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The Yenisei Cossacks in Mongolia During the Civil War Period

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This article examines the Yenisei Cossacks' participation in the Civil War in Siberia and Mongolia during 1920-1921. The reasons for their mass emigration to Mongolia in the beginning of '20s and their participation in Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg's unit are considered for the first time. The military operations performed with their support in Mongolia and the Uriankhayskiy region are also described.

Keywords: the Yenisei Cossacks, the Civil War, Mongolia, Siberia, the Uriankhayskiy region, Baron Ungern, General Bakich. (the shortened variants: Cossacks, Ungern, Bakich, Mongolia, Siberia, Uriankhay).

The Yenisei Cossacks, one of the oldest military formations in Siberia, took the most active part in the Civil War in the east of Russia.

The first Cossacks appeared at the Yenisei River at the beginning of the 17th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, although they had lived in the area for centuries, the Yenisei Cossacks were relatively few in number. In 1917 there were only about 14,000 Yenisei Cossacks of both genders [3, p. 49]. Also, the Yenisei Cossacks' status was not high. After the Yenisei Cossacks' regiment was abolished in 1871 and up to the beginning of the 20th century, there was only the Yenisei Cossacks' hundred, which was transformed into the Yenisei Cossacks' division of three hundred during the war time. In 1910 regulation for the Krasnoyarsk Cossacks' division was approved [9, p. 329]. During the First World War the Yenisei Cossacks' regiment was formed [17 p. 662]. After the revolution, in February 1917, the Yenisei Cossacks made an attempt to

raise their status. On 25 May (3 June) 1917 the First Yenisei Cossacks' convention established the Yenisei Cossacks' battalion [14, pp. 21 - 22]. The union council of Cossacks' troops admitted the Yenisei Cossacks' battalion as a full member, and a delegate from the Yenisei Cossacks entered its body [6, p. 97]. But, the official Russian government did not accept the convention decree. Only in 1919 did the government of A. Colchak raise the Yenisei Cossacks into the rank of a battalion on a common basis with all the Cossacks troops [17, p. 662].

Though relatively few and having no battalion status, the Yenisei Cossacks, nevertheless, took an active part in the Civil War. One hundred of the Yenisei Cossacks, under the Captain Korshunov's command, made up the convoy of P. Krasnov during his troops' attack at Petrograd in October 1917 [17, p. 43]. In 1918 the Yenisei Cossacks, assigned to army 1 of the eastern front line under the command of General A. Pepeliaev, took

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part in the occupation of the city Perm, the most important industrial centre of the Northern Urals [4, p. 688]. In 1918 – 1919 the main forces of the Yenisei Cossacks were cast into the struggle with the Red partisans, acting in the south of the Yeniseisk guberniya and in the Uriankhayskiy region (Tuva). After Admiral Kolchak's army defeat in the end of 1919, the Yenisei Cossacks, having drawn off with the main White forces to Transbaikalia, were actively fighting the Red Army in the Far East in 1920 – 1922. They were one of the last White guardsmen to leave Russia [18, p. 477 - 548].

One of the greatest and most important episodes of the Civil War for the Yenisei Cossacks was the actions of the bands of R. Ungern-Sternberg and A. Bakich in Mongolia. These events, by their essence, were one of the last real attempts by the Yenisei Cossacks to continue an organized anti-soviet struggle and to change the situation in Siberia to their advantage.

Researching the combat activity of the Yenisei Cossacks, who were part of the white bands in Mongolia, gives an opportunity not only to restore an important episode of Civil War history, but also to clarify the role of the Yenisei Cossacks in these events, which had over and above a very serious foreign-policy significance. Moreover, researching the Yenisei Cossacks' role in these events allows a better understanding of the reasons for the emergence of the bands of R. Ungern-Sternberg and A. Bakich and shows the backgrounds that defined the character of Russian military forces' actions in Mongolia during the Civil War period.

