

UDC 94

The Circassian Regiment in the battles for Russia

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Abstract

The article draws attention to the facts connected with the formation and activities of the Circassian regiment during the First World War and revolutionary events. It also points out that the history of the relations between the Adygea people and the Russian state began with the creation of a military-political alliance. The author of the article thinks that the formation of mountaineers' military units during the First World War should be viewed as the brightest page of the history of the unity between the Caucasian peoples and Russia. The article gives special attention to the Caucasian Native Cavalry Division, which is better known as the "Savage Division". This Caucasian Native Cavalry Division was formed in the North Caucasus on the basis of the Supreme Decree of August 23, 1914. It was staffed by volunteers and consisted of six regiments. Most of the horsemen of the Savage Division were forced to emigrate after the Revolution and the Civil War. But they remained loyal to the militant brotherhood that existed in the years when the Russians, mountaineers, Cossacks and other representatives of the multinational Russian state defended its interests. Thus, the Circassians did not disappear and will not disappear into the annals of history.

For citation

Achmiz K.G. (2018) Cherkesskii polk v boyakh za Rossiyu [The Circassian Regiment in the battles for Russia]. *"Belye pyatna" rossiiskoi i mirovoi istorii* ["White Spots" of the Russian and World History], 3, pp. 10-26.

Keywords

Circassian regiment, North Caucasus, agitator, adat, horseman, djigit, infidel, blood enemy, native.

Introduction

Russia and the North Caucasus today are deeply connected civilizations that build together a unified democratic state where, according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, human rights and freedoms will have a priority character, regardless of nationality. Today the North Caucasus is seen by Russian people as a source of interethnic tension, social instability and armed conflicts. This opinion has developed due to the lack of a coordinated interethnic policy in the spiritual sphere, and sometimes wrong actions of federal and regional authorities. Some part of this image is made by the mass media, poorly controlled migration flows, and high unemployment. All this creates additional disharmony in interethnic relations. And although the Republic of Adygea is a part of the Southern Federal District, nevertheless its inhabitants, primarily the indigenous population (Circassians), consider themselves to be the North Caucasian peoples.

Back to the history of relations between Russia and Circassia

Many Russian and foreign researchers wrote about Circassia and Circassians, therefore the memory of the historical Circassia has been preserved. Circassia and the Caucasus became objects of Russian interest during the formation of the centralized Russian state, when Circassia became in the sphere of its geopolitical interests. In the middle of the XVI century military and political contacts were established that ended with the dynastic marriage of the daughter of Temryuk Idarova Gosheney, the supreme prince of Kabarda, (in the baptism of Mary) and the tsar of all Russia Ivan IV the Terrible.

Two Adyghe educators – Sh. Nogmov and S. Khan-Girey – should be especially noted. In 1838 Sh. Nogmov wrote the book *The History of the Adygea People*, where for the first time in the history of the Adyghes he made an attempt to systematize information about the Adygea people. In this book, he carefully compared and analyzed the available historical evidence about Circassians since ancient times, and information from Adyghe folklore [Nogmov, 1958]. The next person who decided to tell the world about his people was Sultan Khan-Girey in his "Notes on Circassia". Emperor Nicholas I called Khan-Giray "Le Caramsine de la Circassie" ("Circassian Karamzin"), but prohibited the publication of "Notes" [Sultan Khan-Giray ..., 2009, 17].

The history, culture and life of the Circassians were described by foreign travelers who visited these places in the 13th-19th centuries with various missions. They left very interesting evidence which is still relevant. Gardanov collected this information in the book "Adygs, Balkars and Karachais in the news of European authors of the XIII-XIX centuries" [Gardanov, 1974]. The collection included 37 sources. This publication has greatly advanced the historical study of the Adygea People. Gardanov arranged collected materials in strict chronological order. It allowed to make a vivid picture of the gradual expansion of knowledge about the peoples of the Caucasus in Western

Europe. Having deeply analyzed these sources, V.K. Gardanov came to the conclusion that Western European authors, as they became acquainted with the Northern Caucasus, "pay more attention to the Adygs, whom they begin to call in Europe mainly Circassians from the 13th century" [Ibid, 10].

