it was impossible to command them. The Cossacks had to recognise their own fault in this – to which could be added belief in Bolshevik promises. The fault of the command had been to fail to organise propaganda, at the front or in the enemy’s rear, as the Bolsheviks had done brilliantly and had thereby tricked not only the credulous Cossacks’ minds but also the whole of Europe.

Two things were lacking in organising such a propaganda mission from the Don: the absence of a good organiser and the lack of means of communication. To this could be added as a major fault of the command the poor organisation of rear area services.

General Ataman Krasnov felt slighted by the Krug’s vote of no-confidence and offered his resignation if it would not consent to revisit its decision over command of the army. The Krug accepted this and power fell to the hands of the President of the Cabinet of Ministers, General Bagayevski.

General Denikin visited the Krug on 16 February, during these days of governmental crisis. Replying to numerous speeches of deputies offering him their friendship (it was decided to post up the texts of these speeches in the meeting room) [page 73] General Denikin told the Krug that the Caucasian troops had been placed on the flank of the Don Cossack Army and expressed the hope that the Caucasian and Mountain troops, having wiped out the Bolshevik troops in their own territories, would march north with the Volunteer Army “to save Russia”. The enthusiasm of the Krug was high and numerous ovations were made for General Denikin. This state communicated itself to the front which was not far from Novocherkassk; a new energy arose among the Cossacks from the feeling that they were not alone.

On 19 February General Bagayevski (brother of the Cossack bard [?] killed in his prime) was elected ataman by 239 votes out of 293 and the President of the Krug, Kharlamov, charged him with *organising in the Don a truly democratic government where the people enjoyed all their rights*. Moreover, the Krug energetically supported the government by



sending a circular to the troops so as to raise their morale. Many deputies were sent to the front with the same aim; a new *ukase* for mobilisation of students reaching the age of conscription was voted in.

The new command, in the person of Brevet Staff-General Sidorin assisted by his chief of staff General Keltchevski, set to work so as to retain the army on its positions on the Donetz.

At this time the army had 15,000 men in total, with 108 cannons and 441 machine-guns. It is true that the Red Army despite its "success" had scarcely managed to get 90,000 men up to the Donetz, which indicates how poor their state of morale was.

On 4 March the recently arrived young guards and above all the Cossacks of the neighbouring stanitsas victoriously resisted the enemy who had crossed the Donetz and made it to the right bank to the south of the Tsaritsyn to Likhaia railway, thus preventing the fall of Novocherkassk by assault, to the general joy of the army.

Between 10 and 13 March the troops, having regained their confidence, repelled a second enemy offensive which tried to cross the Donetz between the above rail-line and that of the south-east. At the same time the Kuban troops joined the left wing of the Don Army; this fact together with the two recent victories strengthened the hope for victory in the army.

The whole of March was taken with spent in very hard combat on the left wing of the army in liaison with the Volunteer Army. The numerical weakness [page 74] of these combined forces, forced to defend on all sides and manoeuvre their units constantly to reinforce the weak points, gave the command the idea to put in place large cavalry commands.

The first result of this manner of fighting was seen on 10 March by the favourable results of the Cossacks in the Lugansk sector where the concentration of two cavalry divisions was of crucial importance.

In the period from 14 to 16 March, this cavalry group headed east, once again fighting the enemy who had crossed the Donetz between the south-east and Tsaritsyn to Likhaia railways; the Cossacks took 50 cannons and 200 machine-guns.

The Kuban cavalry was also victorious in the Lugansk sector from 27 April to 7 May, which together with the success of the Volunteer Army in the Bakhmut sector, succeeded in preserving the left flank of the Don Army.

The enemy adopted a new deployment consistent with cutting off the Don from the Kuban by capturing Rostov. The decisive blow was to be delivered by Dumenko's cavalry.

The situation was saved by the arrival of the Kuban and Volunteer Army troops who stopped the enemy on the Rostov to Torgavaia railway. There again the cavalry played a prime role. In its turn, the Don command conceived a new plan based on cavalry action and aiming for the liberation of the Don. As much speed and energy as possible were needed as an insurrection had broken in Verkhne-Donskoi district and other places occupied by the Bolsheviks.



Definitive renaissance of the Don and second evacuation of Don territory by the Bolsheviks. April to October 1919

Shortly after the occupation on the northern Don by the Bolsheviks there were rumours about an insurrection in the Upper Don district against Soviet power. This was all the more remarkable as this district had recently been the first to wish to submit to the Soviet regime, and the officers and a large part of the intellectual class had been forced to leave and seek refuge in the south. The insurrection was now the exclusive deed of the simple Cossack masses. Aviators brought incontestable proof of the insurrection on 1 April, and what was learnt greatly passed in horror all that had been expected. [page 75] It was said that after having occupied the district the Bolsheviks set to replacing local authorities with men sent specially for that reason. The Cossacks had had to submit, but the Bolsheviks had very quickly committed such indignities that it was not possible to endure them. They had devastated all the farms and workings and shot all those who protested: they had despoiled the women [his euphemism, not mine], burnt the villages and massacred the children. The patience of the Cossacks had been pushed to its limit and they had risen up. Military forces had immediately been sent from the front and the interior to quell the insurrection. In a circular from the Soviet command taken from the Don front one could read: *“Repress the insurrection as quickly as possible, the insurrection of traitors who profit from the credulity of the Red troops in fomenting a riot in the rear of the army. The Don Cossacks have shown once again that they are enemies of the working people. All the Cossacks who have taken part in the insurrection must be exterminated, the same as for those that have spread anti-Bolshevik propaganda. Do not stop at burning those portions of the villages and houses of those that have raised this riot in the rear of our army.”* After having recommended vengeance with iron and fire the circular finished thus: *“We are suffering because a serpent – the betrayal of the secular slaves of the Tsar – has stirred in our breast: so we must be implacable in fighting it; some more blows from the revolution and the happy workers’ republic, drunk from the death of these enemy traitors, will reflower, realising the grand Communist idea.”*

The document does not need any commentary. It characterises very well the Bolsheviks and their system of realising power.

Here is the picture drawn by the aviators who had observed the insurrection: “Gentlemen members of the Krug ... the insurgent Cossacks of the Upper Don send you their humble respects and salutations. The sick, the wounded, the widows and orphans salute you. We beg to tell you that after having, in violation of every human right, suffered insults, pillaging, fires, they have risen up like a single body [page 76] against the Bolshevik yoke which is worse yet than when Russia suffered from the Tartars. Of all the ignoble acts of these Bolshevik-Communists I will only cite a few by way of example: an old Cossack of Vechenskaia stanitsa having openly said the truth about the Bolsheviks had his tongue cut out and nailed to his chin: the unfortunate was taken around the village while he could walk and until death delivered him. They took 100 young girls from Karginskaia stanitsa and forced them to dig trenches; then they raped them; when the insurgent Cossacks approached they chased them up to the front line and shot almost all of them with machine-gun fire. A female Cossack of the same stanitsa, for not wishing to submit to the Bolshevik government, was raped and shut in her house with her five children; the house was piled with straw and reduced to ashes.

“The witnesses to these horrors told of scenes of terrible cruelty which happened in Vechenskaia stanitsa. After installing themselves and bringing in an orchestra, the Bolsheviks devoted themselves to orgies and drunkenness. They had ordered all the schoolgirls to be brought to their party, but as the parents understood what was awaiting the young ones they did not wish to let them go. The commissars, crazy with anger, ordered all the parents shot. According to the witness of the Vechenskaia district council, all the young girls were violated and many were forced to follow the Bolsheviks.

“Even the churches were profaned.

“In one of the Migulinskaia stanitsa houses the insolence of the Jewish commissars was such that they organised the marriage of a priest with a mare; they had a great party during which they obliged the priest and his bride to dance to the orchestra and, as has been certified by the daughter of the victim, they savagely killed the priest. Similar deed have been reported by many people at the place and it is superfluous to tell them all.”

The flyer reported then their contact with the insurgents: “we were welcomed everywhere with delight, flowers were thrown, bells rung: after a religious ceremony we crossed Vechenskaia to the acclaim of the youth of the school lined up along our passage, with flowers thrown in our path.”