In order to achieve all this, it is first necessary to analyze the reasons for the Yenisei Cossacks' mass departure from Siberia to Mongolia; to study the circumstances of the Cossacks' unit entering the military forces, under the command of R. Ungern-Sternberg and A. Bakich; to examine the Yenisei Cossacks' actions during the military

confrontation of the Whites and the Reds in Mongolia and nearby territories; to define the reasons of their actions.

The article covers the period from the end of 1920 – the time, when a unit of the Yenisei Cossacks was formed under the command of I. Kazantsev in Mongolia, up to the end of 1921, when General Bakich's unit, containing the last white Yenisei Cossacks in the region, was defeated.

This article covers events in Mongolia and the Uriankhayskiy region. At the time of the Civil War, Mongolia was «de jure» a part of China. In spite of this, the Chinese government could not always control the situation there. Having its own autonomy and, at the same time, being a part of China, Mongolia was influenced by Russia. From the end of 19th century Russia had disputed China's right to Uriankhay, while at the beginning of the century Russia had established almost full control of the region. Moreover, the Mongolian government tried to claim the Uriankhayskiy region. The unclear legal status of Mongolia and Uriankhay, the difficult domestic policy situation between China and Russia, and the contradictory interests of the local regional elite had determined the complicated situation in which the Yenisei Cossacks found out themselves abroad.

The Yenisei Cossacks' activity within the White military forces in Mongolia has received little attention. Currently there are no scholarly works devoted to this theme.

The article by N. Yefseev «The Defeat of General Bakich» was published in 1923 and it is one of the first works by Soviet historians about Russian White military forces in Mongolia. The author of the article describes the liquidation of Bakich's unit, to which the Yenisei Cossacks belonged, in the proper ideological tone [8].

Later, in Soviet historiography, the participation of the Yenisei Cossacks in the Civil War on Mongolian territory was considered more

often in the context of battle actions in separate regions of RSFSR. Here, we should mention some of the most interesting research - the works by K. Seifulin «The History of Foreign Military Intervention and the Civil War in Tuva», by V. Ochur «The Great October and Tuva» and others. [13, 15].

In modern Russian historiography the Yenisei Cossacks' participation in the White military forces in Mongolia has not yet become a subject of special research. Nevertheless, many authors have touched on the theme. For example, the Yenisei Cossacks participation in operations in the Far East are discussed in detail in the book by V. Shuldyakov «The Yenisei Cossacks' Battalion Destruction» [17, 18]. Great attention is given to the Yenisei Cossacks' participation in the Civil War in the southern territory of the Yeniseisk guberniya, the Uriankhayskiy region and Mongolia in the work by V. Datsishen «Sayan knot» and others [7]. Moreover, it is also necessary to mention such academic-belletristic works as «The Sovereign of the Desert» by L. Yuzefovich [19] and «The Black Griffon's Feather» by K. Shoygu [16], whose authors used a wide range of material about the history of Central Siberia and Mongolia in the Civil War period, including data about the Yenisei Cossacks.

Currently there are no works written by foreign historians about the Yenisei Cossacks in the White units in Mongolia during the Civil War period. The reminiscences of former officers of the Asian horse cavalry division published by V. Shayditskiy, A. Makeev and some others in 1930 – 1960 are simple memoirs without any historical analysis [2].

After the destruction of the Siberian Army under the command of A. Kolchak, the main part of the Yenisei Cossacks, the Yenisei Cossacks' brigade, which consisted of the Yenisei Cossacks' regiments 1 and 2, the Yenisei Cossacks artillery battery and the alternative hundred, left together

with the White military forces, drawing off to Transbaikalia [17, p. 664]. Though, drawing off the Yeniseisk guberniya and the Uriankhayskiy region, a significant number of the Yenisei Cossacks concentrated in Western Mongolia from 1920 – to the beginning of 1921. They camped in Ulyasutay Town, not far from the Tuva border. Several reasons made the Yenisei Cossacks leave for Mongolia.