After the Mongol-Tatar conquest of the North Caucasus and the defeat of the Alans and Polovtians, the Adygs gradually occupy the vast plains of the Ciscaucasia and become the most numerous and influential people of this part of the Caucasus. Their popularity in Europe was growing, and for centuries they became dominant in the North Caucasus. The word "Circassians" becomes a common name and more and more often unites not only the Adygs themselves, but also their neighbors – Abazin, Karachais, Balkars, Ossetians, Ingushes and other peoples. For foreigners, the North Caucasus now appears to be a country populated primarily or only by Circassians. The social structure of the Circassians, their clothing, weapons and customs embody the way of life of all the mountain-dwellers of the North Caucasus.

Among the progressive researchers and developers of the Circassians, who made a significant contribution to the preservation of the historical memory of Circassia, are: N.I. Klingen (1851-1922), L.I. Lavrov (1909-1982), E.I. Zevakin (1901-?), N.F. Yakovleva (1892-1974), G.A. Koki-eva (1896-1955), N.V. Anfimov (1909-1998), A.V. Gadlo (1937-2002), etc. The great scientist is also the outstanding Kuban historian E.D. Felitsyn (1848-1903), who in his works recorded and described disappearing after 1864, but still visible remnants of Circassian culture. Another outstanding researcher is Kuban encyclopaedist F.A. Shcherbiny (1849-1936) and his "History of the Kuban Cossack Host" (1910-1913) in two volumes [Shcherbina, 1910, v. 1; Shcherbina, 1913, vol. 2].

From the XVI century up to 1864 is the era of the New Time in the history of Circassia. It is characterized by an increase in the foreign policy ambitions of the two empires – the Russian and the Ottoman. And although the growth of Moscow's power was delayed by about a century, by the middle of the 18th century, Circassia was between two giants. By that time, Russia had been the leader in the solution of the so-called "Eastern question". When the Mozdok fortification was erected on the territory of Kabarda in 1763, a long Caucasus war began. From 1763 to 1829 this war did not have a continuous character, but after the signing of the Adrianople treaty between Russia and Turkey, the tsar government finally gets a diplomatic instrument in the conquest policy in the North-Western Caucasus, and the war for the Black Sea basin and the territory of Circassia acquired a frontal character.

As it was noted above, the history of the relations between the Adygs and the Russian state began with the establishment of a military-political union. As follows from the Nikon Chronicle of 1552, the Circassian ambassadors "beat the brow, that the Emperor should stand up for them, and take them to serve with their lands, and defend them from the Crimean [Khan]" [Karamzin, 1991, 2, v. 8, 61]. The famous scientist S.Kh. Hotko in his new book *The Discovery of Circassia* describes in detail the relationship between Russia and Circassia for nearly two centu-

ries, including the dynastic marriage of Ivan IV the Terrible to the daughter of Temryuk Idarova Gosheney, the supreme prince of Kabarda. He convincingly proved that this military-political alliance was profitable both for Circassia and for Russia during the continuing rise in the basin of the Black and Mediterranean seas of the Ottoman Empire. According to S.Kh. Hotko, it was one of the "most important political events in the Adyghe history of the XVI-XVII centuries". Its significance was also very great for Russian history, since "establishing ties with the Circassian principalities of Western Circassia and Kabarda opened important geopolitical advantages for Moscow in the confrontation between the Crimea and Turkey" [Hotko, 2015, 53]. Let's take the campaign of the Crimean Khan Devlet-Giray to Moscow as an example, when Ivan IV the Terrible was forced to recognize himself as the "eternal tributary of the Crimea" and to pay tribute every year.