The same catalogue of Bolshevik horror was then described by the insurgents’ deputy Safonov: [page 77] he told how the insurgents had assembled an arsenal with the most primitive means.

The district councilor gave this description to the Great Krug:

“These men, direct descendants of the devil, have pillaged, beaten and shot the peaceful population, they have stolen the wheat and cattle, stolen the icons, taken the linen-chests and precious objects, the table and kitchenware; they have raped the women, the young girls and children: they have demanded contributions at bayonet point and to finish, shot and executed the peaceful population. Dozens were shot and others tortured in such a manner that the sight stops the heart from beating. The Cossack soul cannot put up with such an ordeal ...”



The same ignominies were stated by Krug deputy Bogatyrev who met up with the insurgents by aeroplane.

Here is a letter from the president of the Migulinskaia village council:

“Dear swallows for whom we have waited so long. You arrive from the south with the Spring, but you bring with you something more important than a song – you bring with you life and hope for a resurrection. The people of Migulinskaia stanitsa greet you ... They greet the resolute troops who fight to the death. Greet fondly the Great Krug, the Don Army and the Ataman ... Tell the Cossacks of our stanitsa whose mothers, wives and children who survive, poor and hungry, gaunt faced ... cheering them on, seeking their aid with hands held above the fires of burning houses. Come quickly, bring arms and munitions to chase away this damned vampire.”

“The farms which have suffered most are the 46 situated on the right bank of the Don. All were, in whole or part, first pillaged then burnt. The unfortunate women and children who had not been able to save themselves were shot or massacred.” Signed Sytin and Lubimov.

One could also cite the dreadful descriptions of the Cossacks Chaikin and Mirochinikov, who arrived in Novocherkassk on 29 May, having traveled 650 versts on the Don in a small boat from Vechenskaia stanitsa.

But the descriptions are all the same. The Upper Don insurrection against the Bolsheviks will show later in impartial histories all the charms of the regime. These witnesses were sufficient to wake up anger in those Cossacks who had remained true to the Don and to strengthen the command [page 78] in its decision to go to the aid of the insurgents, as was promised by the Krug in a special proclamation. And that aid was delivered.

Taking account of the state of spirits among the insurgents, the intention of the Don command was to head for them and assist them with a direct attack led by a cavalry group. This manoeuvre would allow hope for the evacuation of the Don and the reinforcement of its weak army. Another attack in the general direction of Tsaritsyn was projected. This offered the advantage of being conducted in the rich region of the right bank of the Don where opinion was favourable and from where rumours were coming of an uprising of Cossacks against the Soviets.

Success before Spring was counted on, because the season for agricultural work was approaching and the Cossacks wished to return to their land and find their families that they had left. One can say that the morale of the army was stronger, noting that at the worst moment in the battle on the Donetz, when operations were stagnant, the army took 6,000 prisoners along with 50 cannons and 264 machine-guns.

The army was reduced to three corps, which assisted command.

Operations commenced with an offensive by the Caucasian army at the start of May, along the Tsaritsyn to Torgovaia rail line in the general direction of Tsaritsyn. This army had just been formed; it was led by General Wrangel, who had been noted among the cavalry as an eminent commander during the liberation of the north Caucasus. Under his command the army crossed the Manych on 18 May and occupied Velikokniageskaia stanitsa (21 May), thus forcing the exit of the Bolsheviks from the left bank of the Don and forcing them to recoil in the direction of Tsaritsyn.

The First Don Cavalry Corps, to whom was given the honour of liberating the right bank of the river and turning Tsaritsyn, participated on the left wing of the success of the Caucasian Army.

[Facing the Bolsheviks:] After the Caucasian Army there was the First Don Corps with the cavalry of the lower Donetz in front; then came the Second Corps which was further north along both sides of the Tsaritsyn to Likhaia railway and then the Third Corps, with General Secretov's cavalry group, which was in the direction of Voronezh. (Map 4)

[page 79] The operation commenced during the night of 24 May; Secretov's cavalry sought to establish a liaison with the Upper Don troops, while the cavalry of the 1st Corps, under the command of General Mamontov, forced the Don to the east of the source of the Donetz.

Propaganda, finally organised, was a great help: it was facilitated by the proximity of the front and the possession of a favourable rail network. The Soviet troops started to organise meetings.

On 7 June, General Secretov's cavalry united with the Upper Don troops, cutting the enemy's southern front in two and isolating the right flank of the Soviet 9th Army on the western side of its route.

General Mamontov's cavalry made 200 versts in 4 days and seized Nizhne-Chiriskaia stanitsa on 8 May after having cleared the enemy from the right bank of the Don.

[page 80] Then the 1st Corps advanced its cavalry which went via Ust-Medvedizkaia stanitsa, Artchada station, Rasdorskaia station, where it divided into two parts. One turned back to isolate Tsaritsyn and the other headed for Krasny Jar; the infantry was transported along the Don to the Tsaritsyn sector. One of the columns of 2nd Corps left the Don between the Medveditza and Khoper rivers, followed the Kumylga river and the rail line towards Povorino; the other climbed the Khoper. The 3rd Corps headed to Voronezh (along the rail line) remaining in liaison with the Volunteer Army along the Eletz rail line.

On the flanks of the Don Army, the Caucasian Army conducted a brilliant campaign, occupying Tsaritsyn on 1 July, while the Volunteer Army advanced with astounding rapidity towards Kharkov, Kursk and Orel.



On 30 June, all its territory as well as a southern part of Voronezh district had been liberated by the Don Army, its flanks being guarded by the Caucasian and Volunteer Armies.

The enthusiasm was indescribable. The enemy forces against the Don were only 29,000 men with 170 cannons. During this whole period the Don Army took 15,000 prisoners, 150 cannons and 350 machine-guns without counting the return of goods which had been pillaged by the Bolsheviks.

Other than military operations in the period, it is worth noting two important acts of the Commander-in-Chief: firstly, on 25 April a declaration was sent to the Allies to explain the government's goals: secondly, on 12 June General Denikin recognised Admiral Koltchak as Supreme Leader and Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

The next day, the Don Krug dissolved itself and published a declaration whose principal points were: a democratic Russia, One and Indivisible; organisation of the state according to the decisions of the Constituent Assembly; local autonomy; *distribution of the land to the workers; recognition of the electoral rights of the Don peasants, with the assurance of participation in economic and legislative life.*

In the project of the "Don Voisko agricultural reform", spelled out by the Krug's legislative commission, all landowners were compulsorily bought out from 14 September 1919, and their land put at the disposition of the Voisko.

[page 81] Excluded from this measure:

- 1) Land called "otrubnyie" and the lands belonging to farms, given definite title by the laws of 14 July 1910 and 29 May 1911.
- 2) Land acquired by the communes and bought by Societies through the Rural Bank.
- 3) Private holdings whose area did not exceed, depending on region, 35, 40 or 50 *desiatinas*.
- 4) Land belonging to towns or villages.
- 5) Land with permanent constructions and the vegetable gardens that went with them.
- 6) Gardens.
- 7) Summer houses.
- 8) Land on which had been built mills, factories or other industrial buildings, with the limits to be fixed in each case.

All freehold land was to be in the hands of the last possessor, while all church and monastic lands were confiscated. Bought lands were expropriated with an indemnity of the purchase price, taxes and any mortgage debt at the moment of acquisition.

Essential improvements and constructions were to be reimbursed.

Payment was to be made by bonds [?] on the Voisko, at 8% and redeemable in 10 years.

These were the essential points of the agrarian reform.

When talking about the activity of the 4th Krug session, the important role of the eminent Don politician V. A. Kharlamov must be stressed, as he directed the work of the assembly in a rational and wise manner.

Those who will later write the history of the Don will certainly give due justice to this great representative of the Cossacks. His immense authority among them is characterised by recalling that he was elected deputy of the Don territory in the four pan-Russian Dumas.

It is evident that his parliamentary experience served him well when he became a member of the regional legislative assembly.

On 30 April the Krug thanked the English government for its assistance with a note to General Briggs, head of the British Mission. The General, then on one of his visits, had reminded them of English aid and insisted on the necessity of a unified Russia.