Firstly, the Yenisei Cossacks believed that the Reds would be soon be forced out of Siberia, as they had been in 1918. Hoping for such an end, the Cossacks did not want to go far from their homes. In Mongolia, they could get current information about their native places, making it possible to take part in the Reds' expulsion at a well-chosen moment and promptly return to their homes. Uriankhay and Mongolia, after it had been occupied by the Reds, closely fit this target. Situated near the Yenisei Cossacks' homes and having well-run lines of communication with the Yeniseisk guberniya, these regions were well-known to the Cossacks. From the beginning of 17th century the Yenisei Cossacks had traditionally served on the border of Mongolia and China. From the end of 19th century they had visited the Uriankhayskiy region during their service [7, p. 62, 116]. Moreover, economic contacts with the population of the Uriankhayskiy region and Mongolia had also been developing. Apparently, this familiarit with Uriankhay and Mongolia contributed to the Yenisei Cossacks' retreating to these territories after the defeat of Kolchak's army in Siberia. We may also suppose that the Yenisei Cossacks did not forget the promise of A. Kolchak to give them the Uriankhayskiy region as their battalion territory [17, p 336].

Secondly, the Yenisei Cossacks, in retreating to Mongolia, could have simply failed to be on time to leave for Transbaikalia with the main military forces of the Siberian army. And to stay in the Yeniseisk guberniya territory was dangerous.

This was due not only to the approach of the Red Army, but also to the extremely hostile attitude towards the Yenisei Cossacks from the regional peasant population [13, p. 19]. Even before the beginning of the Civil War, the representatives of the first Yenisei Cossacks' convention in May, 1917, had stated that both the peasants and the foreign population of the Yeniseisk guberniya had a hostile attitude towards the Cossacks [14, p. 7, 11]. During the Civil War period, the main part of the Yenisei Cossacks - 10 hundreds out of 12, was in the Yeniseisk guberniya and was engaged in suppressing peasants' rebellions, which only exacerbated the Cossacks' relations with local peasants. Moreover, the Yenisei Cossacks did not live in a compact group, but were spread throughout the Yeniseisk guberniya, which was a great disadvantage during conflicts with peasants and foreigners. One should also consider the small size of the Cossacks' population compared to the total guberniya population, - about 0, 8% [6, p. 94, 96]. The fact that there were many women and children, apparently members of Cossacks' families, within Bakich's unit, also implicitly reveals the hostility of the native non-Cossack population as of a reason for the Cossacks' mass departure.

Having left for Mongolia, the Yenisei Cossacks formed a unit, the leader of which became the Yenisei Cossacks' battalion captain I. Kazantsev. According to some sources, Ensign Zanin's hundred became the backbone of Kazantsev's unit. [17, p. 664]. At the end of 1920 – beginning of 1921, under the command of I. Kazantsev up to 150 Yenisei Cossacks gathered. I. Kazantsev was elected president of the battalion administration by circle 5 of the Yenisei Cossacks' battalion, which took place in the period of 15 – 21 of February, 1919 in Minusinsk. In May, 1920 Bolsheviks put him into the Irkutskaya guberniya prison, from which he ran away from in October of that year [3, p. 49; 8, p. 244]. Possessing

high official status and great physical force and resoluteness, I. Kazantsev could successfully take upon himself the role of unit commandment [17, p. 162].

Far from home, in alien surroundings, the Yenisei Cossacks were ready and willing to continue their struggle.

The situation in Mongolia at that time was complicated. Having received a wide autonomy within the frames of the Chinese state in 1911, Mongolia was under a zone influence of Russia. It allowed the Mongolian government to carry out an independent policy. However, in 1919 China took advantage of the internal war in Russia and occupied Mongolia. The head of Mongolia, Bogdo-gegen, was actually under house arrest.

A year later the situation changed. After the defeat of the Far-Eastern (White) Army of Ataman G. Semenov by the military forces of People's-Revolutionary Army of the Far-Eastern Republic in Transbaikalia in October 1920, Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg left Russia. He understood that he could not stand against the Reds by himself, and he went to Mongolia with his Asian horse cavalry division [9, p. 237, 240]. On 3 February 1921 R. Ungern-Sternberg expelled the Chinese from Urga Town. He became the governor of Mongolia and made it a base for his military operations against Soviet Russia. The Mongolian elite, the lords and Bogdo-gegen, were grateful to R. Ungern-Sternberg for freeing them from the Chinese and, afraid of their return, supported all his undertakings.