Circassians in the Russian Empire

After the end of the Caucasian War (1864), the relations of the mountain people of the North-Western Caucasus (Circassia) and Russia were difficult. A significant part of the Circassians (Adygs) died in the bloody Caucasian war, the survivors were forced to leave their homeland and emigrate to Turkey and other Middle Eastern states. In total, from 1858 to 1865, according to official data, about 500 thousand people left the country, including up to 470 thousand Circassians (Adygs) [Achmiz, 2015, 27]. According to the famous historian and publicist Yakov Gordin, the once powerful country of Circassia, whose cultural heritage became the property of the entire Caucasus and the South of Russia, like Atlantis, disappeared from the face of the earth in the 60s of XIX century with the tacit consent of the whole "civilized" world (England, France, Turkey, etc.) [Ibid, 40]. K. Marx noted that the enlightened "Europe is watching with idiotic indifference" the death of Circassia [Marx-Engels ..., 1963, vol. 30, 335]. On its historical territory there were a little more than 60 thousand people. Attempts by certain groups of people to return to their homeland were met with strong objections from the state. Emperor Alexander II inscribed on one petition: "The return is impossible!". Up to the First World War, Circassians (Adygs) left their homeland in small groups in order to reunite with their tribesmen in Turkey. Those who did not leave their native land, gradually built into the social structure of the Russian state. Gentiles (the so-called representatives of all non-Russian peoples in Russia before 1917) were involved in the armed forces of the Russian state on a voluntary basis. From 3 to 6 July, 1887 in the village of Hakurinohabl of the Kuban region, there was a strike of Circassian women (the Soldier's War), caused by the authorities' attempt to mobilize Adyghe men not into cavalry, but in infantry units of the army. Men agreed to serve in the Russian army, but only as riders. That's why it caused the strong protest of women who considered shame for their men to serve in the infantry units of the army. Men were punished for the "revolt" of women [Autlev, 1990, 95].

It should be noted that some of the Caucasus mountaineers, including the Circassians (Adygs), valiantly served in the Russian army during the Russian-Japanese War of 1904-1905. The brightest page of the unification of the Caucasian peoples with Russia was the formation of units from the North Caucasus mountaineers during the First World War. The Caucasian native cavalry division, known in history as the "Wild" Division, was formed on the basis of the highest decree on August 23, 1914 in the territory of the North Caucasus and was staffed by mountaineering volunteers. The division included six regiments of the four-hundred unit: Kabardin, 2nd Dagestan, Chechen, Tatar (from the inhabitants of Azerbaijan), Circassian and Ingush.

The division was headed by the brother of the emperor Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, although he was in political disfavour, but very popular both among the people and among the aristocracy. Therefore, the service in the division immediately became attractive to representatives of the highest Russian nobility, who occupied the majority of command posts in the division. There were Georgian princes Bagration, Chavchavadze, Dadiani, Orbeliani, mountain sultans Bekovich-Cherkassky and Khagandokov, khans Erivansky, khans Shamkhaly-Tarkovsky, Polish prince Radziwill, representatives of ancient Russian surnames princes Gagarin, Svyatopolk-Mirsky, counts Keller, Vorontsov-Dashkov, Tolstoy, Lodyzhensky, Polovtsev, Staroselsky, princes Napoleon-Murat, Albrecht, Baron Wrangel, Persian prince Fazula Mirza Kajar, etc. The glory of this division went ahead of the division. Enemies and residents of settlements sometimes resorted to a stampede during military operations of the Wild Division.

It should be noted that in Soviet historiography, which viewed historical events through the prism of the class approach, it was not possible to give a true coverage of the activities of military formations participating in the First World War, since the war itself, according to V.I. Lenin, "was a war of thieves for the division of prey" under the slogan "defense of the fatherland" [Lenin, 1973, vol. 30, 77]. Another reason was that most of the riders of the Caucasian equestrian division, many officers and Cossacks joined the white movement, and then had to emigrate. And only since the early 90's of the XX century, historians have begun to study the so-called "white spots" of Russian history, including the history of formation and combat operations of the Wild Division.