[page 82] The situation was extremely favourable for large operations and General Denikin on 3 July gave the order for the troops to continue advancing towards Moscow. The Don Army, whose right flank had been replaced by the Caucasian Army, was to advance on the Tambov to Eletz front using the experience gained of cavalry operations: the Don command decided to assemble General Mamontov's cavalry, which later became the 4th Cavalry Corps, in the Uriupinskaia-Novokhopersk district in order to make a long distance raid in the enemy's rear.

This corps started to advance in mid-August, when the situation on the right flank was becoming complicated. By misfortune, the Caucasian Army was already tired and so was not only unable to replace the right flank of the Don Army, weakened by the withdrawal of the Mamontov cavalry, but was not even able to destroy the troops of the enemy Volga Group. Profiting from this delay the enemy strengthened this group (8th, 9th and 10th Armies) up to 90,000 with troops from the Siberian Front and in mid-August started an offensive along the whole front between the Volga and Kholer. At the same time the Selevatchev Group executed an offensive aimed at breaking the front between the Don



and Volunteer Armies: by virtue of the extreme extension of the front, it fell on the rear of the Volunteer Army after crossing the Kupiansk to Voltchansk railway. The Don command, waiting for the success of Mamontov's cavalry, resolved to sacrifice its own interests: it decided to abandon the north-east corner of the Don and send its cavalry north.

Profiting from the gap between the Don Army and the Caucasian Army and the lifting of the 2nd Corps to the sector north of Povorino, the enemy passed by the two flanks of the 1st (which was already under the command of the Caucasian Army) and the 2nd Corps of the Don Army and so forced them to retire behind the Don and the Kholer: it then fell on the Caucasian Army and forced it to retire towards Tsaritsyn.

During this time the situation of the troops opposed to the Selivatchev group was re-established thanks to the activity of the Volunteer Army, permitting the 3rd Corps of the Don Army to advance [page 83] on the Gobutchar to Pavlovsk front and on the upper course of the Rossoche.

The Mamontov cavalry group in some tough combat broke through the enemy's front and passed well into its rear, capturing Tambov on 18 August, Koslov on the 23rd and Lebedian on the 29th. At this moment General Mamontov learned of the success of the Red Army at the junction point of the Don and Volunteer Armies: he turned towards the front to lend help: on 31 August he seized Eletz; on 5 September he occupied Griasi with one of his columns and Kastornoi (to the west of Voronezh) with the other: on 11 September he entered Voronezh and on 18 September he rejoined the troops at the front to the south-west of Korotoiak, to then help the 3rd Corps to occupy that town and advance towards the Liski hub.

Without looking at the prizes taken by this corps it is necessary to indicate that it had destroyed a large number of important rail-hubs as well as many cannon and munitions depots. It must be recognised however that the return of the corps to the south was a mistake. The general march of the operation showed that the appearance of our cavalry in the extreme rear of the enemy army had caused a terrible panic in Moscow without making any influence on the front. One can deduce that it would have been more useful to continue the raid onto Moscow to chase away the central power and assist the population to rise up.

As this raid had been accomplished with ease we have the right to think that it would have been possible for the cavalry to seize Moscow: the question of holding the city would have depended solely on the population and its resolution to fight the Bolsheviks. This operation would have presented no danger for the cavalry as the Bolsheviks had no means of holding it, in case of danger our cavalry would have been able to join our army at any point on the front.

The immediate result of the raid was to provoke the enemy into sending its best cavalry corps, that of Budienny, from the Tsaritsyn sector to the Voronezh area with the aim of opposing our cavalry: it also probably encouraged the forming of large cavalry groups for similar operations.

This raid was detrimental in certain aspects, notably on account of the large amount of pillaging undertaken by some of the participants. Many ensured that private goods and inhabitants would be respected and only the Communist depots [page 84] would meet this fate. Objects of necessity found in conquered stores were even distributed to the population. But pillage is pillage. If the Bolsheviks excelled at it, their enemies had to do precisely the opposite, so that their conduct would give better results. The command tried to exert control over the booty conquered by the Cossacks in the course of the raid, but in vain, because the troops succeeded in evading it.

Also noteworthy was a brilliant success of the Don Army's 2nd Corps. In a series of battles from 6 to 22 September, this corps stopped the offensive of the enemy after they had crossed over to the right bank of the Kholer: it threw them back to the left bank inflicting a serious defeat and taking 15,000 prisoners, 11 cannons and 70 machine-guns.

However, on 27 September a new enemy offensive, enveloping both flanks, threatened to cut off the line of retreat to the Don River of the 2nd Corps and forced the army to retire behind that river with the aim of regrouping.

After being brought back into the front, the Mamontov cavalry corps undertook another difficult mission. Having crossed the Don on 25 September to the north of Korotoiak and fallen on the rear of the enemy group occupying the Liski bridge, which was impossible to approach from the south, it forced this group to evacuate this rail hub on 6 October.

During this operation, the cavalry corps established communications with General Shkuro's cavalry, which had occupied without difficulty the town of Voronezh after its first capture by the Don Army, and thus prepared the liberation of the northern territory [of the Don?].

The Don Army executed a series of difficult operations between the time of the retreat behind the Donetz and the end of September:

- 1) it contained on the Donetz the enemy pressure which threatened the Cossacks with complete annihilation;
- 2) during its stationing on the Donetz, in concert with the Volunteer Army and Caucasian Army, it destroyed the morale of the Soviet Army;
- 3) in June the Don Army completely cleared the enemy from Don territory thanks to some brilliant raids from its two cavalry groups supported by the infantry's offensive.



4) by means of a daring and deep raid into the enemy's rear, the Cossacks prepared the way for an advance of the [page 85] AFSR on Moscow: this raid was made despite conflicting with the Don's direct interests as some Cossack territory was still held by the enemy, which had profited from the weakness on its left flank to once more occupy the left bank of the Don.

The effort of the Cossack army is shown by the following figures.

This army counted around the dates below:

23 May	15,000 men	131 cannons	531 machine-guns
29 June	40,000	–	–
28 July	42,500	177	743
14 August	30,250	161	655
14 September	39,500	175	724
14 October	46,500	192	939

Nevertheless the movement of all the forces to the north was prevented by the enemy's Volga Group with contained the Soviet 8th, 9th and 10th Armies, including the two best cavalry corps of Budienny and Dumenko.

Understanding the grave danger that this group represented, the Don command had asked the high command many times to destroy them before proceeding in a northwards movement. It proposed concentrating all the cavalry mass of the AFSR in the region of Voronezh in order to annihilate entirely the enemy group on the Volga by an attack on its rear, first from the direction of Balachev, then according to the situation, from Saratov or Kamychin. This operation would change the situation on the whole front which was then advancing on all its extent outside Don territory, putting to end the extremely acute question of the so-called "border sickness" of the Cossacks, who did not like to go far from the confines of the Don.

The command's propositions were rejected and the Cossack army had to take part in the liberation of the northern Don: the Liski operation already mentioned was the start of this action, for which a new mobilisation of 20,000 men was made.

At this time there was a move in the enemy Volga Group to the north-west, with a concentration of large forces near Voronezh. Around this time insurrections also broke out in the rear of the Volunteer Army.

With regards to the Summer offensive of 1919, it is necessary to mention an important fact which prevented the exploitation of the success obtained.

[page 86] In the Ukraine the landlords, who had regained their self-confidence, joined themselves to the victorious army and profited from its presence not only to regain that which they had lost, but also to avenge themselves on those that they accused of despoiling them.

As soon as the staff of the Don Army was told of this revolting fact, it communicated all the known details to the High Command and made it aware that it advised applying very energetic measures.

At the same time, there appeared in the "Don Army Monitor" a series of articles intended to set straight who imagined that they would be able to exploit events in their own personal interests.

Continuing the offensive in the Liski district towards the north-east, the Don 3rd and 4th Corps met serious resistance around Bobrov and Chesmenka: consequently, the command ordered a general offensive. It started on 8 October: around the 28th the right flank of the Don Army advanced on the Griasi to Tsaritsyn railway while the centre (2nd Corps) once more cleared the enemy from the right bank of the Kholer.

At the end of October, precise information was received that the enemy intended to pierce the front in the Voronezh sector where a weakening in the Don troops was occurring just when, on the orders of the High Command, a brigade of cavalry was sent to the rear of the Volunteer Army to stifle the insurrections. With the same aim a division of the Caucasian Army which had been sent to stiffen the troops in the Voronezh to Kursk sector was sent to the rear.

