

## THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE



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Original Theoretical Research



### “Masters of Death”: a Note by Junior Sergeant V.N. Nakidnev about the Krasny Concentration Camp

Vyacheslav A. Ivanov<sup>1</sup>  , Olga I. Rudaya<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Crimean University of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Simferopol, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup> Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

 [slavik1855@gmail.com](mailto:slavik1855@gmail.com)

#### Abstract

**Introduction.** This research introduces an unknown and previously unpublished document, a note by junior sergeant V.N. Nakidnev “Masters of Death”, which was stored in the State Archives of the Republic of Crimea. It was extracted from the materials of the Crimean Commission on the History of the Great Patriotic War, included in fund P-156 and file number 34. V.N. Nakidnev’s note chronologically falls outside the voluminous file of 208 sheets, begun in 1941 and completed in 1944, since it bears the date and signature of the author from June 3, 1945. Apparently, V.N. Nakidnev needed to draw up the note as a document confirming his stay in the Nazi death camp “Red”. After the liberation of Simferopol and the camp located on the territory of its district by the Red Army, V.N. Nakidnev, who was listed as one of the so-called “brigadiers”, came under suspicion from SMERSH and in June 1944, as a former prisoner, he testified before the Crimean Extraordinary State Commission regarding possible collaboration with the Nazi occupiers. The charge of collaboration was not proven, but thanks to the trial, archival material appeared, which the authors of this article offer to the reader’s attention.

**Materials and Methods.** General theoretical research methods are used. The main research method is the generalization and systemic analysis of V.N. Nakidnev’s note “Masters of Death”.

**Results.** The author of the article gives a brief description of his life before being imprisoned in the concentration camp “Krasny”, describes the circumstances under which he became its prisoner, and later “a liberated prisoner”. V.N. Nakidnev devotes the main attention to the painful stay in “Krasny”, noting that “the camp here was cruel”.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** It has been established that V.N. Nakidnev’s note contains important information about the conditions of detention of prisoners in the “Red” concentration camp and information about the executions of participants in the underground patriotic movement by the Nazis in April 1944. The publication of this document has current practical significance for the modern understanding of the misanthropic ideology and politics of neo-Nazism.

**Keywords:** The Great Patriotic War, Crimea, Nazi occupation, Resistance movement, concentration camp “Red”, V.N. Nakidnev

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Оригинальное теоретическое исследование

### «Мастера смерти»: заметка младшего сержанта В.Н. Накиднева о концлагере «Красный»

В.А. Иванов<sup>1</sup>  , О.И. Рудая<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Крымский университет культуры, искусств и туризма, г. Симферополь, Российская Федерация

<sup>2</sup> Донской государственный технический университет, г. Ростов-на-Дону, Российская Федерация

 [slavik1855@gmail.com](mailto:slavik1855@gmail.com)

#### Аннотация

**Введение.** Представлен неизвестный и ранее неопубликованный документ, хранящийся в Государственном архиве Республики Крым (ГА РК), – заметка младшего сержанта В.Н. Накиднева «Мастера смерти». Она была извле-

чена из материалов Крымской комиссии по истории Великой Отечественной войны, включенных в фонд П-156 и дело под номером 34. Заметка В.Н. Накиднева хронологически выпадает из объемного дела в количестве 208 листов, начатого в 1941 г. и оконченого в 1944 г., поскольку на ней стоит дата и подпись автора от 3 июня 1945 г. По-видимому, составление записки понадобилось В.Н. Накиднелу в качестве документа, подтверждающего его пребывание в нацистском лагере смерти «Красный». После освобождения Красной армией г. Симферополя и расположенного на территории его района лагеря В.Н. Накиднел, числившийся в составе так называемых «бригадиров», оказался под подозрением СМЕРШ и в июне 1944 г. как бывший узник давал показания перед Крымской чрезвычайной государственной комиссией по поводу возможного сотрудничества с нацистскими оккупантами. Обвинение в коллаборационизме не было доказано, но благодаря судебному процессу появился архивный материал, который авторы данной статьи и предлагают вниманию читателя.

**Материалы и методы.** Применяются общетеоретические методы исследования. Основным методом исследования является обобщение и системный анализ заметки В.Н. Накиднева «Мастера смерти».

**Результаты исследования.** Автор заметки дает краткую характеристику своей жизни до заключения в концлагерь «Красный», описывает обстоятельства, при которых оказывается его узником, а впоследствии «освобожденным заключенным». Основное внимание В.Н. Накиднел уделяет тягостному пребыванию в «Красном», отмечая, что «лагерь здесь был жестоким».

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Установлено, что в заметке В.Н. Накиднева содержатся важные сведения об условиях содержания узников в концлагере «Красный» и информация о расстрелах участников подпольно-патриотического движения нацистами в апреле 1944 г. Публикация данного документа имеет актуальное практическое значение для современного понимания человеконенавистнической идеологии и политики неонацизма.

