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## МАЛОВІДОМІ СТОРІНКИ БІОГРАФІЇ ІВАНА ЧЕРНЯХОВСЬКОГО

*Як справедливо зазначають автори, у наявній літературі щодо біографії І. Черняховського вкрай обмеженими є відомості, які стосуються походження, дитинства й юнацтва майбутнього воєначальника. Серед спірних питань – національна приналежність І. Черняховського, адже ще у 1944 р. у зарубіжних джерелах було висунуто версію про його єврейські етнічні коріння. У липні 1944 р. секретар Єврейського антифашистського комітету в Москві С. Епштейн звертався з проханням про з'ясування цього до секретаря ЦК ВКП (б) О. С. Щербакова, і отримав спростування.*

*Між тим, версія про єврейське походження талановитого генерала набула поширення, зокрема – у контексті процесу підготовки до створення Єврейської держави у Палестині.*

*Етнічна приналежність І. Черняховського час від часу ставала предметом дискусій. Новий поштовх до деталізації першого періоду його життя дала публікація у 2005 р. добірки з семи документів з Центрального архіву Міністерства оборони Російської Федерації, в яких також містилися різноманітні відомості щодо дати народження та інших моментів ранньої біографії. Автори статті наводять характеристики цих документів, зазначаючи, що склалося до десяти варіантів опису раннього періоду біографії Івана Даниловича із суперечливими твердженнями.*

*Дослідники вдалися до власного архівно-джерельного пошуку, виявили й вивчили відповідні документи у Державному архіві Київської області. Аналіз документів підтверджує православно-слов'янську приналежність І. Черняховського та визначення ним особисто української мови як рідної. У статті наводяться цікаві біографічні подробиці дитячого та юнацького віку воєначальника, пережиті ним поневіряння й становлення особистості.*

**Ключові слова:** *Іван Черняховський, військова біографістика, військове мистецтво, просопографія, командні кадри, 3-й Білоруський фронт.*

### Від редакції “Військово-історичного вісника”.

Стаття, присвячена маловідомим сторінкам життєпису визначного радянського полководця доби Другої світової війни, наймолодшого військового діяча Ан-

тигітлерівської коаліції, уродженця сучасної Черкаської області, командувача 3-м Білоруським фронтом, двічі Героя Радянського Союзу, генерала армії Івана Даниловича Черняхівського, уперше побачила світ у науковому виданні “The Journal of Slavic Military Studies” (“Журнал слов’янських військових досліджень”, США) у 2013 р. (т. 26, вип.1, С. 81–113).

Матеріал порушує дискусійні питання біографії знаного й перспективного воєначальника, який здобував воєнно-командну освіту у стінах Київської артилерійської школи (1925/1926–1928 рр.) – однієї з історичних попередників сучасного Національного університету оборони України, який з 22 лютого 2013 р. носить ім’я цього ушанованого полководця.

З люб’язного дозволу авторів статті, ми передруковуємо її під назвою, наданою редакцією “Військово-історичного вісника”. Наукову підготовку до друку здійснено к.і.н. О. Филем (автором кількох книг, присвячених своєму землякові, зокрема – “За крок до маршальського жезлу”. К. 2005, “Іван Черняхівський”. К. 2006, “Життя як спалах зірки... Іван Черняхівський: штрихи до портрета полководця”. К. 2014) та д.і.н. Д. Веденєєвим.

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## UNKNOWN PAGES OF IVAN CHERNIAKOVSKY'S BIOGRAPHY

### **Abstract**

The books and articles written about Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky, one of the foremost Soviet commanders in World War II, render very little reliable information about his childhood and youth, with many inconsistencies, including even his birth date and birthplace. In particular, since 1944 it has been disputed whether he was Jewish by birth, as was almost unanimously accepted in the West but denied by the Soviets. The Jewish origin was suspected of being the main reason for the heavy veil drawn over Chernyakhovsky's past. We discuss the reasons for the scarcity and inconsistency of the biographical material. New archival findings shed some light on the Chernyakhovsky

family history which contradicts the Jewish origin theory.

General Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky was one of the foremost Soviet commanders in the Second World War. His meteoric career in the Red Army—where within three war years he was promoted from the rank of colonel to four-star general, becoming the youngest ever Soviet Army-General and the commander of the 3rd Belorussian Front, was ended on 18 February 1945, when he was mortally wounded by a shell splinter in the East Prussian front (near Königsberg, which is called Kaliningrad today), just a few days before he was to be promoted to the highest Red Army rank of marshal. Upon learning of his death, Britain's Prime Minister Win-



Cadet of the Kyiv Artillery School. 1926.



Commander of the 241th Rifle Division.

ston Churchill sent the following personal message to Joseph Stalin: 'I read with sorrow of the loss you have sustained by the death from wounds received in action of General Chernyakhovsky. The quality and services of this brilliant and brave officer were greatly admired by His Majesty's Government and the British Army.'<sup>1</sup> Chernyakhovsky was honored twice with the highest decoration 'Hero of the Soviet Union', and after the war, the conquered East Prussian town of Insterburg was renamed Chernyakhovsk in his honor.

Despite his national and international eminence, and the many books, articles, encyclopedia entries, etc. dealing with his life and deeds, General Chernyakhovsky's childhood and family background remained in the dark for many years, and only very little information about this part of his life was available. Moreover,

the available relevant few pieces of information were inconsistent, even contradictory. This situation became fertile ground for much speculation, including the widespread supposition, especially in the West, that Ivan Danilovich was of Jewish descent. This assumption was formulated in print for the first time already in 1944, when the victories of the 60th army under his command became known worldwide.

According to an article published in 2002 in the magazine *Evreiskii Kamer-ton*, in July 1944 the secretary of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee in Moscow, S. Epshtein, addressed the following request to A.S. Shcherbakov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and director of the Soviet Information Bureau:

Dear Alexander Sergeevich! We received from many countries suggestions



for articles and reports dedicated to Jewish generals in the Red Army. In particular, there is a large demand for material on Army-General Chernyakhovsky. We were informed from England that the information minister, who gave a speech about the bravery of the various nations in the Soviet Union, the Jewish nation among them, dwelled in particular on the figure of General Chernyakhovsky. Many foreign correspondents wrote to their papers, with the approval of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, about the military capabilities of General Chernyakhovsky, with stress on his Jewish descent. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which has no official material at its disposal, could not satisfy the request of a number of journal editors and news agents. I ask you for an order enabling the responsible workers of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee to be acquainted with the personnel department of NKO (the People's Commissariat of Defense) with the material about the Jewish generals, commanders and officers in the Red Army, in particular about General Chernyakhovsky.

Shcherbakov's brief reply came in 18 July 1944: 'General Chernyakhovsky is Ukrainian, and not Jewish.'<sup>2</sup>

A similar story was told in 1991 by The Jewish Chronicle's East European correspondent Ze'ev Ben-Shlomo, upon the transfer of Chernyakhovsky's remains from Vilna to Moscow: '... When Eynikeit, the newspaper of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, wanted to refer to General Chernyakhovsky as a Jew, the report was withdrawn on official orders.' Ben Sh-



Comandarm. February. 1943.

lomo explains: 'The decision to erase any mention of General Chernyakhovsky's Jewish origin was pursued as a matter of policy... , he was given peasant origins by an official 'proletarian' biography, just as General Lev Dovator, the commander of the Soviet cavalry corps, who died in action in the battle of Moscow in December 1941, was transformed from the son of a Jewish artisan born in ashtetl into the son of a Belorussian peasant.'<sup>3</sup>

But Shcherbakov was a notorious anti-Semite who was believed to lead a clear policy of belittling the Jewish contribution to the war, as stated in the following excerpt from Salo Baron's book *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*: 'The number of decorated Jewish soldiers is doubly remarkable as some of them were passed over because of the pernicious influence



With children Neoniloy and Oleg.

of the late Supreme Army Commissar Shcherbakov, member of the Politburo ... dyed-in-the wool anti-Semite'.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, Shcherbakov did not enjoy high credibility, neither among the Jews, nor among Western correspondents, and his prompt brief reply did not convince them. In spite of Shcherbakov's blunt denial, the Western correspondents continued to refer to Chernyakhovsky as Jewish. Thus, David Abarbanel's article in the August 1944 issue of *Liberal Judaism*, claimed that 'General Chernyakhovsky evidently stresses his Jewish origin'<sup>5</sup>, and the *Time Magazine* issue of 28 August 1944, tells about 'the iron-muscled and iron-willed young Jewish general, Ivan Chernyakhovsky'.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time the question about Chernyakhovsky's ethnicity was raised in

Palestine, and the newspaper *Davar* published in 25 August 1944 the following:

In light of the many questions addressed to *Davar's* editors whether it is true that General Chernyakhovsky is Jewish, and following the various hypotheses raised in this issue, that the General's correct name is Chernikhovsky (and surely he is from the family of the poet S. Chernikhovsky, o.b.m) – we must comment: The name of the commander of the Soviet army group, the liberator of Vilna and more, who is mentioned often nowadays in the Moscow announcements and Stalin's orders of the day, is Chernyakhovsky (and not Chernikhovsky or Chernyakovsky). He does not belong to the family of the poet Chernikhovsky and he is not Jewish...<sup>7</sup>

The question was raised again upon his death half a year later. In the *New York Times* report the following day, 19 February 1945, the following comment (in brackets) was added: 'Moscow dispatches recently corrected reports that General Chernyakhovsky was Jewish, saying that he was a member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.'<sup>8</sup>

The picture drawn by *Davar's* short obituary, a few days later, is less decisive:

Jew or non-Jew? This question, which was asked many times during the lifetime of the commander so rich in deeds, is asked also after his death. The answer is not clear and is uncertain. The well-known American writer Maurice Hindus<sup>9</sup> was one of the first to announce about the talented Jewish general Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky. The *JTA* (*Jewish Tel-*



Funeral ceremony and farewell to the commander. Vilnius. 20 February, 1945.

ographic Agency) writer in Moscow denied the information about the Jewishness of Chernyakhovsky, but the English newspapers continued to write about him as a Jew. John Gibbons and other Anglo-Saxon reporters describe him as a 'typical Ukrainian, short and sun-burnt', while Gromiko, the USSR Ambassador in Washington, recently raised a toast to 'the USSR hero, son of the Jewish nation, General Ivan Chernyakhovsky'. Davar's editors addressed, a few months ago, a formal enquiry to Moscow asking whether it is true that Chernyakhovsky is Jewish. Such a confirmation did not arrive. It seems that Chernyakhovsky's father was of Jewish descent but the general himself did not boast of this.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, rumors about Chernyakhovsky's Jewishness were strengthened by the fact that in liberated Belorussia and Lithuania, the Jewish survivors considered him as their Jewish savior.