At the end of October, the enemy made a new energetic offensive all along the front: this was the start of the last act of the struggle told above, which ended with a general retreat of the AFSR towards the Crimea.



The catastrophe of 1919 to 1920 on the AFSR front and the retreat of the anti-Bolshevik troops to the Crimea. October 1919 to March 1920

From October the situation in front of the AFSR was very unfavourable:

- 1) Having reinforced its armies with troops pulled from [page 87] the Siberian Front, the enemy commenced a decisive offensive along the whole front.
- 2) The rear of the Volunteer Army broke into insurrection, which forced it to retire from the front part of its forces and which certainly exercised a moral effect on the soldiers.
- 3) The troops of the AFSR having fought hard all summer were overworked.
- 4) The weakness of the AFSR and the enlargement of the front during Summer led to a scattering of units and a total exhaustion of reserves.
- 5) The complete disorganisation of the rear and the activity of malicious elements, who utilised the success of the army to their own profit, raised the popular masses against the AFSR.

In addition, the 18,000 infantry, 19,000 cavalry and 200 cannons of the Don Army found themselves facing 49,800 infantry, 17,800 cavalry and 360 cannons of the Red Army.

[map 1 would appear to relevant here]

This situation led the Don command to conceive the idea of supplying the whole army with horses. It launched at the end of November a mobilisation order for horses and asked the High Command to seek the Kuban authorities to make every effort to assist.

It must be said that the Kuban Cossacks did not participate in the struggle in a sufficient manner, if one takes account of the proportion of soldiers mobilised out of the population. Well informed people were able to give reasons for this passivity: in any case the desire to save their skin was strong among the Cossacks. Moreover, the enemy was a long way from the Kuban and each could comfortably say, "Let's hope that they don't fall upon us."

The Kuban politicians blamed this situation on the abnormal relations between the Kuban government and the High Command, but in using this argument in their fateful propaganda they increased the disorganisation at the front and promoted desertion.

The enemy offensive grew with great speed and around mid-December they found themselves already in the northern part of the bend in the Don: the Voronezh Shock Group, which occupied that town on 29 October, found itself near the rail hub at Valuiki, threatening the right flank and rear of the Volunteer Army.

[page 88] The cavalry group of the Don and Caucis concentrated in the Valuiki sector under General Mamontov could not fulfil the hopes placed in it. It had 3,500 Cossacks and about 1,000 Caucasians. To this was added about 1,350 infantry. General Mamontov knew that the troops were worn out from continual fighting and could no longer offer any resistance: those of the Kuban were particularly weak and demoralised.

On 10 December, Mamontov's cavalry group was, by order of the High Command, taken from the Don Army and placed under the Volunteer Army.

It was then (11 December) that the commander of the Don Army sent a telegram where among other things he said: "the Don Army had detached 6,500 bayonets and sabres to reinforce the Volunteer Army and the needs of the interior front. This figure can be raised to 8,000 if one adds the reinforcements already moving. This fact cannot but harm the ability of the Don front to resist, and I fear that if enemy pressure persists, that the Army will not be in a state to hold the banks of the Don."

Then alluding to the weakness of the Kuban Cossack strength, he said: "For fear of the most disastrous results in the near future, I beg you to share the necessary burden in an equal manner between the various districts of southern Russia, because of first importance the Don Cossacks must be relieved urgently ..."

As we see, it was difficult to count on any activity from the Don Army and the cavalry in particular: nevertheless the troops on the right flank and centre continued to resist the enemy offensive and prevent them passing to the right bank of the Don.

The situation was less good on the left flank. The enemy profiting from a vast gap between the 3rd Don Corps and Mamontov's cavalry corps, gained the rail knot at Kupiansk, and occupied Starobelsk and Svatovo on 16 December with its cavalry on the flank and to the rear of the group: this movement, together with a strong pressure from the north, placed General Mamontov in a difficult position and forced him to evacuate Kupiansk after three days of hard combat.

The decision taken by the commander of the Volunteer Army to replace General Mamontov with a Kuban general [page 89] was protested in a report declaring that the strength of his group was 4,350 sabres and 2,000 bayonets from the Don to which only 1,700 men from the Caucis could be added: it finished thus, "taking into account the strength of the



cavalry group, I consider that replacing me for no apparent reason with a shorter-serving man who does not belong to our army is not compatible with the honour of the Don Army and is a personal offense. Consequently, I regard it as impossible to keep command of the Don 4th Corps” (this corps was part of the group).

This protest was supported by the command and by the ataman and the matter was ruled by the return of the 4th Corps to the Don Army.

It is obvious that this complication was not favourable in the general situation.

Another evil which had a harmful effect and particularly in the combat at Svatovo should be mentioned. There were an enormous amount of equipment trains and railway carriages attached to the staffs and the technical groups. When the army advanced all this mass was spread across the rear, but in the course of a precipitate retreat they did not have time to retire from the front and found themselves in the way of the troops. These impediments, of no use to the troops, inconveniently attracted masses of deserters. After the evacuation of Svatovo, General Mamontov flushed out 4,000 men from their “base” in the equipment trains of the 4th Corps alone. He repeated this enforcement many times.

The crossing of the Don by the Dumenko’s Red Cavalry Corps in mid-December in the direction of Bogutchar completed the complication of the situation, and the abandonment of Kharkov by the Volunteer Army showed that the situation there was also poor.

Following its old pattern of only holding on natural positions, the Don command gave the order to organise the defence on the Donetz position and proclaimed a supplementary mobilisation: unfortunately, none of these measures were executed.

The experience of the Civil War showed that engineers were not at their best in preparing field fortifications. They could only [page 90] work in conditions of normal war: so that despite the numerous resources supplied to them, the Engineer Department was not able to achieve either the necessary work or procure the needed tools. The men who directed the work had their eyes turned towards the rear and thought only about immediately preparing to retreat.

Among the specialist troops, only the Don aviators devoted themselves courageously to their mission with their half-deteriorated machines. They rendered great services, above all during the insurrection in the Upper Don. Unfortunately, their rear services were installed in trains which immobilised a very large number of wagons and locomotives.

The armoured cars were also more an encumbrance than a use, the enemy knowing very well how to use this arm while the Don cars were always being repaired when they were needed. The tanks were no help; but since their activity with the Volunteer and Caucasian Armies was very great, it can only be deduced that the Don Command did not know how to use them. During the most critical moments, in the month of December 1918, near Novocherkassk, the tanks refused to march and fell into enemy hands. To clarify it a bit, the tankers complained that they were not supported by the Don troops, while the latter accused the tanks of not doing their duty. The command of the automobile sections showed proof of total incapacity: there was always a enormous quantity of cars and trucks at the rear of the army, while there were none at the front. Even when sections of automobile-borne machine-guns were organised there was no way to execute the project, because the rear refused to deprive itself of personal comforts.

Among the technical services, the great work accomplished the special trains (of engineer Kalakutski and others) who repaired with praiseworthy rapidity the damage to the railways and other works should be mentioned.

The army was beaten by the rear which sheltered behind it. During the whole civil war those in the rear were merry and amused themselves freely while the combatants at the front were dying in the service of the motherland. And the same people who were exuberant with enthusiasm in the periods of success were seized with panic from the first signs of a reverse.

[page 91] One of the greatest plagues of the rear was without contest the service of provisions. At the end its chief was certainly a man of integrity and gifted with great qualities, but how could he control the vultures in the rear who swooped on all the supplies, taking the bulk and leaving the remainder for the front? So the front lacked boots and clothes: to which can be added the avarice of the Cossacks. Not only did they present themselves with uniforms in rags, but they hastened to send home their new equipment: and one often saw women and children in the villages dressed in uniforms. The supply service and the equipment train were high and mighty too, as was shown by the example of the Mamontov’s 4th Corps. After his raid he was abandoned by his supply train which only rejoined him at the moment of the retreat into the Crimea.

The supply trains which separated from their corps attracted all sorts of stragglers. In order to replace their supply services the combatant units were forced to requisition materials from where they were, and the discontent grew among the peasant population.

The fight against theft and pillage was all the more difficult because the Cossacks saw it as a means of recuperating what had been “requisitioned”, “nationalised” etc from them by the Bolsheviks during their invasion of the Don.