Under such circumstances, Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg, the Russian officer, the constant enemy of the Soviet system, the person who had taken under his control the main part of Mongolia, could be considered by the Yenisei Cossacks as their absolute leader. Already in spring 1921, when Baron Ungern began to take the control of all the Russian military forces in Mongolia at that time, the detachment of I. Kazantsev

became part of the Asian horse cavalry division, while also remaining as a separate military unit [18, p. 336]. Apparently, the Baron's promise to fulfill Kolchak's decision had played a role in I. Kazantsev's decision to submit to R. Ungern-Sternberg, the decision to create the Uriankhay Cossacks' battalion from the Yenisei Cossacks, and the assignation of the Uriankhayskiy region to the Cossacks for colonization. According to some accounts, the Yenisei Cossacks of I. Kazantsev's unit took the promise at face value and even began to calculate the size of their future land shares [17, p. 336]. Moreover, Ungern appointed I. Kazantsev himself to be a battalion ataman, notwithstanding the fact that officially the Yenisei Cossacks already had an ataman – A. Tyalshinskiy, elected in Big Circle 5 of the Yenisei Cossacks' battalion [3, p. 49]. We may also suppose that, at that time, the victory of the Reds in Siberia was not taken by the Yenisei Cossacks as final, and that they hoped for events similar to those of 1918, when for several weeks almost all of Siberia was free of Bolsheviks. They understood the necessity of continued fighting against the Reds, and with the support of other Whites.

At the end of April, Ungern met with the heads of separate units under the Baron's operative command in Van-Khure Village. B. Rezukhin, N. Kazagrandy, A. Shubin, I. Kazantsev and others were present. At the meeting the plan of future combat operations against Soviet Russia was discussed. Actually, two plans suggested by B. Rezukhin and N. Kazagrandy, commanders of the biggest battle units, were discussed. B. Rezukhin suggested a plan in which all the small units led by B. Rezukhin, N. Kazagrandy, A. Shubin, I. Kazantsev were to join his brigade, which would have contained up to 700 men. Being the third brigade head of the Asian division, B. Rezukhin was going to cross at the western side of the Selenga River and move to Baikal. At the same time, Ungern himself was to attack Troitskosavsk

and Kyakhta along the Orkhon valley and, after their capture, he was to attack Verkhneudinsk.

N. Kazagrandy offered another plan. According to it, all the smaller units, B. Rezukhin's brigade and Ungern's main military forces would have acted by themselves but according to a single plan and would have coordinated their actions with each other. Kaygorodov had to fight from Kobdo to Biysk, Kazagrandy and Shubin had to go to the southern part of the Irkutskaya guberniya, and Kazantsev had to go through Uriankhay, in order to organize the Yenisei Cossacks for the struggle against the Soviet regime. Apparently, the later plan counted on a mass volunteers' inrush into the White units from local territories, through which it had been planned to attack. In the other case, spreading forces would have deprived the attacking side of all hope of success. There were real chances of support from the local population. In the beginning of 1921, Y. Yanson, the Central Siberia foreign affairs commissar reported to B. Shumyatskiy: «The moods in Mongolia and Uriankhay are not to our advantage [...]. The presence of our military forces in the Uriankhayskiy region is not justified for the White liquidation.» [1, Fond 1, Bordereau 1, File 125. List 7]. After some hesitations, R. Ungern-Sternberg accepted the plan of N. Kazagrandy. The result of it was the appearance of «Order 15» [18, p. 172].

