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It notes that “the article was written in 1973, and quite naturally keeps the imprint of time, but it is deliberately published in the author’s version without editorial revision”.

Who took the Crimea in 1920?

In 1973 the military publishing house of the USSR Ministry of Defense published the book *The Path of Valor*¹, the third volume of the memoirs of Marshal of the Soviet Union S.M. Budyonny.

On 16 June 1973, the newspaper *Pravda* published N. Denisov’s review of this book under the meaningful title “How the Party Taught”. Apparently, in the opinion of the reviewer (and the editorial board of *Pravda*?), the memoirs of S.M. Budyonny are the model for Party military historians.

Is it?

The history of the Red Army’s struggle against the White Army of Baron Wrangel has been the topic of many scholarly works, and is given a large place in the five-volume *History of the Civil War*. Several collections of documents relating to this period have been published, as have many articles and memoirs (albeit mainly about the First Horse Army).

How have the memoirs of Budyonny, and in particular his third book, enriched this abundant historical literature?

Let’s look and see.

1. The plan to defeat Wrangel’s army

S.A. Sirotinski, a senior aide to the then commander of the Southern Front M.V. Frunze, wrote on page 188 of his book *Arsen’s Way* (Voenizdat, 1959), about a conversation of V.I. Lenin with Frunze on the upcoming Crimean campaign. Lenin said: “The main thing is to prevent a winter campaign.... Wrangel must not be allowed to flee to the Crimea. His defeat (must) be completed by December.”

On the night of 26 October 1920, Frunze summoned his Army commanders to Apostolovo station and outlined to them the plan for the defeat of Wrangel’s army, developed by the headquarters of the Southern Front. This plan, based on Lenin’s directive, was aimed at encircling and destroying Wrangel’s main forces in the plains of the Taurida, preventing them from escaping to the Crimea.

Soon afterwards the directive was sent out “for the personal information of the army commanders,” repeating what was said at the meeting: “1. I am setting the front armies the task of defeating Wrangel’s army, preventing it from retreating to the Crimean Peninsula and capturing the isthmus. In pursuance of this common task, the right-bank army must cut off the enemy’s retreat to the Crimea and advance eastwards to attack Wrangel’s reserves in the region of Melitopol.”

This document is cited Budyonny’s book without distortion. But how is this directive interpreted in it, given it does not seem to allow any misinterpretation?

On page 57 of the memoir we read:

“I read the directive, and there was a tense silence. Voroshilov, who was sitting opposite me, got up. I carefully read the text point by point, then said:

– So, they propose to divide the operation into two parts, Taurida and Crimea?

I thought about it and was deeply convinced that the operation to defeat Wrangel should be done as a single operation and that the blow should be delivered with two ‘fists’: at Perekop and at Berdyansk.”

Where did Budyonny get “dividing a single operation into two parts”? There is no suggestion of any ‘division’ in the command directive.

The ‘division’ was simply invented by Budyonny. It would seem he did so in order to cast a shadow on

¹ A more literal translation is “The Path Travelled”, but I have opted to go with the title used in the abridged English publication.

Frunze's directive and at the same time justify his actions. The Party does not seem to teach this. But this not the first time that Budyonny has presented in print his concept of the Crimean campaign, discrediting Frunze and praising himself.

So, on 16 November 1960, *Pravda* published an article by Budyonny titled "The Decisive Blow", which said: "The general idea of M. V. Frunze, following the requirements of V.I. Lenin, was to destroy Wrangel's main forces with a strong blow and then break into the Crimea, with the least losses, and complete the defeat of the White Guards".

But we have just read the documents. In neither Lenin's instructions nor in Frunze's directive does it say that. Both documents clearly state: "to prevent Wrangel from fleeing to the Crimea."

Why does Budyonny make up his story?

It was to conceal what actually happened. Then to retroactively justify a fact not mentioned in the memoirs, but recorded in the documents (they are kept in the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army¹). At the crucial moment of preparation for the defeat of the Southern counter-revolution, the First Horse Army's commander, S.M. Budenny, started to oppose its control by Frunze, seeking "independence" of his army and to replace the Southern Front's plan with his own.