Among the first publications on this subject are works published abroad, written by eyewitnesses and direct participants of the events occurred in those years. One of the first historiographers of this military unit is N.N. Breshko-Breshkovsky, who in his novel "Wild Division" [Breshko-Breshkovsky, www] told readers about many military affairs of riders and the atmosphere in the regiments of the division. Of particular interest are the memories of the events of 1917 of the member of the Ukrainian Military Committee V. Kedrovsky, published in Ukrainian in Canada in 1967 [Kedrovsky, 1967]; "Sketches of Russian Troubles" in five volumes by A.I. Denikin, the leader of the White Movement, and others. Here are also publications in daily provincial and all-Russian newspapers of that time, which, unfortunately, "trying to give new and interesting material to their readers every day, often could not carefully verify the reliability of published information"

[Dzagalov, 2007 , 232]. The well-known North Caucasian archivist O.L. Opryshko wrote about returning from oblivion and restoring the historical truth about the Caucasian equestrian division. The Kabardino-Balkarian publishing house Elbrus began the Adyghe historical series from the historical narratives of O.L. Opryshko under the title "On the trails of history" [Opryshko, On the trails of history, 2007], which included works written on the basis of the materials of the Russian State Military Historical Archive, various archival sources of the North Caucasian republics, including "Riders from the Legend." Next came the publication of the Caucasian Equestrian Division [Opryshko, Caucasian Equestrian Division ..., 2007], which for the first time on the basis of documentary sources, gave the summary of the division of the Caucasian mountaineers, who became famous during the First World War, told about the riders and officers who were part of all six regiments. The publication of the researcher A.D. Vershigora is of particular interest, it is also based on archival sources and periodicals from the times of the World War [Vershigora, 1998, No. 1; Vershigora, 1998, No. 2]. Interesting information about the riders and their combat actions are in the study of S.V. Volkov [Volkov, 2004]. This book contains information on the fate of more than 6,800 cavalry officers who survived the collapse of the Russian Empire, who were shot during the "Red Terror", who died during the civil war of 1918-1922, died in emigration, were repressed in 1920-1930, etc. New pages, based on publications in the Ukrainian periodical press of 1914-1918, published by the researcher A.S. Dzagalov. Perhaps it is one of the few scientific works that moved from the traditional listing of the merits and military achievements of the riders of the Wild Division and has taken a productive step towards exploring the atmosphere inside and around the Caucasian regiments in World War I [Dzagalov, 2007]. Very interesting information about the participants of the Circassian regiment is given in A.V. Kazakov's article "Adygs and Abkhaz-Abazins in the World War I as part of the Circassian cavalry regiment of the Caucasian Equestrian Division and other military formations", which gives the characteristics of more than 100 soldiers of the Circassian regiment [Kazakov, www].

The reasons for the high fighting efficiency of the Wild Division

Despite the fact that the Wild Division suffered many losses during its combat activities, there was no surrender, no flight of panic from positions, disobedience to commanders and fraternization with the enemy, which were characteristic of the Russian army especially during the last period of the war. The riders of the Wild Division met on the battlefield with compulsorily mobilized military units, such as the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Rusins who lived on the territory of the Habsburgs and did not have the desire to fight. They had to fight also with the most combat-ready military formations of the enemy – Hungarian cavalry, Tyrolean arrows and German infantry. In these battles, they fought as brave Russian soldiers. The features of the unit formation and the mentality of its personnel had a significant impact on disciplinary practice in the units and the moral and psychological state of the riders. National regiments had a hierarchical structure, similar to the

structure of a large late-family typical of all mountain peoples. It was even suggested to create special hundreds of representatives of the same name. It was often possible to meet representatives of several generations or brothers in the same regiment. The number of those wishing to serve always exceeded the regular capabilities of the regiments. The biggest punishment for riders was the exclusion from the lists of the regiment "for incorrigibly bad behavior" and "leave" of those guilty to the place of residence. The glory of an unusually wild, brutal and brave army was, as a rule, ahead of the troops, it was widely promoted and disseminated by journalists. Materials about the "Wild Division" regularly appeared in the illustrated literary publications "Niva", "War Chronicle", "New Time", "War", etc. and also in the local press. During the war, according to O.L. Opryshko, about 7000 mountain people served in the "Wild Division". By March, 1916, the division lost 23 officers, 260 horsemen and lower ranks. 144 officers and 1438 riders were wounded. Many horsemen could be proud of the St. George's reward. For non-Russians in the Russian Empire, there was a cross with the state emblem. The horsemen were very indignant that they were given a "bird" instead of "dzhigit", and got it [Bezugolny, www]. Soon the "Wild Division" played its role in the great Russian drama – the revolutionary events of 1917.