The official issuing date of «Order 15» was 21 May, 1921. By this Order, Ungern proclaimed the beginning of a crusade against Soviet Russia, aiming to overthrow Bolshevism and, in paragraph 4, in particular, defined the direction of the main blows: «... a) Western – the Manzhouli station; b) the Mondensk direction, along Yablonoï Mountains; c) along the Selenga river; d) the Irkutsk direction; e) out from the Uriankhayskiy region down the Yenisei river; e) down the Irtysh river. [...] The commanders of separate sectors had to be ruled by these directions and to follow

the directives of colonel N. Kazagrandy in Irkutsk direction, orders of Yenisei Cossacks' battalion ataman I. Kazantsev in the Uriankhay direction, and orders of Cossack captain Kaygorodov in the Irkish direction » [19, p. 231].

In May 1921, preparing his unit attack, I. Kazantsev arrived in Uriankhay, at Khemchik, allegedly being invited by Khemchik noyon Buyan-Budyirgy. At the meeting with the heads of two Khemchik khoshuns, I. Kazantsev reached an agreement with the Touvinians that they would find 400 armed soldiers Touvinians for Kazantsev's unit. But, the day after the negotiations begun, I. Kazantsev had to run away, having left behind all the documents and his personal effects. The revolting arats rounded upon him right on the place of negotiations with the noyons [7, p. 202]. But nevertheless, the prearrangements for the military advance were continued. The Mongolian military department sent to Touvinian governors the orders, where Uriankhay noyons were obliged to render every kind of assistance to Kazantsev's unit. Moreover, according to this order, it was decided to send an officer, lama Chamzy-Kamby, to the Uriankhayskiy region, to Khemchik «in order to gather arms and soldiers in Uriankhay khoshuns and sumo for joining Russian White military forces and concurrently mopping up our lands of the enemy» [15, p. 97].

On 18 May, 1921 Kazantsev's unit entered the Uriankhayskiy region in two columns. Having entered the Uriankhay territory, the eastern column, under the command of Lieutenant Popolzukhin, camped at the estuary of the Tarlashkyn River. The second column, under the leadership of I. Kazantsev himself, headed for Khemchik. Shortly before that, Kazantsev had received a letter from noyon Daa-khoshun Buyan-Budyirgy, in which he promised to give Kazantsev 400 well-armed Touvinians. Being completely sure of the Touvinian elite's support, Kazantsev sent a secret letter to Popolzukhin, when he was still half way

to Khemchik. In the letter he wrote: «Instructions: take under your command the mobilized Uriankhay population, and form out of them two hundreds for Soyot regiment 2. In order to drill them military, appoint to them your cavalry instructors, knowing the language, if possible». By the same letter I. Kazantsev suggested measures for capturing I. Safyanov, the most active adherent of the Soviet Regime in Tuva [16, p. 59].

However, the well-planned operation of the Yenisei Cossacks's unit suffered a defeat. On 23 May 1921 Popolzukhin's unit was already smashed by the Red partisan unit of S. Kochetov at the Tarlashkyn River. The main part of the unit was destroyed and most Cossacks, including unit commander Popolzukhin, were captured by the Reds. Simultaneously, two Red squadrons of regiment 352, under the leadership of regiment commandant Lizenkov, occupied Samagaltay khure, where there was the White camp. [1. F. P-49. B.ac. 2 Fl. 10. L. 112]. At the same day, on 23rd May, at Khemchik, in the Chadan region of, 200 of the armed Touvinians attacked the Kazantsev's camp. Having lost many soldiers, the White unit had to leave for Mongolia [7, p. 203]. Having examined captured Lieutenant Popolzukhin, the Reds found out, that «...at the beginning of the operation in the region of Khemchik -Samagaltay there was one common enemy unit of 450 men under the command of ataman I. Kazantsev, reporting to Ungern. The unit was divided into three groups and performed Soyots' impressment, which gave them in result up to 700 men. The first group under the command of Lieutenant Kryakhno was placed along the Chadan river (apparently, I. Kazantsev, the commander of the unit, was within the group – M. T.), the second and the third groups made camp in the region of Yercin-Gol, besides, the second group had been destroyed in battle (the group of Popolzukhin himself is meant – M. T.), and the third group, under the command of warrant officer Vedernikov,

was gone in an unknown direction» [5, p. 269]. While estimating the White military forces in Mongolia, the Reds somewhat exaggerated their quantity, in particular, Kazantsev's unit, which they thought about 700 cavalry men [11, p. 244].