This is how this brilliant plan is described in his memoirs (p. 57): "First of all, the Melitopol group had to be destroyed. Otherwise, the enemy, passing to the right of Aleksandrovka, would let our units pass through Perekop and the Crimea and cut them off. Close the gate. It was also alarming that during our siege of Perekop, Wrangel would be able to strike in the rear of our units ". It is appropriate to recall here that our five armies of the front totalled 133,500 combatants against the 35,000 of Wrangel's men.

Having received the support of K.E. Voroshilov, Budyonny sent his plan to Lenin, the Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev, and the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic². They then dispatched a copy to Southern Front commander, Frunze. After that, the author of the memoirs writes, "... the members of the RMS³ of the First Cavalry wondered: He will. He must understand. After all, our plan most realistically takes into account the current situation. But will they understand us there, at the Southern Front headquarters?"

But C-i-C Kamenev and the RMSR, "did not understand" Budyonny's plan. The author of the memoirs has to admit that in a direct wire conversation, the C-i-C reprimanded him for sending his proposals to all the recipients, "whereas they should be sent only through the chain of command" (p. 61).

But Budyonny did not oppose the plan of the Southern Front for nothing and did not send it to all the addresses for nothing. He was eager to wage war "separately". Not long after Budyonny again appealed to the RMSR – this time requesting that the First Horse Army be subordinated not to the Southern Front but directly to the Commander-in-Chief of the Republic.

Militarily such a separation was senseless and dangerous, and Budyonny was made aware of this. On 22 October Frunze telegraphed the commander of the First Horse Army: "On the basis of the telegram of the Commander-in-Chief.... your army has been placed under my command."

This document is preserved in the archives of the TsGASA. This is, of course, not mentioned in the memoirs, nor is it mentioned that Budyonny did not obey this order either. The next day, 23 October, Kamenev summoned him to Kharkov to "establish a full understanding of the forthcoming directive, for which it is extremely urgent that comrade Budyonny be in Kharkov for a period of several hours".

This document is kept in the TsGASA too. On it is the authorisation by Budyonny: "To the Commander-in-Chief. RMS member Voroshilov is leaving for Kharkov instead of me."

From the correspondence preserved in the TsGASA it can be established that during this period Budyonny repeatedly failed to carry out not only the orders of his commander, but also the orders of the

¹ From here forward, TsGASA.

² This was the organisation that ran the Red Army. From here forward I will use RMSR.

³ Revolutionary Military Soviet. The Soviet armies all had one of these as their commanding body: made up of the military commander and two political officers who approved his orders.

Commander-in-Chief, for which he had already received an official reprimand from the RMSR. They had to take serious measures against the “unforgivable capriciousness of the RMS of the First Cavalry” and against Budyonny himself – who refused to go to the meeting of the commanders, demanded direct subordination to the Commander in Chief, and demanded that all the armies of the front “were on equal terms with the First Cavalry”.

One more interesting fact is reflected in the documents of that time: we have information from a member of the RMS of the Southern Front, S. I. Gusev, that “the divisions of the First Horse are marching through the Ukraine, causing not only brutal expropriations, but also Black Hundreds pogroms¹. Of course, there is not a word about any of this in the third book of *The Path of Valor*, which is understandable: what bird fouls its own nest? And it is none other than Budyonny, in the pages of the journal *Questions in the History of the CPSU*, who preached fervently about “comprehensive coverage of the activities” of individual military leaders, against “the exorbitant praise of their merits and the silencing of their serious political errors”.

How good it would have been if Budyonny had spoken with the same fervour and detail about his own mistakes. It would then have been possible to recommend his book.

2. The Battles in Northern Taurida

On 26 October 1920, the Second Horse Army crossed the Dnieper River and started to fight the Whites. Day after day, the battles became more and more fierce. Wrangel's First Army Corps (Markov and Kornilov Divisions, 42nd Don Regiment) lost about half of their strength. Frunze then wrote to the commander of the First Cavalry that “the best of Wrangel's Corps crashed against the 2nd Horse Army on 27 October.”