For example, Shalom Eilati, then a child who had survived the Kovna (Kaunas) ghetto, says: '... in particular I remember the majestic funeral of Front Commander General Chernyakhovsky who was killed when his headquarters were bombed in Prussia. By the portraits carried in the funeral and published in the papers, the man was young and good looking, and I mused in hidden pride – here is one of us among the army chiefs'.<sup>11</sup> Chernyakhovsky's human approach to the Jewish survivors and his help to the Jewish community of Vilna (Vilnius) supported this belief. Isaac Kowalsky, who ran the underground press in Ghetto Vilna, writes that Chernyakhovsky met him personally and describes his excitement when he met 'the great Jewish general'. He states,

The General spoke very slowly and was friendly. He asked about everything that had happened during the Nazi occupation. I felt that he had a very sensitive





Funeral ceremony and farewell to the commander. Vilnius. 20 February, 1945.

heart. He was serious and concerned, and mentioned that if we needed anything we should freely ask for it. This we did, and he helped a great deal, for example, in getting furnishing for a Jewish children's home.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, Isaac Kowalsky passed away a few years ago, and his son, Martin Kowalsky from New York City, could not add any information to his father's story. Other sources from Lithuania's Jewish community tell about the help received through the personal involvement of Chernyakhovsky's Jewish physician and Front Psychiatrist Lieutenant Colonel Iosif Veniaminovich Rebelskii, who sponsored the Jewish orphanages and schools in Vilna and Kovno after the liberation.<sup>13</sup> When Kowalsky published his memoirs, there was renewed interest in the role of the Jewish fighters in Second World War. In 1966, the Polish-born Jewish historian Reuben Ainsztein published his article

'The War Record of Soviet Jewry', and in 1967, two books on this subject appeared in Israel (in Hebrew) – *Face to Face with the Nazi Enemy and Jewish Soldiers in Europe Armies*.<sup>14</sup> None of these three publications could conclusively establish Chernyakhovsky's ethnicity. Here are Ainsztein's words:

No doubt many readers will find it odd that my list does not include the name of Army General Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky, one of the most brilliant Soviet commanders in the last war, who would undoubtedly have become a marshal if he had not died in East Prussia. I am aware that several foreign correspondents writing from Moscow during the war described him as being of Jewish origin and that Israeli publications dealing with the military contribution of Soviet Jewry treat him as a Jew. However, my requirement for decision whether a Soviet general was or is a Jew is to find a Soviet or a



The monument on the grave of Ivan Chernyakhovsky. Vilnius. 28 April, 1945.

Soviet Jewish source confirming the fact. I have never come across such a confirmation in the case of Chernyakhovsky.

To ascertain the nationality of Chernyakhovsky and Dovator, the most famous Cossack commander of the last war, I wrote to Konstantin Simonov, the well-known playwright and novelist who despite many portraits of Jewish soldiers, is not a Jew. The reason why I also inquired Simonov about Dovator is that Pavel Fyodorov in his biographical novel *General Dovator*, published in the *Voennoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR* (Publishing House of the USSR Ministry of Defense), describes him as the son of Belorussian parents. I received from Simonov the following answer in November 1963: 'At first I was not even certain

whether I could answer your question, for during the war I did not stop to think what was the nationality of Generals Chernyakhovsky and Dovator. I met Chernyakhovsky several times during the war and, in my opinion, he was by nationality a Russian, but he might easily have been a Ukrainian. I did not have the opportunity to meet Dovator, I only heard a great deal about him, especially during the battle for Moscow in 1941. But after receiving your letter, I consulted my friends who had known him personally. They told me that as far as they knew, Dovator was born in Byelorussia, but was a Jew by nationality.<sup>15</sup>

*Face to Face with the Nazi Enemy*, a collection of Jewish war veteran stories, which was published in Tel Aviv in 1967,





Novodiveche cemetery – final shelter for commander. Moscow. 1992.

does not count Chernyakhovsky among the Jewish warriors. In the introduction to the chapter dealing with the Soviet Jewish soldiers, it is explained:

We will not hide our hesitations and our special deliberations concerning several famous and glorious heroes. We could not decide on the Jewishness of General Chernyakhovsky, commander of the 3rd Belorussian front and twice ‘Hero of the Soviet Union’; Katukov Yefim, Marshal of the Armored Troops and former commander of the 1st (Guards) Tank Brigade and twice Hero of the Soviet Union’; Brandis Anatol, Air-Force Colonel and twice ‘Hero of the Soviet Union’; General Dovator, the legendary commander of the cavalry corps; Pozniak Viktor Gribovich, Major-General, and Pinchuk Timophei Zinoviyevich, Lieutenant-Colonel.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the above-mentioned uncertainty, during the 1970s several books were published in the West in which

Chernyakhovsky was described, without any doubt, as Jewish. For instance, in Kremerman's *From Vilna, ‘Jerusalem of Lithuania’ to Haifa*, published in 1975, the author writes about ‘the 3rd Belorussian Front commanded by the Jewish Marshal, Chernyakhovsky’, and tells another version of the Jewish orphanage story: ‘For the Jewish heart beating in his chest will testify the fact, that after the liberation of Vilna he met a Jewish teacher and suggested to her to gather Jewish children who hid in gentile homes and establish for them a home and school in the house next to the green bridge ...’.<sup>17</sup>

The Jewish historian Salo W. Baron, who did not mention Chernyakhovsky explicitly in the first edition of his book mentioned above, was already convinced of Chernyakhovsky's Jewish descent 12 years later, and in the second edition of his book *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (1976), he went quite far:

Similarly Yona (Jan) Davidovich Cherniakhovski, holding the highest rank of Marshal of the Soviet Army, who had vanquished the Germans in three important 1943 encounters at Voronezh, Kursk and Konotop and was the only Soviet general who had never lost a battle, was killed during his drive on Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) by a mysterious explosion of a mine, possibly laid by his own anti-Semitic subordinates. He was granted his final wish and was buried in the Jewish cemetery of his native Vilna in the presence of relatives, including two rabbis. But the monument erected in his honor failed to refer to his Jewish nationality, while the official Soviet who's who of leading military commanders called him a White Russian and described his father – who had made a living from selling Vodka at a rented road-house – as a poor peasant sharecropper.<sup>18</sup>

Since the 1970s, after Chernyakhovsky was entered into the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971)<sup>19</sup>, as well as into the concise *Hebrew Judaica Lexicon* (1976)<sup>20</sup>, most articles and encyclopedia entries in the West referred to Chernyakhovsky as a Jew.<sup>21</sup> During the 1980–90s, the Western bibliography didn't pay special attention to General Chernyakhovsky's roots, and no new facts or claims regarding his biography were published.

The first, and up to now only, professional article in the West on Chernyakhovsky, was published in 2004 in the *WWII History Journal* by the Jewish-American military historian Steven Ossad.<sup>22</sup> Ossad's summary is: 'Russia's



Commander's son Major General Oleg Ivanovich Chernyakhovskiy. Photo from archive of Oleksandr Phyl.

Rommel, General Ivan Chernyakhovsky survived brutal anti-Semitism, Stalin's madness, and German tanks to achieve a stunning combat record and fell at the end of the war.' In the article, Ossad says that Chernyakhovsky, 'the youngest Front Commander, and highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Soviet Army ... the youngest of four children and son of a railroad clerk, was born on 16 June 1906 in the small Ukrainian village of Uman near Kiev'. In his article Ossad cites Kowalsky's story, and refers to *Encyclopedia Judaica* and to the Internet site of Jacqueline Zaslow from New York, who in 2002 posted on the Internet a family genealogy site, in which it was claimed that Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky was a brother of her great grandmother Raisel.<sup>23</sup>

In a quite recent book about the war,



Commander's daughter Neonila Ivanivna. Moscow. March, 2005. Photo by Oleksandr Phyl.

Sean M. McAteer's *500 Days; The War in Eastern Europe, 1944–1945*, Chernyakhovsky is still considered Jewish - one finds in it the following about him: 'This rare Jewish general in an army tinged with anti-Semitism was the first of the new generation of Soviet generals not to have fought in the civil war.'<sup>24</sup>

Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky, among other legendary army commanders and heroes of war, became after the war the subject of both semi-scientific and popular publications. Many newspaper articles containing elements of his biography appeared immediately after his death. After the war more serious biographies were published. The main emphasis in practically all of them was on his exclusive military career, the battles he won, his role in overthrowing Nazi troops from

Belorussia, Lithuania and Eastern Prussia, and his premature death. His family and childhood were usually described, if at all, in very general terms due to the lack of available information. Though it is impossible to mention all of those publications we'll try, anyhow, to present a brief review of what was published in the former USSR about his family and young days.

Actually the late 1960's and early 1970's were the years during which interest in Chernyakhovsky reawakened in the Soviet Union. This, in a way, became part of a general campaign, encouraged by the state, of glorifying the exploits of Soviet people during World War II. In a comparatively short period, several publications devoted to the heroic life of General Chernyakhovsky appeared. A short biography, written by S. Drigo,<sup>25</sup> was published in 1964 in the city of Kaliningrad and, since 1966, several short articles dedicated to him appeared in the local Chernyakhovsk youth journal *Kommunist* as well as in other local newspapers twice a year around the dates of his birth (June 29th) and his death (February 18th).

