

“Up until the 14th of August 1919, despite the number of military fronts connected with the civil war, for us in Kozlov, everything was more or less calm, at least, as calm as it gets behind the front lines.”¹ These words introduce a brief set of reminiscences, published in the local Communist Party newspaper, *Our Truth (Nasha Pravda)*, in the town of Kozlov, located in the central Russian province of Tambov. The occasion was the tenth anniversary of one of the most brutal episodes of the Russian civil war to take place in the province, namely “Mamantov’s Raid,” in which a force of Don Cossack cavalry, active in the anti-Bolshevik struggle in the south of Russia, advanced deep into Soviet territory, disrupting vital Red Army supply and communications links with the front line.²

August 1929 was also the occasion for what were called “Evenings of Veterans’ Reminiscences” (*vechera vospominanii veteranov*), in which local Party members assembled at the Communist Party offices to share stories of their experiences connected with the commemorated event.³ Mamantov’s cavalry force experienced little effective resistance in its drive into the territory of Tambov province, and both the provincial capital, Tambov city, and Kozlov, then the location of the Southern Front headquarters of the Red Army, were occupied in succession by the marauding White force. For many, if not most, it was their first and only direct experience with the Whites. As one woman at a Party “Evening” told the assembled group, “Up until that time, when I saw it for myself, I had found it hard to believe all the reports in the press about White atrocities.”⁴

And the atrocities were many, as the scattered units under Mamantov’s command did not limit themselves to the destruction of the transport and communications infrastructure. Full-scale pogroms, particularly in the occupied towns of Tambov and Kozlov, and looting on a scale not seen previously in the province, combined to create what one soviet administrator described as an “absolute nightmare,” left behind when Mamantov’s force finally exited the province to return to the main body of the Don Army.⁵

In the wake of the raid, the judgments of the Soviet regime were mixed concerning how the experience had affected the population of Tambov. In the words of one state inspector, “Some of the villages suffered terribly at the hands of the Cossacks. Under the influence of events, the peasants of the volost began to settle down appropriately,” by which he meant that they fulfilled obligations to the state without too much fuss.⁶ Indeed, this was the line taken at the Sixth Provincial Party Conference, the first following the events of August 1919. The peasants, it was declared, had become “more revolutionary,” as a result of their sufferings at the hands of Mamantov’s troops.⁷ During the course of the raid, and following it, the Military Commissariat was able to announce that record numbers

of deserters were surrendering at their offices and that voluntary enlistment was on the rise.⁸ Had a true *perelom*, a political watershed, been reached with the citizens of Soviet Russia as a result of their experience with the Whites?

There was, though, a darker side to the popular response to Mamantov's raid. With the advance of the Whites there was a corresponding evacuation of Party personnel in the countryside and towns, and as a result, the balance of authority existing in the province was upset. The "dark forces of counter-revolution" emerged from within the towns and villages and greeted Mamantov with bread and salt. Personal animosities and rivalries came to the fore, and countless *revanches* and attacks plagued individual villages and towns when the Soviet administration was thrown into chaos. In addition, organized rural rebel groups—the mercurial Greens—made their first major appearance during the White advance, causing particular concern even before Mamantov's arrival. Their attacks on state and Party personnel as well as on state property, were punished with almost equal ferocity when the provincial Soviet administration sought to reestablish control in the province. The hoped for *perelom*, evidently, was a debatable proposition.

Strangely, not a single complete account of the raid, which in Tambov province only lasted for fifteen days, has been written.⁹ General Anton I. Denikin, then commander of the Volunteer Army, paid tribute in his memoirs to the strategic importance of the raid, but he was nevertheless dismayed by the conduct of Mamantov's troops, and he always lived with a tense relationship with the Cossack general (as, indeed, he did with most of the Don Cossack commanders). Konstantin Konstantinovich Mamantov was regarded as a loose cannon, but he was a hero to his fellow Don Cossacks and in the Rostov area, making him virtually untouchable and, evidently, untamable.¹⁰ Denikin's successor, General Petr N. Wrangel, was less circumspect and had few qualms in making one of his first actions as commander the dismissal of Mamantov as leader of the Fourth Don Cavalry Corps.¹¹ For the Soviet side, the story of Mamantov's raid is not only one of gross atrocities committed by White counterrevolutionaries; it is inextricably bound up with military defeat and administrative chaos—themes not favored in the national history of any patriotic country. As such, there was largely silence about the affair from both sides of the ideological divide.

Much of the civil war history of this province hinges on the experience of Mamantov's raid, and the event itself is connected with other developments of interest and importance, such as the protracted Mironov affair. An account of the raid and its aftershocks provides a detailed snapshot of the complexities that bound the micro-level experiences in the localities of Soviet Russia to the large-scale political and military questions at the national level. What follows is

a chronological account of the events of August 1919 and their aftermath, with an analysis of how these extraordinary events relate to the larger themes of the revolution and civil war period.

The incursion of Mamantov's cavalry was not the only time that the fronts of the civil war impinged on Tambov province.¹² In 1918, General Petr N. Krasnov's advance in the autumn and winter pressed toward the regional center, Voronezh, and while never capturing that city, one of Krasnov's subordinates, Gusel'shchikov, did bring the conflict into the southern extremes of Tambov province. Borisoglebsk was occupied by White Troops in late December 1918, bringing the chaos of the front line—hasty evacuations, executions, looting—to that small uezd center.¹³ The occupation, though, was short-lived: newly mobilized Red Army detachments, mainly composed of recently inducted Party members and *komsomoltsy*, managed to sustain resistance to the White Cossack troops in the surrounding countryside. (One of these young *komsomol* members, Mikhail Menshikov, became a Soviet minister for foreign affairs.) The Don Cossacks, representing the furthest advance of Krasnov's army into Soviet territory, found themselves virtually abandoned by the main force, bogged down at Tsaritsyn. The retaking of Borisoglebsk, on 6 January, was anticlimactic, with demoralized Cossack troops surrendering or defecting in large numbers to the Red Army.¹⁴

The previous autumn, like in so many provinces in Soviet Russia, Tambov had seen major disturbances connected with the first general mobilizations to the Red Army.¹⁵ The crisis brought on by the advance of Admiral Aleksandr V. Kolchak's army in Siberia in 1919, as well as the summer offensive on the southern front by Denikin's troops, led to an intensified campaign to reinforce the ranks of the Red Army and to address the desertion problem which plagued, especially, the territory of the rearguard, with its system of reserve units and garrisons. It was at this time, in the summer of 1919, that the Bolsheviks first confronted the problem of organized resistance in the villages by men intent upon evading service in the Red Army. In the uezd of Borisoglebsk, the southernmost uezd of the province and the one most immediately threatened by the advance of the Volunteer and Don Armies, the local military authorities intensified their efforts to round up those who had failed to appear at muster points or who had actively fled their Red Army units. While the antidesertion squads had come to expect evasion and even violent threats from local communities and individuals, in May 1919 the Soviet authorities in the uezd were confronted by a novel, organized form of resistance. On 14 May, a group of local community members confronted and arrested the local village soviet and fledgling Party cell in the village of Makashevka, located near the border with Saratov province. At a village assembly, the arrested Party members were accused of crimes connected

with the requisitioning of grain and the closing of the village church. Their accusers were identified as the members of a *shtab* (headquarters) for what were called the “Greens.”¹⁶ The backbone of their organization, which was alleged to have been led by a former tsarist officer, consisted of local village men who were considered by the authorities to be deserters.¹⁷

The Green leaders began to make contacts with groups from other villages in the surrounding area, both in Borisoglebsk uezd and in neighboring Voronezh province. By the next month, their network of contacts had, it was believed, expanded to incorporate some thirty thousand men—an estimate, no doubt, established with reference to the number of deserters believed to be in the region.¹⁸ In the forest of Tellermanovskii, in Borisoglebsk uezd, there was believed to be a Green force of some five thousand, organized into small units, armed, and intent upon holding out against the antidesertion squads of the Soviet state. Individual attacks on soviet and Party cells, like the one in Makashevka, were repeated in other villages in the area, often ending in show trials and executions. Such events, combined with the approach of Denikin’s army, led to the decision to place the southern half of Tambov province under martial law (2 July).¹⁹

Despite the independent nature of their name, the Greens were considered by Soviet authorities to be in league with the Whites. According to one source, army intelligence had established that the Greens planned to occupy the town of Borisoglebsk before Denikin’s arrival, with the aim of making it a grand gesture to present the White general with the prize.²⁰ Another army source believed that the Green organization was actually the work of Denikin’s agents, part of a strategy of sowing discord in the Soviet rearguard.²¹ Violence had broken out in disparate parts of the uezd, which, while disrupting the activities of the Red Army in the province, did little to indicate substantial organization on the part of the rebels. One group of so-called Greens emerged in the area surrounding the town Borisoglebsk, another to the northwest, along the railway leading toward Lipetsk, and, most seriously, in the area of Muchkap, located north of the town of Borisoglebsk, along the railway that connected Tambov city and the town of Balashov, in Saratov province.

A Red Army battalion commander, Kolmykov, was dispatched to Muchkap, in order to assess the situation and to take control of the garrisoned force and organize the defenses of the critical railway station, which provided an essential link between the Southern Front Command in Kozlov and the Ninth Army, based in Balashov. Arriving in the last days of June, Kolmykov found a local garrison that was short on rifles and debilitated by an outbreak of typhus. He noted that the epidemic had particularly affected the officers, who had used their illness as an excuse to take leave from the village. What these officers had abandoned

was, by all accounts, under serious threat by a rebel force numbering some six thousand, a force which, in Kolymakov's downbeat estimation, could even threaten to take Tambov. The local population had already resigned itself to an occupation, not by the Whites, but by the Greens. Nevertheless, Kolymakov believed that the Greens in the area were receiving active support from advance parties of White cavalry.²²

By July, the town of Borisoglebsk had fallen to Denikin's troops.²³ On the same day, the Party members and soviet personnel evacuated Muchkap, despite the fact that authorities in Tambov had dispatched a full infantry battalion (the second) from its garrisoned Thirty-fifth Regiment, in order to aid in the defense of the village. This force established itself at the railway station on 3/4 July, its commander, Iukhnevich, informing Tambov on the fourth that he and his 700 men would never allow the village and station to surrender.²⁴ The provincial command in Tambov was busy sending individual battalions to bolster scattered garrisons, primarily along the railways, with full knowledge that the troops in the countryside were unlikely to display much resolve when faced with immediate risk. Such was the case in Rzhaksa, a station further to the north of Muchkap, where 177 soldiers abandoned their posts without a fight when a group of Greens approached the village on 3 July.²⁵

Another worrying incident involving such indiscipline occurred soon after the abandonment of Rzhaksa. The third battalion, numbering just over nine hundred men, was sent from Tambov toward the general region of Muchkap with the objective of taking up a position in the village of Osinovka, just over the border in Saratov province. According to Iukhnevich in Muchkap, however, the battalion never reached Osinovka, but had instead stopped in the village of Novo-Pokrovskii and staged a mutiny, arresting its command staff, murdering the political commissar, and declaring itself a unit of the Green Army.²⁶ The murder of a political commissar could only increase suspicions that the Whites were somehow behind the disturbances. Yet, according to these initial reports, the mutiny was directly related to the Green phenomenon.