Budyonny disagrees with Frunze. It is, of course, his right to disagree, but it is somehow obscene to portray one of the most talented Soviet commanders as some kind of ignorant and befuddled fool, remembering that Frunze has been dead for 50 years. And Budyonny is trying to do just that. Here is what the memoirist writes: (p. 93)

“An infantry group of the 46th and 3rd Rifle Divisions (2nd Horse) managed to knock out parts of the Markov Infantry Division.... and defeat it, capturing up to a thousand men. This partial success gave reason to think that the best corps of the enemy had been defeated”. Above, on page 85, Budyonny writes about the same thing: “Looking ahead, let us say that the commander was misled.” With what? Budyonny does not say. But the impression he gives remains: that Frunze “did not understand” Budyonny's brilliant plan, that Frunze was “misled” by unstated persons – most likely the commander of the 2nd Horse Army.

All this is quite deliberate. Budyonny needs it to belittle the merits of the 2nd Horse Army and to shift the responsibility for Wrangel's breakthrough into the Crimea onto it. Who will object? After all Frunze and the commander of the 2nd Horse, Mironov, are long dead.²

But this matter is documented. Let us try to reconstruct the actual course of events from them. On 23 October 1920 all five armies of the Southern Front, including the First Horse, launched a decisive offensive. The transition of Budyonny's army to the left bank of the Dnieper began early in the morning of 28 October. The 6th and 11th Cavalry Divisions made up the Northern Group, and the 4th and 14th the Southern Group. The Northern Group stood in the line of the enemy's retreat, and the Southern Group moved to the isthmuses, blocking their way to the Crimea.

According to the plan, the main blow to the enemy was to be inflicted by the 6th Army together with the First Horse. The 4th Army moved from near Aleksandrovsk and began fighting in the Bolshoi area (the word is illegible).

What happened? How did Wrangel still manage to break through to the Crimea after all this?

The surviving documents explain without any doubt that there were two main reasons for this: a) Wrangel's intelligence learned about the new plan, and b) our army had neither armoured cars nor tanks, and foreign “friends” had generously equipped Wrangel with these (see the telegram of Frunze to Lenin of 19

¹ The Black Hundreds were a group of notoriously anti-Semitic reactionary organisations of Tsarist Russia.

² Mironov was shot soon after the Crimean campaign for political reasons, and so was a very soft target for Budyonny to blame. Suspicions persist that Stalin had Frunze killed, via an excess of anaesthetic for an unnecessary operation.

December 1920, the article by Wrangel in No. 338 the White Guard newspaper *Southern News* for 1920, and the speech by Gusev at the 5th conference of the Party on 10 November 1920).

In the article mentioned, Wrangel said: “The Bolsheviks’ strategic plan was known to us in advance, thanks to our well-established agents in the country, ... It had the main mass of their forces, namely the 6th Army and Budyonny’s First Horse Army, acting from (the wording is illegible), breaking through to the rear of the Russian Army¹, seizing the isthmus and cut it off from the Crimea.”

Wrangel goes on to talk about his countermeasures: “During the night of 17-18 October² [30-31 October], screened to the north by the Don Cavalry Corps, which successfully repulsed the attacks of the enemy 2nd Horse Army, our strike group approached the Reds in the Salkovo area while they were not expecting it ... At dawn on 18 [31] October our group attacked the Reds by surprise, pushing them back into the Sivash ...”

Indeed Wrangel, shielded to the north by the Don Cossack corps, which prevented the 2nd Horse Army from connecting with the First Horse Army, threw armoured detachments and tanks against the 4th and 14th Divisions of the First Horse Army, gathered cavalry and infantry into a strike mass – and broke through to the Crimea.

Let us recall that the First Horse Army was supposed to reach the isthmuses and block Wrangel’s path into the Crimea. No military historians blame Budyonny for failing to do this: everyone understands that it was almost impossible for cavalry units in the conditions of the time to resist the onslaught of armoured detachments. Budyonny well understands the significance of this: he reminds us in his memoirs (p. 110) that the First Cavalry had neither armoured cars nor tanks.

Did the 2nd Horse have them?

No, the 2nd Horse did not. It must be said honestly and straight-forwardly, as Gusev did at the 5th Party Conference: “The battles in Northern Taurida did not yield the desired results and the Whites departed for the Crimea due to the weak armament of our troops.” This is a historical truth.