The rail services were still more deplorable. Repairs of damage were made by technical trains with extraordinary rapidity, but the lines could not be placed on a rational basis. The directors of the militarised lines kept themselves in



office work, while the local station commanders bowed and scraped to local agents with the aim of making themselves more popular. And these, badly paid, took bribes everywhere. Some exemplary punishments were needed to put a stop to this corruption, but the High Command was too weak and inspired by overly humanitarian principles.

The health service was a nightmare. While recognising that it was difficult to procure the needed medicines and medical personnel, it is inadmissible that a sufficient number of nurses and orderlies could not be assembled. Note for example this revolting fact: according to a report of the inspector of health services for January 1920, when the army was on the left bank of the Don and [page 92] Manych, part of the hospital establishment was on the right bank of the Manych. In directing the report, the inspector not only did not know where his hospitals were, but had not even gone the bother of glancing at a map to ensure that they avoided being left in enemy held territory.

There was yet another factor which contributed to ease the success of the Bolsheviks: this was the hostile attitude of the "White" officers with regard to the "Red" officers, above all those on the staff. This hostility prevented the latter from passing in greater numbers across to the "Whites".

Already by the moment of the retreat in Autumn 1919, the Commander-in-Chief's staff had asked the advice of the staff of the armies. In the circulars which reported on this question the abnormal state of affairs was indicated.

The Don command immediately gave a detailed reply.

It was noted that from the moment of the unification of command at the start of 1919, the Don command had stated on its own initiative its point of view on this matter in a special report and it reconfirmed its opinion this time.

Here in outline is that opinion: the officers who found themselves in the "White" army could not take towards their brothers who were forced to serve in the Soviet Army the attitude of "infallible judges". Taking into account the system of constraint employed by the Soviets towards their officers, the terror system of hostages and guarantors, it must be considered that the large majority of officers in the Red Army were forced into service by circumstances. In taking this view, the attitude to officers crossing to our side would be quite different from that that had become customary in the extreme rear of the AFSR: on that condition the Red officers would pass more freely to our side.

In these lamentable conditions, the army started southwards towards the Donetz, on a march made difficult by the season: the last mobilisation did not meet expectations because those called up saw the approach of the enemy and rushed to the rear. The order to retreat to the Donetz was given on 18 December.

The command wished to halt the army there, reconstitute it and repeat the operations of Spring 1919, all the more so because the Cossacks, after the sad experience of the previous year, [page 93] left their villages and followed the army in its retreat. Unfortunately, most of the leaders no longer had any energy, nor confidence in victory, and throughout December the situation was such that more and more deplorable reports reached the High Command: some talked already of capitulation as did the profiteers in the rear.

The command of the Don Army, General Sidorin, did not wish to hear talk of this question, which was not even posed. Around that time, 2 January, it was clear that the army would not be able to hold the Donetz: the left wing and the centre, as well as the Volunteer Army, fell back in the direction of Rostov, while the right wing slowly retired to the south and the Don.

A success, unfortunately without long-term effects, came when General Mamontov's cavalry corps from 28 December to 2 January destroyed approximately two enemy divisions, but had to retire in front of the Red cavalry without serious combat.

On 3 January the weakened Volunteer Army received the title of "Volunteer Corps" and was placed under the Don command who had taken a decision to give a final combat to the north of Novochoerkassk so as to not abandon it without a struggle.

General Mamontov's cavalry once more had a success when it annihilated two infantry and one cavalry division, but it could no longer resist and started an uncoordinated retreat to the south. The reason for this breakdown was simple: the Cossacks knew that behind them was the Don, partly frozen, with a single bridge near Aksaiskaia stanitsa, and they dared not continue the fight in those conditions.

In general during the retreat the Don Cossack formations, like their command, perhaps unconsciously, showed little eagerness to fight with the enemy cavalry. The Bolshevik leaders fortunately did not realise this and did not know how to carry an easy victory. Perhaps they also doubted their forces. We think this last hypothesis most likely, taking into account the defeats suffered by the Red cavalry on the left bank of the Don at the start of 1919. The Don command, noting the lack of activity in its cavalry, tried vainly to force it into active operations.

[page 94] On 9 January the whole army found itself already on the left bank of the Don River, after a particularly difficult crossing. Some unexpected cold periods saved the situation and they only stopped when the army had finished crossing the river – it was said that the Don's weather wished to save its sons. (map 5)

But the retreat behind the Don and Manych changed in a single blow the situation of the army and gave it a solid line of natural defence. The spirit of the troops rose, their number grew from 22,000 in the middle of December until it passed



40,000 men, with 200 cannons and 860 machine-guns around 14 January, without counting the Volunteer Corps. The explanation for this is easy: deprived of their homes, the deserters rejoined the troops. But one can safely say that a considerable number of men were hiding in the rear: and to these figures can be added again a large number of refugees. So much that [page 95] the Don was uninhabited, the Cossacks feared to stay.

But those of the Kuban and Caucus all returned home and the decomposition of their units was complete. The deserters found this way to excuse themselves – they were returning home to join the Kuban Army which had started forming.

The enemy waited some time at Rostov and Novocherkassk to celebrate its success which, on 18 January, allowed the Don command to form a strong reserve of cavalry in the Rostov area.

That same day, Budienny's cavalry crossed the Don near Aksaiskaia stanitsa and directed its offensive at the point where the Don Army joined the Volunteer Corps.

It should be noted that the enemy's offense was led exclusively by two groups of cavalry: the Dumenko group with no more than 5,000 men advanced to the east along the Voronezh to Novocherkassk railway, while the Budienny group of some 15,000 was a little to the west. As for the infantry, its role was near zero and was beaten whenever it intervened.

The Bolshevik cavalry did not possess exceptional qualities, being itself composed for a large part of Don and Kuban Cossacks: it had success when its adversary lacked tenacity or was completely disorganised. One sees this in the combats which took place in January on the Don and Manych, where the retreating Cossack troops still continued to battle the enemy cavalry who were so proud of their previous exploits.

In the combats of 18 to 21 January, the concentric attack of the Don and Volunteer troops finished by giving the Budienny group, which had crossed the Don to the east of Rostov, a severe defeat: it was thrown back to the other side of the river. The two enemy corps undertook an attack on the lower course of the Manych, but in the combats of 26 to 29 January, the Don 4th Cavalry Corps beat that of Dumenko (28 January) and that of Budienny (29 January) who lost all their artillery and all their machine-guns: distressed and in panic they fled behind the Don.

At the head of 4th Corps there was a very well known general of cavalry, Pavlov; the chief of staff remained the same, General Kalynovski, young and capable, who had distinguished himself on a cavalry raid with General Secretov [page 96] while he was chief of staff, and during the course of the fighting of 4th Corps which he had been with from the beginning.

At the same time the Volunteer Army fought the enemy around Rostov, where the latter attempted to force the passage of the river with its infantry.

There was on the part of the Don command an undeniable mistake in not knowing how to exploit its success. Although General Pavlov had proposed making a pursuit, it was decided to not start active operations until the moment when the Kuban troops arrived, a concentration that should have taken place at the start of February, But the formation of this army went badly, as was later learned, and some Cossacks were drawn away by propaganda, forming special groups called "Greens" which disturbed the rear services and drew troops from the front to combat them.

We will stop for a while to look at the political situation. It must be said that the events were the consequence of dissension between the High Command and the Kuban government, but we will not be able to give exact details here, leaving that to better informed people.

However, we must note that on the initiative of the Kuban there appeared an idea around December 1919: the creation of a Krug of all the Cossack Voiskos which should take supreme power.

This Supreme Krug exchanged telegrams on 23 January with General Denikin, and the next day the President of the Don government, Melnikov, speaking in the name of the ataman and his government, asked that people not accentuate tension in the relationship with the Volunteer Army and that new allies were not being sought. The Don command was of the opinion:

- 1) The possibility and necessity of continuing the struggle;
- 2) The need for the Kuban troops to be sent to the Front;
- 3) That the border regions should be autonomous and the diverse Voiskos should have a great deal of autonomy on the condition that there was a single High Command.
- 4) The need to stress the idea of a united Russia, because the Russian volunteers and the officers would sacrifice themselves for Russia, but not solely for the benefit of the Cossacks: this was expressed clearly by the Volunteer leaders and the command of the Don and Kuban armies.
- 5) The Volunteers would not submit to local power:
- 6) The mountaineers of the north Caucus would not recognise the power of the Supreme Krug.

