

Irina Rebrova

## People with Disabilities as Nazi Victims on Screen and Paper: A Close Reading of the 1943 Krasnodar Trial Records

2025

<https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/23563>

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Rebrova, Irina: People with Disabilities as Nazi Victims on Screen and Paper: A Close Reading of the 1943 Krasnodar Trial Records. In: *Research in Film and History. Documenting Nazi Crimes through Soviet Film* (2025), Nr. 6, S. 1–33. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/23563>.

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Creative Commons - Namensnennung - Nicht kommerziell - Keine Bearbeitungen 4.0 Lizenz zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu dieser Lizenz finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a creative commons - Attribution - Non Commercial - No Derivatives 4.0 License. For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS NAZI VICTIMS ON SCREEN AND PAPER: A CLOSE READING OF THE 1943 KRASNODAR TRIAL RECORDS

by Irina Rebrova

Published: February 14, 2025

This is a PDF version of an online article: <https://film-history.org/issues/text/people-disabilities-nazi-victims-screen-and-paper>



On July 18, 1943, in the city square of Krasnodar, the main city of Krasnodar region situated in the south of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (hereafter the RSFSR), a public execution by hanging of eight Soviet citizens

took place. The verdict was the result of an open trial held by the Military Tribunal of the North Caucasus Front from July 14 to July 17, 1943 in Krasnodar.<sup>1</sup> It was the first of twenty-one public trials, which took place in the liberated cities of the five Soviet republics until the end of the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> Open trials in the USSR served several purposes including:

*exacting revenge and extracting retribution; deterring future collaboration; cleansing Soviet society of "enemies of the state"; garneting evidence for repatriations claims; countering Western allegations of Soviet wrongdoing; and enabling the authorities to draw parallels between Soviet and Western justice.*<sup>3</sup>

In this sense, the Krasnodar trial had an important propaganda value for the USSR, since it was carried out during the ongoing World War II on the Soviet territory in the city that had been retaken by the Soviets less than six months earlier (Krasnodar was liberated on February 13, 1943, while the entire Krasnodar region became Soviet again only in the fall of 1943). All the defendants in this trial were Soviet citizens who were accused of collaborating with the Germans. In this regard, the Krasnodar trial was well covered in the Soviet (and international) media of that time: all the central newspapers (*Izvestiya*, *Pravda*, *Bol'shevik*, *Krasnaya zvezda*) published daily reports from the courtroom, well-known writers and correspondents Aleksey Tolstoy, Elena Kononenko, Ilya Selvinsky were present at the trial.<sup>4</sup> Mark Troyanovsky, the head of the film group of the North Caucasus Front, and Viktor Kotov, a sound engineer, were summoned from Moscow specifically to film the trial. In a letter to his mother dated July 19, 1943, Troyanovsky mentioned: "On the 18th, the sentence was carried out. For the first time in my life, I saw and filmed an execution."<sup>5</sup> According to official data, more than 30,000 people gathered in the city square to witness the public execution.<sup>6</sup> Soldiers on duty and townspeople, mostly women and children, stood in the square and applauded the execution of the sentence. Troyanovsky's camera captured joyful faces of women, slightly

embarrassed children, concentrated soldiers with weapons at the ready. A long shot showed people standing and approaching the square, sitting on the roofs of houses and in the backs of trucks, taking seats “closer and higher” to get a better view of the public execution, to be a part of Soviet justice.<sup>7</sup>

Among those sentenced to death was Mikhail Lastovina, who worked in the Berezanskaya psychiatric colony during the Nazi occupation of the Krasnodar region. In December 1942, he was on duty as an overlooker and was involved by members of Sonderkommando 10a Einsatzgruppe D to escort the remaining by that time patients to the place of mass execution.<sup>8</sup> In the 12-minute documentary *THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT / PRIGOVOR NARODA*, which was released on the screens of Soviet cinemas in August 31, 1943,<sup>9</sup> three of the four witness testimonies recorded in the courtroom referred to the mass killings of patients in psychiatric hospitals located in the Krasnodar region. However, from the speeches of witnesses and from a close-up of the sign with the official name of the Krasnodar hospital it is impossible to understand that the Nazi victims were patients (adults and children) of psychiatric medical institutions. At the same time, 14 volumes of Krasnodar trial records contain unique testimonies of eyewitnesses, including medical personnel, on the fact of mass killings of people with disabilities who were treated in psychiatric hospitals in the Krasnodar region.<sup>10</sup> However, this data was long silenced because the records of this and other Soviet trials were classified.