The following reasons led to Kazantsev's unit defeat in Uriankhay. Firstly, the Uriankhay population's impressment failed to give not only battle-worthy personnel assets but, on the contrary, it weakened the unit in that the impressed Soyots tried to desert as quickly as possible, they also felt hostility towards their commandment. Secondly, while being on Ungern's side, Mongolian lords wanted to gain control over Tuva, which had been always considered be a part of Mongolia. They managed to get their plans approval by the Uriankhay elite, but not by the Uriankhay population, whose attitude towards Mongolians was extremely antagonistic. This can explain the fact that ordinary Touvinians-arats took the most active part in the struggle against Kazantsev's units. Thirdly, Kazantsev's unit had a critically limited supply of arms. Here, for example, is information from the Minusinsk district executive committee to the Yeniseisk regional committee about one of Kazantsev's units: «...the second band [...] is of three hundred men, only one hundred being armed among them, and among the other two hundreds there are several women-refugees» [1. F. 1. B. 1. Fl. 133. L. 121]. Apparently, this unit was actually a group of refugees not capable of fighting seriously. The Mongolian governors' reaction to Kazantsev's unit defeat was interesting. The Mongolian khan Tsurukhtu sent a letter to ambynnon Sodnam-Balchir with a request to provide him the information about «what kind of Russians have destroyed the White unit of Mongolians and Russians, their quantity, where they are now, and who from khoshuns and how many Uriankhay men have been involved in that incident». Moreover, the letter instructed that these Uriankhay men were to be «judged strictly» by Mongolian

lords [13, p. 98]. In the letter to the Khemchik Noyons, the khan threatened to punish those Noyons, «who have not full filled their promises, and over disobedient arats as well» [16, p. 101]. Active diplomatic pressure by the Mongolian government on Uriankhay Noyons continued up to the middle of the summer of 1921 – when the pro-Soviet government of Sukhe-Bator came to power in Mongolia. This event not only deprived the White units of the Mongolian government's support, but it meant the failure of all their plans of armed struggle against the Soviet Regime. The Red government victory in Mongolia made their chances for physical survival insignificant.

Striving for the final defeat of the White military forces in Mongolia, the Red partisans held a conference on 3 August, 1921. In the conference it was decided to unite all the partisan units of Uriankhay under the command of S. Kochetov. Moreover, in August, 1921, regiment 440 of the Red Army was deployed from Minusinsk to Tuva [7, p. 205]. At the end of August – the beginning of September the Soviet commandment began a military attack on the White positions in all directions. Red troops were brought into Mongolia from Altai and Uriankhay. On 6 September, 1921, cavalry division 13, consisting of 1350 soldiers, 32 machine-guns and 4 main guns, occupied Shara-Sume Town. Selected special designation unit 22 of soviet army 5 under the command of K. Baikalov (Nekunde) left Kosh-Agach for Kobdo. The main body of the unit was Irkutsk communists and Komsomols; it numbered 450 Red soldiers, 300 of them were cavalry men with 20 machine-guns. An integrated partisan unit, consisting of 425 men under the command of S. Kochetov, went from the Uriankhayskiy region to Ulangom [10, p. 18 - 20].

Nevertheless, the Russian and foreign soldiers' unit of esaul A. Kaygorodov managed to block the unit of K. Baikalov in Sarul-Gun khure in the region of the Tolbo-nur Lake, not far from Kobdo. The unit of General A. Bakich, consisting

of the remnants of the Orenburgian corps and also including a large number of refugees, women, children and civilians, arrived at Sarul-Gun to join Kaygorodov [15, p. 316]. I. Kazantsev and his unit, consisting of, according to different sources of information, from 150 to 300 men, also arrived there, after having failed to attack Uriankhay [11, p. 253; 15, p. 336]. Some researchers think that, at the beginning of August 1921, after having failed to attack the territory of Soviet Russia and having lost Urga, Baron Ungern himself planned to retreat to Western Mongolia and unite with the military forces of A. Bakich, A. Kaygorodov and I. Kazantsev, but the mutiny, which had just begun in the Asian division, disrupted his plans [11, p. 252].