Chernyakhovsky's first full-size biography was published in 1969 – this was Lieutenant-General P.G. Kuznetsov's book *General Chernyakhovsky*.<sup>26</sup> Two more books on Chernyakhovsky followed in 1971: Kisilev's: *Youth and maturity of a commander*, and Colonel Sharipov's *Chernyakhovsky, a story about a commander*.<sup>27</sup>

Needless to say, none of these publications regarded the Chernyakhovsky fami-



ly as being Jewish. We will try to compare and discuss the relevant parts of these publications in the sequel. At the moment we would like only to remark, that from all of these publications, Sharipov's was chosen as the officially adopted biography, which later became the source of different secondary publications. It was translated and published in Moscow for propagation abroad, first into Spanish in 1978, and later into English in 1980.<sup>28</sup>

Already, these early biographies tell two different stories about Ivan Danilovich's childhood. These stories differ mainly in his birth date and birthplace and in his father's occupations.

Story no.1, as told by Drigo, states:

Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky was born on June 29th in the village of Oksanino, which is near to the city of Uman in the Ukraine. His father worked as a switchman in the railway [ ... ]. Ivan was only eight years old when the imperialistic war broke out and the father was taken to the front to defend 'Father Tsar'. After a year, the father came back, wounded and crippled. For a long time he could not find work in Oksanino, and the family moved to the village of Verbovo, nowadays in the Vinnitsa district. There the father hardly managed to find a job, with little money, as a horse-man with the local estate owner [ ... ]. In spring 1919 both parents of Chernyakhovsky died, at the same time, from the typhus plague which spread in the neighborhood. The orphaned family was taken care of by the neighbors. Ivan did not live for long with the alien people. In order not to be of a burden, he roamed for a full

year in search of work in the villages and towns of the Ukraine. When the Soviet regime established itself, Ivan came back to Verbovo. Friends of his father arranged for him work as a locksmith assistant in the Vapnyarka train station. Here he entered the Komsomol and after some time became the leader of the Komsomol cell in his village. After a while Chernyakhovsky went to Novorosisk. He worked as a cooper in the local cement factory Proletar.

To this brief biographic report, and the description of the miserable life of the poor family in the civil-war stricken Ukraine, Drigo adds a heroic story about a night ambush on a troop of White-Polish cavalry troop by the village youngsters led by young Ivan Danilovich, in which Ivan's group managed to surprise and scare the Polish soldiers and cause them to run away.

On the other hand, General P.G. Kuznetsov's biography of Chernyakhovsky tells quite a different story. Maybe because Kuznetsov didn't want to present the controversial details about Chernyakhovsky's early biography in the opening chapter, the reader is acquainted with them only later, where they are presented as Chernyakhovsky's feverish daydreams while being hospitalized in September 1941:

In his insomnia and high fever, he daydreamt about his homeland, near the heart of the Ukraine, the long sorrow of his parents' life, his youth-friends and his army experiences. Long ago, the early childhood, can it be forgotten?! He was born in 29 June 1907 in the village of Oksanino,

Uman sub-district of Kiev district, in the family of a landless agricultural worker. Through the smoke of time stood his father's image – Danila Chernyakhovsky, tall, broad-shouldered, with long shiny moustache with down-bent ends in the Cossack way. Next to the father – the mother, Maria Lyudovikhovna, a dark, black-eyed beauty, very quiet and effective in the household works. And, around the parents, all the bunch of children – two brothers and three sisters and him, the fourth in the line, jolly and agile Stasik, thus he was nicknamed in childhood. The father worked as a stable man with Master Novinsky and sustained his large family with his meager pay. They lived in misery, hardly satisfying their hunger.

In 1914, Master Novinsky bought a new estate for himself in the village Verbovo, and moved there his permanent crew. Together with the Master, moved also the master's stable man, with his family. In Verbovo passed Ivan's adolescence and youth. In autumn 1915, when he was already eight, he went to study at the Vapnyarka railway school. His studies were severed in the terrible year of 1919. In the country raged the civil war and spread the typhus plague. In the spring, the father and mother died from the typhus, leaving six uncared for orphans. A hard life began for the twelve year old youngster Vanya Chernyakhovsky. For a piece of bread he herded other people's cows, became a hired worker for rich farmers, and worked in the railway in repair-works and as a locksmith assistant.

In 1922 he entered the Komsomol' to-

gether with his elder brother Mikhail. In order to be admitted he missed a year, he had to change his birth year from 1907 to 1906. Since then, in all documents, he was considered to be older by one year. Mikhail volunteered to the Red Army in 1923. In the same year, Ivan moved to Novorossiysk.<sup>29</sup>

Though the book of A. Kisilev is titled Youth and Maturity of a Commander only the first six pages of it deal with Chernyakhovsky's childhood and youth, and most of the text in these pages describes the general situation in the Ukraine and the region at that time. While Drigo and Kuznetzov do not refer to any document or evidence concerning Chernyakhovsky's childhood, Kisilev mentions some autobiographic report written by Chernyakhovsky, but cites only one sentence from it. In his description of the controversial biographic details, Kisilev agrees with Drigo, though without stating explicitly the birth date or the birthplace. Yet, it does contain new, somewhat delicate, information about Danilo's job in Verbovo.

... in August 1914 ... Danila Nikolayevich Chernyakhovsky – a switchman at the Uman station in the Kiev line ... was called to go and fight for the 'Father Tsar', and left the wife Maria Lyudvigovna with the bunch of little children ... in one of the battles he got concussion. He was taken to hospital and was found later to be unfit for further service. He returned to his homeland in autumn 1915. His former work position as a switchman was occupied. In search of work [ ... ] he arrived at Vapnyarka sta-

tion, but also there he couldn't get a job in the railway in his specialty. He had to hire himself to a landlord whose estate was in the vicinity, in the village of Verbovo [ ... ]. At first he worked as a stable-man, and later as an *ekonom*.

An *ekonom* is a housekeeper or farm manager. In the Soviet regime, such a position was not considered to be a genuine workman's job, and those holding it were suspected of being allied with the landowners. It is no wonder that this 'blot' on Chernyakhovsky's social background was not mentioned in most early publications.

This may be the reason why Sharipov's version of Chernyakhovsky's biography, which was considered 'official' by the Soviet regime<sup>30</sup>, begins with a fantastic children's story 'clearing' Danila Chernyakhovsky from the charge of cooperating with the upper class: In March 1919, a Petlyura band arrives at Verbovo and breaks into Danila's house, blaming him for distributing the master's horses among the peasants, and going to kill him when he refuses to return the horses. The villagers, alarmed by 13-year-old Ivan and his friends, save Danila at the last moment. As for Danila's position as a manager in Novinsky's estate, it is mentioned only later in the book, as a slander brought against Chernyakhovsky in the 1937 purge period, without an explicit denial of it. According to the book, Ivan Danilovich was cleared from that charge due to the personal intervention of Lenin's sister.

Although claiming to be based on archive documents, the 20-page chapter of

Sharipov's book dealing with Chernyakhovsky's childhood does not cite or refer to any document. It stays 'politically correct' as much as possible, leaving some vagueness concerning the points in which former books disagree. Thus, the 1971 book did not explicitly state Ivan's birth date, though one can deduce from the text that he was born in the summer of 1906 (interestingly, the more recent editions of the book switched to the 1907 version). The only reference to the family's history before coming to Verbovo is a story, told by a mother to a son, trying to attribute the non-Ukrainian-sounding family name Chernyakhovsky and Ivan's nickname Yasik, to landlords' whims (this ridiculous story is not found in the recent Internet version of Sharipov's book).

Thus, the published material about Chernyakhovsky in the second half of the 20th century did not reveal much about his parents and his childhood years, and even in those rare bits of information it was not possible to distinguish fact from fiction, since they did not cite or refer to documented evidence.

The new wave of interest in Chernyakhovsky in post-Soviet Russia and the Ukraine began in 2005, with a publication of the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (TsAMO) of the Russian Federation.<sup>31</sup> This publication consisted of a three-page introductory short biography written by I. D. Baranovoi, and a selection of seven documents from his personal file.

In the opening section of the introductory biography we find: 'He was born in



1906 in the village Oksanino in the Uman district of Kiev region (now Cherkassy region) in a farmers' family (according to some biographies – a family of a railway worker. It is evident that the railway was the later workplace of the father of I.D. Chernyakhovsky)'.

#### Document No.1

This Record of the reminiscences of I.D. Chernyakhovsky and the villagers from the village Verbovo in the Vinnitsa district told to O.T. Ivanova, colleague of the Central Museum of the Red Army, begins with:

Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky was born in July 1907 in the village Oksanino of the Uman district (uezd) of the Kievgubernia. In the extract from the 1907 church registration (metrical) book it is written about Ivan Danilovich's parents: 'peasant Danila Nikolayev Chernyakhovsky and his legal wife Maria Lyudvigovna, both Pravoslav (Russian Orthodox), from the village Bagva of the Tarashcha uезд.

The contradiction between the birth date cited from the birth certificate, July 1907, and the 'official' birth date, June 1906, adopted by Baranavoi, is settled in the archive by a comment to Ivanova's report, which also adds more information about Chernyakhovsky's childhood and family background:

The birth date is mistaken. I.D.Chernyakhovsky was born on 16 June 1906.<sup>32</sup> About that period in the life of the Chernyakhovsky's there are kept reminiscences of Oksanino villager P.M. Desyatnik, who wrote to O.T. Ivanova on 23 September 1949: 'I was born in the

village Okasanino, formerly in Uman region, to the family of the peasant Kalinovsky. My father, like I.D. Chernyakhovsky's father, worked in the Novinsky estate. They were peasants who did not have land of their own and they worked at the estate for wages. The wages included also the huts where we lived. These huts, as accounted by the estate owner, were Master Novinsky's property ... I.D. Chernyakhovsky's father – Danko Chernyakhovsky, as he was called by the peasants in Oksanino village, was in care of the horses of Master Novinsky. He liked animals very much and was considered by our villagers as a veterinary. Tall, broad shouldered, with reddish hair and long shining moustaches – so was Danko Chernyakhovsky. The mother was dark, with black eyes - one can say, even, a beautiful woman, very quiet and clever. I remember that their house was always very clean ...<sup>33</sup>

This comment does not give any explanation or reference to the different birth date. It goes on with the story of the Chernyakhovsky family in Verbovo: 'In the year 1914, the family moved to the village Verbovo in the Vinnitsa district. Master Novinsky bought the Verbovo estate from Master Perlovsky. In 1914 Novinsky himself moved there, and with him his stable-man Danila and his wife Maria Chernyakhovsky.'