**Ключевые слова:** Великая Отечественная война, Крым, нацистская оккупация, движение Сопротивления, концлагерь «Красный», В.Н. Накиднел

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**Introduction.** The State Archives of the Republic of Crimea contains a note by Junior Sergeant of the Red Army Vasily Nikitovich Nakidnev, in which he recounts his experiences in a concentration camp created by the Nazis in the former Krasny state farm in the Simferopol region in November 1941.

This document was compiled on June 3, 1945 and included in the file under the general title of “author’s articles and essays, eyewitness accounts of fascist atrocities during the occupation”. V.N. Nakidnev’s memoirs are written in the third person using the pseudonym, Vasily Chernomorsky. They recount the monstrous conditions of camp life, and also record facts of cruel treatment by the Nazis and their accomplices towards participants in the anti-fascist underground patriotic movement in Crimea.

**Materials and Methods.** The publication is based on an archival document. The main research method is the generalization and systemic analysis of the note of junior sergeant V.N. Nakidnev. General theoretical research methods are also used: analysis, synthesis, etc.

**Results.** The author of “The Master of Death” is Vasily Nikitovich Nakidnev, according to the materials of the Central Archive of Defense of the Russian Federation, was born in 1915 in the city of Yevpatoria [1]. He studied well at school and was a member of the Komsomol organization. During the Great Patriotic War, V.N. Nakidnev became a participant in the anti-fascist Resistance movement that arose in Yevpatoria after its occupation by German-Romanian troops on October 31, 1941.

In 1942, underground patriotic groups of “party and non-party Bolsheviks”, doctors, Komsomol members, and the “Exterminate the Fascists” organization were created in the city. The leader of the underground group of Yevpatoria Komsomol members was A.I. Galushkin, who had worked as the secretary of the Simferopol City Party Committee before the war. His organization did not last long; in May 1942, most of its members were killed by the Nazis. By 1943, several more underground groups had formed in Yevpatoria: at a motorcycle repair plant headed by A.E. Chepurny, at a power plant headed by N.P. Shtrigel, as well as two units of former Soviet prisoners of war headed by P.I. Khlebnikov and S.G. Pashchenko [2, pp. 2–5; 3, pp. 353–354; 4, pp. 431–445]. In total, eight underground organizations operated in the city, uniting 45 people [5, p. 116]. It is quite difficult to say which of them V.N. Nakidnev belonged to. It is known that, having become a victim of betrayal, he ended up in the Krasny concentration camp in the spring of 1943.

Despite the circumstances and inhumane camp conditions, V.N. Nakidnev was able not only to survive, but also to avoid the execution organized by the Nazis against the underground fighters on the night of April 10–11, 1944.

On April 11, against the backdrop of the Red Army approaching the city of Simferopol, the camp authorities, Oberscharführer K. Speckman and commandant P. Krause, opened the gates and released all the prisoners [6, p. 325]. The camp was blown up, and its buildings were destroyed. The German administration and “volunteers” who provided security for the concentration camp went to the city of Sevastopol, which by that time continued to be in the hands of the occupiers [6, p. 328].

Together with other very exhausted prisoners, V.N. Nakidnev was released. The day of liberation became special: an unforgettable event in his life. N.V. Nakidnev recalled how “a huge crowd of Simferopol residents was waiting for them at the gates... The people hugged and kissed the liberated, gave them flat cakes, bread, pies, jam, etc. Many cried, others laughed with joy with tears in their eyes” [7, p. 53 rev.]. V.N. Nakidnev returned to the city of Yevpatoriya, where he got a job at a military trade store. However, the military commissariat soon mobilized him into the army, where he arrived on June 8, 1944. The author of the note was unable to take part in the final battles of the Great Patriotic War. On June 3, 1945, he gave testimony, which later became part of the archival case of the Crimean Commission on the History of the Great Patriotic War. Unfortunately, the further fate of Junior Sergeant V.N. Nakidneva remains unknown.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** Thus, the analysis shows that V.N. Nakidnev’s note contains valuable information about the social and living conditions of prisoners in the “Red” death camp, as well as information about the mass executions of members of the underground patriotic movement carried out by the Nazis in April 1944 and called the second “cleansing”. The publication of this document has scientific, practical and political significance for the modern understanding of the ideology of neo-Nazism. “Masters of Death” can help researchers understand such a complex topic as Nazi concentration camps and the inhumane policy of the Hitler regime in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War.

The note is published in the author’s spelling and punctuation.