But the historical truth does not suit Budyonny. He needs to find someone to blame. And he ‘finds’ someone. Here is what is printed on pages 92 and 93 of his memoirs: “When the White troops began to retreat, the outcome of the battle and its success became directly dependent to a large extent on the actions of the 2nd Horse Army. It was tasked on 29 October with breaking through to Serogozi³ at all costs in order to, with the 6th and First Cavalry armies, surround the most powerful enemy strike group there ... and destroy it ... But, unfortunately, the enemy managed to restrain the actions of the 2nd Horse Army ... In the morning and all day, it fought scattered battles with isolated enemy units ... The commander of the 2nd Horse decided that Wrangel’s main forces were attacking him and ordered the direction of his main forces to change from the south to the southeast. This was a deviation from the orders of the Front command ... There was still time to correct the mistake ... But time was lost and General Kutepov’s main forces in the strike group fell upon the First Horse cavalry... “.

This is how history is corrected retrospectively. So, 53 years after the events, it turns out the blame for the passage of Wrangel’s troops to the Crimea rests with ... the 2nd Horse Army.

Can we believe in the objectivity of this assessment? Wouldn’t it be correct to assume that the more honest, more objective, and therefore less partial, assessment was given to the events on the Southern Front on 30 and 31 October 1920 was by Gusev? Moreover, his assessment was made three weeks after the events occurred when everyone was alive and could challenge him on it, not 53 years later.

But no one disputed him. Here is what Gusev said in his speech of 18 November 1920: “Wrangel managed to break through to the Crimea thanks to our poverty in ammunition and equipment. We had no armoured cars, no tanks ... The enemy had dozens of armoured cars and 60 trucks on which it installed machine guns, and thanks to that it managed to break through the encirclement.”

About the Second Horse Army, Gusev said: “The Second Horse Army showed such strength in battle that

¹ The formal name of Wrangel’s army was “The Russian Army”.

² Wrangel, like most Whites was still using Old Style dates.

³ Now Sirohozy

Wrangel was misled and mistook it for Budyonny's Army. On 30 October, Wrangel gave the order to defeat the 2nd Horse Army ..." This, as we know, he failed to do. Recalling the battles in Northern Taurida, Marshal Budyonny shows dissatisfaction with the actions of the commanders of the 2nd Horse Army, as well as the 4th and 13th Armies, which, in his opinion, "did not act decisively enough." In short, he is dissatisfied with the actions of everyone – except KommandArm Budyonny.

From a person it is understandable, but is that what the Party should be teaching?

3. The Liberation of the Crimea

After careful preparation for the assault on the fortifications, on the night of 8 November our army's offensive began.¹

The 6th Army (15th, 51st, 52nd and Latvian Rifle Divisions) advanced on Perekop. The 2nd Cavalry Army and Makhno's units were drawn up to exploit any success in the area. The 4th Army operated in the Chongar area. The 9th Rifle Division and the 3rd Cavalry Corps were transferred to it from the 18th Army. Behind the 4th Army was the First Cavalry Army. The 13th Army remained as Front Commander's reserve.

The Lithuanian peninsula² was cleared of the enemy by 8 o'clock on 8 November, and parts of the 15th and 52nd rifle divisions moved towards the Yushun³ fortifications. The capture of this peninsula, bypassing the Perekop fortifications, was a signal for an attack on the Turkish Wall. The 51st Rifle Division attacked it for 13 hours: on the morning of 9 November it was taken. Fierce battles unfolded for the possession of the Yushun fortifications. Wrangel's men threw our units from the Perekop Isthmus. Frunze ordered the 7th Cavalry Division of the 4th Army, the 16th Cavalry Division of the 2nd Horse Army and Makhno's detached units to move to help the 15th and 52nd Rifle Divisions. The 46th Rifle Division was temporarily subordinated to the 2nd Horse Army with the general task of striking towards Dzhankoy.

This was the course of events on 8, 9 and 10 November.