A comment in the archive publication adds:

This part was complemented by the memories of E.D. Olshanskaya, who wrote on the other side of the page: 'In

1914 our family moved to Verbovo. Father worked there as the stable man, later as an ekonom. For a while, when we were still living near Uman, father worked in the railway. In 1914, soon after we moved – the four of us, two sisters and two brothers, I.D. Chernyakhovsky included, went to the Vapnyarka Railway School.

The document continues, ‘1919 was a terrible year for the Chernyakhovskys. In the same year both father and mother died. There were left six children. The eldest were Elena Danilovna and Anisia Danilovna – Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky's sisters, on whom fell all the burden of raising the children and maintaining the family.’

Another comment adds to that:

The tragedy of the Chernyakhovsky family is remembered by Verbovo villager G.G. Bogarchuk in 19 September 1948: ‘When the revolution arrived, the Master's wheat was distributed among the villagers. The Master returned to the Ukraine and to Verbovo with the white Poles. He fired Danilo<sup>34</sup> from work since he participated in the wheat distribution. In 1919 he [and his wife] died of typhus.’<sup>35</sup>

And the document goes on:

The Chernyakhovsky family was very needy in those years’ – told the villagers of Verbovo. When the father and mother were still alive, Ivan Chernyakhovsky began to study at the Vapnyarka School. But when father and mother were not there anymore, he stopped going to school. In order to facilitate the family's situation, he worked as a cowherd in the summer, gaining thus their living. But he never

forsook the thoughts about studies. Part of his salary he used to pay the teacher from whom he took lessons in the Verbovo village.

In his childhood Vanya distinguished himself by his earnestness, but he did like loud merry games, especially war games. Such an episode from his childhood is mentioned. In 1920, a company of mounted white-Polish soldiers arrived intending to park in Vapnyarka. Vanya Chernyakhovsky grouped his age-peers from the village Verbovo, cowherds like him, to whom he supplied trophy obrezkas (shortened rifles) which were always abundant in the Ukrainian villages, and positioned them in the forest near the road through which the company had to pass. When the company approached, the children opened fire simultaneously at them. The Poles thought it was a serious ambush, and ran away from Vapnyarka on their horses. The joy of the children was boundless ...

In 1921, Vanya Chernyakhovsky appears as one of the first organizers of the Komsomol cell in Verbovo village [ ... ] The dire material situation of the family drove Ivan Danilovich in 1924 to go to Novorossiysk city to look for work. Chernyakhovsky began to work at the Novorossiysk cement factory Proletar....

In document No. 2 of the Archive publication, Reminiscences of Anton Stepanovich Doob, present Director of the I.D. Chernyakhiovsky Railway Club of Vapnyarka (Ivan Danilovich's brother-in-law), we find some stories about the young Chernyakhovsky, including a

humbler version of the ambush story, in which Ivan only 'plans' such an ambush in case the Petlyura people would come, but there is no additional information about Ivan's early history.

The other five released archive documents are:

- Document No. 3: Memoirs of Major-General A.A. Pushkus, head of the chair for tactics in the Armored Forces Academy (6 Jan. 1949).

- Document No. 4: Memoirs of Lieutenant-Colonel V.E. Chelombitko, who served as a commissar in 27th Tank Regiment prior to the 1941 Barbarossa invasion (12 Jan. 1949).

- Document No. 5: Record of a meeting of P.E. Novokhatsky with Captain L.S. Tserlevsky, who was deputy commander of the Political Department of 1st Regiment, 177th Brigade, of 60th Army (23 Aug. 1948).

- Document No. 6: Record of a meeting of P.E. Novokhatsky with V.I. Kolesnik, born in 1922 in Verbovo, who remembered seeing Chernyakhovsky in 1937 when Ivan came to the village on vacation, but had a brief meeting with him only in 1944 (5 Sept. 1948).

- Document No. 7: Record of a meeting of O.T. Ivanova with Major-General S.B. Kazbintsev, who was chief the Political Directorate of the 3rd Belorussian Front, telling about Chernyakhovsky's death (29 June 1949).

This was the first and only time that an official document was cited to prove that Ivan Danilovich's family was not Jewish, though there was no archival reference

for the quoted excerpt from the registration book.<sup>36</sup>

In the same year, 2005, appeared also Aleksander Sukharev's *Legendary Chernyakhovsky*, a collection of sources about the general.<sup>37</sup>, also appeared. Its fourth chapter, *From the Personnel file of I.D. Chernyakhovsky*, is subtitled by archive and museum material, and includes part of the TsAMO (Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense), Document No. 2. Strangely enough, it does not contain Document No. 1 or any reference to it. On the other hand, it contains photographs of Ivan's parents which fit the description given there, and, most important – several photocopied documents, among them a personal form submitted by Chernyakhovsky on 13 March 1939, with a handwritten short autobiography, probably the same autobiography mentioned by Kisilev. This was the first time that it was published. Yet, Sukharev was quite cautious – the pictures and photocopied documents are not listed in the contents of the book, the sources of the documents are not given, and the autobiography is presented in Chernyakhovsky's handwriting. The reason for the reluctance to display the document more openly was, probably, the damage that some of the following relevant excerpts from the biography could cause to the immaculate image of the ideal commander:

I was born in the year 1906 in the city of Uman, in Kiev district. Father, Daniil<sup>38</sup> Nikolayevich, worked until 1914 in the railway as a switchman. In 1914 father was taken to the front, and after



head injury at the end of 1915 returned from the front to Vapnyarka station in Tomashpol uезд of Podolsk region, began to work in Novinsky's estate – first as a stable-man and later as an ekonom, and moved there the whole family. After the October revolution father became a farmer in Verbovo village – he received land and practiced agriculture until April 1919. Mother was always a housekeeper. In April 1919 father and mother died from the typhus plague and were buried in Verbovo. After the death of the parents we remained a family of six. Today I have, from the close family: a sister Anastasia – a candidate to the Bolshevik Communist Party, married to an artillery officer, a sister Anisia – working at the Kolkhoz (collective farm) of Verbovo village, a sister Elena – married to a state employee and living in the Vapnyarka station of the South-West railway, a brother Aleksander – trainee in the 49th cavalry regiment, now working in the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Inner Affairs) organization in the city of Novorossiysk. I have no other adult person in the close family ... From 1915 to 1919 I studied in Vapnyarka railway station elementary school ... In 1937 I had a party punishment – a reprimand – from the Party Committee of 8th Mechanized Brigade, for not telling, at the time of the elections to the party institutions, about the judicial inquiry in the Academy for false writing of my social origin. The reprimand was removed on 9 May 1938 by the Party Committee of 8th Mechanized Brigade ... .

Other relevant details in that form are that Chernyakhovsky declares his nationality and his mother tongue as Ukrainian, and that he was homeless in Vapnyarka from October 1919 to May 1920. Indeed, in the form he filled in March 1936 for replacing his old party card (no. 1094205) by a new one (no. 1011604), where asked for the father's occupation until 1917, Ivan Danilovich wrote: ‘Until 1914, in the railway, switchman. From 1915 to 1917 in Novinsky estate in Verbovo village, Tomashpol sub-district of Podolsk district, a senior worker’, without explicitly specifying his father's job as a farm-manager. In a later form, from 1944, he wrote that in 1937 he was reprimanded for concealing the fact that his father served as an ekonom for two years (which does not leave long time for the former job of a stable-man in Verbovo ...) These forms, as well as the 1939 form and biography, were found by B. Morozov in the Russian State Archive of Social-Political History.

Thus, Chernyakhovsky's biographers had to make a difficult choice between two stories – two different birth dates, two different birthplaces, and the different jobs of father Danila. While for the birth date it seemed to be too late, since the ‘official’ birth date had already been set as 29 June 1906; they had a somewhat wider choice for the location and the father's employment.

With the publication of the TsAMO documents in 2005, a new wave of biographies of Chernyakhovsky began. In that year, the above-mentioned book by Sukharev appeared. In Chernyakhovsk

city, Igor and Galina Erofeev published a youth-oriented booklet on Chernyakhovsky, including a short biography based on the newly released information and oscillating between the two birth dates.<sup>39</sup> That same year, Oleksandr Phil' published, in Ukrainian, his thesis titled: *From the Wandering Stick to the Marshal Scepter*.<sup>40</sup> The little that is said in Phil's thesis about Ivan's childhood is the following:

Ivan Danilovich was born on 29 June 1907, but, in his autobiography from 13 March 1939, Major Chernyakhovsky, then commander of the 9th Light Tank Regiment, wrote that he was born in 1906. The same is found in the encyclopedias and other data sources – the birth date of the commander is 29 June 1906. But, as told to the author in private talks with the son of the important military leader, General O.I. Chernyakhovsky, his father was born in 1907. According to the memories of the mother, Ivan Danilovich's widow Anastasia Grigor'evna, he added a year in order to be admitted to the Odessa Infantry School. The same version is confirmed also by Dr. F.D. Sverdlov in his book *The Unknown about Soviet Commanders*.<sup>41</sup>

The would-be commander was born to the family of Danil Mikolaevich and Maria Lyudovigivna Chernyakhovsky, who lived at that time in the village of Oksaniino in the Uman district of the Kiev region. The father worked in the Uman railway station. In 1914, when the First World War broke out and Ivan was eight years old, his father went to the front. After suffering a concussion at the end of 1915, the father returned from the front. In search of

work he arrived at the village of Verbovo in the Tomashpol' district of the Podolsk region, where he was employed by Master Novinsky, first as a stable-man, and later as an ekonom. After a short time in Verbovo, Danilo Mikolaevich moved his whole family there as well. Following the October revolution, the father became a member of the village association of Verbovo, received a piece of land and, until April 1919, was a farmer. The mother remained a housewife all the time. In April 1919 the father and mother both died of typhus, and were buried in Verbovo.<sup>42</sup>

In 2006, Phil' published a 'popular' version of his thesis, titled *Ivan Chernyakhovsky*, also in Ukrainian. We have not managed to get a copy of that book, and the information about it comes from talks with Phil' himself.