Thus the decisions of the meeting were summarized by General Denikin in his declaration to the Krug. The evening before his address, finding himself in the Headquarters of the Don Army, he had communicated its general tenor to the



commander of that army, to his chief of staff and to the provisional quartermaster-general. He asked their advice, made some changes, and added his agreement with them in a paragraph on the agrarian question. In sum, despite all the misunderstandings before and the surprising discussions in the rear, the Don command remained openly faithful to General Denikin.

On 29 January he presented himself to the Supreme Krug and started his speech with the following words, "In these days of defeat everyone is seeking the cause of the deterioration of the front. The Right sees it in the lack of vigour in the execution of its program, the Left in the reactionary character of the government; others in separatist tendencies; others in intransigence to the new states. Others yet – in the High Command; and everybody finally agrees to incriminate the pillaging and general poor state of the troops, even those who have pushed them in this direction with the intention of making up for their lack of patriotism by the attraction of booty. The release of political passions prevents us from knowing the truth ..."

General Denikin showed nevertheless that the morale of the army was lowered not only by the retreat and the spirit of lucre, but also by the violent propaganda which fought against the authority of the command and sought to distort the reasons for the struggle. He stressed then the intensity of desertion among the Caucasian troops and brought out the fact that at the most critical moment for the Kuban Cossacks that the latter had only 8,500 men at the front.

Commenting on events in the rear, the Commander-in-Chief said notably, "Ekaterinodar has denied Russia, has created a Cossack state with an independent army: it is preparing now to seize absolute military and civil power in the south-east. One thing is forgotten, that the Volunteer Army and the Commander-in-Chief serve Russia and not the Supreme Krug."

[page 98] "Unfortunately the talks in Ekaterinodar have already had their effect. The front thinks it can no longer continue the struggle in such conditions ..."

Stressing the necessity of a unified Russia, General Denikin defined his opinion on the border states of Russia:

"1) I recognise the *de facto* independence of the border governments who are fighting the Bolsheviks."

"2) The establishment of future relations will be the subject of a treaty between these states and the central government of Russia."

"It is not intolerance, but the prime interests of the Russian Empire which are being considered."

General Denikin added that he personally did not ... [line or words missing in the original] ... Council held on 25 January, declared that if the Supreme Krug refused to participate in the organisation of a pan-Russian power and kept its pretensions of forming a Cossack state, that the Volunteers and officers occupying posts in the Cossack technical troops would withdraw.

Outlining the ruin and desolation in which it was equally possible to honestly serve Russia ... [more missing text?] ... the following conditions:

- 1) A great Russia, one and indivisible.
- 2) Submission by the Cossack armies to a sole command.
- 3) Fight to the death against Bolshevism.
- 4) Autonomy for border regions and large autonomy for the Cossack Voiskos, with self-government in the districts and territories.
- 5) Participation of Cossack representatives in the central government.
- 6) Appointment of a representative body with consultative powers.
- 7) Division of the land between the peasants and working Cossacks.
- 8) Guarantee of the professional interest of the workers.
- 9) A general Constituent Assembly which would determine the future form of the government.

... [A garbled paragraph discussing the future form of the government, which might be monarchical or republican]

This declaration, like that of the Council of 25 January, shed some light on the conflict. We cannot when looking for causes [page 99] either establish which of the parties was responsible, but we can say that the Don government, who knew that its army formed the most important force in the AFSR, never demanded separation (from the moment it had submitted to the Commander-in-Chief) despite the complications during which the government had naturally always sought to safeguard the interests of its own army.

This attitude was evidently appreciated by General Denikin who in difficult times had always kept good relations with the leaders of the Don Army and found support from them. One cannot otherwise explain the meeting held by General Denikin with them on the night before his address.



On the other hand, the legitimate desire manifested in Cossack political circles to be represented in the pan-Russian government must be admitted.

The concessions made by General Denikin allowed a mixed government to be formed in the middle of February headed by General Bagayevski, the Don Ataman, which satisfied this desire. Unfortunately, it was already too late.

Let us now see the reasons for the defeat as formulated by the Don command in their Order of the Day for 30 January, #25. The commanding General expressed himself thus:

“Valiant soldiers of the Don Army and Volunteer Corps. When the criminal rear of our army completely fell apart, when our administration – rotten with misappropriation – misunderstood the law and the needs of the population in the occupied territories, they rose against the corruption of the army; when the enemy, having concentrated against us all its forces, started its offensive, we were forced to retreat fighting.”

After stressing the latest successes of the army, General Sidorin said, “The faults of the past will not be committed again. The struggle for the people and for Russia, for the Cossacks and their liberty, these are now the principles of our action and work. Placed on the same front the Cossacks and Volunteers will advance, sweeping away Communism and setting up a basis for peace for all the Russian people.”

One of the causes of the defeat was the excessive number of people occupied in rear area services: [page 100] when General Kelchevski, Chief of Staff of the Don Army and named Minister of War in the new southern government, looked at the list of employees of the Ministry, the number exceeded 1,800. He gave the order to reduce it to a minimum.

Lets look now at what happened at the front: knowing that no assistance was going to come from the Kuban Cossacks, at the start of February the command decided to start an offensive northwards with its available forces. It was then that it received news of a shift of all the enemy cavalry in the direction of the disorganised front of the Kuban Army (map 5). To parry this manoeuvre it was necessary to order (14 February) the 4th Don Corps to make a sharp turn to the south-east to destroy the enemy cavalry and to the Volunteer Corps, joined to the Don 3rd Corps, to start an attack towards Rostov and Novochoerkassk.

As misfortune had it there was a terrible cold at this time (-33°C) which definitively caused the loss of the army.

The Budienny detachment, advancing along the right bank of the Manych and the Velikokniayeskaia to Torgovaia railway, found all along the route large inhabited localities, good for staying overnight, while the Cossacks on the left bank found it completely devastated from the first Red invasion and deprived of any shelter for them. The result was that when the troops arrived at the Torgovaia crossing (18 February) of the 12,000 men of the 4th Don Cavalry Corps only 5,500 were still in the line: the others remained on the route, poor victims of the cold.

Diminished in strength, weakened in morale, the corps was in no state to fight the enemy cavalry, even though it had been victorious in January. Meanwhile the Volunteer Corps crossed the Don in the course of some fruitful combats and on 21 February occupied Rostov and Nakhitchevan. The 3rd Don Corps also made ground towards Novochoerkassk, but could not develop the attack properly, and was surprised on its right flank by Dumenko against whom it had no cavalry to oppose.

This situation led to the evacuation of Rostov and Nakhitchevan on 23 February, and a retreat across the Don.

On 25 February a counter-attack by Budienny failed. The command then decided to concentrate against him all the available cavalry [page 101]: Don Cossacks, Caucasians and Volunteers.

Profiting from the weakening of the front in the Rostov sector, the enemy made a general offensive and succeeding in breaking the line. By 29 February the anti-Bolshevik forces were resigned to collecting their troops behind a new defensive line along the Kagalnik River. But it could not be held. The morale of the troops was dreadful: orders received were not executed. The whole army flowed south towards the Kuban.

The command felt that it was would not be possible to make a front there and the point of attraction for the disordered troops was Novorossisk.

By 5 March the army was already on the line of Novoleuchkovskaia to the Chelbass River. By 9 March it was from Staroleuchovskaia to the Beysug River, the right wing being covered by a cavalry group which, although twice the size of the enemy group, was incapable of stemming its advance.

On 17 March the troops withdrew to the left bank of the Kuban, where the Volunteer Corps was detached from the Don's command. At the crossing of the Kuban the same scenes were repeated from the crossing of the Don. The Don Army had a single bridge at its disposal near Ekaterinodar and others could not be thrown up quickly enough to the east and west of that town.