In the book *The Path of Valor* about later events it states: "On the night of 11 November the 51st and Latvian rifle divisions, overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy ... broke through the last line of the enemy's Yushun fortified zone and entered the operational space" (p. 135). And just below, on the same page, it is reported that the 30th Irkutsk Rifle Division on the night of 11 November "... finished crossing Sivash Bay. The way to the Crimea in the Chongar area was open."

Finally, an order was received for the First Horse Army to advance. It moved forward in a mighty stream. "We walked," says Budyonny, "across the damaged, still smoking Crimean landscape, where battles had recently been fought. Fallen wire barriers, trenches, foxholes, shell and bomb craters ... And then a wide steppe opened before us. We spurred our horses on" (p. 130).

From the quoted passage it is quite clear that fierce battles had been fought on the Crimean land before the entry of Budyonny's cavalry.

Who waged them?

And here the author of the memoirs becomes extremely brief. He reports succinctly: "The First Horse set out on the morning of 13 November. By this time, units of the 6th and 2nd Horse Armies had already cut the highway to Simferopol, occupied the railway station of Dzhankoy and Kurman-Kemelchi⁴, where the 2nd Brigade of the 21st Cavalry Division particularly distinguished itself" (p. 140). Let us note in passing that the memoirist deliberately forgets to mention that the 21st Cavalry Division was part of the 2nd Cavalry Army.

Thus the battles preceding the entry of the First Horse Army into the Crimea are reported in passing, as an insignificant military episode: using "cut," "occupied" etc. However these were the battles that decided the outcome of the entire Crimean operation, as Frunze wrote in his dispatches to the 2nd Horse Army.

¹ There is a helpful map of this at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Perekop_\(1920\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Perekop_(1920))

² The Pivostriv Lytovs'kyi area.

³ Now Ishun'

⁴ Modern Krasnogvardeyskoye,

The course of events, reflected in the surviving operational reports, is irrefutably clear about this. As Budyonny states, the First Horse started its campaign on 13 November. And at 3:40 am on 10 November the 16th Cavalry Division, as ordered by the 2nd Horse Army commander, F.K. Mironov, quickly manoeuvred along the southern bank of the Sivash to go to the aid of the 15th and 52nd Rifle divisions of the 6th Army in the defile between Solenoye and Krasne lakes.

Wrangel hastily gathered the remnants of his First Army and Cavalry Corps and threw them into a counterattack to protect the Yushun fortified positions. On the morning of 11 November our units were driven back to the tip of the Lithuanian Peninsula. Then General Barbovich's Cavalry Corps got into the rear of the 51st and Latvian divisions, who were fighting in the Yushun station area. There was a real threat of encirclement. It was then that Frunze ordered the 2nd Horse Army to immediately move to the aid of units of the 6th Army, in order to assist them "in the battle which would decide the outcome of the whole operation" (Frunze. *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 418).

At 5 o'clock in the morning of 11 November the 2nd Horse Cavalry crossed Sivash Bay and reached the Lithuanian Peninsula, some 3-4 km away. East of Karadzhan it met the wounded of its 16th Cavalry Division passing the other way.

The approach of the 2nd Horse Army changed the situation. A brigade of the 2nd Horse Division was sent to support the infantry units of the 6th Army and the 16th Cavalry Division. A bloody battle went on all day, as attack was followed by counterattack.

The fighting reached particular fierceness at Karpovaya Balka. General Barbovich's Corps with the Kuban Cavalry Brigade, supported by the officer battalions of the Drozdovski and Kornilov Divisions, broke through to the north, threatening the Armenian Bazaar¹ and the rear of the 51st Rifle Division.

At this critical moment, the *lava* of the 2nd Horse Army moved towards Barbovich's cavalry *lava*. The two *lavas* approached like menacing clouds: a few hundred more steps and the brutal felling would begin. But at that moment the Red cavalry moved aside – and the enemy faced 250 machine guns on tachankas. The machine gunners opened fire. The first ranks of the White cavalry fell, the rest wavered and turned, but came under fire from units of the 41st Division. So the soldiers of the 2nd Horse defeated Barbovich's cavalry a second time.