According to a local soviet chairman, though, the men of the this battalion had not, in fact, mutinied, but had been confronted by a force of White Cossacks that outnumbered them nearly two to one. On 5 July, they surrendered without a fight, and the Red Army soldiers managed to hold discussions with the Cossack commanders, offering to yield their own command staff and munitions in exchange for the freedom of the rank and file. This was accepted by the Cossack force, which was evidently not keen on accepting nine hundred prisoners.²⁷

Whatever the truth behind the event, for Iukhnevich the lesson was clear: the defense of the province should not be placed in the hands of reinstated desert-

ers. Recent reports to the provincial capital had given some encouragement to the authorities concerning the reaction of local communities to the advance of the Whites. Deserters had begun to appear at soviets and military commissariat offices, surrendering themselves to the Red Army.²⁸ Scattered reports indicated that the rebel forces of the Green Army were coming into conflict with the Cossacks of the Don Army, or were dispersing as the White cavalry advanced farther into the territory of the province, bearing out Trotsky's declaration, that "there can be no room for Greens in this war [between Red and White]."²⁹ According to Iukhnevich, whose own outpost had witnessed the voluntary appearance of former deserters, these same men should not be armed and organized into makeshift Red Army units. "Such deserters," he wrote to the headquarters of the Southern Front in Kozlov, "only take up the example of the third battalion of the Tambov regiment, and give themselves over to the white-green bands."³⁰ This commonsense conclusion, though, would hardly affect the reality of Soviet defensive arrangements in the province of Tambov.

The month of July did not see any more advances into Tambov province by the Whites. Yet with the Southern Front headquarters for the Red Army moved at this time to Serpukhov—a place further behind the front lines than Kozlov—the confidence of provincial authorities in their own security was understandably low.³¹ Farther from the area immediately affected by the White incursion, there were continuing problems involving bands of armed deserters. In the *uezd* of Kirsanov, which bordered Borisoglebsk to the north, the well-known rebel leaders Aleksandr S. Antonov and Petr M. Tokmakov had stepped up their efforts to organize local men in armed groups. One such group, according to the Kirsanov *revkom* (revolutionary committee), numbered in the region of a thousand men. "The band is terrorizing the population, undertaking brutal murders of Communists and even of simple peasants, and its numbers are being added to all the time by local deserters. The band has established permanent guard posts, one of which is located in Ramza village. In light of the fact that the band is located in the rear of the Rtishchevo regiment [in Saratov province, to the east], the situation is presently very serious, and measures should be taken immediately to address the problem."³²

Instead, local Soviet authorities were heartened by the difficulties the occupying White forces encountered in the countryside of Borisoglebsk and Voronezh. In a familiar story for the White movement, efforts to requisition horses and grain, as well as other items needed by the army, were met with stern resistance by village communities, forcing the Whites to devote more and more resources toward the policing of the surrounding countryside—providing the Red Army with an opportunity to exploit the situation to their advantage.³³ Evacuated Communist

Party members, dispersed throughout the surrounding countryside (in addition to those who quickly went into military service), actively propagated resistance to the White occupation. Such resistance, naturally, incurred a violent response from the agents of the White Army. “Due to the acts of retribution by Denikin’s troops, the sympathies of the local population have shifted comprehensively to the side of Soviet power.”³⁴ On 17 July, Borisoglebsk was liberated by the Red Army, once again with little resistance. The Don Army had effectively abandoned it as of minimal strategic significance.³⁵

Preparation began for the Red Army counterattack in July. The strategists planned to concentrate efforts with the Ninth and Tenth Armies, located on the eastern section of the southern front. The counterattack, which would focus on Wrangel’s Caucasus Army, was to commence in mid-August 1919.³⁶ Supply lines running through the province of Tambov would be critical to the plan; disruption would certainly have been in the interest of the anti-Bolshevik movement led by General Denikin. While the actual strategic decision-making leading up to the cavalry raid remains somewhat murky, the dramatic move by General Mamantov’s Fourth Don Cavalry Corps into the territory of Tambov province, behind the front lines, certainly appeared to contemporaries to be an effort to thwart the planned counteroffensive by the Red Army.³⁷ This raid began in the second week of August from the region of Novokhopersk, in Voronezh province. The beleaguered town of Borisoglebsk was once again captured (12 August), with minimal resistance because the local defenses had been depleted in order to head off another group of the White cavalry to the west.³⁸

Anton Okninskii, a Petrograd bureaucrat who had moved south to Tambov in search of safety and food following the revolution, was working as an accountant for the volost soviet in the village of Podgornoe, in the northeastern half of Borisoglebsk uezd. Not being a member of the Communist Party, and suspected by some locals to be a *burzhui* (bourgeois), or even a former gentry landowner, Okninskii tended to keep a low profile in local affairs. According to his memoir, published several years after the civil war, when martial law was declared in the province, the local members of Communist Party began to parade around, policing the activities of villagers with rifles slung over their shoulders and small grenades clipped to their belts. At this time the Whites were some two hundred kilometers to the south. When news came of a drive by the White cavalry into the province, these well-armed Party members suddenly made themselves scarce.

The size of Mamantov’s force, as well as its dispersal within the province, were all matters of speculation at the time. From the executive committee members of the soviet in the volost of Aleksandrovsk, located just to the northeast

of Podgornoe, the following telegram was sent to authorities in Tambov:

We inform you that . . . the reconnaissance operation by the militia chief of the ninth region of Tambov uezd has managed to establish that a Cossack patrol under the command of two officers and an adjutant were in the village of Volkovoi (10 versts from Aleksandrovka) yesterday, 13 August, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, where they managed to assemble a crowd of locals, and they spoke to them about the Constituent Assembly, and so on and so forth. They also informed the crowd that following their patrol was a cavalry force of some seventy-five thousand, which should reach this part of the province by the 14th or 15th of August. We also inform you that our retreating forces have not been in evidence at all, and that, for the most part, general panic has set in.⁴⁰

The sense of powerlessness, even among Party members, appears to have dominated amidst the confusion of events. Even after the fantastical figure of⁴¹, seventy-five thousand Cossacks was dismissed, only to be replaced by another overestimate of fifteen thousand the insecurity sensed on the ground was undiminished.⁴² Trotsky issued calls from his railroad headquarters for all rural Communists to collect intelligence on the White raiders and to organize acts of sabotage to impede their progress.⁴³ The telephone in the typical rural soviet was constantly ringing, with inquiries as to whether there were Cossack troops, or Red Army patrols, in the given village. The calls came not only from Red Army commanders, but from the advancing Cossacks and even rebel Greens, who exploited this helter-skelter network of information and rumor.⁴⁴

For local authorities, at least those who remained in the countryside, risk aversion became the unwritten policy. Okninskii wrote that two local militia members were met outside the village by a squad of cavalry, who identified themselves as "Mamontov Cossacks." The two men, no doubt fearing for their lives, quickly said how grateful they were for the arrival of the White Cossacks, because finally some law and order could be established in the Russian countryside. To this, the cavalry leader replied: "We purposively said that we were Mamontov Cossacks; we are not from Mamontov's band, but we are from the [Red] Cossack unit of commander [name not given], and you, it would appear, are White Guardists, counterrevolutionaries." The two militia members were arrested and taken to the Podgornoe soviet, where the authorities were instructed to keep the men under arrest.⁴⁵ Significantly, the temporary soviet chairman, understanding the behavior of the two militia men, waited until the Red Army patrol departed and then released them.

Much of the initial advance of the White cavalry was conducted along the main roads, away from the railway lines. The horrendous weather of early August, with heavy thunder showers, made of the roads a morass which best suited those on horseback. The Red Army, with its artillery, infantry groups, and armored

trains, was rendered helpless. In their black raincoats, the Cossack patrols riding north toward Tambov were easily identifiable from the air, like several “black caterpillars,” as one Red Army pilot wrote.⁴⁶ The Whites also had artillery—both light and heavy—in tow, but these lagged behind, along with countless horse-drawn carts, steadily filling with looted supplies and valuables.

It was quite clear that the objective for the Cossack troops at this time was Tambov city. Its defense rested upon the Fourth Rifle Brigade, reinforced by numerous mobilized Party members, young military cadets, *komsomoltsy*, requisition squads, and recently apprehended deserters. Even considering the morale-boosting visit by the “All-Russian Elder,” Mikhail Kalinin, to the Fourth Brigade earlier in the month, their actual numbers were of limited significance given the shortage of guns and ammunition, as well as basic supplies such as food and boots. In addition, their numbers were made up in significant measure by deserters “from northern provinces,” according to one source. Other forces in Tambov were largely insignificant; for instance, a local cavalry “division” was reported to possess only two sabers.⁴⁷ Still, in advance of the attack, patrols had been organized to defend the perimeter and outlying areas of the city; trenches had been dug and barbed wire laid.⁴⁸ The members of the provincial executive committee, as well as several of the Communist Party leadership, began their evacuation to the town of Morshansk (small numbers were relocated to Kirsanov, to the east) on 16/17 August, leaving Tambov city effectively in the control of the commander of the Fourth Brigade.⁴⁹ As the former provincial military commissar, Grigorii Mikhailovich Shidarev, later wrote in his memoirs, “Even until the last moment, we in the military soviet were fully confident that the Cossacks would be unable to take the city, and that we would succeed in holding onto Tambov.”⁵⁰

From Morshansk, the chairman of the temporary “bureau” of the Tambov soviet executive committee, I.P. Gudkov, reported that they had lost all contact with Tambov on the evening of 18 August.⁵¹ What they did not expect was that the commander of the Fourth Rifle Brigade in Tambov, Dmitrii Petrovich Sokolov (a man later identified as a former tsarist officer), along with his entire staff, would defect without having offered any resistance to the White troops once they had entered the city.⁵² Just a short time before the appearance of Mamantov’s cavalry in Tambov province, the brigade had been reinforced by units drawn from garrisons in Tula and Riazan, increasing its strength to an estimated three thousand men. According to Vladimir Nikolaevich Zarubaev, a member of the temporary military soviet appointed to manage the crisis presented by Mamantov’s raid, it was only days before the actual attack on Tambov city that the members of the soviet “learned” that these new units were entirely composed of recently captured

deserters. In a statement given after order had been restored, he wrote that one of the critical factors contributing to the fall of Tambov city was the lack of any *zhelanie drat'sia* (desire to fight) among these new troops.⁵³ According to the provincial Communist Party chairman, Vasil'ev, it was because these new units were full of “black hundreds” and “mensheviks.”⁵⁴

One member of the provincial Cheka, Boris Gusev, had already left the city before the Cossacks arrived. Several other members of the Cheka and Communist Party had left their families behind rather than be forced to hide in the city and risk the well-being of friends and loved ones.⁵⁵ But their good intentions were compromised by the fact that they had mistakenly left behind the staff directory, giving the names and home addresses of all members of the provincial Cheka. Gusev was assigned to reenter the city and seize the critical notebook. He found the streets largely deserted, but could hear occasional gunfire. Successfully reaching Cheka headquarters, he encountered several people, evidently locals, looting the premises and attempting to move the large safe in the chairman’s office. Others were busying themselves with more mundane treasures, such as ripping the leather off the furniture and taking office supplies. In the midst of this activity, Gusev was able to participate in his own way, eventually locating the address book and slipping out of the town.⁵⁶

Tambov was reoccupied in the early hours of 21 August by Soviet forces, only four hundred in all, without a fight, since Mamantov’s units had left the city soon after taking it.⁵⁷ Chichkanov, returning to Tambov in his capacity as a member of the temporary soviet of the Tambov Fortified Region, found the city almost completely sacked by Mamantov’s troops.⁵⁸ Bridges were demolished, warehouses of grain and other domestic products were plundered and then burned, arsenals were emptied, stores were looted and reduced to ashes, and factories had been destroyed. The archives of the administration had also been destroyed, and several former soviet workers had been left dead in the streets.⁵⁹