Wild Division as a support of the dictator L.G. Kornilov

After the summer offensive in 1916, the division was engaged in position battles and reconnaissance, and from January 1917 it was on a quiet section of the front and did not take part in the fighting. Soon it was put on vacation, and the war was over for it.

Materials inspections of the regiments in February 1917 showed that the unit went to rest in perfect order, representing a strong fighting unit. During this period, the command of the division (the head N.I. Bagration, chief of staff P.A. Polovtsev) had plans to deploy the division to the Native Corps, that it to add to it other Muslim cavalry units that were in the Russian army – the 1st Dagestan, Ossetian, Crimean-Tatar and Turkmen regiments. N.I. Bagration and P.A. Polovtsev went with this proposal to GHQ, arguing that "the mountain people are such a wonderful combat material," and even inclined the emperor to this decision, but they did not find support from the General Staff.

Riders of the "Wild Division" met February revolution with confusion. After Nicholas II, the recent commander of the division, Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, abdicated from the throne. According to the observations of contemporaries, "riders, with the wisdom inherent in the mountaineers of the Caucasus, met all "achievements of the revolution" with sullen mistrust [Ibid.].

"Regimental and hundreds of commanders tried in vain to explain their "natives" what had happened ..." The natives "did not understand much and, above all, did not understand how it could be" without the tsar". The words "the Provisional Government" did not say anything to these dashing riders from the Caucasus and they did not wake up any images in their eastern imagination" [Breshko-Breshkovsky, www]. Revolutionary new forms of divisional, regimental and other

committees also affected the Wild Division. However, in their "arrangement" the most active part was taken by the senior commanders of the regiments and divisions, and the divisional committee was headed by the commander of the Circassian regiment Sultan Krym-Girey [Koshev, 1999, 62]. The division retained the rank of veneration. The most revolutionary focus in the division was the team of sailors-machine-gunners of the Baltic Fleet, assigned to the formation before the revolution. In comparison with them, "the natives looked much more tactful and restrained" [Bezugolny, www]. So, at the beginning of April, P.A. Polovtsev could reluctantly announce that his native Tatar regiment "comes out of the revolution in perfect order". A similar situation was in other regiments. The historian O.L. Opryshko explains the preservation of discipline in the division by that "special atmosphere that was not characteristic of other parts of the Russian army, the voluntary nature of service and the blood and land ties that held the military collective together" [Bezugolny, www].

At the end of June, 1917, the Provisional Government made an attempt to launch a major offensive on the South-Western Front. But because of the reluctance of soldiers to fight this plan failed.

At the end of August, there was a campaign to Petrograd of troops faithful to L.G. Kornilov. To participate in this campaign, it was decided to use the "Wild Division" and the 3rd Cavalry Corps of General Krymov. In opinion of L.G. Kornilov, these forces should have been sufficient to neutralize the troops of the Petrograd garrison, disperse the Soviets and establish a military dictatorship.

In the conditions of the coming civil war, the motive of the interethnic clash, connected with the use in the speech of L.G. Kornilov to "Wild Division", embarrassed the participants of the overdue conflict. Petrograd, according to the historian G.Z. Ioffe, "numbed" from this news, not knowing what to expect from "mountain goons" [Ioffe, 1989, 39]. There was a widespread opinion that "the Caucasian mountaineers didn't care whom to cut". B.V. Savinkov, who was "wholeheartedly with Kerensky" and his deputy as Minister of War (at the request of A.F. Kerensky), before the break-up of the government with L.G. Kornilov on August, 24 asked him to replace the Caucasian division with regular cavalry, since "it was embarrassing to entrust the establishment of Russian freedom to the Caucasian mountaineers". The counter-revolutionary Kornilov revolt in August provoked widespread popular resistance. The authorities realized that L.G. Kornilov intended to overthrow the Provisional Government and replace it with a military dictatorship. Under these conditions, they considered it best to seek help from all the revolutionary forces, including the Bolsheviks. As a result of joint actions, the revolution was saved, which brought them considerable political dividends [Tsagolov, 2017, www].