In 2006 another biography of Chernyakhovsky appeared – Vladimir Karpov's *Army General Chernyakhovsky*.<sup>43</sup> Karpov went a step further than Sukharev, and published the autobiography at the beginning of Chernyakhovsky's biography, fully legible – not as a photocopy of a handwritten document, but as a part of the text. After a few opening words, he says: 'I decided to present before the reader in the beginning of the book, as an introduction to Chernyakhovsky (which is necessary, of course), the 'autobiography' written by him, assuming that this is the most true and original document.'

Yet, maybe for balance, he adds, almost word for word, Sharipov's fantastic children's story about the Petlyura band on its way to kill Ivan's father. Karpov dared to

uncover another ‘unpleasant’ story about Chernyakhovsky: How he had had a narrow escape from the autumn 1941 purging of the high commanders ‘responsible’ for the defeat in the summer of 1941.<sup>44</sup>

The most recent Chernyakhovsky biography is Vladimir Daines’ *General Chernyakhovsky, Genius of Defense and Attack*.<sup>45</sup> Daines adopted the TsAMO documents’ version, including the birth dates and birthplace (according to him, Ivan Danilovich changed his birth date in order to be admitted to work in the Vapnyarka station). Daines added some of Sharipov's stories, copied almost exactly, including the investigation of the 1937 purges (which are, of course, now put in quite a different light), as well as Karpov's story about Chernyakhovsky's critical situation of September 1941.

All of the above-mentioned biographies, with the exception of Phil's thesis, are written in a literary style, with no references and no discussion of the contradicting pieces of information. In fact, the biographers add to the confusion. A striking example is the different names of Ivan's sisters mentioned in the different documents and biographies. Thus, none of the ten existing biographies, including Phil's thesis, provides a reliable history of Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky's family background and his childhood and youth. It seems rather strange that, even in post-Soviet time, the early life story of one of the greatest Soviet war heroes was left in the dark until today. Is this only because of the unpleasant fact that Ivan Danilovich did not stick to the truth in his

autobiographical report? Or are there still other skeletons in the closet?

As early as the 1980s and, especially, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, several Jewish historians from the former Soviet Union set themselves the task of researching and making known to the public the significant role of the Soviet Jews in World War II. They took advantage of the ‘Glasnost’ that enabled some access which had been formerly denied, to state and army archives. With this new wave of research, the problem of Chernyakhovsky's ethnicity rose again. Due to lack of conclusive supporting documentation, most of those historians did not count Chernyakhovsky among the Jewish war heroes. In particular, his name does not appear in Fedor Sverdlov's ‘canonical’ book *Jewish Generals in the Soviet Army in Second World War*.<sup>46</sup> Yet, the claims to Chernyakhovsky's Jewishness continued to be raised among Russian-speaking Jewish communities of the former Soviet Union, Israel and the United States.

Thus, in the 31 January 2002 issue of *Evreiskii Kamerton*, Tsvi Raz (Grigory Rozinsky) wrote that he had met the Belorussian historian Feliks Gorelik, who passed on to him ‘incontestable data about Chernyakhovsky's parents.’ F. Gorelik was convinced that Chernyakhovsky's Jewish parents came to their son's funeral in Vilna ... Raz claimed that he himself had visited the city of Gomel in Belorussia, where he met a Jewish woman named Chernyakhovsky who worked in one of the local hospitals as a doctor or a nurse,



and she represented herself as a sister of the general. Raz wrote also that he was told by the Jewish researcher Professor Ster Elisavetsky from Kiev, who visited Israel, that long before that, he had visited Chernyakhovsky's birth village in the Uman district, where he heard from the villagers that Chernyakhovsky was born to a Jewish family.<sup>47</sup> Almost the same story was brought as a counter-argument by Igor Akselrod in the Evreiskii Mir site – according to Akselrod, Elisavetsky met Chernyakhovsky's sister and looked at all the preserved documents, but could not find the smallest ‘hook’.<sup>48</sup>

In the 26 March 2002 issue of the same magazine, Evreiskii Kamerton, Professor Aron Chernyak published an article named: The Riddle of General Yona Davidovich Chernyakhovsky,<sup>49</sup> based on the writings of Tsvi Raz and Salo Baron. As further supporting evidence, Chernyak cites Il'ya Ehrenburg's *People, Years, Life*, where Chernyakhovsky is quoted as telling Ehrenburg: ‘... in Uman, an old man told me some time, that King David wrote psalms and offered them to the frogs to quack with him ...’.<sup>50</sup>

It turned out that the question of Chernyakhovsky's ethnicity has a practical significance in Israel: Is he, as Israeli historian Mikhael Har-Sgor wrote, ‘the most senior Jewish military leader in Jewish history’? Should he, or shouldn't he, be memorialized in the newly established Museum of the Jewish Warrior in World War II? Thus, while the present research was initiated by personal curiosity (Dan Amir has some Chernyak-

hovsky family connection, and vaguely remembers the famous general being mentioned once), it turned into trying to solve a ‘national’ dilemma.

An extensive Internet and telephone search revealed two more families with alleged family connections to the general. The Smoler family in the United States has a family tradition, according to which their great-grandmother Eva Smoler, born Chernyakhovsky, was a sister, or a cousin, of Ivan Danilovich. After obtaining her death certificate, we learned that she was born in 1880 in Radomysl’, and that her father's name was Avrum. The family could not recall or find any other information about the alleged family relationship.

The members of the Chernyakhovsky family in Holon, Israel, were more specific about such a family relationship. Grandfather Isaak Yakovlevich Chernyakhovsky, himself a former officer in the Soviet Army, told them that Ivan Danilovich was his cousin, and that Ivan's Jewish name was Isaak Davidovich. He even sent his daughter Zhanna in 1960 to visit the general's widow in her nice Moscow apartment where she was welcomed by Anastasia Grigor'evna. Unfortunately, both Zhanna and her brother, Vladimir, passed away a few years ago, but the remaining family, including Zhanna's widower and her cousins in the United States, remember the story. From Major Isaak's Yakovlevich Chernyakhovsky's army dossier, Aleksander Maslov managed to learn that Isaak was born in 1907 in the small village of Likhachikha, in the Belaya Tserkov area.

The family immigrated to Israel in 1991 from the city of Vladikavkaz, and that city is probably the place where Mark Petrushansky, a local Jewish leader, heard about the alleged family relationship and included it in his 2009 book *From the Tribe of the Maccabees*.<sup>51</sup> Isaak Yakovlevich had three sisters, and maybe it was one, or more, of them, whom Raz Elisavetsky and the others mention (it must be remembered that in Russian, 'brother' or 'sister' may mean, sometimes, just cousin, and 'cousin' may be what we call 'second cousin', etc.). A similar 'first source information' may have enabled The Jewish Ukrainian community leader Il'ya Levitas to be so adamant about Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky's Jewishness in his 2007 *Jewish Military Encyclopedia*.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, taking on the one hand the many existing rumors and speculations regarding Chernyakhovsky's Jewish origin, though none of them was solidly confirmed, and, on the other hand, the two suspiciously contradicting Soviet documents and lack of direct documental evidence (no archival references to the extract from the church registration book of the birth of Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky and no copy of the document), it was necessary to search for other documents.

These documents were indeed found. One of them was found in the Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of the Ukraine (Ts-DAVO Ukraini). After A. Maslov found that document, we learned from Oleksandr Phil' that he had already discov-

ered this document and published it in his 'popular' book<sup>53</sup>. This was the stenogram of a meeting with Anastasia Grigor'evna Chernyakhovsky, written down on 29 November 1949 by P.E. Novokhatsky, a junior co-worker of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union<sup>54</sup>. The section of the document relevant to our discussion is the following:

I know that Ivan Danilovich's childhood was not too good. His father and mother did not live well one with the other. The children were afraid of the father, and the mother was sad and good-looking. Ivan Danilovich lost his parents when he was twelve. Both of them died at the same time from the typhus plague and were buried on the same day. When the parents died, the children scattered each to his direction. The eldest sister married at the age of 18 and took with her the best of the property. The younger sister, Misia, married before she was 16, and took with her the younger brother Sasha, who was one or two years old at that time. Ivan Danilovich's brother, Misha, left. He became a Komsomol member.

Ivan Danilovich went to rover in the world and was cast into a band of vagabond children. This was shortly after his parents died. He stayed with them a full year. I remember that he told how they were severely beaten when they slept in a church somewhere around Vapnyarka. They caught them, set benches, laid them over the benches and spanked them so harshly, that white scars showed on the belts. After that Ivan Danilovich ran away to another city and arrived at

Vapnyarka station, where Yas Tsishkovsky's father worked as a locomotive mechanic.

Ivan Danilovich told that he was very hungry. He grabbed a bottle of milk from a milkman who stood there, and ran away. The milkman ran after him, caught him and hit his head with the bottle with such violence that his crane broke. That blow left a scar in his temple. Ivan Danilovich fell down and lost conscience. He was taken and brought to hospital. The wound did not heal for a long time, it even got worms. When he came out of the hospital he was very exhausted. He began to think: I'll better fall under the train wheels. He lied down on the rails. At the same time the locomotive driven by Tsishkovsky maneuvered on the same track. Tsishkovsky stopped the locomotive on a side track. He saw a boy lying on the rails, came to Ivan Danilovich, warmed him and took him to his place.