From the moment of the retreat to the Kuban, the operations bureau of the Don Staff had predicted that the army would not be able to maintain itself on the Kuban. A report on this question, made during the time the Staff was in Timachevskaya on 10 March, mentioned that the retreat of the whole army to Novorossisk would have grave



complications. Firstly, it was foreseen that there were insufficient means to transport the entire army and the refugees from Novorossisk to the Crimea. Also noted was that the majority of Cossacks, separated by the sea from their land and deprived of their horses, would be incapable of continuing the fight.

A strong liaison with the Volunteer forces, heading directly to Novorossisk, was proposed in order to permit every chance for the Kuban Cossacks to organise themselves and, having explained the situation clearly to the combatants, to retire to the south-east in the direction of Maikop. The richness of this area could be profited from to winter the troops, [page 102] all the more so since the enemy forces were insignificant. It would be possible to recommence the struggle in Spring.

In case of failure there were two routes possible to retire from Maikop: to the south-east towards Piatigorsk, presenting the flank to a weak enemy group in Stavropol, and to the south-west, along the railway to Tuapse, from where one could embark for the Crimea or follow the sea's edge to Georgia. It would be necessary in the latter case to open talks with Georgia for whom a defeat of the Cossacks meant the threat of Bolshevik invasion. It was also noted that the Staff would have to no longer move by rail, but on horse so as to keep close to the troops.

But the Chief of Staff declined this project, indicating that the decision had already been taken in agreement with the High Command: the army, in case of necessity, would retire to Novorossisk, from where the coast could be followed to the south-east. The Kuban Cossacks would have to follow in part the Armavir to Tuapse railway, with the bulk of their forces evacuated by boat to the Crimea. The Chief of Staff said that talks with Georgia had already been started, and that the order had been given to organise bases on the line of Novorossisk, as well as from Armavir to Tuapse.

The situation of the armies became extremely complicated. In the second period of the retreat (19 to 21 March), the front of the Don Army was broken in the Ekaterinodar area by insignificant enemy forces, the tired troops not having offered the required resistance. At the same time, the right wing of the Reds was reinforced by some (Kuban) Cossacks crossing over. In the rear of the army the attacks of the "Greens" became continuous: they disarmed isolated detachments and pillaged the convoys.

We need to stop to look at two events. The bulk of the Cossacks of the Kuban Army dispersed to their homes, some trying to cajole the Bolsheviks by remaining neutral or even with feigned indications of friendship, the others to seek the "Greens" who attracted the Cossacks by promising them a quick end to the fratricidal war.

The first set were very quickly disappointed and scarcely had the Reds crossed the northern borders of the Kuban and installed their power than the northern Kuban stanitsas broke out into a new set of insurrections. These attempts remained as ever isolated, unfortunately without [page 103] tangible results and a portion of the Cossacks fled to the south and rejoined the retreating army, while others were probably forced to march with the Bolsheviks.

The "Green" groups, formed in the Voronezh district starting in May and June 1919 were joined by elements refusing to fight in either camp. These were men worried for their skins, who did not constitute a grave peril. In the Kuban the "Greens" already became more dangerous. Preaching peace, they attracted to themselves Cossacks worn out by the fighting. And since they lived in the woods and the mountains, and needed to obtain supplies, they pillaged the convoys after disarming the escort.

The Don command wished to enter into talks with them to understand their spirit and find a means of conciliation.

On 19 March an officer was sent on a mission to the Smolenskaia stanitsa, 20 versts to the south of Ekaterinodar, where a rendezvous had been arranged with two "Green" leaders, Piliuk and Savitski. Piliuk, a Kuban Cossack captain, was without doubt their military leader: Savitski – lawyer, vice-president of the "Kuban Territorial Rada" and member of the Supreme Krug – was their political leader. Both expressed their doubts about the realisation of the Cossack program in the Constituent Assembly: they would be obliged to conquer all Russia. The "Greens" thought that the Assembly would soon convoked by the Bolsheviks or the Socialist-Revolutionaries: the civil war having failed, the Cossacks would not lose everything, because the Bolsheviks coveted the wealth and not the soul of the Cossacks.

Piliuk added that their delegates in Ekaterinodar had an understanding with representatives of the Soviet government, who had accepted as a starting point for peace talks the independence of Cossack territories. But to be able to discuss peace it was necessary to fight, to have real force. To this end, after the evacuation of Ekaterinodar, the "Greens" would send a detachment to occupy the town and keep a vigilant neutrality with regards to the Bolsheviks.

He advised that the political men of the Cossacks, still in Ekaterinodar, should enter into peace negotiations along the lines indicated. The "Greens" were opposed to all repression, sympathised with the Don Cossacks and did not want to fight them.

Piliuk then indicated that it would be impossible to cross the mountains because of the natural obstacles, the lack [page 104] of supplies and the attitude of the population. These, despite official declarations of neutrality, would continue to commit guerilla acts.

He explained the intransigence of the "Greens" with regard to the Volunteer Army by the exploitation suffered by the Cossacks at the hands of General Denikin and the latter's refusal to accept the peace conditions proposed by the



Bolsheviks. While stressing their hostility to Communism, the two leaders expressed their profound sympathy for the Socialist-Revolutionary cause.

This interview showed that in general the movement of the “Greens” was a fight against the civil war and the bloody reprisals. But later events showed that all the calculations of Piliuk and his followers were wrong.

On 21 March the army continued its retreat southwards in the direction of Novorossisk. The bulk of the cavalry, cut from the Ekaterinodar to Novorossisk railway, veered south-east. It united later with the debris of the Kuban Army and, having had an unfavourable welcome from Georgia, the troops headed together, via Tuapse, along the coast of the Black Sea. A small portion of the remainder of the cavalry was transported to the Crimea; the others were dispersed in the mountains, or were obliged to join the Bolsheviks.

As for the retreat of the rest of the troops, it was accomplished under awful conditions.

The initial plan of the High Command, to evacuate at least a part of the army from the Taman peninsular, unfortunately failed as a group of Red cavalry cut off this line of retreat. From Krymskaia station where the two rail lines which the Don and Volunteer Armies were travelling along met, the whole army advanced towards Novorossisk following the difficult route which the railway took through the gorge.

While in these abominable conditions the troops tried in a series of skirmishes to hold back the enemy, it was clear that a happy result was impossible. If the morale of the army had been poor when the troops were behind obstacles as large as the Don and Kuban, one can imagine what it was when it felt it was being driven into the sea. Everyone rushed to the coast to get first to the vessels that could save them. Perhaps the army might have slowed down if it had foreseen the terrible disillusionment that was to await then in Novorossisk.

[page 105] The commission of the Don Army headquarters (three generals and the head of the operations bureau) was charged with studying and deciding on the question of the transport of the troops and refugees. It arrived at the headquarters of the commander-in-chief and informed him that the transport of the whole army and the all the refugees was not possible.

Other than the combatants of the Don Army, of which part had crossed to the “Greens” and which by the figures of 14 February counted 39,500 men, there was the rear services with an equal strength, and on top of this there were innumerable refugees. It was not possible to establish the exact number of the mass which accumulated in Novorossisk, of fighting Cossacks and refugees, cattle, goods of all sorts saved from the Bolsheviks and transported there. And how many more unfortunates were dispersed in the gorges and forests of the Caucasus mountain foothills?

So that western Europe, which still doubts the ignominy and ferocity of the Bolsheviks, should understand the extent of its error, the Don authorities later published some information and precise statistics. From their study one can conclude that the Don Cossacks, spearhead of the fight against the Red Tsars in Moscow, at the time of these terrible days of the loss of their motherland and the retreat towards the Black Sea did not constitute a class, a proscribed group of bourgeois, but represented the great mass of working Cossacks, who were not put off by hard work but who had however preferred this grievous exodus to Bolshevik tyranny.

General Denikin made it known to the commission that he would consent to not only transport to the Crimea all the army but also all the refugees, if the Don command could guarantee the resistance of Novorossisk for one more week.

The desire of the Commander-in-Chief to save the Don Army, which up until then had furnished the largest portion to the struggle against the Bolsheviks, from a fatal loss is quite comprehensible, but what reply could the commission give to his proposition?

The facts over-ride any need for commentary. The discussion took place on 25 March, and by 27 March Novorossisk was already evacuated: the bulk of the Don fugitives who had not been able to find a place on the vessels headed south-east along the Black Sea. Unfortunately, there were no vessels [page 106] specially designated for the evacuation of the Don Army, and only those with luck were able to leave Novorossisk that way.