At the time, it was unclear what the Cossacks’ objective was, if it was not to occupy Tambov.⁶⁰ According to one source, upon leaving Tambov the White cavalry began dispersing leaflets in which the general called upon the people to rise up against the Soviet government, declaring his intention to strike at the center of Soviet power—Moscow—and to end the civil war in one dramatic blow.⁶¹ But the signals were often mixed as to the real intentions of the Cossack force. Sergei Korsunskii was a Red Army soldier who was taken prisoner by the Whites in Tambov city. He traveled with one Cossack unit out of the city, eventually reaching Kozlov, to the northwest. En route, the unit would stop in large villages and, among other things, call a general assembly of villagers. Korsunskii reported that there would be a lot of gun-waving and anti-Soviet

speeches, as the Cossacks called on the villagers to do away with the Bolshevik-dominated soviets.⁶²

And there would be much trading, as well, as the White cavalry traveled from village to village en route to Kozlov. While the Cossacks were keen on selling and trading goods they had looted along the way, the plundering of the towns, especially, was completed by locals once Mamantov's men had taken the initiative. Communist Party members in the large village of Rasskazovo, just east of Tambov city, noted that during the entirety of Mamantov's raid, and for some time after, prices at the local markets fell dramatically, and all sorts of products suddenly appeared in the stalls.⁶³ According to another report, the Cossacks were paying "big money" for such items as carts, needed to haul away their loot.⁶⁴

In the villages the Cossacks would also try to trade their exhausted horses for fresh ones, but as was typical throughout the civil war along the front lines, such exchanges were less than popular with the locals. According to Korsunskii, one peasant, approached by a White commander, carefully examined the soldier's tired horse and politely declined the proposed trade. In reply, the cavalry commander took out his pistol and shot the man dead, taking both horses now that the exchange had been cancelled.⁶⁵

In Kozlov, anxiety concerning the fall of Borisoglebsk at the beginning of the month increased when it was learned that a cavalry force was pressing its way further into the province.⁶⁶ Evacuations began early on the morning of the eighteenth, and priority was not so much "given to" as "taken by" the headquarters of the Southern Front Command, which had appointed its own evacuations officer to oversee the commandeering of available rolling stock. Such work was entirely self-contained, and all appeals by the civilian evacuations chief (or "dictator," as he called himself) for help and coordination were ignored by the military command.⁶⁷ By 21 August, some two days before the initial Cossack artillery barrage began, Kozlov's residents started to gather round the local railway station with their belongings. Unable to provide them with any transport, local officials could only try to contain the panic and violence that might result from such a situation.⁶⁸

When news arrived that Tambov had been occupied, emergency mobilizations of all available Party members began for the formation of an extraordinary defensive force.⁶⁹ News that the Cossacks had reached the station at Saburovo, roughly half way between Tambov and Kozlov, prompted the positioning of these newly mobilized troops at the next largest station along the railway, Nikifirovka. The Communist Party unit was particularly concerned with protecting the railway bridge at Nikifirovka, as well as removing any rolling stock along the line.

According to one member of the unit, Artemov, they were laughed at by locals upon arrival at Nikifirovka: “Our defenders—they said—to hell with you.”⁷⁰

This sense of ingratitude and apathy among the general population, if one is to judge from the reminiscences offered ten years later, was one of the most salient perceptions shared by Communist Party members who took part in the ill-fated defense against Mamantov’s raid. In an attempt to hold off the advancing Cossack troops, some of whom had headed north of Kozlov, apparently with the aim of sabotaging the Kozlov-Riazan (-Moscow) line, Artemov’s unit became involved in a gun fight lasting some eight hours and nearly exhausting their supply of ammunition. Returning to Kozlov on a train in order to fetch munitions known to be already loaded onto two rail cars at the station, Artemov found the town bustling with the evacuation. “At the station, we found all the remnants of the Southern Front Headquarters and our GPU had been loaded up onto train cars. The man in charge at the station would in no way allow us to take the two rail cars. We asked him this way and that, but he simply refused. So I then drew my revolver and said, ‘I’ll kill you here and now, if you want, even before Mamontov arrives.’ So then the man begins to say, ‘Well, what is it to me, I’ll give them to you.’ So we took three cars [of munitions], all the while clutching our revolvers.”⁷¹

But by this time, 23 August, the cause was already lost.⁷² The numerous small Soviet armed units were too sparsely dispersed and were simply overwhelmed by the White attack.⁷³ After an extended artillery barrage, Mamantov’s force advanced on the railway station. This attack was rebuffed by the Communist Party units, but only for a brief time did this small victory endure. Within hours, the Whites made a massive thrust toward the center of town, filling the main thoroughfare like a sudden deluge.⁷⁴ The main line of evacuation and retreat was to the southwest, toward Griazi, a station which was a main junction on the line to Voronezh, and from there to Lipetsk. Forced to make for Lipetsk on foot, one unit of mobilized Party members could see the smoke rising from Kozlov from their position, several kilometers away.⁷⁵ The final trains of evacuees and supplies managed to leave Kozlov on the twenty-third, but they were quickly brought to a halt near Griazi, where an accumulation of train cars had ground to a halt—cars of the Southern Front Command, of Narkomprod, of the Postal and Telegraph Commissariat, and so forth.⁷⁶ Some trains farther up the line, nearer Kozlov, had to be abandoned when they fell within range of the White artillery. These cars were then attacked by several of Mamantov’s men, joined by local villagers, emptying the cars of their freight and supplies before setting them alight.

According to Boitsova, the wife of one of the local militia commanders,

when Mamantov arrived on the Saturday (23 August), he was greeted by an assembly of locals—"all dressed in their holiday clothes"—and was welcomed with an offering of the traditional bread and salt. But no sooner had this welcome taken place than the looting and burning began.⁷⁷ While the looting had been encouraged by the White soldiers throughout their course through the province, little encouragement was needed to prompt the locals, who were living through times of severe shortages. Almost as soon as the Whites appeared in the town, R. A. Kashirskii, a worker at the railroad, was confronted by a group of local youths who demanded that he open up a particular rail car, believed to be filled with salt. The young boys were evidently sent by their parents, who expected the goods at the rail station to be free for the taking. He was able to ignore them, but only until a group of Cossack soldiers arrived. Although they were more interested in locating stocks of munitions than in the pleas of the boys carrying empty sacks, the soldiers insisted that Kashirskii open the rail car holding the shipment of salt.⁷⁸

The looting typically followed a routine in which Mamantov's men would initiate a move and the locals would follow in their wake. "In this way," wrote one eyewitness, "practically all the property of the Southern Front HQ and the remaining organizations and administrations was looted or destroyed. When Mamantov's band began its mass plunder, it seemed that the local population of the *uezd* and town fell under some sort of psychosis of looting: people were screaming and climbing over one another at the warehouses, trying to get their hands on anything, often things which they did not even need. For example, many people made off with skis. But on the whole, the real free-for-all took place at the warehouses that held the supplies of sugar, salt, and manufactured goods. One man even drowned at the station in Kozlov, after he fell into a cistern that held kerosene. Even with all the people who were there [also taking kerosene], he was not saved."⁷⁹

But it was not just some sort of "psychosis" that had befallen the people of Kozlov. Not only were the White soldiers actively encouraging the looting, and not only was there great need among the population for many of the goods targeted by looters, there was also a simple logic behind the participation of local inhabitants. To accomplish what was emerging as the dual purpose of Mamantov's raid—destruction and profit—the White troops first took what they could carry and then set alight the given building. Such wanton destruction of warehouses and factories, often still containing useful products, was too much to bear for needy locals, and they followed in the wake of the soldiers, risking their own lives in the process. According to Korsunskii, several hundred were killed in one incident, when the Cossacks set a distillery ablaze after having

taken their fill of the alcohol inside.⁸⁰

Other than references to the extensive looting and destruction, which most characterized the first three days, very little information seems to have emerged concerning the full seven-day period of the occupation of Kozlov. It is clear that Mamantov found individuals who welcomed his entry into the town and the removal of the Bolsheviks. When he and his troops left, many such people went with them. And those that stayed behind, if they were not immediately shot by the Bolsheviks soon after the reoccupation of Kozlov, managed to keep a very low profile.

The White general did have allies in the town, and a sort of temporary occupation regime was established. The day after their arrival, Mamantov and one of his subordinates, Kutyrin, published a declaration of their objectives in their own two-page gazette, *Chernozemnaia mysl'*.⁸¹ Self-described as a "non-party, progressive paper," its publication was undertaken by a local citizen authorized by Mamantov. The general listed the following six objectives:

1. War with the Bolsheviks until their final elimination.
2. Calling of a "People's Assembly" on the basis of universal suffrage.
3. Satisfaction of the land needs of the peasants.
4. Defense of the labor of the workers from exploitation by the forces of capital and the state.
5. Wide decentralization of the state, based on democratic municipal and zemstvo self-government.
6. Establishment of a long-lasting respect for public order and rule of law.

Further, the declaration insisted that "we are fighting only with the communists-bolsheviks. The peaceful population should calmly go about their usual business. We have put in place the Temporary Municipal Self-Government and Militia, to which the local population should direct its inquiries."⁸² He then assured the locals that all measures had been taken to put a halt to the looting in the town.⁸³

The liberal trappings were all in evidence during the few days of Mamantov's dominion over Kozlov: the reinstitution of free trade, the reelection of the soviets, preparations for the convocation of the "People's Assembly," and calls for former zemstvo officials to come forth and take the reins of local government.⁸⁴ Yet any substantive indications that the Whites were intending to create a base in the town were otherwise missing. One local Jew, Teitel'baum, recounted how he and five other Jews were rounded up by Cossack soldiers soon after the occupation and taken out on the street to be shot. When the soldiers fired, Teitel'baum was not struck by any bullet, but fell to the ground all the same with the five

others, who had not been so fortunate. Lying on the ground motionless, he was amazed to find that the Cossack soldiers did not even check to see if they were dead, did not even remove the bodies from the middle of the street. After they had gone, he ran for safety, eventually hiding at the home of a friend.⁸⁵ When Soviet officials eventually returned to Kozlov, they found several corpses of similarly executed Jews and Communist Party members, just left lying—some of them apparently for days—in the streets.⁸⁶

The attacks on Jews went hand-in-hand with the looting by Mamantov's troops. The local Jewish community was only tiny, but there were also refugees from other parts of the country, particularly from the western territories of the former empire, who had found themselves in towns such as Kozlov and Tambov, displaced by the conflicts of the previous five years.⁸⁷ The local Orthodox church played a role in promoting the pogroms in Kozlov; the senior priests from the two most prominent churches openly greeted and met with Mamantov and his agents.⁸⁸ Yet the targeting of Jews was not officially incited, nor was it ignored by the municipal “authorities”; according to “Order no. 2/6” from the office of the town commandant (Kutyrin):

It is necessary to take the most decisive measures to eliminate the possibility of anti-Jewish pogroms; by no means should Jewish families be forced from their apartments, nor should any sort of permission be required for movement to and from the town, except in those cases when there are goods being transported. Individuals found to be inciting and participating in anti-Jewish pogroms will be interned at the offices of the commandant. Sectional committees found to be not taking sufficiently energetic measures to prevent anti-Jewish pogroms will be held legally accountable.⁸⁹

While it is interesting that such words appeared at all, official appeals flew in the face of events on the street.⁹⁰ In a subsequent report on the damage done in the town by Mamantov's troops, Kozlov authorities noted: “The thirst for blood and destruction displayed by Mamontov's band in its pogroms went beyond the realms of rational thinking and proceeded without any consideration for expediency, leaving the uezd in a disastrous state.”⁹¹ One available figure places the number of local Jews killed in Kozlov during the occupation at 110.⁹² Artemov, one of the first to reenter Kozlov after the Cossacks left, later wrote: “Kozlov today looks, more than anything, like a Jewish cemetery.”⁹³

The woman mentioned earlier, Boitsova, had stayed in Kozlov while her husband, a militia official, evacuated to the south. Upon witnessing the executions taking place in the street, she decided to abandon her flat and hide at the home of one of her relatives, a risky measure that all were loath to take. After only the first night, Boitsova awoke to the sounds of Cossack soldiers entering

the apartment.