The Wild Division did not meet Kornilov's demands. N.N. Breshko-Breshkovsky believes that the reason for the failure is that "General Kornilov, devoid of dictatorial ambition, dictatorial temperament and dictatorial gravitation towards power, did not lead the division himself" [Breshko-Breshkovsky, www]. Close to A.F. Kerensky people advised him to send a delegation from the

native Muslims to the riders of the Wild Division. They decided the outcome of the matter: "Why do you, the Caucasian mountaineers, interfere in the affairs of the Russians?" Is it not enough you fought, and do not your families wait for you in your native villages? That's enough! Kerensky will send you to the Caucasus and reward you as much as you have for life! The wedge of temptation and discord was skillfully hammered, and here still immobility, inaction, which can disintegrate the most solid and persistent "[Ibid.].

L.G. Kornilov frightened Kerensky, saying straightforward that in the future military junta he could have a maximum portfolio of the Minister of Justice. Of course A.F. Kerensky could not agree with it. And he announced that he moved L.G. Kornilov from the post of commander-in-chief. At the same time he declared Petrograd on the martial law and made the Soviets repulse the rebellious general. The Soviets, where the Bolsheviks retained their influence, naturally used the opportunity to arm themselves (several tens of thousands of rifles and revolvers, a large quantity of ammunition were issued from arsenals and military depots for the arming of the Red Guard detachments) and organized themselves, creating combat detachments.

It should be noted that the promotion of troops faithful to L.G. Kornilov went bad. First, the general managed to set himself against the leadership of the trade union of railway workers ("Vik-Zhel"), who was threatened with severe punishment if his demands were not fulfilled. And the railwaymen sabotaged the advance of echelons with cavalry units. Then the invasion of agitators began on the trains stretching along the railway. To work with the djigits from the Wild Division, their fellow countrymen – the so-called Muslim delegation from the Central Committee of Mountain Peoples – came from the North Caucasus. After one day of conversation, the fighting efficiency of this division became zero. Djigits left trains at Vyritsa station and refused to go to Petrograd.

The commander of the Circassian regiment Sultan Krym-Girey played not the least role in these events. A combat officer and caring commander was popular in the mountain parts of the Wild Division and was elected on April 24, 1917 as rider chairman of the divisional committee. His position during this period was complicated and contradictory. On the one hand, he, as an officer and commander, could not fail to comply with the orders of the highest army commanders, especially the commander-in-chief of General L.G. Kornilov. On the other hand, Krym-Giray as chairman of the divisional committee (a new public institution created by the revolution) was obliged to oppose a counter-revolutionary insurrection. Just like the figures of the Central Committee of the Union of United Highlanders of the Caucasus, formed on March 6, 1917, Colonel Sultan Krym-Girey made his choice in favor of the February revolution. He sharply opposed the possibility of using the "Wild Division" for gendarme purposes.

The detailed report of the commander of the Circassian regiment of Colonel Sultan Krym-Girey at the Second Congress of the Union of United Mountaineers of the North Caucasus gave an exhaustive description of the alignment of political forces in the Kornilov conspiracy, the place and role of the "Wild Division" in it. It could be seen from the report that in the morning of August

29, 1917, a delegation of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Muslim Union, headed by the chairman of the committee, A.T. Tsalikov came to the division. The delegation included AYTEK Namitokov, Shamil (descendant of the famous Shamil), member of the State Duma T.E. Elderkhanov, representative of the Georgian military organization K.N. Machabeli, etc. The delegation explained the essence of the events and called all riders not to interfere in the conspiracy of General L.G. Kornilov against the revolution.

Sultan Krym-Girey replied that "the delegation could be absolutely calm, since our regiment and the whole corps probably held the same opinion." In September 5, 1917 addressing to the mountaineers of the North Caucasus, Krym-Girey said that the division "had joined the revolution irrevocably" [Koshev, 1999, 63]. The Union of United Mountaineers and the Terek Regional Executive Committee asked A.F. Kerensky, the Chairman of the Provisional Government, to return the cavalry corps to the Caucasus. This request was fulfilled.

The whole idea with the dictatorship of General L.G. Kornilov failed. General Krymov shot himself after talking with A.F. Kerensky, and L.G. Kornilov was arrested and sent to the prison of the city of Bykhov.