Wrangel's men still managed to organise a swift retreat to the south. Mironov, commander of the 2nd Horse, ordered the Independent Cavalry Brigade to follow a brisk pace, until it reached the enemy. The 21st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions followed behind the brigade. At the end of 11 November they managed to catch the enemy. Another battle began, which lasted until darkness fell. The enemy fought back with the fury of a cornered beast, but was forced to abandon Voinka station, falling back to the southeast. The 2nd Horse pursued them relentlessly.

At about 8 o'clock in the morning of 12 November the 2nd Horse Division, together with the Independent Cavalry Brigade, occupied the Dzhankoy station after breaking desperate enemy resistance. The Special Cavalry Brigade was left to guard the station, with a huge amount of captured property and several thousand White prisoners. The 2nd Cavalry Division raced after the rest of Wrangel's troops, who were chaotically retreating towards Simferopol.

At the same time, the main forces of the 2nd Horse Army were striking south of Dzhankoy, in the direction of Kurman-Kemelchi² station. The stubborn resistance of the enemy was explained by their desire to delay the onslaught of the 2nd Horse Army at all costs in order to gain time to load onto ships. After a three-hour battle, the enemy abandoned the station and huge reserves of military equipment and hastily moved to Simferopol. The enemy's retreat route was marked by abandoned military equipment for dozens of kilometres.

The battle at the Kurman-Kemelchi station was the final one. The last cannon salvos in the Crimea were the volleys of the 2nd Horse Army guns. The dying rays of the sun, setting on the evening of 12 November, witnessed the final defeat of the remnants of Wrangel's army. As a result of the battles on 11 and 12

¹ Now Armiansk.

² Now Krasnogvardeyskoye.

November over 20,000 of Wrangel's men were taken prisoner.

The next day – 13 November – Wrangel declared his army disbanded. And on the same day the First Horse Army entered the Crimea. So who defeated Wrangel? Who took the Crimea? Since Marshal Budyonny himself, on page 140 of the third book of his memoirs, testifies that “the First Cavalry set out on the march on the morning of 13 November,” thereby confirming that the First Horse Army did not participate in the hostilities in the Crimea. This, in fact, is evident from the operational reports of this army, published in the journal *Soviet Archives* (1970, No. 5).

What kind of heroic actions of the First Horse “in the final operations of the war on the Southern Front during the defeat of Wrangel” is the Pravda reviewer N. Denisov speaking of? The First Cavalry had enough truly heroic actions on its own account. Why, one may ask, ascribe to it ones which not only did it not make, but could not have made for the good reason that it did not take part in the battles in question. Denisov seems to have forgotten that such actions are called the falsification of history – which is not appropriate for a reviewer of the Leninist newspaper *Pravda*.

It is a difficult task to find these non-existent heroic acts, but the author of the memoirs manages it. We begin to look for these 'heroic actions' in his book – and we find them. For example, Budyonny writes: “During the prosecution of the enemy (What? Long lines of prisoners were moving from the Crimea, because military operations had already ceased) Voroshilov and I were with one of the brigades of the 4th Cavalry Division ... We moved day and night ... KomBrig Maslakov offered a ride in his carriage. We took it. We drove further. The night was dark. Hour after hour passed. Whether we lagged behind, or had overtaken the brigade, we were alone ... And there was no one to ask. (See the third book of *The Way of Valor*, published in issue 11 of *Don*, 1969).

And there is another heroic action: Commander Budyonny, together with Voroshilov, captured a battalion of Wrangel's men. A story about this was published in the same issue of *Don* (p. 6). This is how things stood, according to the memoirist:

“We learned from a local resident that the Dzhankoy station was five kilometres from us. They asked to be a guide ... We drove up to the station. There was almost a whole battalion of Wrangel's troops here. They were having breakfast. Seeing us, they froze in indecision. I got down from the cart and loudly announced: “I do not recommend taking up weapons! Our troops are on the way. Continue to have breakfast, and then hand over your weapons. We are the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry ... Consider yourself prisoners. “

Maybe this might be attributed a “heroic action” if we did not know that by that time Dzhankoy station had already been captured by the 2nd Horse Army and that the Special Cavalry Brigade had been left to guard the prisoners and captured property. In these conditions not only a battalion but a regiment of Wrangel's men could be made prisoners of war.