#### “Masters of Death”

A[mong] the many thousands of Soviet people who survived the difficult years of the fascist occupation was Vasily Chernomorsky. Living there, in his native seaside town of Yevpatoria, he always [...] in his strengths to harm the occupiers. Keeping in his soul a burning hatred for the insidious enemy, since he always believed in the imminent liberation of his native land. While still studying at [school], he joins the Komsomol, which educates him to be devoted to the Socialist Motherland and he becomes a true patriot of the people. Spring 1943. At this time, Vasily Chernomorsky calls together groups of people and carries out, very successfully, the theft [June? ...] of material from the Germans and distributes it to the population of his native city. The matter did not go without betrayal. Vasily Chernomorsky is soon sought out by German gendarmes and imprisoned in a cold solitary confinement cell. He became a victim of betrayal, who in childhood taught him in the 4th grade. It was Morozov Petr Nikolaevich at the age of 64, who later turned out to be a Gestapo agent. And all those who suffered from products, also studied or supported the efforts of Chernomorsky. Soon after Vasily was put in solitary confinement, he underwent a series of interrogations, where he answered the German gendarme’s questions about his life in the Soviet Union and his time in the Komsomol firmly and behaved courageously. The German chief asked: Are you a Komsomol member: “Yes, I am a Komsomol member”. [The following is omitted. Ed.] All this for his people, since they are having a hard time with bread. [In] a fit of fury, the gendarme officer, turning white, then turning bloodshot again, forcefully pushed Vasily against the wall. In the room on the 3rd floor [there was] a middle-aged woman, a [Polish] woman by nationality, Sander Sofia Bronislavovna. During all the other interrogations, Vasily Chernomorsky noticed, somehow instinctively, that this woman treated him with some special curiosity and respect, later he meets this woman and learns about underground work, in one of the underground organizations of Crimea [...], Vasily was in great danger all the time. In their ... sessions, the gendarmes decide whether to take Vasily’s life or hang Vasily in the Lenin Garden (near the City Theatre), the monstrous plan was not destined to come true, since all the efforts of the translator were not in vain, she thwarted their monstrous plan, and Vasily remains alive. But after some time, the gendarmes hold their own trial over Vasily and send him to the SD concentration camp in Crimea, to the Krasny state farm (located 2 km from Simferopol). Having ended up in this death camp, Vasily concluded in the circumstances that he, among many thousands of prisoners, would never leave here alive or even to freedom. The camp here was cruel, as in many other German concentration camps. Mostly, there were unreliable people here, who had gone through [...] the German “new order in Europe”. The camp was surrounded by two rows of barbed wire and was reliably guarded by Tatar volunteers. Here, from exhaustion and beatings, most of the prisoners died, who were buried, here, next to the camp, by the well, such [...], hastily dug pits. All those living conditions in the camp left their heavy mark on Vasily Chernomorsky. Soon, he was incredibly exhausted and weak, and could hardly be distinguished from the other prisoners. One early autumn morning, Vasily joined a group of prisoners, 30–40 people, who were to be taken to work not far from the camp, where he wanted to get some food to ease his difficult situation.

But they did not come to him in the field, where he soon learned that the camp commandant Krause himself [...] with the rank of [...] Hauptscharführer, had taken him out of action, placing him [...] in the middle of the camp, where Vasily