Seeing that there were many things hastily scattered on the floor, they began to ask why the flat was in such a state. “It means,” they said [to Boitsova’s relative], “that you are a Communist, so tell us now where you have hidden Jews, and hand over your money.” My relative told them that they had no money and that they could take whatever they saw in the flat. But several of the neighbors had already entered the flat as well, and they began to yell at the Cossacks to get out. . . . In a word, that day and evening were just awful, and I suffered tremendously under the strain. The night went by without incident, but the next day the neighbors learned that I was hiding in their building, and they started to say that it would be better if I was just handed over to the Cossacks. They said that I, as the wife of a Communist, was only interested in saving my own skin. I lived in terror for the next few days.⁹⁴

Although Mamantov’s operation did little, in fact, to delay or offset the planned Red Army counteroffensive to the east, which began on 15 August, he nevertheless did succeed in one of the primary objectives of the raid—the temporary disabling of the railway lines, for which Kozlov was an important junction.⁹⁵ All four major railway bridges had been destroyed or disabled, usually with explosives, or trains filled with explosives that collided with other trains traveling in the opposite direction. During the occupation of Kozlov, the townspeople were regularly shocked into silence by these explosions, wondering which factory, warehouse, or other piece of the infrastructure had been demolished. The railway stations were littered with hundreds of burned out railcars.⁹⁶ The significance of this destruction was played down, however, especially by Trotsky, whose own reputation was once again under fire. Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, in particular, wondered aloud what had happened to Trotsky’s glorious Red Army.⁹⁷ “It is true, comrades,” Trotsky told trade union delegates in Moscow, “that we are facing an unpleasantness, not a military failure, but an unpleasantness in the full sense of the term. That is the breakthrough by Mamontov’s cavalry.”⁹⁸

The events inside Kozlov were largely unknown to Soviet authorities, many of whom had returned to Tambov city soon after it was retaken on 21 August—the same day Kozlov was occupied by Mamantov’s troops. Scouting expeditions from Tambov in the direction of Kozlov revealed a trail of destruction left by the White cavalry. Just on the outskirts of the town, near the village of Pushkar’, scouts found a train which had been caught on the tracks. The train extended nearly two kilometers, with all the wagons completely burned out.⁹⁹ In the countryside between Tambov and Kozlov, the soviets had largely disappeared, and the collective farms organized under the auspices of the Soviet government had been disbanded.¹⁰⁰ One Red Army scouting party had entered several vil-

laces claiming to be Cossack soldiers, and they were alarmed at how deferential and respectful the locals instantly became, addressing them as “Your Honor.” In their intelligence report, they wrote: “As it turns out there was very little said [by the locals] about the Cossacks, but it is clear that in the villages the attitude toward Soviet power and the Red Army is very hostile, and the soviets in many of the villages have been reelected, with counterrevolutionaries (mensheviks) now leading them, and they have taken full control of the land. This about sums up affairs in the countryside of Kozlov uezd.”¹⁰¹

Of much more immediate significance for the Soviet authorities in Tambov was the rumor that the Whites had begun to arm and organize the people of Kozlov town, as well as several villages in the countryside, to resist the Soviet government. By 27 August, three days after the occupation of Kozlov, it was reported that a significant part of Mamantov’s force had left the town, heading southwest toward Lipetsk. The previous day, 26 August, a group of Cossack cavalry had made its way in this direction, but encountered resistance at Griaizi, a large rail station along the line toward Voronezh. These troops then returned to Kozlov, and there were renewed fears that Mamantov might decide that the path of least resistance was, ironically, toward Moscow.¹⁰² Such fears proved unfounded, though, as reported by the cavalry commander of the Red Army’s Fifty-Sixth Division:

I can report that today [27 August] at 18:00 two members of the Communist Party, comrades Dorofeev and Savenkov, returned from Kozlov, having been sent there on a scouting mission, and they informed me that the enemy has left behind in Kozlov town a force of around 1000 cavalry, and that they have armed the local population, as well as those from the surrounding villages, with rifles and ammunition. Several times, peasants have traveled into Kozlov to fill up their carts with arms to take back to their villages. All the villages around Kozlov are fully armed. According to our records, there was a strong peasant uprising against Soviet power in this area one year ago. Another scouting report informs us that in the village of Epanchino, to the northeast of Kozlov, General Tarankin is working to form a “Green-Volunteer Division” from among local deserters and hunters [*okhotnikov*].¹⁰³

The bulk of Mamantov’s force had, in fact, quit Kozlov. Late on 27 August, a Cossack force occupied Ranenburg station (Riazan province) and appeared to be heading for the town of Lebedian.¹⁰⁴ While there were fears that Mamantov would again return to Kozlov, particularly among those preparing to retake the town, his southerly orientation after Ranenburg seemed to indicate that he intended to join up with General A.G. Shkuro, whose White forces were still entrenched in Voronezh province.¹⁰⁵ By the end of August the Red Army had only begun to mobilize for the pursuit of Mamantov, but these units were slow

in forming and their operations were chronically inhibited by a dearth of basic intelligence relating to the enemy cavalry corps.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, a mutiny by a Red Army cavalry corps led by Filipp Mironov delayed plans to undertake a similar raid from the east, into the rearguard of the Don Army, a measure which was hoped would, among other things, bring a swift conclusion to Mamantov's own foray into Soviet territory.¹⁰⁷

Concerning the force in Kozlov left behind by Mamantov, Red Army estimates ranged from one to three thousand. By 26 August, the First Cavalry Regiment of the Red Army's Fifty-Sixth Division was already positioning itself around Kozlov. With only some two hundred men, the commander of the regiment had an interest in any information about the enemy's strength in the town. His superiors in Tambov pressed him to retake the city and rebuked him for hesitating due to clearly unknowable variables, such as whether or not Mamantov would return. For his part, the commander reminded Tambov that he had a much better understanding of the situation on the ground and that with the proper reinforcements he would have been able to take Kozlov on the twenty-fifth.¹⁰⁸

Given the soviet authorities' general mistrust of the civilian population, the greatest concern on the ground was the size of the local contingent (a "voluntary self-defense force," according to one scouting report) organized to defend Kozlov against a Red Army attack.¹⁰⁹ This figure, according to the intelligence transmitted to authorities in Tambov, always numbered in the thousands, supplemented by the force believed to be assembled in the countryside north of Kozlov, also estimated to be in the realm of three thousand. The size of the White force left behind was estimated between three hundred and one thousand, well armed and organized for a defense of the town.¹¹⁰

The gathering of intelligence continued, to the dismay of provincial authorities in Tambov, until 30 August, when the Red Army units assembled on the outskirts of Kozlov finally made their move, beginning at six o'clock in the evening. Predictably, perhaps, the defense of the town quickly melted away after only a few salvos from the artillery positioned outside the center of town. Mamantov's machine-gunners almost immediately abandoned their positions, while many of the White troops looked for an escape route once the Red Army seized the initiative. The operation lasted only a couple of hours. The feared resistance from local townspeople, as well as from peasants of the surrounding countryside, did not materialize.¹¹¹

When local Party officials followed the Red Army into the town, the streets were empty, save for the bodies of executed Communist Party members and other victims of the White occupation.¹¹² According to the first report by members of the local revolutionary committee (*revkom*), they heard only the occasional gunshot

and the sound of glass crunching underfoot. The apprehended Cossacks—those who were not able to escape—cooperated with the *revkom* authorities in identifying the remaining locals who had collaborated with Mamontov’s “Temporary Municipal Self-Government.” According to one of the Party members who had remained in Kozlov during the occupation:

Almost immediately after the Cossacks were chased out on 30 August, the *revkom* rounded up and shot members of the local bourgeoisie and their associates, those who had greeted Mamontov and helped him organize his local government and helped his bandits loot our town—in all there were nine shot (Nosikov, Arkhangel'skii—a local teacher, Gavriil Savinskii—the priest from the Starokladbischchenskaia church, Uglinskii, Prudskii, N. A. Blaznin, Ia. I. Iastrebov, S. D. Pridorogin, N. V. Tarasov). After this the *revkom* issued an order about returning all military munitions and stolen goods, which were to be collected by regional committees. In my estimate, about one-third of these goods were returned, mainly the military munitions. Those first few days in Kozlov, after Mamontov’s band had left, were spent amidst total destruction. There was practically no food to be had. We had to start completely from scratch.¹¹³

The newly organized *revkom* issued an order calling for the reorganization of the local soviets in the *uezd* countryside.¹¹⁴ This order was worded specifically to countermand Mamontov’s order disbanding the soviets. A special commission was created in the *uezd*, consisting of some forty-eight Party members, to travel out to the countryside and oversee the reformation of soviets loyal to the Communist Party.¹¹⁵

Mamontov eventually reached Voronezh province on 11 September, where he joined the forces commanded by Shkuro (19 September). The combined cavalry force of the two generals occupied the provincial capital on 30 September.¹¹⁶ After quitting Voronezh following General Mikhailovich Budennyi’s offensive, Mamontov and his men fell farther back into White-controlled territory where they were welcomed as heroes, especially when they eventually returned to Rostov-on-Don. According to Wrangel, “General Mamontov’s name was on everyone’s lips,” but for all the wrong reasons: “The regiments under General Mamontov returned burdened by a mass of loot, in the form of pedigree livestock, cartloads of manufactured goods and produce, domestic and church silver. Upon leaving the front line, Mamontov delivered a greeting by radio to his ‘native Don’ and state that he was bringing to the ‘quiet Don’ and to his ‘family and friends’ ‘valuable gifts.’ There followed a list [transmitted by radio-telegram] of these ‘gifts,’ in which were included simple church implements and even rice.” Wrangel’s personal distaste for Mamontov was obvious. In his strategic judgment, he was even more disdainful: “I consider the actions of General Mamontov not

simply unfortunate [for the White movement], but also clearly criminal.”¹¹⁷ On 2 November 1919, Wrangel effectively stripped Mamantov of his command, for when the Fourth Don Cavalry Corps was transferred from the Don Army to the Volunteer Army, Mamantov’s direct subordinate, A. S. Sekretev, became its commander.¹¹⁸

For the Red Army, the lessons of the raid, which exposed several shortcomings in the defensive organization of the “home guard,” as well as the lack of an effective cavalry to counter the forces of the Whites, were clear enough, and measures were taken to address these faults.¹¹⁹ Still, the ease with which Tambov city and Kozlov were occupied by the Whites was not entirely due to these macroorganizational shortcomings; local decision-makers were held responsible for the failings on the ground. What Trotskii identified as serious “disorganization”¹²⁰ was taken up by Sergei Kamenev in Moscow, whose understanding of the events was summed up in a telegram sent to Tambov, 2 September: “[I consider] it necessary to point out that in literally every town occupied by Mamontov the Cossack bands immediately began to drink themselves into a stupor, and while drunk they proceeded to commit their deprivations. At such a time, even a moderate number of children could have succeeded in driving the bandits from the town, even managing to take a good half of them prisoner.”¹²¹