Ivan Danilovich recovered at the Tsishkovsky's family (he fell ill again – the wound was infected). When he was healthy again, Yas Tsishkovsky's father taught him the locksmith trade, and he began to work as a locksmith. Then he herded cows. He also entered the Komsomol, and the Komsomol cell sent him to Novorossiysk. He went there intending to live with his sister, but she could not take him in, since they did not live in prosperity. Her husband was a sailor, always out of home. He was a difficult man. The younger brother Sasha lived with them, sailed with his brother-in-law in the ship in the furnace room and later ran away

from them ... He did not like to tell about the family. The eldest sister he saw later only once ...<sup>55</sup>

The fact that two other interviews reported by the same Novokhatsky, were included in the Central Archive's publication, while this document, which reveals much more about Chernyakhovsky's personality, was not, speaks for itself. It is quite obvious why this document was not brought to the public knowledge – it was extremely politically incorrect and could ruin the idyllic picture of the loving family and the iron-willed young hero. It also explains the scarcity of reliable information about Ivan Danilovich's childhood – whether it was he himself who refused to contribute such information, or it was his sisters and widow who hid it. Anyhow, it is clear that the authorities were willing to cooperate in concealing that part of his biography. Were there more skeletons in the closet, even his ethnic origin? In order to learn more about that question, we had to search for documentation of the family in the relevant archives of the Ukraine.

In order to find proof of the ethnicity of Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky and his family, a special search was conducted by Boris Morozov in various Ukrainian archives. This search produced some results. In the State Archive of Kiev Region (Kiev) he found the collection of documents (fond) 384, containing the questionnaires of the First General Census of Population of the Russian Empire, which was conducted in 1897<sup>56</sup>, dealing with the population of the Kiev gubernia (region). In this collection he found the file of the



documents of the village Bagva of the Tarashcha District (Part 3), and Lists 133–134 of this file are devoted to the family of Nikolai Lukyanov Chernyakhovsky, the grandfather of Ivan Danilovich.<sup>57</sup>

The front page (List 133) and the back page of the questionnaire (List 134-reverse) contained the printed instructions for the census workers, explaining how to fill in the form (Table 1). The form had a number (64) and it was marked in handwriting that the census was provided by ‘Census Station No.9, Counting Station No.6, Camp or Police Station No.2’. On the same page, in the box ‘type of inhabitation’ it is written ‘private mansion’ and ‘Nikolai Lukyanov Chernyakhovsky, owner of his own house’. In the box ‘number of estates in this inhabitation’ it was written ‘1’ and in the box describing the house it was written ‘wooden peasant's house, straw thatched’. The box ‘count of the population on the day of the census’ was filled: ‘all available population: male - 4, female - 4’. The box ‘population permanently living here’ was filled: ‘male - 4, female - 4’.

**TABLE 1 List 133–Reverse**

Lists 133-reverse and 134<sup>58</sup> contain the following table (Table 1):

From this particular document, we can easily see that Chernyakhovsky Daniil Nikolayev (old form of patronymic), the son of Nikolai Lukyanov Chernyakhovsky and future father of Ivan, was, in 1897, 23 years old, still single, lived and worked together with his parents, was Pravoslavnyi (Russian Orthodox) like his whole family, considered the Ukrainian language to be

his native tongue, was illiterate, and was registered as ‘civil guardsman of the 2nd class’ for the military service.

A further check in the Kiev Regional Archive produced no positive results, because the documents of the Uman district (where Oksanino was located), as well as the church metrical books for the village Bagva, were kept elsewhere. Finally the remaining documents were found in the city of Cherkassy.

In the State Archive of Cherkassy Region (Cherkassy), in the collection (fond) of metrical church books of the region, we found the church metrical books of the villages Teterovka<sup>59</sup> and Bagva of the Tarashcha district for 1889–1901, 1903–1905,<sup>60</sup> and for 1906–1915, 1917–1919, and 1922–1923.<sup>61</sup> A thorough check of the files until 1908, including huge books where the local priests registered in handwriting all family events (births, weddings, and deaths) of the citizens, disclosed several writings regarding the Chernyakhovsky family. In Part 2 (registering marriages), in the 1900 records, we found the first writing (Table 2).<sup>62</sup>

**TABLE 2 From the 1900 Marriage Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book**

This document reveals that the peasant of Bagva, Daniil Chernyakhovsky, Russian Orthodox, 27 years old, on 29 May 1900 married the peasant of village Bagva, Maria Lyudvigova Belinskaya, Russian Orthodox, age 21. The sacrament was done by the local parish priest – Pavel Matushevich – in the presence of the guarantors.

The next writing mentioning the Chernyakhovskys was found in the same book, in Part 1, registering those who were born in 1900 (Table 3).<sup>64</sup>

**TABLE 3 From the 1900 Birth Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book**

From this document we found out that a daughter was born on 8 August 1900, to the family of Daniil and Maria Chernyakhovsky, and that, on 13 August 1900, she was baptized and called Anna by the same parish priest Pavel Matushevich in the presence of godparents.

The last writing is found in Part 3, registering deaths during 1905 (Table 4)<sup>67</sup>.

**TABLE 4 From the 1905 Death Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book**

From this document we learned that Olga, daughter of Nikolai Chernyakhovsky and sister of Daniil, died on 2 October 1905 due to cold and was buried according to the Orthodox tradition at the parish cemetery on 3 October.

Because of the limited time and since the principal aim was to find documents about Ivan Danilovich Cherniakhovsky, the search was at first confined to the years 1899–1908. Aleksander Maslov later also searched the Teterovka church metrical books from 1909 on. He found in the 1912–1913 books six records of events where the Chernyakhovsky, Belinsky, Levitsky, or Yavorsky families were mentioned, but in none of those events was Danila's close family involved. It is quite interesting that three of those six records were birth records

where one of the parents was Russian Orthodox and the other, Roman Catholic with a Polish-sounding name. This is not very surprising when we remember that the village of Bagva previously belonged to Polish landowners (Pototsky and the Cherkovsky family). However the christening and birth registrations were done in the Teterovka Russian Orthodox church.

In the same archive were also found the church metrical books of the village Oksanino of the Uman district.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, the physical condition of these metrical books was not very good and many year-books were missing. Anyhow, the page by page search of the book for 1906<sup>69</sup> did not indicate any evidence for the birth of Ivan Cherniakhovsky. This could prove that he was not born in Oksanino in 1906, but neither could we confirm that he was born there in 1907, because the book for 1907 was missing (as well as the books for 1908–1911). This raises a serious question regarding the authenticity of the extract from the 1907 church registration (metrical) book document (quoted in the publication of 2005). Because no one published a copy of this extract, we may assume that it was just quoted without any reference. Otherwise we cannot explain how the book, missing in the archive and considered to be lost during the war, was quoted. One can even speculate that the metrical book did not survive the civil war, and this enabled the young orphan Ivan Danilovich to declare a false birth date.

Later, Aleksander Maslov found in the same file 2611, writings about the par-

icipation of Danilo Nikolayevich Chernyakhovsky (as godfather) in baptizing a boy, named Nikolai, son of the peasant Andrei Nikitovich Shkolnikov from the same village Bagva of Tarashcha district on 2 May 1906,<sup>70</sup> and of Maria Lyudvigovna Chernyakhovskaya (as godmother) of two children, one of whom – a girl from Oksanino, was baptized on 4 January 1912, and the other – a boy from the nearby village of Shukaivoda, on the 21st of the same month.<sup>71</sup>

This archival search enabled us to reconstruct (at least partly) the history of the Chernyakhovsky family. From the 1897 census we learned that the family of Daniil Nikolayevich indeed lived in the village of Bagva. The father of the family, Nikolai Lukyanovich, was born in about 1847 in the nearby village of Antonovka in the Stavishche district (which is only about 20 km from Likhachikha, Isaak Chernyakhovsky's birthplace). He married a Bagva-born wife, Anna Gordeyeva, born in about 1851, and acquired (maybe through marriage) a piece of land there. They had six children. The eldest was Daniil, born in 1873 or 1874. On 29 May 1900, Daniil married the 21-year-old Bagva girl Maria Lyudovigovna Belinskaya. Only ten weeks later she bore him a baby daughter, Anna, who probably died in infancy (according to the TsAMO document, she was not in the family when they moved to Oksanino). Since the village of Bagva was a derevnia [country village without a church] and not a selo [another version of country village with a church], i.e., it did not have an active church, the corresponding ceremonies and

registrations were performed at the church of the nearby village of Teterovka. Maybe this is also the reason for the very late wedding ceremony – it seems that the family was not that devout to rush and perform a baptism or wedding ceremony until the very last moment ... In general, it seems that the religious practices were not strictly observed by the Bagva people. This may be the reason why, besides Anna, we found no birth records for any of the brothers and sisters, and we cannot know for sure where and when Ivan's brother Mikhail and his sisters (about whom the documents and stories are very confusing) were born. As for the most intriguing question, the when and where of Ivan's birth, we can only say for sure that he wasn't registered as born in Oksanino during 1906. The birth certificate cited by Ivanova can be interpreted to tell that he was baptized and registered in Oksanino in July 1907, of which we still have no actual proof, and that his parents at that time were still registered in Bagva. This leaves open the question of when exactly the family moved to Oksanino, and when they were registered there. The fact that they participated in baptizing children from the families of people born in Bagva may indicate that there were several Bagva people employed in Novinsky's estate in Oksanino. The reason for Ivan's effort not to mention Oksanino in his autobiography may be the same as the reason for presenting his father as a railway worker – to minimize Danila's association with the landowner.