We will not stop here on all the horrors of that evacuation, not on the agonising scenes which accompanied the storming of vessels in Novorossisk port. Without accusing anyone, we can state the brutal facts, leaving to impartial historians the business of unraveling the causes.

We would just like to remark here that in the worst moments and in the middle of the terrible scenes of the evacuation to the Crimea of the troops abandoning the Kuban, Colonel Morosov's brigade of Don Cossacks had been part of General Slachtchev's detachment charged with defending the Perekop Isthmus. This brigade had taken part in all the sufferings of the campaign alongside the Volunteer Army. In this way these Don Cossacks had from the start of the war against the insurgent population in the rear of the Volunteer Army, to save themselves and the save Russia, made sacrifices as large as those of any other Russians.



Conclusion

In summing up what happened during the Don Cossacks' fight against the Bolsheviks, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1) The Don Cossacks were not fertile ground for Bolshevik experiments: on one hand they were penetrated by the notion of the State, and on the other they were ignorant of the intensity of the class struggle which is the basis for the success of the Bolshevik program. The large majority of Don intellectuals are very close to the simple Cossacks, and most of the officers come from that background. This origin is reflected in their attitude and the conservation of a certain stamp of modesty, and they are given the privilege of understanding well the needs and interests of the bulk of the Cossacks. The relative richness of the Cossacks is another obstacle to the development of Bolshevism amongst them.

2) Rejecting Bolshevism, the Don Cossacks however did not begin an active struggle against it until after they had exhausted all means of conciliation. They even made a sad attempt to recognise Soviet power, an attempt that ended however in violent insurrection against that régime which had used atrocious terrorisation.

[page 107] 3) The fight against Bolshevism was undertaken by the whole of the Cossack population and not by "a group of generals and officers" which can be seen by the evidence of the table below, such an army could only recruit its forces from the great mass of the Cossacks:

Date	Forces of the Don Army			Forces of the enemy army		
	Men	Cannons	MGs	Men	Cannons	MGs
1918						
14 May	17,000	21	58	70,000	200	400
14 June	40,000	56	179	65,000	170	350
14 July	49,000	92	272	63,600	198	371
end July	39,000	93	270	40,000	132	–
14 August	31,000	79	267	66,200	233	420
3 December	49,500	153	581	131,200	379	1,087
1919						
14 February	38,000	168	491	124,000	435	1,337
28 February	15,000	168	491	115,000	435	1,337
3 May	15,000	108	441	115,000	538	
23 May ¹	15,000	131	531	110,000	570	
29 June	40,000	131	531	29,000	170	
28 July	43,000	177	793	58,000	279	
14 August	30,000	161	655	63,000	243	
14 September	39,500	175	724	88,500	265	
14 October	46,500	192	939	80,000	372	
28 October	52,500	196	765	71,500	354	
14 November	37,000	207	798	67,600	360	
14 December	22,000	143	535	62,700	300	
1920						
14 January ²	39,000	200	860	70,000	356	
4 February	39,000	243	856	49,000	302	
14 February	38,000	158	687	55,000	260	
26 February ³				44,000	278	
4 March ³				50,000	263	

¹ Start of the Cossack Don offensive

² Not including the Volunteer Army formations

³ Figures are missing for the Don Army

[page 108] 4) The preceding figures allow us to compare the forces of the Don against those of the Reds, and give us an exact figure for the military effort of the Don Cossacks. These numbers are only for combatant units: if one adds the rear services, which experience has shown have many more men than the front, one can see that the Don Cossacks in their fight against Bolshevism furnished at least as much effort as the rest of the Russian population. The losses were proportional to the effort, above all if one thinks of the cruelty of the Soviets to the Cossacks.



5) The reasons for the attitude of the Don peasants towards the Cossacks, part being neutral and part hostile, are clear: if the Russian peasants could be seduced by Bolshevism there is no reason why the Don peasants could not also be and put more faith in the promises of the Soviets than those of the Cossacks.

6) Nevertheless, the Cossacks by admitting all those who fought against the Reds, by their agrarian law and by other texts voted by the Krug, had shown sufficiently that they wished to work with the peasants, in ceding their own land even, previously acquired by great sacrifice.

7) The Don Cossacks did not participate in the fight against the Bolsheviks only to defend their territory, but also took part in the common effort. They had detached troops to the ranks of the Volunteer Army (Colonel Morosov's brigade and the 42nd Don Cossack regiment) and it was General Mamontov's Cavalry Corps who spearheaded the miscarried raid on Moscow. If the great bulk of Cossacks do not venture far from the Don borders it was exclusively the result of a familiar sentiment, the love of home. Moreover, many Cossacks argued that they did not wish to impose their will on Russia. In general, the Don Cossacks did not feel separatist tendencies as was always expressed by their deputies: these stressed that the Don wished to be an autonomous part of Russia, governed by principles laid down in the Constitution.

8) The decision of the Great Krug to proclaim independence for the Don was caused by the fall of the Provisional Government and was only a temporary measure to last until a pan-Russian power was re-established.

[page 109] 9) All the legislative work of the revolutionary period as well as their way of expressing their will also plainly shows their democratic tendencies. Partisans of a convocation of a Constituent Assembly for all Russia, they showed their desires by means of delegates elected according to the four fundamental principles. These delegates chose the supreme leader in the person of the ataman and controlled the work of the government, defending the interests of the Cossacks and trying to smooth over the difficulties with the peasants.

In the table below we can see a detailed list of the work of the Cossack and peasant representatives in the various Krugs and Congresses:

[list of meetings and the prime matter discussed]

[page 110]

10) The recognition by the Cossacks of the command under the AFSR, established by special understanding, shows that they sought to reconstitute a unified Russia.

11) The fact that the struggle against Bolshevism continues still after three years is characteristic: if "all Russia" supports Soviet power, it would be truly impossible for a handful of Cossack and Russian combatants in contact with them to hold against the Russian colossus. It is clear that this fact has other causes, which everyone can appreciate for themselves: we would simply indicate that if the Soviet régime is impractical in western Europe, it is no less so in Russia because it does not respond to the will of the Russian people.

Prague, 31 July 1920

V. Dobrynin



Below are the figures given in the table above but with the ratio of how many “men” for each “cannon” calculated; likewise the ratio of men to MGs; and the averages for half years tabulated.

	Don					Soviets				
	Men	Guns	ratio	MGs	ratio	Men	Guns	ratio	MGs	ratio
1918										
14 May	17,000	21	810	58	293	70,000	200	350	400	175
14 Jun	40,000	56	714	179	223	65,000	170	382	350	186
14 Jul	49,000	92	533	272	180	63,600	198	321	371	171
end July	39,000	93	419	270	144	40,000	132	303		
14 Aug	31,000	79	392	267	116	66,200	233	284	420	158
03 Dec	49,500	153	324	581	85	131,200	379	346	1,087	121
average	37,583	82	532	271	174	72,667	219	331	526	162
1919										
14 Feb	38,000	168	226	491	77	124,000	435	285	1,337	93
28 Feb	15,000	168	89	491	31	115,000	435	264	1,337	86
03 May	15,000	108	139	441	34	115,000	538	214		
23 May	15,000	131	115	531	28	110,000	570	193		
29 Jun	40,000	131	305	531	75	29,000	170	171		
28 Jul	43,000	177	243	793	54	58,000	279	208		
average	27,667	147	186	546	50	91,833	405	222		
1919										
14 Aug	30,000	161	186	655	46	63,000	243	259		
14 Sep	39,500	175	226	724	55	88,500	265	334		
14 Oct	46,500	192	242	939	50	80,000	372	215		
28 Oct	52,500	196	268	765	69	71,500	354	202		
14 Nov	37,000	207	179	798	46	67,600	360	188		
14 Dec	22,000	143	154	535	41	62,700	300	209		
average	37,917	179	209	736	51	72,217	316	235		
1920										
14 Jan	39,000	200	195	860	45	70,000	356	197		
04 Feb	39,000	243	160	856	46	49,000	302	162		
14 Feb	38,000	158	241	687	55	55,000	260	212		
26 Feb						44,000	278	158		
04 Mar						50,000	263	190		
average	38,667	200	199	801	49	53,600	292	184		