The Defense Council (soviet oborony) in Moscow had considered an official investigation into the “Tambov affair” as early as 22 August, the day after the city was reoccupied by Soviet forces.¹²² When a case was finally put together, to be overseen by the Military-Revolutionary Tribunal (Revtribunal), Moscow informed Tambov that among those to stand trial would be all three members of the temporary soviet of the Tambov Fortified Region, including the executive committee chairman and Tambov native, Chichkanov.¹²³ Tambov immediately protested the indictments, claiming that Moscow was only searching for scapegoats rather than taking concrete measures to correct a very vulnerable situation.¹²⁴ Chichkanov, for his part, had already attempted to play the part of the strong leader, sponsoring a resolution in the soviet executive committee that called for ruthless Red Terror to uncover white-guardist and bourgeois organizations in the city. This resolution came under some criticism from other public organizations, and later attempts by local officials to sponsor resolutions which took up a more severe line, in accordance with Trotskii’s rhetoric, were immediately rejected.¹²⁵

Despite this tough line, and a noticeable “closing of ranks” by the local state and Party organizations in Tambov, the Revtribunal case went ahead, beginning on 11 September 1919. All the accused pleaded their innocence, and in his statement, one of the defendants, Redzko, opened by observing: “Usually, the

victors are not judged, but some cruel fate has placed me, a victor, on trial here today.”¹²⁶ Obviously indignant about being placed on trial alongside Sokolov, the treacherous commander of the Fourth Rifle Brigade (who was tried *in absentia*), Chichkanov, Redzko, and other senior Soviet officials were very blunt in the statements they submitted to the tribunal. Not only were the shortcomings of the available troops in Tambov highlighted in their defense, but the intelligence and strategic guidance provided by commanders at Southern Front headquarters was also placed under scrutiny. Claiming that the Cossack force numbered just over one thousand men, Southern Front was alleged to have repeatedly expressed confidence to Tambov about its ability to defend the city, despite the fact that the Red Army was concurrently making preparations for an evacuation of Kozlov. Even two days before the White attack, officials in Tambov were advised not to begin preparations for a full evacuation. While some local commanders were found guilty of separate transgressions, such as failure to contain panic, the tribunal concluded the proceedings quickly, leaving the impression that the trial itself was only a political exercise intended to salvage some credibility for the Red Army.¹²⁷ The senior officials, such as Chichkanov, were found innocent of the accusations of negligence, indecision, and defeatism.¹²⁸

But as a result of the raid, and the recriminations that followed, the administration and Party in Tambov province were left in a state of almost complete breakdown. Two of the officials found innocent by the Revtribunal, Chichkanov and Shidarev, were senior members of the soviet executive committee and as a result of their trial were initially barred from further service in Tambov. Chichkanov was granted medical leave of six weeks owing to stress and nervous illness. Shidarev was eventually allowed to return to his post as military commissar in Tambov, but Chichkanov was murdered by bandits while duck hunting during his six-week recuperation period.¹²⁹

With its aim of inflicting chaos and destruction in the Soviet rearguard, the raid by Mamantov’s force was an almost perfectly packaged event for Soviet propagandists. Although Mamantov had made gestures—albeit token gestures—to court popular support for the Whites, they were never likely to have been taken seriously by either the public at large or even the White troops themselves. Scattered surviving references to the “Mamantov program” indicate the extent to which the Whites, even via the most unlikely of messengers (such as Mamantov), appreciated the enduring symbolic value of the agrarian revolution and of “democracy,” but the operation conducted by the Fourth Don Cavalry Corps was never intended to consolidate territory or cultivate popular support.¹³⁰

Soon after the event, an official from the Tambov uezd Party committee, Comrade Agte (*sic*), delivered a report that pointed out the political benefits to

the Soviet regime. Observing that the conduct of the White troops stood in stark contrast to that practiced by Soviet power in the province, Agte claimed that such a situation “places Soviet power in a position of moral superiority over the Cossacks, and the peasantry cannot but understand and recognize this fact.”¹³¹ Similar voices were expressed at the Sixth Provincial Party Conference, held only weeks after the raid. But in those intervening weeks, while the provincial government was tied up with tribunal hearings and the complexities of restoring administrative order, practically nothing had been done to court the political sympathies of the local population, particularly that of the peasantry. Sharp criticism of the provincial leadership emerged at the conference. “Following the Cossack pogroms,” said one of the uezd-level delegates,

when the mood of the masses underwent such a clear change, for example, in Kozlov and in other places, what did the provincial Party committee do, in order to utilize that change in mood? The masses saw with their own eyes that everything the Communists had said was, in fact, true, and that mood should have been used. Meanwhile, from the provincial center there were never any instructions. Individual Communists tried to make use of this new situation in bringing to the population a clear policy, but there was never any sort of authoritative word from the Party committee.¹³²

During the civil war, tension had mounted between the provincial and uezd levels of administration in Tambov province, as, indeed, it had throughout Soviet Russia. In Tambov province, however, Mamantov’s raid brought matters to near boiling point.¹³³ Kozlov was the most aggrieved, and perhaps most aggressive, of the uezd-level administrations, and its executive committee stated their intentions forcefully with a circular telegram to all local administrations calling for the removal of the present provincial leadership on account of its failure to take command of affairs in the wake of the raid.¹³⁴ For this, the Kozlov executive committee and Party leaders were threatened with arrest on the charge of “typical *makhnovshchina*”—an allusion to the rural anarchist insurgency in southeast Ukraine, which evidently implied indiscipline and parochialism. Such stern action taken by the provincial leadership, however, failed to suppress dissent, even if it did stop any open moves against the Tambov leadership of the soviet and Party.¹³⁵

If there was any concrete action taken by the provincial leadership following Mamantov’s incursion, it was to reduce the authority of local officials.¹³⁶ The instructions issued by the Food Commissariat (Narkomprod) provide an example. The growing influence of Narkomprod during the civil war effectively shaped the character of the administration in agricultural provinces like Tambov, and the destruction wrought by Mamantov to the decentralized system of food

procurement was seen as an opportunity by Narkomprod officials to take significant steps toward centralization. In October, the food commissar, Aleksandr D. Tsiurupa, telegrammed Tambov officials, expressing this very clearly: “Have you yet to take advantage of the damage caused by Mamontov in order to restructure your uezd-level food commissariats which, according to your provincial food commissar, were so thoroughly incompetent and ineffective in the past? . . . Please take note of the organization in Saratov, where such military activities did nothing to upset the effectiveness of provisions work in that province.”¹³⁷

Narkomprod replaced the provincial food commissar, David Efimovich Gol’man, with the younger, more energetic, and perhaps more zealous, Iakov Grigorievich Gol’din, who immediately set to work to overhaul the food procurement system in Tambov province.¹³⁸ He had the full support of the newly appointed chairman of the soviet executive committee, V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, a man who was more interested in forging an effective Cheka organization in the province than making peace with the local leadership in the uezds and volosts of Tambov. According to his reminiscences, published in *Pravda* in 1923:

This was an anxious time. The front was still nearby. And at the front not all was going well. In the province there were gangs of “greens” roaming about, and in the town—according to the Cheka—the whites were preparing for an uprising. The offices of the provincial Party committee [*gubkom*] had been transformed into a fortress. There were armed guards at both the front and rear doors to the building. At the front entrance there was a wooden bench, specifically to be used to barricade the door. At the *gubkom*, there was always a team of men responsible for communications. In the corner of the Party secretary’s office, there was a store of rifles and a large box of bullets. On the balcony, facing out to the main square, there was a machine gun. There was a special telephone line, connecting the *gubkom* to the factory committee and to the Cheka, in case the normal municipal telephone lines were out of action.¹³⁹

For men such as Antonov-Ovseenko—that is, those who served in the province following the raid—the concerns that governed the administration of a Soviet province were entirely defined by the needs of the war effort. Together, Antonov-Ovseenko and Gol’din worked toward the radical centralization of authority in the province, which further antagonized and alienated local officials. Their efforts contributed significantly to the creation of a political situation which, ultimately, allowed for a rural uprising that accompanied the autumn 1920 procurement campaign to develop into what is known to history as the *antonovshchina*.

As noted earlier, Mamontov ultimately returned to his native Don territory, succumbing to typhus at the beginning of February 1920.¹⁴⁰ His death was announced in the press in Tambov, but only with a brief notice, buried among other

details emerging from the continued military struggle in the south of Russia.¹⁴¹ By that time, a new group of leaders was directing the affairs of the province and several of the local administrations, and the imperatives that guided their activities—namely, those associated with the collection of grain—made for a climate inimical to the cultivation of political capital. Especially for senior officials brought in following the raid, wartime demands made it virtually impossible for the state or the Party to take a commanding role in the consolidation of any political gains to be drawn from the brief experience of the local population with the counterrevolution.

Without a doubt, everyone in the Communist Party and Soviet administration wanted to believe that some sort of positive outcome to the raid—a massive shift in popular political sympathies toward the Soviet government and Red Army—was possible, although the episode represented a military defeat. This was despite the suspicion of local people expressed by officials in the administration and Communist Party during the raids, suspicions which were often, but not always, born out. Still, an optimistic assessment of the popular response remained a politically safe opinion, as the official line iterated at subsequent congress resolutions would prove. But in the escalation of mutual recriminations following the loss of Tambov and Kozlov, any practical initiatives that would have affected or consolidated such a *perekol* were neglected. The prospect of a *perekol* had become merely a symbolic point of contact between competing interests in the Communist Party and Soviet administration in Tambov, dividing those that were situated at the provincial and local levels. In reality, any such popular response to the raid proved to be transient, determined largely by personal experience and by local interpretation—precisely those qualities lamented by certain officials in their conflict with the provincial and central authorities. The new officials who were dispatched by Moscow to take the reins of administration following the raid kept to the official line, in the formal sense, even if their activities in Tambov betrayed a conviction that popular hostility to the Soviet government, and not sympathy, was the rule in this predominantly agrarian territory. Nevertheless, the question of the popular response to the raid remained part of the increasingly insular world of the governing group that managed affairs in the province and would continue to inform reflections on Mamantov's raid by veterans of the civil war conflict and by later historians of the Russian revolution and civil war.