Few people today are aware that the commander of the Circassian cavalry regiment, Colonel Sultan Krym-Girey, who opted for the February revolution, was an active supporter of the federal, democratic future of the Russian state, where the Adygs and the mountaineers of the Kuban could gain autonomy with an obligatory guarantee of the rights of small nations. "I am sure," said Sultan Krym-Girey, speaking at the congress of the Kuban Krai Rada in September 1917, "that the Cossacks and the mountaineers of the Kuban in brotherly cooperation will go hand in hand and will be able to arrange their life and the ideals of life at their own discretion on the basis of brotherhood and love" [Ibid, 65]. Following his convictions and principles, Sultan Krym-Girey followed those who defended the perspectives of Russia's bourgeois-democratic development. While in the troops of the Kuban Rada, one of the most prominent public and military figures of the Adygs died in the prime of life and talent at the age of 40 in March, 1918.

Fidelity to combat brotherhood and adat

Even in these troubled years the mountain people remained faithful to their traditions, adat. The guest was always under the protection of the hoster, even if he was in blood feud with him for a while. Following their "adats", these unwritten laws, the mountain people saved not only their officers, but also all those who sought protection. The duty of the widest hospitality is a sacred duty for every Muslim, not only in relation to friends, but also to the most fierce enemies, and even if the seeker of the shelter and hearth is a person who killed someone from the family who hides him from the persecution. There are countless examples from the bloody Russian feud, when the Caucasian mountaineers for a long time concealed the Russian officers persecuted by the Bolsheviks.

"Having learnt that Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich Romanov is in one of the Circassian auls, a large Soviet unit with machine guns and two guns took all approaches to the village and announced an ultimatum:

– Boris Romanov will be immediately extradited, or the entire village will be defeated.

The Grand Duke appeared at a meeting of the oldest under the chairmanship of the mullah. The Council quickly and unanimously issued a decree:

"The grand prince must be protected all the way to the last man".

It was announced to the Grand Duke, but he objected:

"I'd rather die alone than you'll all be killed."

An eighty-year-old mullah, the patriarch in a white turban with a green border, who had visited Mecca seven times, answered:

"Your Imperial Highness, if we extradite you, and we will live, an indelible dishonor will fall on our heads, our children, our grandchildren". We'll be worse than dogs. Every mountaineer will have the right to spit in our face."

In a few minutes the whole village was a military camp. All the Circassians from old men to teenagers were fully armed. A parliamentarian with a reply to the ultimatum was sent to the head of the Red detachment.

"The Grand Duke is our guest, and we will not extradite him." Try to take him by force ...

The commanders of the detachment were talking for a long time. They knew the fanaticism of the mountain people, they knew that even if the Reds won, then at the cost of great losses, especially when they were drawn into the village itself, where each attack would have to be stormed, like a small fortress. They also knew that in this village there were about sixty horsemen of the Circassian regiment who had passed the experience of the Great War. Each such rider was worth ten Red Army men. Under such conditions, the battle would be a risky adventure "[Breshko-Breshkovsky, www].

It should be emphasized that all the peoples of Russia respected and treated the state-forming people, the Russian people. It was confirmed by the events of the First World War of 1914-1918 and the activities of the Circassian Regiment of the Wild Division. There is a very interesting certificate of A.I. Mikoyan, the prominent statesman of the country, who headed the North Caucasian Krai of the RCP (B.) in the 20-ies of XX century, which was then part of the Adygea Autonomous Oblast formed in 1922. According to A.I. Mikoyan, the Adygeans were the most economically well-off from the mountain peoples. "They lived amicably with the Kuban Cossacks – the population of neighboring stanitsas. I do not remember the case that we ever discussed the issue of banditry among the Adygeans. Hagurate, an Adygei, a respected, serious, reasonable communist headed the revolutionary committee of Adygea" [Mikoyan, 1975, 182].