An anecdote takes four pages. On the streets of Simferopol, already taken by the 2nd Horse Army, the commander of the First Cavalry was unexpectedly surrounded and taken prisoner by a column of horsemen. Ultimately Budyonny managed to escape from this detachment in a tachanka. It is unclear, however, what kind of horsemen they were and how this could have happened in the city which had already been occupied by Red troops for four days – indeed four days after the White Guards had laid down their arms.

It is also not entirely clear why two Cavalry armies ended up in the same city.

The Second Horse Army, having been deployed offensively, had largely lost contact with the rear. Therefore, its RMS did not receive the order from the South Front Commander from Kharkov at 2:00 on 13 November. That ordered the 2nd Horse to follow the Dzhankoy to Feodosia railway line, and pursue the enemy in the direction of Feodosia and Kerch, and to capture Kerch no later than 22 November. Since the order was not received, on 13 November the 2nd Horse was already on the way to Simferopol, and its advanced units had entered the city even earlier.

It is of undoubted interest when the South Front Commander's order was received by the First Horse Army, which had entered the Crimea two days later than the 2nd Horse and, therefore, better connected with the

rear, from the command of the Southern Front. The TsGASA archives store a report from the commander of the First Horse Army to the Southern Front, dated as having been sent on the evening of 13 November that the order was sent by commander of the 6th Army “for handing over to me (i.e., commander of the First Horse, Budyonny), but it has not yet been received. Its content, which orders the 2nd Horse Army towards Kerch, and the First Cavalry towards Simferopol and Sevastopol, I know from the talking to the 51st Division commander Comrade Blyukher. “

If the South Front Commander’s order had not yet been received by Budyonny on 13 November, then it is clear that the commander of the 2nd Horse, which was two days further ahead in the offensive than the First, could not, with the means of communication at the time, have received it or known its content from someone else.

Thus we can be certain that F.K. Mironov, commander of the 2nd Horse, did not know about the new direction he had been ordered to take and so continued to move in the old one.

Did the commander of the First Horse know that the 2nd Horse had fought its way to Simferopol ahead of his army? There can be no doubt. He knew. It is apparent that he needed to inform the South Front Commander about this and ask for his permission to change the direction of the First Horse, that is, to move it to Feodosia and Kerch, in order to prevent the loading of Wrangel’s men onto ships there. But Budyonny did not. This time he showed discipline: he kept silent and led the army entrusted to him to Simferopol, already taken by the 2nd Horse. Why?

Now, 53 years later, we cannot answer that question. But we can evaluate Budyonny’s interpretation of the events.

This is what is printed in the above-cited excerpt from the memoirs, published in the *Don* magazine. (1969, No. 11, pp. 7-8):

“The telegraph operator of the Dzhankoy station was ordered to contact Simferopol, and to Budyonny’s question: ‘Are there troops?’ there followed a calm answer: ‘Yes. Soldiers of the 2nd Horse.’ Voroshilov was surprised: ‘How can it be, because Mironov has a completely different area of operations.’ Yes,” Budyonny writes further, “we could only be surprised. Mironov instead of a forced march to Feodosia and Kerch is resting in Simferopol. After all, this plays into the hands of Wrangel.”

This is how Budyonny ‘illustrates’ the facts. We know the facts: the 2nd Horse cleared the Crimea by combat, defeating Wrangel’s forces, and took Simferopol. And all this, it turns out, ... is in order to play into Wrangel’s hands?!

Further, the story continues in the same spirit and tone:

“At dawn on 15 November (that is, on the third day after the end of the war) we went to Simferopol. We went to the headquarters of the 2nd Horse. There were F. K. Mironov, D. V. Poluyan, K. A. Makoshin and others.

– Pleased to see you! – said Mironov, rolling his moustache.

– Likewise, – I answered quietly, and asked, – How on earth did you get to the wrong place?

– I have not received any orders, – said Mironov angrily.

– Why then do we know about this order? – asked Voroshilov.

– I have lost contact with the Commander.