Our main conclusion is that the family was definitely registered as Russian



Orthodox in Bagva, practiced Russian Orthodox baptisms, marriages, and funerals in Bagva, and continued to participate in such ceremonies when they lived in Oksanino. This certainly proves that Daniil Chernyakhovsky's family cannot be considered as Jewish.<sup>72</sup> This does not mean that all the Jewish family stories claiming family connections to the famous general were purely lies. The fact that there were Jewish officers named Chernyakhovsky, and the lack of reliable information about Ivan Danilovich, could have led Isaak Yakovlevich Chernyakhovsky to believe that

he was his first or second cousin. However, as things stand now, while none of the published documents and biographies of Ivan Danilovich tells the exact story, and there are many questionable details in them, Army-General Ivan Danilovich Cherniakhovsky, famous military commander of the Soviet troops during World War II and twice hero of the Soviet Union, cannot be considered as being of Jewish ethnicity. This should probably stop still-existing speculations and rumors, at least until any new reliable documents proving the opposite are disclosed.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence among the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941 – 1945, Progress, Moscow, digital reprint 2006, 416 pp. Message No. 408, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Boris Gertsnov, 'The Invisible Institute and Its Co-workers', (in Russian), Evreiskii Kamerton, Novosti Nedele, 11 July 2002, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Zeev Ben-Shlomo, 'Kiev's Liberator Reburied in Moscow', The Jewish Chronicle, London, 20 December 1991, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Salo W. Baron, The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets, Macmillan, New York, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> David Abarbanel, 'Scourge of the Supermen', Liberal Judaism Journal, August 1944, pp. 20–21.

<sup>6</sup> 'Stage Wait', Time Magazine 44(9), (1944).

<sup>7</sup> 'Kishinev Liberated' (in Hebrew), Davar, (1944), p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> 'Chernyakhovsky Dies of War Wound', New York Times, 19 February 1945, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> The Jewish-American writer Maurice Hindus (1891–1969), born in Belarus, served as a war correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune in Russia during the Second World War.

<sup>10</sup> 'General Ivan Chernyakhovsky' (in Hebrew), Davar, 22 Feb. 1945, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Kowalski, A Secret Press in Nazi Europe, The Story of a Jewish United Partisan Organization, Shengold Publishers, New York, 1978, p. 338.

<sup>12</sup> Shalom Eilati, To Cross the River (in Hebrew), Karmel Publishers, Jerusalem, 1980, p. 222.

<sup>13</sup> Dina E.G. Porat, 'Beyond the Material – The Life-Story of Aba Kovner', (in Hebrew), Am-Oved Publishers, Tel Aviv, 2000, p. 200.

<sup>14</sup> Jewish Soldiers in Europe Armies (in Hebrew), Ma'arachot – IDF Publishing House, Tel Aviv, 1967.

<sup>15</sup> Reuben Ainsztein, 'The War Record of Soviet Jewry', *Jewish Social Studies Journal* 28 (1966), pp. 3–24. The above-mentioned quotation appears on p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Face to Face with the Nazi Enemy* (in Hebrew), Association of Disabled Veterans of Fight against Nazism, Tel Aviv, vol. 2, 1967, p. xxiv.

<sup>17</sup> Yekhezkel Kremerman, *From Vilna, 'Jerusalem of Lithuania' to Haifa*, (in Hebrew), Author's edition, Haifa, 1975, pp. 185, 191.

<sup>18</sup> Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*, MacMillan, New York, 1976, (2nd printing), pp. 259–260.

<sup>19</sup> Chernyakhovsky, Ivan Danilovich, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, MacMillan Inc., New York, 1971, p. 397.

<sup>20</sup> Chernyakhovsky, Ivan Danilovich, (in Hebrew), *Judaica Lexicon*, Keter House, Jerusalem, p. 278.

<sup>21</sup> For example, on p.65 of Martin McCauley's *Who's Who in Russia since 1900* Routledge, London, 1997, we find: 'Chernyakhovsky, General Ivan Danilovich (1906–1945), most famous Jewish general in the Red Army ...'. The 2004 English Wikipedia entry said: 'Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky, (Cherniakhovsky), 1906–1945, Russian general, (promoted to field marshal), twice Hero of the Soviet Union, brilliant commander of the 3rd Byelorussian Front, died from wounds received outside Königsberg at the age of 39. He was the youngest Front commander in the Red Army. He was Jewish by birth.' After the 2005 publication of documents about Chernyakhovsky from the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense (TsAMO) of the Russian Federation the sentence about Chernyakhovsky's Jewish descent was dropped.

<sup>22</sup> Steven L. Ossad,, 'Russia's General Ivan D. Chernyakhovsky achieved a combat record that is virtually unknown in the West', *WWII History Journal* 3 (2004), May 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Jacqueline M. Zaslow, from New York, stated in her *Genealogy Homepage* (The Generations Network, 2002) that she received this information in 1992 from her great aunt, Raisel's daughter Esther Sokol. According to that information, Raisel, born 1887 in Loyev, was the third child of Moische and Momi Chernyakhovsky from Loyev, Ukraine (the first two being Pinchus and Sprny). Momi was born about 1867 in Loyev, Ukraine and died of cholera during an outbreak when she went to Boslev (Boguslav) to help her daughter to give birth. There was no clarification in this family story for the long time gap between Raisel and Ivan, and more puzzling, for Ivan's patronymic name (Danilovich and not Movshovits or Moiseevich etc.). No documental proofs for the story were mentioned. Correspondence and personal meeting with the Zaslow family did not contribute any further information about the alleged family tie to the general, and the site has been recently removed.

<sup>24</sup> Sean M. McAteer, *500 Days: The War in Eastern Europe, 1944–1945*, Dorrance Publishers, Pittsburgh, PA, 2009, p. 100.

<sup>25</sup> Sergei Vasil'evich Drigo, *Chernyakhovsky* (in Russian), Kaliningrad Book Edition, 1964.

<sup>26</sup> Pavel Grigor'evich Kuznetsov, *General Chernyakhovsky* (in Russian), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1969.

<sup>27</sup> Akram Agzamovich Sharipov, *Chernyakhovsky, a Story about a Commander* (in Russian), USSR Ministry of Defense Publishing House, Moscow, 1971.

<sup>28</sup> A.A. Sharipov. *Cherniajovski. Relato sobre el Estratega*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978.;

A.A. Sharipov, General Chernyakhvsky, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980.

<sup>29</sup> P.G., Kuznetsov, General Chernyakhovsky, pp. 47–49.

<sup>30</sup> A shortened version of the first edition was published in 1978 by the youth publishing house Molodaia Gvardiia [Young Guard] - A.A. Sharipov, Chernyakhovsky (in Russian), Molodaia Gvardiia, 1978, 303 pp. and in 1980 a second edition of 100,000 copies was published. On the cover of the English translation it says: ‘General Chernyakhovsky’ is a documentary novel ... The novel has a strong appeal for its veracity. None of the heroes is fictitious ...’

<sup>31</sup> ‘I.D. Chernyakhovsky in the recollections of his contemporaries’ (in Russian), Otechestvennye arkhivy (Fatherland Archives), 2005, no. 2, Moscow, <http://www.rusarchives.ru/publication/chernyakhovskiy.shtml>

<sup>32</sup> 16 June of the old Russian calendar is 29 June according to the present calendar.

<sup>33</sup> TsMVS (Central Museum of the Armed Forces), B-4/62, ll.6–7.

<sup>34</sup> Danilo is the Ukrainian name for the Russian Danila.

<sup>35</sup> TsMVS (Central Museum of the Armed Forces), B-4/62, l.5.

<sup>36</sup> This was, and until now still is, the only official statement disclosing the facts of Chernyakhovsky's birth, but even in this quoted document there is no archival reference for the mentioned ‘church registration book’. This publication affected some of the more recent Western publications, but certainly not most of them. In Wikipedia, for example, the sentence about Chernyakhovsky's Jewish descent was dropped.

<sup>37</sup> Aleksander Yakovlevich Sukharev, Legendary Chernyakhovsky, (in Russian), Zarnitsa, Moscow, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> This is the way I.D. Chernyakhovsky spelled his father's name, but all authors use Danila (Russian) or Danilo (Ukrainian).

<sup>39</sup> Igor Erofeev and Galina Kashtanova-Erofeeva, Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovsky, 1906 (1907) – 1945, A Short Biographic Chronicle (in Russian), Chernyakhovsk District Municipal Education Administration, 2005.

<sup>40</sup> Oleksandr Phil’, Za krok do marshalskovo zhezla (One Step to the Marshal Scepter) (in Ukrainian), Taras Shevchenko University, Kiev, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Fedor Davidovich Sverdlov, The Unknown about Soviet Commanders (in Russian), Moscow, 1995, p. 87.

<sup>42</sup> Oleksandr Phil’, Za krok do marshalskovo zhezla, pp.10–11.

<sup>43</sup> Vladimir Vasil'evich Karpov, Army-general Chernyakhovsky, (in Russian), Veche, Moscow, 2006

<sup>44</sup> V, Karpov himself was arrested already in February 1941 and tried for ‘anti-Soviet agitation’, re-drafted in October to a ‘penal unit,’ where he climbed again from private to lieutenant, and became Hero of the Soviet Union, though rehabilitated only in 1956.

<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Ottovich Daines, General Chernyakhovsky, Genius of Defence and Attack, (in Russian), Iauza, Moscow, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Fedor Davidovich Sverdlov, Jewish Generals in the Armed Forces of the USSR, (in Russian), Moscow (with Yad Vashem) 1993. Hebrew translation: Ma'arachot, Tel Aviv, 1996.



<sup>47</sup> Tsvi Raz, (in Russian), Evreiskii Kamerton, Tel Aviv, 31 January 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Igor Akselrod, 'To Love Jews Is Difficult, but Necessary', (in Russian), Evreiskii Mir, 25 May 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Aron Cherniak, 'The Riddle of General Yona Davidovich Chernyakhovsky', (in Russian), Evreiskii Kamerton, Tel Aviv, 26 March 2002, p. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Il'ia Erenburg, *Liudi, Gody, Zhizn'* (People, Years, Life) (in Russian), book 5, chapter 13 (digital edition), [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/erenburg\\_eg07/index.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/erenburg_eg07/index.html)

<sup>51</sup> Mark Borisovich Petrushansky, *Iz Plemeni Makkaveev* (From the Tribe of the Maccabees), (in Russian), Vladikavkaz Regional Center, Vladikavkaz, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Ilya Mikhailovich Levitas, *Jewish Military Encyclopedia* (in Russian), Stal', Kiev, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Oleksandr Phil', *Ivan Chernyakhovski* (in Ukrainian), Kiev, 2006, pp. 161–165.