Notes

1. Tsentr dokumentatsii noveishei istorii Tambovskoi oblasti (TsDNITO), *fond 382, opis' 1, delo 352, l. 14.*
2. Two different spellings of the Don Cossack general's family name are met with in the literature. His name is spelled "Mamantov" by sources closer to the Cossack community and "Mamontov" by Soviet sources, both contemporary and secondary. It can be assumed that the former is the proper spelling, even if the memoirs of Denikin and Wrangel use the latter spelling. I use the other spelling only when quoting sources.
3. On these and other activities of the Istpart (Party History) project, see F. Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event: The October Revolution as Memory Project," *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 389–414.
4. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 47.
5. Report dated 29 September 1919, in *Sovety tambovskoi gubernii v gody grazhdanskoi voiny* (Voronezh, 1989), 184.
6. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Tambovskoi oblasti (GATO), f. R-394, op. 1, d. 556, ll. 22, 23.
7. *Ocherki istorii Tambovskoi organizatsii KPSS* (Voronezh, 1984), p. 96–97.
8. For example, see V. Danilov and A. Berelovich, eds., *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD, 1918–1939* (Moscow, 1998), vol. 1 (1918–1922), 150, 154, 194–95, 213, 217.
9. An exception to this is M. Rymshan, *Reid Mamontova, Avgust – Sentyabr' 1919* (Moscow, 1926). This book or pamphlet is referred to in the bibliography to volume 1 of J. Meijer, ed., *The Trotsky Papers*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1964–71). I have failed to locate this source.
10. A. Denikin, *Pokhod na Moskvu* (Moscow, 1928), 119. Biographical information on Konstantin Konstantinovich Mamantov (1869–1920) is sparse. He is mentioned only in passing, and often with disdain, in the memoirs of former White commanders. He died of typhus in February 1920 in Rostov, leaving no written reminiscences. A career cavalry officer, he was a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War and First World War, always commanding his fellow Don Cossacks. Following the revolution, he served as a partisan in his native Don oblast in 1918, before formally becoming a cavalry officer in the White movement. For a brief biography see *Kazachii slovar'-spravochnik*, 3 vols. (Cleveland/San Anselmo, Calif., 1966–69), 2: 155–59.
11. P. Wrangel, "Na Moskvu," in *Beloie delo. Letopis' beloi bor'by* (Berlin, 1928), 5: 252–54.
12. The traditional hierarchy of local administration in Russia was the following: *guberniia* (province), *uezd* (county), and *volost'* (canton), followed by village.

13. Subsequently reading in *Izvestia* of the orderly and even heroic evacuation of the town, one resident (identifying himself as a “nonparty bolshevik”) felt moved to write a letter to those in Moscow, protesting that “the authorities in Borisoglebsk only ran about the town, yelling and screaming at one another, and there was no plan for the evacuation, only total chaos.” See V. Danilov and T. Shanin, eds., *Krest’ianskoe vosstanie v tambovskoi gubernii v 1919–1921gg.* (Tambov, 1994), 27.

14. E. A. Nakrokhin, *Inogo ne bylo puti* (Voronezh, 1975), 87–94.

15. See V. Kanishchev and Iu. Meshcheriakov, *Anatomia odnogo vosstaniia* (Tambov, 1995), chapters 3, 4; Nakrokhin, *Inogo ne bylo puti*, 87.

16. The civil war phenomenon of the “Green Army” is a complex one which cannot be adequately developed here. In part, the appearance of the “Greens” as a special form of popular, political resistance can be attributed to the inclination of governments and formal armies to ascribe organization and conspiracy to those who resist, often when no such elaborate organization exists. In this essay, I use “Green” and “Green Army” only when the sources being consulted utilize these terms. The actual *existence* of such organization is not under consideration here.

17. Nakrokhin, *Inogo ne bylo puti*, 98–99.

18. The figure is given in *ibid.*, 99. According to the official figures from the Tambov Anti-Desertion Commission, there were only some thirty thousand deserters in the entire province. See Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv (RGVA), f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, l. 34.

19. The order is reproduced in Danilov and Shanin, *Krest’ianskoe vosstanie*, 31. The order evidently caused a great degree of alarm among the population (most likely of Tambov city itself), and an explanatory announcement had to be issued subsequently by the provincial executive committee and the Cheka: “The institution of martial law is the result of our temporary misfortunes on the Southern Front, and the Communist Party has not planned, nor is it planning, to begin slaughtering people—in general, these rumors are just the vile work of the enemies of workers’ power.” (*ibid.*).

20. Nakrokhin, *Inogo ne bylo puti*, 99–100. *Perepiska sekretariata TsK RKP (b) s mestnymi partiinymi organizatsiiami*, 11 vols. (Moscow, 1957–), vol. 8 (June–July 1919), 493. Borisoglebsk Party leaders reported that the climactic confrontation with this large army of Greens resulted in 400 rebels killed and 1200 taken prisoner.

21. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 15: “Kozlov. 28 June. The activities of bands of deserters, of the so-called Green army, have reached widespread proportions. These large bands, having connections with agents of Denikin and being exploited by counterrevolutionary elements, present a serious threat to the front lines, as they not only create general disorder, but they complicate any defensive preparations needed in the rearguard, such as the organization of reserve army units.”

22. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 19–24, 107–114. Kolymakov requested to be moved to a different post, pleading exhaustion and infirmity (he evidently had been suffering from a long-term injury of some sort). The tone of his dispatches made it clear that he was suffering from the same morale problems that affected the garrisoned troops in Muchkap.

23. According to the Borisoglebsk Party report from 14 July 1919, they had learned from the previous occupation: “All the church valuables and railroad freight were removed during the evacuation, such that this time the enemy was left with an empty town.” See *Perepiska sekretariata*, 8:493. Borisoglebsk had been occupied on 2 July.
24. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 77, 80.
25. *Ibid.*, l. 212.
26. *Ibid.*, ll 94 (6 July 1919), 201 (5 July 1919).
27. *Ibid.*, l. 342.
28. *Ibid.*, l. 158; *Perepiska sekretariata*, vol. 8:493–94.
29. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 107, 190; Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, trans. Brian Pearce, in *The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky*, 5 vols. (London, 1979–1981), vol. 2: *The Year 1919*, 327.
30. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, l. 261 (7 July 1919).
31. See *Sovety tambovskoi gubernii*, 172–73.
32. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 8, l. 336. When information was being gathered during the large rural insurgency led by Antonov in Tambov province in 1921 Cheka investigators tried to link Antonov to Denikin and Mamantov. The claims were elaborate, involving meetings between representatives of both parties, a small transfer of ammunition and explosives, and even White Army airplanes running missions over Kirsanov uezd to drop agitational leaflets. See Danilov and Shanin, *Krest’ianskoe vosstanie*, 156.
33. See V. Potapenko, *Krasniankoe vosstanie: dokumental’nyi ocherk* (Voronezh, 1968).
34. *Perepiska sekretariata*, 8: 493.
35. The neighboring uezd town of Novokhopersk (Voronezh province) was also retaken from the Whites with the support of rural rebels. However, the published documents are unclear concerning the involvement of the Red Army. According to a telegram (22 July 1919) from the newly installed chairman of the town’s revolutionary committee (*revkom*), Novokhopersk was occupied “by the insurgents, with the support of Soviet forces.” In the same telegram, he explains: “The uprising by the peasants took place in nearly every village. At first, it was the left SRs who tried to direct the insurgency. But the peasants maintained their full commitment to the Soviet side.” See *Dni grozoye. Voronezhskaiia organizatsiia KPSS v gody grazhdanskoi voiny (1918–1920gg.): dokumenty i materialy* (Voronezh, 1960), 109–110.
36. Meijer, *The Trotsky Papers*, 1: 606–609; Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, 2, 356–58; E. Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Boston, 1987), 175.
37. According to one source, Mamantov explicitly disobeyed orders in undertaking the

raid. He had been ordered to move on Voronezh, in coordination with General Shkuro. But instead of participating in the strategic advance, which concentrated on the western end of the Southern Front, Mamantov ignored Denikin's orders and continued into Tambov province. (Red Army commanders astutely observed at the time that Mamantov was probably encouraged by the minimum amount of resistance he encountered in the region.) See V. V. Klaving, *Belaia gvardia* (St. Petersburg, 1999), 74–75.

38. Nakrokhin, *Inogo ne bylo puti*, 103.
39. Okninskii, *Dva goda sredi krest'ian. Vidennoe, slyshannoe, perezhitoe v Tambovskoi gubernii s noiabria 1918 goda do noiabria 1920 goda* (Riga, 1936; Newtonville, Mass.: 1986), 151–52.
40. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 25. Another Soviet source reported, after speaking with one of the Cossack officers, that the Whites expected some thirty thousand infantry to follow their advance into Soviet territory. See GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 118, ll. 217ob, 218.
41. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 37.
42. According to one civil war history, Mamantov's force consisted of an estimated 6000 cavalry and 3000 infantry, with some 7 armored trains, 3 armored cars, and 12 artillery guns. See *Grazhdanskaia voina v SSSR*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1980–86), 2:160. The listing of armored trains among Mamantov's force may be a mistake, at least as concerns Tambov province. Another source gives the figures above, but omits the armored trains and adds 120 machine guns. See *Direktivy komandovaniia frontov Krasnoi armii (1917–1922 gg)*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1971–78), vol. 4: 488 (enemy force levels for 1 Sept. 1919 in the “region of Kozlov–Elets, internal front”).
43. Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, 2: 392 (18 Aug. 1919).
44. Okninskii, *Dva goda sredi krest'ian*, 152, 157–58, 162–63. Realizing how the telephones were being used by Reds and Whites alike, a Red Army patrol leader at Okninskii's local soviet wondered aloud whether or not it might be better to just cut the line. “As you wish,” replied the temporary soviet chairman. “For me, it would be a lot better. Then I could finally go home. I've already sat here for a third of the day just answering that phone” (164).
45. *Ibid.* 155–56.
46. I. Petrozhitskii, “Vozdushnaia razvedka boevykh deistvii konnitsy Mamontova,” *Voeno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 12 (1975): 63–64; RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 75, 179, 179ob. Aerial scouting would have been ideal for the conditions, as the article contends, but Petrozhitskii's Voisin-1, running on low-grade kerosene, was one of the only aircraft available to the army in the province.
47. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, l. 1. This is according to Popov, a member of the temporary soviet of the Tambov Fortified Region (*ukrepliennyi raion*), in a report delivered after the crisis had passed, 29 August.
48. Ocherki istorii Tambovskoi organizatsii, 93–94; Sovety Tambovskoi gubernii, 178–89.

One group, the Six Hundred Tenth Regiment, sent out to dig trenches and lay barbed wire, fell victim to an early attack by a Cossack advance group and was never able to return to the city to take up defensive positions (TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, d. 1). Throughout the summer of 1919, when reports of Denikin's advance were raising alarm, thousands of local villagers in Tambov province were mobilized for digging trenches. See Sergei A. Esikov, *Krest'ianskoe khoziaistvo Tambovskoi gubernii v nachale XX veka (1900–1921 gg.)* (Tambov, 1996), 82.

49. Not knowing that Tambov had been all but abandoned, the Central Committee in Moscow asked Trotsky what was being done to halt Mamantov's advance toward the provincial capital. He only knew the basic details of the situation, but was aware that the Red Army was threatened "with a repetition of the history of that sore which festered in the rearguard of our forces in the stanitsas of Vyoshenskaya and Kazanskaya [of the Don territory]." See A. B. Murphy, *The Russian Civil War: Primary Sources* (London, 2000), 172–73.

50. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 338, l. 2. This evaluation contrasts with that offered immediately after the conclusion of events, about which more below.

51. *Sovety Tambovskoi gubernii*, 183 (18 Aug. 1919). The bureau was organized on 18 August (other documents give the date as 19 August) when Tambov city was being evacuated. One of its first acts was to order the release of grain and other items of necessity (salt, kerosene, etc.) to the village communities of Morshansk uezd, to ensure stability of the uezd as the new seat of the provincial administration (GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 104, l. 2). The official executive committee chairman, Chichkanov, was a full-time member of the temporary soviet of the Tambov Fortified Region, which was relocated to a village not far from Tambov.

52. *Ocherki istorii Tambovskoi organizatsii*, 94; TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 338, l. 4 (here mistakenly dated 20 August). The provincial executive committee chairman, Chichkanov, identified the offending officer as the commander of the Fourth Cavalry Brigade (RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 80). Later explanations drew attention to how poorly equipped the soldiers were. The Tambov Party chairman, Vasil'ev, later claimed at the Sixth Provincial Party Conference, that the brigade had only enough guns and bullets for one quarter of the men. (TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 158, l. 30).

53. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 199, l. 52. Another official, Militev, claimed that "only four days before the attack did I learn that the forces defending Tambov were absolutely not up to the task of defending the town" (*ibid.*, d. 158, l. 43).

54. *Ibid.*, ll 26, 27. The troops garrisoned in Tambov who did manage to evacuate were ordered to reassemble to the east, in Kirsanov. There, it was hoped, they could be properly reorganized into a fighting force by Commander Shorin's representatives from the Southeastern Front. See *Direktivy komandovaniia frontov*, 2: 310.

55. One convoy of evacuees, made up of Communist Party families, did manage to get out of Tambov just hours before the attack. This numbered only just over seven hundred people, mainly women and children. Their journey toward Penza is a real saga in which the women on the train nearly mutinied against the echelon commanders, first because they wanted to return to Tambov and later because they refused to go back. This is related by the commander, I. Glushkov, in his "Doklad ob evakuatsii semeistv kommunistov iz g. Tambova v g. Penzu vo vremia nabeg kazakov na g. Tambova," TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, ll. 3–4ob.

56. *Ibid.*, f. 9019, op. 1, d. 179, l. 9.

57. *Ibid.*, f. 382, op. 1, d. 199, l. 31.

58. The “Defense Council of the Tambov Fortified Region” was organized on 1 July 1919, comprised of two local military officials and the chairman of the provincial soviet executive committee. With the declaration of martial law in the province at the end of July, the council took full control over the management of affairs in Tambov.

59. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 80 (23 Aug. 1919).

60. At first, the main body of the White force split in two, with one group heading toward Kozlov, the other toward Morshansk. But then the second group evidently changed its direction and rejoined the other group. See RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 80.

61. Petrozhitskii, “Vozdushnaia razvedka,” 66. Trotsky heaped scorn on the notion that Mamantov would make for Moscow, characterizing the raid as symbolizing the “courage of despair”: “Do Denikin’s generals really hope to take Moscow by means of a cavalry raid? No, they are not so stupid as to believe that.” See Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, 2: 393.

62. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 476. Because the majority of the local soviets in the countryside were not led by Communist Party members, several of them remained in place and even oversaw the arrest of Soviet state representatives (food supply officials, for example), to be handed over to the Cossacks. This was done, presumably both to safeguard their locality from Cossack deprivations and to rid themselves of hated agents of the Soviet state. See D. DuGarm, “Peasant Wars in Tambov Province,” in V. Brovkin, ed., *The Bolsheviks in Russian Society: The Revolution and Civil Wars* (New Haven, 1997), 181.

63. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv rossiiskoi federatsii (GARF), f. R-8415, op. 1, d. 111, l. 75. Such markets were, of course, illegal, but were selectively tolerated by local officials. This provides the main theme for the document cited here.

64. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, l. 218ob.

65. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 476. In another incident, a lone Cossack soldier, separated from his unit, demanded a horse from the locals in the village of Chemer (Lebedian uезд). The crowd deliberated, but when a member of the volost Communist Party cell arrived on horseback, they yelled that he was Communist and that his horse should be taken and the man shot. Some asked the Cossack soldier if he would hand over his gun so that they could shoot the Communist, but he refused, saying, “If he has done much evil, then we can either beat him with the birch rod or hang him.” “Hang him,” was the response from some of the young men, which was promptly done. See GATO, R-5201, op. 2, d. 1036, l. 114.

66. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, ll. 215, 217. Anxiety was felt throughout the province, exacerbated by the almost complete breakdown in communications. From the uезд town of Kirsanov, the local military commissar (Lukaianov) desperately wrote to Kozlov: “Since we have had absolutely no news about events in Tambov [city] and the rumors we pick up are hardly encouraging, we urgently ask you to tell us whether we should be evacuating the town or not.”

See RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 168 (n.d.).

67. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, ll. 215, 217. Other local administrations to be given priority over civilian evacuations were the Soviet Executive Committee, the Cheka, the Provisions Commissariat, and the Postal and Telegraph Commissariat.

68. Others attested to the chaos surrounding the evacuation of Kozlov, especially that of the officials at the Red Army Southern Front headquarters. The haste, or sloppiness (*razgil'diaistvo*), with which they proceeded was cited as a primary reason why so many materials and munitions fell into the hands of the Cossacks after they entered Kozlov. See TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, l. 1ob.

69. Lenin had been appalled by reports concerning the poor resistance offered by troops brought in to combat Mamantov, calling the state of these hastily mobilized troops "an outright disgrace." He was especially indignant when informed, by some source in the railway administration, that many soldiers were refusing to leave the trains that brought them to conflict zone. See Meijer, *The Trotsky Papers*, 1: 662–64. Notes made by Lenin on the situation surrounding Mamantov's raid recommended that the most "draconian" measures be undertaken to sustain discipline among these troops, which included shooting those recently mobilized soldiers who refuse to leave railcars. Reproduced in *Direktivy komandovanii frontov*, 2: 325.

70. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 34. There were four main bridges leading to the main railway junction at Kozlov. According to one of the Communist Party volunteers who was stationed at the Nikifirov bridge: "Our unit was given the duty to protect the Nikifirov bridge, and thanks to us they [the Whites] didn't touch it. Mamontov managed to blow up all the bridges, but only the Nikifirov bridge remains as a memorial" (l. 32). Unfortunately, this claim, made ten years after the events, is inaccurate. The Nikifirov bridge did suffer considerable damage, as did the other three main bridges, and did not become operational until several weeks following the raid (GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, l. 1015ob).

71. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 35, 36.

72. The on-going debacle in Tambov, and especially the fall of Kozlov, had the effect of setting in motion one of the most controversial episodes of the civil war—the Mironov affair. Already disaffected by the conduct of the Communist Party (esp. vis-à-vis his fellow Cossacks) and the strategic and organizational decision-making of the Red Army command, Mironov and his incompletely organized Don Corps decided to move westward from their garrison position in Saransk (Penza), seemingly toward the area of activity in Tambov. Although an extremely complicated episode, it is safe to conclude that Mironov wanted, in some way, to save the revolution from both the Soviet authorities and from the Whites. When he was finally stopped and apprehended, Soviet authorities portrayed it as a mutiny and claimed that one of his objectives was effectively to join Mamantov. See T. Shanin and V. Danilov, eds., *Filipp Mironov. (Tikhii Don v 1917–1921 gg.) Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow, 1997).

73. The preparations had been haphazard, and appeals to Moscow for support were not answered with substantial assistance. Leaders in Moscow were hesitant to divert any forces that would participate in the planned counteroffensive of the Ninth and Tenth Armies. See *Direktivy komandovanii frontov*, 2: 307 (S. S. Kamenev, 14 Aug. 1919), 311 (V. N. Egor'ev, 18 Aug. 1919).

74. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, ll. 217, 217ob; TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, l. 1ob.
75. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 14, 15.
76. *Ibid.*, l. 27.
77. *Ibid.*, l. 47.
78. *Ibid.*, l. 38.
79. *Ibid.*, l. 16.
80. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 476. Similar tragedies occurred in other major villages in the region, although some explosions and fires were accidental. See TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 45, 46.
81. The title, which possessed a vaguely “liberal” association, translates as “Blackearth idea” or “Blackearth view,” a reference to the agricultural heartland of Russia, famous for its rich, “black” topsoil.
82. GATO, f. 5201, op. 2, d. 485, l. 10 (15 Aug. 1919, old style). The GATO copy of the gazette is number 3, and to my knowledge is the only surviving one. The declaration of objectives is dated 11 August (old style), and was most likely published in the two previous editions of *Chernozemnaia mysl'*. No such gazette was published in Tambov city during the short time the Cossacks had occupied the town, although one edition (under a different title) did appear in Borisoglebsk.
83. And to an extent, people did approach this temporary government with their concerns, particularly over safety. One of the senior employees at the railway repair works in Kozlov, Liaukh (who was also a member of the Communist Party, although he did not reveal this fact), appealed to the local White commandant for greater security for several stores and private homes threatened by looters in their area. Liaukh was told that the Cossacks had only twelve thousand soldiers, far fewer than the railway works had employees; the railroaders should organize their own security. See TsDNITO, f. 480, op. 1, d. 415, ll. 40, 41.
84. While the Whites did maintain a certain respect for the notion of a representative assembly, they were loath to promote any direct association with the Constituent Assembly of 1918; they used different words to describe what was, in essence, the same sort of legislative body. On the popular interchanging of the words *narodnoe* (people's), *uchreditel'noe* (constituent), etc., in the context of the 1917 elections, see O. Figes and B. Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven, 1999), 135.
85. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 17.
86. *Ibid.*, f. 480, op. 1, d. 415, l. 1 (31 Aug. 1919).
87. Tambov was one of the first provinces outside the Pale of Settlement to be opened up to Jewish refugees following Russia's entry into World War I. See P. Gatrell, *A Whole Empire*

Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I (Bloomington, 1999), 145.

88. TsDNITO, f. 480, op. 1, d. 415, l. 40.
89. GATO, f. 5201, op. 2, d. 485, l. 10ob. This order, according to one of those caught in Kozlov at the time, was issued three days into the occupation—three days of looting and killing. See TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 49.
90. On the tactical appearance of appeals by the White leadership to curb anti-Jewish violence, see P. Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology in the Russian Civil War,” in J. Klier and S. Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992), 291–313.
91. *Sovety tambovskoi gubernii*, 184.
92. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 16.
93. GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 118, l. 1015 (2 Sept. 1919).
94. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 48.
95. Egorov emphasizes the effect of Mamantov’s raid on the performance, especially, of the Southern Front Striking Group (composed primarily of the Ninth and Tenth Armies, under Commander Vasili Ivanovich Shorin), claiming that these forces were prevented from providing sufficient support for the complementary offensive of the forces under Commander V.I. Selivachev. See A. Egorov, *Razgrom Denikina* (Moscow, 1931), 113; P. Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1919–1920: The Defeat of the Whites* (Berkeley, 1977), 42–43. According to a more recently published source, Mamantov’s activities were the cause of serious indiscipline among the units of the Striking Group: several units considered secretly sending delegates to make overtures to the Cossack cavalrymen under the slogan: “Peace with the Cossacks, the Cossacks are not our enemies.” See S. A. Pavliuchenkov, *Voennyi kommunizm v Rossii: vlast’ i massy* (Moscow, 1997), 84. Klaving asserts that Mamantov could have done much more damage if he had not moved west to Voronezh, but had, instead, undertaken an attack in the rear of the Eighth and Ninth Armies. S. S. Kamenev, examining the situation on 6 September 1919, agreed that a move toward Voronezh by Mamantov would be “less painful and dangerous for us than the other possible directions of movement” for the Fourth Don Cavalry Corps. See Klaving, *Belaia gvardiya*, 74–75; *Direktivy Glavnogo komandovaniia Krasnoi Armii (1917–1920)* (Moscow, 1969), 465.
96. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 40, 15.
97. *Ibid.*, d. 199, l. 47.
98. 26 August 1919, quoted in D. Volkogonov, trans. H. Shukman, *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary* (London, 1996), 159–60.
99. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 15.