Most of the riders were forced to emigrate after the revolution and the Civil War. Even when they were in exile, they proved to be faithful to the fighting brotherhood that developed in those years, when Russians, mountaineers, Cossacks, and other representatives of multinational Russia

defended its interests. Very tragic and dramatic was the fate of another famous military leader of the mountaineers, one of the leaders of the Wild Division, General Sultan-Girey Klych, who had a complicated, contradictory life. In Soviet historical literature, he is better known as an ardent anti-Soviet, a bandit and accomplice of Hitler's invaders.

In 1942, Sultan-Girey Klych, who had the task from the Wehrmacht to form a volunteer regiment of Circassians to fight against the USSR, and who specially came to Adygea for this purpose, told the villagers: "I have traveled all over the world. But I've never seen better country than Russia. The Russians, and only they, can unite and help other nations. Russian man has amazing qualities. You need to live only with Russia, with the Russian people. This is your homeland. Do not change it. Do not let the Germans deceive you. Do not listen to them. Do not talk against each other. Protect each other. This is your salvation "[Bejanov, 2002, 320]. He did not fulfill the task. His fate was tragic and dramatic. Issued by the Allies, in accordance with the decisions of the Yalta Conference of the Allied Powers on the Anti-Hitler Coalition, General Sultan-Girey Klych was executed in January 1947 in Moscow together with other people of the "white" movement on the verdict of the military tribunal. Had he any chance to return to the USSR? Numerous sources testify that he had such chances, but he was persuaded not to take this precipitate step. In May 1945, in his speech in Austria to the same deceived Caucasians (about 5 thousand people), he said: "Let those who are able to leave – especially the young people – immediately leave and forget our dream to make the Caucasus and the Caucasus peoples free. I am too old to continue the struggle and prefer to surrender to the mercy of the winner ". This appeal had an effect, and 125 Caucasian officers, led by Sultan-Girey Klych [Koshev, 1999, 108], surrendered to the British. According to the famous Kuban writer V.A. Kanashkin, who for many years headed the magazine Kuban, Sultan-Girey Klych answered when was asked not to go to Russia: "How will I look in the face of those around me, if my comrades P. Krasnov, A. Shkuro, S. Krasnov, G. Domanov, A. Vasiliev and others would go to Russia to die, and I'll stay here? I will never do it! "[Ct. by: Achmiz, Kat, 2016, 54]. A brave warrior, brave Circassian, he remained faithful to the fighting brotherhood that developed between the Cossacks and the mountaineers during the First World War. According to the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, Sultan-Girey Klych was executed by hanging in January, 1947. Thus the life of the brilliant commander of the Circassian Regiment of the Wild Division ended.

Conclusion

Summarizing, we should note that the Circassians (Adygs) have not been lost and will no longer dissolve in the history. Not every Russian can feel the pain of others, understand and appreciate the essence of the national catastrophe that this Caucasian people had. As our outstanding Adygeyan poet and writer Iskhak Mashbash wrote: "only those, who have suffered, can feel someone else's pain".

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Черкесский полк в боях за Россию

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Аннотация

В данной статье освещаются факты, связанные с образованием и деятельностью Черкесского полка во время Первой мировой войны и революционных событий. Отмечается, что история отношений адыгов с Российским государством началась с установления военно-политического союза. Указывается на то, что самой яркой страницей единения кавказских народов с Россией стало формирование из числа горцев Северного Кавказа соединений в годы Первой мировой войны. Особое внимание уделяется Кавказской туземной конной дивизии, которая более известна в истории как «Дикая». Данная дивизия была сформирована на основании высочайшего указа 23 августа 1914 г. на территории Северного Кавказа, укомплектована добровольцами-горцами и включала в себя шесть полков четырехсотенного состава. Большинство всадников «Дикой» дивизии вынуждены были эмигрировать после революции и Гражданской войны. Даже находясь в эмиграции, они оказались верны боевому братству, сложившемуся в эти годы, когда русские, горцы, казаки, другие представители многонациональной России защищали ее интересы.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Ачмиз К.Г. Черкесский полк в боях за Россию // «Белые пятна» российской и мировой истории. 2018. № 3. С. 10-26.

Ключевые слова

Черкесский полк, Северный Кавказ, агитатор, адат, всадник, джигит, иноверец, кровник, туземец.

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