<sup>54</sup> This is the same Novokhatsky who wrote also two of the seven documents published by the Central Archive.

<sup>55</sup> TsDAVO Ukraini, F.4620. op. 3, spr. (sprava, file in Ukrainian) 50, ark. (arkush, list in Ukrainian) 6–15.

<sup>56</sup> According to the regulations, approved by the Decree of the Emperor on 5 June 1895.

<sup>57</sup> State Archive of Kiev Region, fond (collection) 384, opis (list of files) 11, delo (file) 55, ll.133–134–reverse. On the cover of the file it is written: 'Kievskaiia gubernia's Commission regarding the First General Census of Population of 1897. Census Commission of Tarashcha District. Part 3. The lists of the census of population of 1897. Village Bagva, Tarashcha district. private estates on chinshevye (quit-rent) lands. Census Station No. 9, Counting Station No. 6.' The lists of the census of village Bagva are contained in 3 files — NN 53–55. File 53 is titled as Part 1, file 54 — Part 2 and file 55 — Part 3. Chinsh in Ukrainian (in Polish, *czynsz*, in German, *Zins*, meaning percent) is a form of quitrent, which was paid for the piece of land or house lent for a long time, used originally in Poland. Later it brought to the special form of property based on everlasting and hereditary rent. The amount of chinsh couldn't be changed by one of the sides. Historically in the Western areas of Russian Empire there were many villages (places) built on such land. The law of 1886 guaranteed the right of people living on such lands to preserve their status and to pass it to their heirs, unchangeable amount of quit-rent as well as the right to buy these lands from former owners.

<sup>58</sup> List 134-reverse contains the prolongation of an instruction how to fill the census list. It is very general and not very interesting. Below we just show some of the paragraphs as an example: In the paragraph devoted to religion (11) it is written: 'Here to write the religious confession, for shortening you can write instead of pravoslavniui (Russian Orthodox) - 'prav.'; edinovercheskuiiu (sect dissenters from the Orthodox church) - 'edinov.'; rimsko-katolicheskuiiu (Roman Catholic) - 'rimsk.kat.'; liuteranskuiiu (Lutheran) - 'liut.'; reformatskuiiu (Reformist) - 'reform.'; armiano-gregorianskuiiu (Armenian-Gregorian) - 'arm.grig.'; iudeiskuiiu (Judean) - 'iud.'; musul'mane (Muslim) - 'musul.'; buddisty (Buddhists) - 'bud.'; lamaity (Lamaists) - 'lam.'; shamanstvuiushchie (shamanism) - 'shamast.'; etc.' In the paragraph devoted to the mother tongue (12) it is written: 'Here to write the language which is considered to be mother tongue. For Russian you can write letter 'R', for Malorossiiskii (Ukrainian) - 'MR', for Belorus-

sian - BR, while for all other languages it must be written in full, for instance, - Polish, French, English, German, Jewish, Tatar, Mordovian, etc.’

<sup>59</sup> The church was in the village Teterovka, so the people of the village Bagva were a part of Teterovka's parishioners. In the church metrical books Bagva was specially marked.

<sup>60</sup> State Archive of Cherkassy Region, fond 931, opis 1, delo 2252.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 2, delo 34.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 1, delo 2252, list 204.

<sup>63</sup> Not completely legible — maybe also Podirchuk, Pokhidchuk etc

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., list 193.

<sup>65</sup> We may assume that here the priest just made a mistake because in other existing documents the wife of Daniil Cherniahovsky was mentioned as Maria Lyudvigova (see, for instance, document 4). He probably wrote the patronymic of the godmother by mistake.

<sup>66</sup> This writing is not absolutely clear, so it can be also read as ‘Grigorii Morskoi’.

<sup>67</sup> State Archive of Cherkassy Region, fond 931, opis 1, delo 2252, list 42.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 1, delo 2432 (for the period 1883–1900) and delo 2611 (for the period 1906, 1912, 1918–1919).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 1, delo 2611, ll. 113–142-reverse (lists for January 1906 are missing).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 1, delo 2611, l.122.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., fond 931, opis 1, delo 2611, ll.56–57.

<sup>72</sup> The fact that the first name Avraam appears twice in the names of Danil's ‘garantors’ in his wedding registration — Avraam Gordeyev Podirchuk and Semion Avraamov Levitsky — does not necessarily suggest a Jewish connection. It seems that in pre-revolution times there were no less non-Jewish Avraams than Jewish, and the same applies even more so to the somewhat Jewish-sounding family name Levitsky.



TABLE 1 List 133–Reverse

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Surname, name (nickname), patronymic (there has to be a special mark in case people are blind, deaf and mute, or mad).	Sex (M — for male, F — for female)	Relation of the person to the mansion's owner or to the family head	How many years or months passed since the birth	Single, married, widower divorced.	Estate, status, rank	Whether born here (if not — where? <i>gubernia</i> , district, town)	Whether registered here (if not — where?) for those who have to be registered
1. Chernyakhovskiy Nikolai Lukyanov	M	owner	50	M - married	<i>eto iz odno (odnodvoret's</i> — peasant, the owner of 1 house)	in the village Antonovka of <i>Stav. Yo</i> (Stavishche Volost)	here, registered to Vo [lost]
2. Chernyakhovskaya Anna Gordeyeva	F	wife	46	M	<i>odno</i> , owner of one house	here	the same
3. Chernyakhovskiy Daniil Nikolayev	M	son	23	single	without any	here	the same
4. Chernyakhovskaia Maria Nikolayeva	F	daughter	19	virgin	without any	here	the same
5. Chernyakhovskiy Ivan Nikolayev	M	son	14	—	without any	here	the same
6. Chernyakhovskaya Olga Nikolayeva	F	daughter	8	—	without any	here	the same
7. Chernyakhovskiy Trofim Nikolayev	M	son	5	—	without any	here	the same
8. Chernyakhovskaya Ekaterina Nikolayeva	F	daughter	1	—	without any	here	the same
9	10	11	12	13		14	
Where usually lives (if not here — <i>gubernia</i> , district, town)	Special remark about absence or temporary presence	Religion	Mother tongue	Literacy A - whether literate	<b>B</b> —where studied and for how long	Occupation, business, A — main, which brings main means of subsistence	Trade, post. B — 1. subsidiary work. 2. position in the army
here	—	<i>Pr.</i> - <i>Pravoslavnyi</i> , Russian Orthodox	<i>Mr.</i> - <i>Malorossiiskii</i> Ukrainian	<i>da</i> - yes	at home	<i>zem. hozrab. podrobotka</i> - agricultural work, subsidiary work	1. —2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>Nm-nemnoz'ko</i> , a little	—	together with husband	1. —2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>N</i> — <i>net</i> , no	—	<i>zem. pri otse</i> - farmer with father	1. <i>na podsobnyh rabotah</i> - accessory works. 2. <i>Opolchen's2. razrada</i> — civil guardsman of 2 <sup>nd</sup> class
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>N</i>	—	<i>zem. pri otse</i>	1. <i>na podsobnyh rabotah</i> 2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>Nm</i>	—	<i>pri otse</i> - with father	1. —2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>P</i> - <i>podrostok</i> , underage	—	<i>pri otse</i>	1. —2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>P</i>	—	<i>pri otse</i>	1. —2. —
here	—	<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Mr.</i>	<i>P</i>	—	<i>pri otse</i>	1. —2. —

(Continued)



TABLE 2 From the 1900 Marriage Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book

Number of wedding	Month and day of	Rank, name, patronymic, surname, and religious belonging of the betrothed; number of previous marriages	Age of the groom	Rank, name, patronymic, surname, and religious denomination of the bride; number of previous marriages	Age of the bride	Who did the sacrament	Who were guarantors	Signatures of witnesses (not obligatory)
N 4	May, 29	The peasant of Bagva Daniil Nikolayev Chernyakhovsky, Russian Orthodox, first marriage	27	The peasant of v[illage] Bagva Maria Lyudvigova Belinskaya, Russian Orthodox, first marriage	21	Parish priest — Pavel Matushevich, with acting as psalm-reader — Kirik Kravchenko.	Guarantors of the groom — peasants of v.Bagva Avraam Gordeyev Pokhidchuk <sup>63</sup> and Simeon Avraamov Levitsky; guarantors of the bride — peasants of v.Bagva Ivan Vasyev Belinsky and Grigori Ivanov Yavorsky	

TABLE 3 From the 1900 Birth Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book

Number of born	Month and day of		Name of newborn	Rank, name, patronymic, and surname of parents and religious belonging	Names, patronymics, and surnames of godparents	Who did the sacrament of baptism?	Signatures of witnesses (not obligatory)
	birth	Baptizing					
N 31 female	8 August	13 August	Anna	The peasant of v[illage] Bagva Daniil Nikolayev Chernyakhovsky and his legitimate wife Maria Leontyevna, <sup>65</sup> both of Russian Orthodox religion	The peasant of the same village Ivan Ivanov Matkovsky and Daria Leontyeva, the wife of Grigori Morskoy <sup>66</sup>	Parish priest — Pavel Matushevich, with acting as psalm-reader — Kirik Kravchenko.	—

TABLE 4 From the 1905 Death Registrations in the Teterovka Church Metrical Book

Number of the dead	Month and day of		Rank, name, patronymic, and surname of the dead	Age of the dead	The reason of death	Who accepted confession and did Eucharist?	Who buried and where were the dead buried?
	death	burial					
N 18 (female)	2 October	3 October	Daughter of the peasant of the village Bagva Nikolai Lukyanov Cheryahovsky — Olga. Parish priest — Pavel Matushevich, psalm-reader Pavel Dolgosheya	16	Because of cold	Parish priest — Pavel Matushevich	At the parish cemetery