– It is not good, Philip Kuzmich, – I say, – Wrangel’s men are loaded onto ships in Kerch and Feodosia, and you are resting in Simferopol. I understand it’s easier here, the enemy is running away. Yes, it’s not good ...

I fell silent. Mironov was also silent.”

Every word here is a deliberate misleading to a reader unfamiliar with the history of the events. We know how the RMS of the First Cavalry had just found out about the orders from the Army Commander. Why ask Mironov sanctimoniously how they knew and he didn’t? Both Budyonny and Voroshilov understood why perfectly. And, one wonders, what moral right does the commander of an army that has not come into

contact with the enemy to insult the commander who had just finished fighting hard and dare to say: "I understand it's easier here...."? and "the enemy is fleeing." He had long since fled – but from whom? From the very one to whom Budyonny was preaching. Mironov never needed moral instruction, as far as we know.

Then the author of the memoirs reports that, by right of seniority, he declared himself head of the garrison and gave his headquarters the order to begin a census of the POWs. Forgetting, of course, to tell who had taken them prisoner.

Now we can fully appreciate the correctness of the reproach thrown by Budyonny in the same *Don* journal to some Soviet historians.

"Some authors," Budyonny wrote, "striving at all costs to whitewash and glorify Mironov, use techniques unworthy of Soviet scientists. They twist and manipulate of facts, distort well-known truths, and attribute to Mironov victories and deeds which he had nothing to do with.

All of the above facts are taken from indisputable documents .

On their basis, any reader can be convinced who uses unworthy techniques, who distorts and manipulates the facts. And, finally, to whom is attributed "victories and deeds which he had nothing to do with" – the Soviet historians of F.K. Mironov or the one used to S.M. Budyonny basking in the fame by himself – S.M. Budyonny?

You will find yourself unable to disagree, after reading the memoirs *The Path of Valor*, with the assessment of the Rostov Communist historian F. I. Prisonorezova: "I call S.M. Budyonny's memoirs, *The Path of Valor*, a book of self-praise". We saw above what role each of the two Cavalry armies played in the liberation of the Crimea. Here is how Budyonny described it in his article "The Decisive Blow" (*Pravda*, 16 November 60):

"On the night of 11 November, the 30th Rifle Division's attack on Chongar began ... the Chongar bridge was restored under devastating fire, over which the First Horse's 6th Cavalry Division rushed. The enemy was overwhelmed and fled to Dzhankoy in panic. Taking advantage of the success at Chongar, the Latvian Rifle Division, which operated alongside the 51st Division, launched an attack on the Yushun positions. The gates to the Crimea were thrown open, and an avalanche of Red cavalry poured through them, pursuing and exterminating the White Guards. They resisted fiercely, although their position was clearly hopeless. The White troops counterattacked us. They attacked the headquarters at night. But despite this, on 13 November Soviet troops liberated Simferopol."

Everything is true. It is just not specified which army was in the "avalanche of Red cavalry that poured into the Crimea" (according to headquarters reports the First Horse divisions did not have contact with the enemy), who it was that the White Guards desperately resisted, who they counterattacked, whose headquarters they attacked at night and, finally, which Soviet troops liberated Simferopol. That the Soviets did – that's for sure.

What Budyonny writes – and most importantly, the way he writes it – creates the impression that Crimea had been taken by the First Horse Army. And this is not true. And this untruth confuses not only ordinary readers, but also writers – even those such as L. M. Leonov (see *Ogonyok* magazine No. 14, 1973). But while Leonov, misled by Budyonny, can be excused for mixing up the combat of the 2nd Horse with a simple movement of the 1st Horse through the already liberated Crimea, Budyonny himself cannot be excused for passing off somebody else's battles and victories as his own.

It is even less forgivable for the editors of Soviet newspapers and magazines – especially *Pravda* -- to sanction this imposture. By publishing materials under the heading "How the Party Taught", and, thus Lenin, the workers of our Central Organs should look not at military ranks and awards, but at thrice verified primary sources.

In 1920 Lenin conveyed through Berzin to the RMS of the Southwestern Front a persuasive request: "Do not make Budyonny a hero and praise him personally in print (one or two words not legible), as this has a very detrimental effect on him."

In vain, they disobeyed Lenin this time as well!

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