100. According to one scouting party which went to Lipetsk uezd from Tambov, the local villagers had not only seized the equipment of the soviet farms, they had already tilled and seeded much of the land with winter crops. See RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 179ob (25 Aug. 1919).
101. *Ibid.*, l. 252.
102. *Ibid.*, l. 229. Evidently the leaders of the White forces were just as confused as the Reds concerning Mamantov's movements and his objectives. See Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia*, 43–44.
103. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, l. 453. The Fifty-sixth Division was part of the Ninth Army.
104. The uezd town of Lebedian' was, indeed, occupied and effectively sacked. Mamantov's forces made no attempt to establish themselves in the town, however. See "Nalet na Lebedianskom uezde," *Izvestiia* (Tambov), no. 197 (12 Sept. 1919): 3.
105. RGVA, f. 287, op. 1, d. 50, ll. 7, 8, 15, 18, 27.
106. This much was acknowledged by Trotskii and the commander of the pursuit forces, M. M. Lashevich. See *Direktivi Glavnogo komandovaniia*, 462–63. In order to shore up the resolve of these pursuit forces, Trotsky issued an order stating that there would be rewards ("leather tunic[s], boots, watches") for every Cossack caught dead or alive, and that objects found on captured or killed Cossacks could be kept by the captor (Volkogonov, *Trotsky*, 160). As early as 18 August, S. S. Kamenev's instructions to forces on the ground in Tambov were: "I only ask of you one thing—do not allow Mamantov to return and teach them not to undertake any more such raids. Do not take any prisoners, and carry out terror among Mamantov's force." See *Direktivi komandovaniia frontov*, 2: 311.
107. *Direktivi Glavnogo komandovaniia*, 459; *Grazhdanskaia voina*, 2: 161; S. Budennyi, *Proidennyi put'*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1958–73), 1:233–35. On the Mironov affair, see n. 72 above.
108. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 229, 234, 453. The shortcomings of scouting and intelligence exposed by Mamantov's raid were subsequently highlighted by Trotsky: "The local authorities have often relied on obscure rumors instead of precise facts. Uncertainty is the mother of panic." See *How the Revolution Armed*, 2: 402 (4 Sept. 1919).
109. As evidence for the pro-Soviet sympathies of the population in the countryside, it was later claimed that Red partisan detachments had been organized in a few villages south of Kozlov, and that these units attempted to pursue Mamantov's troops during their retreat from the uezd. See *Ocherki istorii tambovskoi organizatsii*, 95. Similar reports of pro-Soviet volunteers appeared in the Voronezh province press. See G. A. Belov et al., eds., *Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1961), 2: 458.
110. RGVA, f. 827, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 213, 216, 250, 278.
111. *Ibid.*, l. 508.

112. TsDNITO, f. 840, op. 1, d. 415, l. 1 (31 Aug. 1919).
113. *Ibid.*, f. 382, op. 1, d. 352, l. 15. The prompt return of stolen goods was also noted by another of the “veterans”: “What began to emerge was a much more humane picture. The workers had come to realize their error, that they had not actively supported the efforts to defend our Kozlov, and they decided to put right their mistake” (l. 37).
114. It was later noted by the Kozlov authorities that upward of one half of the village and volost soviets had been destroyed at the time of the raid. See *Sovety tambovskoi gubernii*, 184.
115. TsDNITO, f. 840, op. 1, d. 415, l. 1. Such was the situation throughout much of the southern half of the province—in Borisoglebsk, Kozlov, Tambov, Usman, and part of Kirsanov uezds—the most grain-rich in Tambov province. One of the most profound effects of Mamantov’s raid on the province was its impact on the food procurement system, since it forced the delay of the 1919–1920 campaign by nearly two months. In compensating for the delay, local Narkomprod officials radicalized the procurement system, conducting the requisitioning of grain from local communities as a shock military campaign, which did not begin until December 1919. See the comments by Food Commissar Gol’din, at the Fifth Provincial Congress of Soviets, GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 101, ll. 17–18 (17 Nov. 1919). The statistical “success” of the brutal procurement campaign of 1919–1920 was portrayed as further evidence of the *perelom* in Soviet-peasant relations in the province. See *Ocherki istorii tambovskoi organizatsii*, 96–97.
116. *Dni grozovye*, 137–38. Mamantov’s path to Voronezh went through Elets (31 Aug.) and Griazi (6 Sept.). By the time he reached Voronezh province, the Red Army had managed to mobilize and deploy three separate pursuit forces. See *Grazhdanskaia voina*, 2: 161.
117. Wrangel, “Na Moskvu,” 206, 207.
118. Klaving, *Belaia gvardiia*, 292–93.
119. See K. Agureev, *Razgrom belogvardeiskikh voisk Denikina (Oktiabr’ 1919–Mart 1920 goda)* (Moscow, 1961), 42–43; Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, 2:406–08, 412–414; TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, l. 1ob.
120. Trotsky stepped up his rhetoric in September, when he began to speak of “traitors, cowards, and deserters” in relation to weak resistance offered to Mamantov’s troops. See *Izvestiia* (Tambov), no. 193 (7 Sept. 1919): 2.
121. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118 (part 1), l. 394.
122. Trotskii was personally resolved that the surrender of Tambov was a criminal matter well before this date. Initially, though, he singled out for responsibility only the Southern Front commander, Vladimir N. Egor’ev, and Commander Shorin of the Ninth and Tenth Armies. See the materials reproduced in V. O. Daines et al., eds., *Revvoensovet Respubliki. Protokoly, 1918–1919 gg.* (Moscow, 1997), 332, 334, 369, 372.
123. In all, thirty-two individuals were indicted. See TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 199, l.

53.

124. GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 104, l. 10 (joint meeting of *ispolkom* and *partkom*, 9 Sept. 1919).

125. *Ibid.*, d. 118, l. 52 (plenum of municipal organizations, 30 Aug. 1919). One example of an official taking up the “Trotskii” line is that of Kamenev (only surname recorded), of the Tambov uezd Party committee, who proposed the following resolution at a committee meeting: “Urgently undertake a full-scale purge of the Communist rank and file, getting rid of all deserters, cowards, and traitors. Initiate Red terror, not in the pages of the wall newspapers [*stengazety*], but in deed, with the corpses of the bourgeoisie.” The resolution was rejected. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 185, l. 1ob.

126. “Delo o sdache tambova,” *Izvestiia* (Tambov), no. 198 (13 Sept. 1919):2–3. Redzko was certainly alluding to the Russian proverb: “The victors are never judged.”

127. Later, in October, a battalion commander from the Moscow sector, Kochergin, complained to Lenin about the soft treatment given by the Revtribunal to the senior officials tried in Tambov. Lenin then made inquiries with Trotskii about the affair, asking, “Have the guilty ones been handed over to courts, yet?” It took an intervention from V. N. Podbel’skii, a senior Bolshevik with close ties to Tambov, to convince Lenin that the decision reached by the Revtribunal was the correct one. See TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 199, ll. 48, 73.

128. For copies of the statements of Redzko, Chichkanov, Shidarev, and others, see TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 199, ll. 50, 51, 52, 68 and *passim*.

129. GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 108, l. 357; TsDNITO, f. 840, op. 1, d. 332, l. 136; *Sovety tambovskoi gubernii*, 38 fm. 1. Chichkanov’s murder is typically attributed to the rebel Antonov, but most archival materials relating to the murder are still classified at the request of the victim’s surviving relatives.

130. The actual approach to any future national assembly by the leaders of the Whites was far from clear, although it figured prominently in the pronouncements of both Kolchak’s and Denikin’s administrations. See V. Tsvetkov, “Belo dvizhenie v Rossii. 1917–1922 gody,” *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7 (2000):63–64.

131. TsDNITO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 182, l. 59 (17 Sept. 1919).

132. *Ibid.*, f. 382, op. 1, d. 158, l. 61.

133. On issues of centralization and local leadership, see G. Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861–1930* (DeKalb, 1982), 497–508; S. A. Pavliuchenkov, *Krest’ianskii brest, ili predistoriia bol’shevistskogo NEPa* (Moscow, 1996); E. Landis, “Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of the Antonov Rebellion: The Tambov Countryside Through Revolution and Civil War” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1998), chapters 1, 2.

134. TsDNITO, f. 840, op. 1, d. 84, l. 93 (Kozlov telegram, 19 Sept. 1919).

135. GATO, f. R-1, op. 1, d. 23, l. 119ob (Gubispolkom protocol, 22 Sept. 1919). At the Sixth Tambov Party Conference, the Kozlov executive committee chairman (and Tambov native), Ignatii Artemov, articulated the continued outrage felt particularly by the Kozlov officials: “Seeing that the provincial center was not taking any initiative following the devastation brought by Mamantov, at a time when there should have been strong central leadership, local workers asked Tambov for instructions and leadership—instructions which, when they eventually were received, proved to be a bitter disappointment [*kak posle uzhina gorchitsa*] . . . [A]nd when these local officials decide to take the initiative themselves, Tambov screams: *makhnovshchina*, place them under arrest,—and when the Kozlov committee states that the provincial center is incompetent and that we need to remove them and find new leaders in order to put affairs in order—for this they are placed on trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal.” See TsDNI TO, f. 382, op. 1, d. 158, l. 52. Artemov was soon to be removed from his post in Kozlov and sent to work for the Transport Commissariat in Tomsk and later in Murmansk.

136. One measure could be interpreted as singularly punitive. DuGarm notes that in September, the Tambov leadership passed an extraordinary tax on the local population, intended to be punishment for their participation in the looting and destruction that accompanied Mamantov’s raid. See D. DuGarm, “Peasant Wars in Tambov Province,” 182. Not much should be read into this measure. First, the idea originated with the Finance Commissariat and was intended to be a purely financial matter, in that the costs of reconstruction were far beyond the resources available to the administration. Second, the provincial executive committee only agreed to the tax if its collection was limited to the towns of Tambov and Kozlov and the nearby villages. They also expressed their desire to have the tax collected from those individuals for whom it could prove that they had participated in the looting of government property, so as not to arouse any hostilities among the general population. (That locals had participated is simply beyond doubt.) Third, the tax was never implemented with any resolve by the Finance Commissariat, nor could it have been, even if it remained legally in force for just over one year. See GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 108, l. 384; d. 23, ll. 119ob, 957ob.

137. GATO, R-1, op. 1, d. 118, l. 1397.

138. Gol’din has emerged as a central figure, if not *the* central figure, in recent explanations of the causes of the *antonovshchina* (Antonov rebellion), the mass rural insurgency against the Soviet state in 1920–21. See, for example, N. Fatueva, *Protivostoianie: krizis vlasti, tragediya naroda: iz istorii krest’ianskikh volnenii i vosstanii v Tambovskoi gubernii v 1918–1921 godakh* (Riazan, 1996). The classic history of the Antonov rebellion is O. Radkey, *The Unknown Civil War in Soviet Russia: A Study of the Green Movement in the Tambov Region, 1920–1921* (Palo Alto, 1976). A fine analysis of the development of the food procurement system in Tambov is provided in DuGarm, “Grain and Revolution: Food Supply and Local Government in Tambov, Russia, 1917–1921” (Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1998).

139. Quoted in *Istoriia kommunisticheskoi partii sovetskogo soiuza*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1964) 3, bk. 2 (Mar. 1918–1920):335.

140. According to Klaving, Mamantov traveled to Ekaterinodar to attend a meeting of the leadership of the Don, Terek, and Kuban Cossack hosts, which began in January 1920. While there, he contracted typhus, dying shortly thereafter in Ekaterinodar. See Klaving, *Belaia gvardia*, 292–93.

141. For example, see *Morshanskaia Kommuna*, no. 41 (24 Feb. 1920):1.