An integrated unit of A. Kaygorodov, A. Bakich and I. Kazantsev managed to defeat the Red Mongolian unit of Khasbator, which consisted of 400 sabers, and was close to taking control of all of Western Mongolia. But the siege of Sarul-Gun monkey ended in failure. The fighting spirit of the besieged, their superior armament did not allow the Whites to capture the monkey. The Reds declined the ultimatum of A. Bakich, who had become the head of the integrated unit, and fought off several combat assaults of the khure [11, p. 253].

The Soviet Government urgently sent an integrated unit of Chonovians and two regular regiments to help – regiment 185 of Perm rifle division 21 and cavalry regiment 59 [1. F. P-49. B. 2 ac. Fl. 10. L. 7]. Having known about the approach of major Red military forces, the Whites relieved the khure siege that had lasted for 42 days. After that, the unit of Kaygorodov left A. Bakich and managed to reach the Altai Mountains. At that time, a mutiny occurred in I. Kazantsev's unit, caused by its continuous failures. The major part of the unit left their commander and moved to the Reds. The fate of these soldiers is unknown. After

that, the remnant Kazantsev's Cossacks decisively joined the unit of A. Bakich [11, p. 253].

On 25 October 1921, in the region of Khonur-Ulen, 100 kilometers north-west from Kobdo, Bakich's unit was defeated by the Red troops of rifle regiment 185 and cavalry regiment 59 and was staved to Kobdo, from there it left for Ulangom [1. F. P-49. B. 2 ac. Fl. 10. L. 7]. As this took place, some Bakich's people left the unit and surrendered to the Reds. Most of these captives, Yenisei Cossacks among them, died of cold or hunger or were simply shot by the guards [18, p. 337].

In despair, A. Bakich and I. Kazantsev tried to find a way into the Uriankhayskiy region. There were no paths of retreat to China; Mongolia was fully under the Reds' control. More over, A. Bakich could not count for internment, as far as in May – June, 1921, after the defeat of the White Army, the unit under his command retreated to China from Russia and, having refused to disarm, smashed Chinese troops and went to Altai district of Sintszyan. It is thought that A. Bakich intended to free the district of Chinese troops, to join the region to Outer Mongolia and make it a base for military operations against Soviet Russia [17, p. 327 - 321]. Moreover, the presence of Ungern, who had fought against the governmental Chinese troops in the unit meant that the Chinese government would not necessarily act humanely towards Russian soldiers and officers.

The impossibility of staying in Mongolia, the unwillingness or incapability of leaving for China forced A. Bakich and I. Kazantsev to capture a major populated point in Uriankhay territory, to make a base in it and to try to survive a severe winter.

Esaul A. Kaygorodov demonstrated a capability of battling through the territory of Soviet Russia and starting an armed struggle against the Reds. His unit, earlier coordinated by A. Bakich, after the defeat at Sarul-Gun, managed

to rush through on the territory of Russia, to the Altai Mountains, where A. Kaygorodov began active partisan operations [18, p. 339 - 340].

The unit's target became a large Russian village Atamanovka, situated in Uriankhay, not far from Belotsarsk. On 21 December, 1921 Bakich – Kazantsev's unit, numbering more than 1000 men of Orenburgian, Siberian and Yenisei Cossacks, White Guards and White patriots, attacked Atamanovka. Apparently, it became disastrous for the Whites that, while crossing a polynya in the Elegest River, they could not save the machine guns and main guns from getting wet and rendered them useless. Nevertheless, the Whites began to attack the village and the Red garrison barely managed to fight them. During the second attack, the Red partisan unit of S. Kochetov struck behind Bakich and Kazantsev. The Whites were completely defeated. Up to 200 men were slaughtered or wounded; up to 300 were captured by the Reds. Five machine guns, one main gun and the whole column of vehicles were seized by the Reds. In the battle the unit's commander and the Yenisei Cossacks' captain I. Kazantsev was killed [18, p. 338].