stood until lunch, and then sent him to the penal camp company, which was located [...] in the camp zone, where they were treated even cruelly [...], once [...], and forced to work all the time running. But even this (?) courageously Vasily Chernomorsky, in his struggle with the difficulties [...] of his native land, from the damned occupiers, about which he always shared [...] his difficult moments. Autumn 1943 arrived. The enemy was locked tightly in Crimea, at Perekop. Throughout Crimea, he intensified his terror against the civilian population. In the villages, mass roundups took place, all the youth were driven off to Germany. In the concentration camps of Crimea, including the "Red" concentration camp, a series of [...] mass executions took place at the end of October and beginning of November 1943. At that time, several dozen people remained alive in the Krasny state farm camp, including Vasily Chernomorsky. January 1944 arrived. The camp filled with prisoners and soon there were many of them. Those who survived told of the bloody deeds of the Gestapo, of the executions carried out in an area called Dubki, near Simferopol. At the end of 1943 – beginning of 1944, Vasily Chernomorsky was unable to [...] leave his cell due to exhaustion, his body and legs were covered with rotting wounds. But [...] on February 16, 1944, he began to move around little by little, and only thanks to the care (?) of his comrades, who provided him with [...] all possible assistance. Together with Vasily in the camp there was an engineer [...] from the city of Simferopol – Porosyatnikov I.S., a metal turner, [...] from Sevastopol – Ivanov Konstantin, an electrician from Simferopol – Solovyov Ivan, a beekeeper from the city of Sary Krym Golovachev Nikolay [...] and many others. The year [...] 1944 arrived, at the end of this year the Gestapo uncovered an underground organization in the camp that had connections with the partisan detachments of the Crimean forests. The members of this organization were [...] camp foremen, who looked after the order in the camp during their time off from work. The main objective of their activities was to blow up the building [...] where the camp's Gestapo officers lived, and to take all the prisoners to the forest [...] to the partisans. But they failed to carry out their plan [...], and all 5 people of this organization were shot, including Nadya, the camp translator (whose last name Vasily Chernomorsky does not remember) together with her 3-year-old daughter Vera [...] 1944. The Red Army was delivering its third blow in Crimea and [...]. Seeing their inevitable death, the vile two-legged beasts, [...] organize an execution of prisoners in the concentration camp on the night of April 10-11, 1944, and this time in the camp zone, near the building [...] and the corpses were thrown into a well dug by the prisoners, but there were none [...] The execution took place all night, until dawn on April 11 [...] 1944. Before the execution, the prisoners were tied with wire [...], taken back in groups to the well and shot with machine guns. And by the morning, only 6 men and about 50 women remained in the camp, but they were locked in cells, and Vasily Chernomorsky was in cell No. 7. ... [...] the prisoners were taken out of their cells that same morning, into the yard, [...] they were in a depressed mood. Since none of them had slept that [...] night, they did not believe that they were still alive. Soon, they were lined up in the courtyard [...], men and women together. Then the «owners» arrived, [...], the chief himself (word crossed out), Oberscharführer Speckman, commandant Krause and an interpreter. Standing in front of the line, they all began to talk about [...], that now, we will let you all go home, but just don't go into the forest, to the partisans, and this means that the partisans dealt them strong blows and did not give them life in the Crimea. Meanwhile, the line of people stood as if dead, and with complete distrust treated the words spoken by the chief of the camp. But suddenly, the chief shouted at the top of his lungs, go, now, quickly, everyone to the cells, take your things and go home. The people, perplexed, rushed into the cells, hastily grabbing their meager rags and rushed to the exit, the camp gates, ahead of each other and not believing at all that they were all going to freedom.

At the gates, a huge crowd of Simferopol residents was waiting for them. Here at the gates, an unforgettable meeting with the released prisoners took place, among whom was Vasily Chernomorsky. The people hugged and kissed them, giving them whatever they could bring from home: flatbread, bread, pies, jam, etc. Many cried, others laughed with joy, again, with tears in their eyes. Then, the stream of prisoners spread out along the roads of Crimea, and everyone who remained alive at that moment hurried to their mothers, wives, children. Among them, Vasily Chernomorsky hurried to his relatives, whose relatives had long since considered him dead in this terrible death camp. Despite his terrible picture of exhaustion, on April 15, 1944, he still arrived to his relatives, to his father and mother, who at that time lived in the village of Chernomorsk [...].

When Vasily entered the yard, his mother, coming out of the storeroom at that time, had firewood in her hands, and could not recognize him, but Aunt Stefanida, Vasily's mother's sister, recognized him first, since he was tortured beyond recognition during his stay in the concentration camp. After resting for 7 days with his mother and father, Vasily returned to his native, beloved seaside town of Yevpatoriya. Here, he went to work at the Military Trade Department, as a caretaker, but was soon drafted into the Red Army, where he serves to this day, who was always eager to repay for his suffering and the suffering of others, but he never had to take part in the final defeat of Nazi Germany. But all those atrocities that the Germans committed will never be forgotten by history and the people, they will be passed on from generation to generation, so that their foot will never again step on the lands of other peoples.

*June 3, 1945. Junior Sergeant Nakidnev V.*

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## About the Authors:

**Ivanov Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich**, Cand. Sci. (History), Associate Professor, Department of Social and Humanitarian Disciplines, Crimean University of Culture, Arts and Tourism (39, Kievskaya Str., Simferopol, 295017, Russian Federation), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-code](#), [slavik1855@gmail.com](mailto:slavik1855@gmail.com)

**Rudaya Olga Ivanovna**, Cand. Sci. (History), Associate Professor, Department of History and Cultural Studies, Don State Technical University (1, Gagarin Sq., Rostov-on-Don, 344003, Russian Federation), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-code](#), [oiru2011@yandex.ru](mailto:oiru2011@yandex.ru)

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## Об авторах:

**Иванов Вячеслав Александрович**, кандидат исторических наук, доцент кафедры социально-гуманитарных дисциплин, Крымский университет культуры, искусств и туризма (295017, Российская Федерация, г. Симферополь, ул. Киевская, 39), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-код](#), [slavik1855@gmail.com](mailto:slavik1855@gmail.com)

**Рудая Ольга Ивановна**, кандидат исторических наук, доцент, доцент кафедры истории и культурологии, Донской государственный технический университет (344003, Российская Федерация, г. Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-код](#), [oiru2011@yandex.ru](mailto:oiru2011@yandex.ru)

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