A. Bakich and the remnants of his unit had to go back to Mongolia, to Ulangom. But there was no longer any possibility to continue the struggle. On 30 December, 1921 A. Bakich capitulated with all his unit of 700 men to the Mongolian revolutionary government military forces under the command of Khatan-Bator-Van [11, p. 253]. This event put an end to the Yenisei Cossacks' participation in organized opposition to the Soviet Regime in Mongolia. According to operations reports, sent to the headquarters of army 5, there was a significant number of women and children among the captives. There were 23 women and children out of 131 people of a captives' gang that arrived in Minusinsk at the end of March, 1922. If we take into account the apparently much higher mortality rate among these groups of captives,

especially in winter time, we may suppose that in I. Kazantsev's and A. Bakich's units, women and children reached up to one fifth of the total number of people. So, here it may be more appropriate to speak about refugee groups, rather than about battle units [F. 1. B. 1. Fl. 108. L. 19].

In conclusion, giving a general evaluation of the Yenisei Cossacks' actions as a part of the White military forces in Mongolia, it is necessary to underline the following principal moments.

The reasons for the mass departure of the Yenisei Cossacks to Mongolia in the beginning of 1920 – 1921 lay in the Yenisei Cossacks' attempt to find safety for themselves and their families from the Soviet persecution. The relatively small number of Cossacks and their family members (about 0,8 %) of the population of the Yeniseisk guberniya, and also their dispersed settlements among peasants and foreigners hostile to them were also a reason for their departure abroad. The impossibility of the majority of the Yenisei Cossacks to leave for Transbaikalia, and also their attempt to be near the territory of their former settlements determined their major concentration in Mongolia. This fact is also proved by the content of the Yenisei Cossacks' unit in Mongolia. There was a very high rate of refugees in the unit (up to two thirds): women, children and unarmed men. Apparently, the refugees also originally planned to return to their homes after the political situation changed. A good knowledge of the regions from military service and business, contributed to the Yenisei Cossacks' departure to the Uriankhayskiy region and then to Mongolia.

The Yenisei Cossacks' battalion joined the unit under the command of I. Kazantsev, a part of the Asian horse cavalry division of R. Ungern-Sternberg. The latter joined the unit of A. Bakich and was determined to become a part of any major anti-Bolshevik politico-military force that gave them an opportunity not only to continue the struggle against the Reds, but also to save

the Yenisei Cossacks, their families and other refugees in Mongolia, from Soviet Russia's peril and from danger from the Mongolians.

The Yenise Cossacks battalion under the command of I. Kazantsev was involved in the armed opposition of the White units of R. Ungern-Sternberg and A. Bakich against the Chinese government, and the continuing battles with Soviet troops. Having joined the White units in Mongolia, the Yenisei Cossacks took a most active part in the struggle against the Reds. This could be explained by the fact that, first of all, the zone of military actions was very close to the places of the Cossacks' former settlements. The attack, undertaken by Baron Ungern in Soviet Russia, was a failure and it deprived the Cossacks of the possibility of returning to their homes. The White units' military confrontation against the Chinese government, while in Mongolia, made impossible

to retreat to China. The victory of the pro-Soviet government of Sukhe-Bator made remaining in Mongolia extremely dangerous for both the Yenisei Cossacks and all the White units.

Under such circumstances, the only way out for the Yenisei Cossacks was an attempt to fight in Russia, in order to start a new round of military struggle against the Soviet Regime. The situation in Siberia and in Soviet Russia did not give them this opportunity.

On the whole, the situation in which the Yenisei Cossacks found themselves in Mongolia in 1920 – 1921 and their actions during that period were caused by a whole row of circumstances of both objective and subjective character. The Cossacks met irresolvable problems and consequent circumstances were characteristic of that time and place for all the White military forces.

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