This article focuses on the analysis of the already mentioned Soviet propaganda documentary film *THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT* and the Krasnodar trial records (protocols of interrogations, witnesses' statements, and closing indictment) with a special attention to the representation of the mass killings of psychiatric patients. Even though the Krasnodar trial has been already studied in terms of its propaganda meaning,<sup>11</sup> its role in the investigation of crimes against people with disabilities has not yet been highlighted. In the first part of the study, I will

present general facts about mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied regions of RSFSR and, in particular, the Krasnodar region. I will then elaborate on the analysis of the final footage of the documentary THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT and the original trial records regarding the mass killings of patients from psychiatric hospitals in the region. I aim to compare what was screened and what was documented to understand why the Soviets used among the variety of evidence the cases of mass killings of people with disabilities in their war propaganda and why at the same time they hid this group in the official narrative of "peaceful Soviet citizens."<sup>12</sup>

### **Mass Killings of People with Disabilities in Occupied RSFSR: An Overview**

The Nazi racial theory was succeeded in the genocide of "defective nations" along with the wide usage of social engineering. It was supposed to "cleanse" society from the "sick," "inferior," and "unable to work" social groups, which include people, also children, with physical and (or) mental disabilities, who were treated in psychiatric hospitals, special sanatoriums, and homes for the disabled. By the time of the outbreak of World War II in the Soviet Union in June 1941 up to 70,000 psychiatric patients both in the German Reich and in the occupied countries have already been victims of what will be later called "Aktion T4."<sup>13</sup>

As in Nazi Germany, in the occupied regions of the former Soviet Union, people with physical or mental disabilities were also seen as "people who have no right to exist" and "useless eaters" who were not capable of working. Nazi biopolitics on Soviet soil was slightly transformed by the Nazi perception of the Slavs as "Untermenschen" (literally "undermen") who had to provide for the needs of the Aryans through their labor.<sup>14</sup> The Soviet population was seen as "low" in terms of civilization and through the influence of Bolshevism.<sup>15</sup> The German military administration's need for a ready-made infrastructure to establish military hospitals, camps for Soviet prisoners of war, and other services as the war

intensified on Soviet soil became an important factor in developing the biopolitics.<sup>16</sup> The extensive hospitals' property, including the farm fields "liberated" from the psychiatric patients, were ideal for this purpose. Members of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the SD, often in the cooperation with regular Wehrmacht troops and active assistance by Soviet auxiliaries, including medical staff and chief doctors, became the main perpetrators of mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied Soviet regions. In the occupied regions of the RSFSR, the only available evidence suggests that Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler personally ordered the murder of up to 850 patients at psychiatric clinic in Kolmovo near Novgorod,<sup>17</sup> but historians have no documentary evidence to back this up. Decisive in the mass annihilation of people with disabilities in the USSR was also the fact that the high Wehrmacht command had abolished the protection of the population in accordance with international law. This was facilitated by the work of Wehrmacht lawyers, above all Eugen Müller.<sup>18</sup> The main difference between the mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied Soviet territories and the crimes committed in the Reich was precisely its decentralization, when the final decision to "liquidate" patients in each medical institution was made by members of the local military or civil administration, or by the leaders of the military units.

Due to the lack of German wartime sources, there is no clear knowledge of the reasons for the mass killings of people with disabilities on Soviet soil, primarily in the RSFSR, it is however obvious that the NS-ideology and broader biopolitics was one of the decisive factors for mass killings not only among SS units' members but also the Wehrmacht command. The NS-ideology towards "useless eaters" and its implementation in the German Reich made the process of mass killing of people with disabilities easier and faster on Soviet soil. Soviet sources, on the other hand, documented the Nazi crimes in detail. The main purpose of the Extraordinary State Commission (hereafter the ChGK),<sup>19</sup>

established in November 1942, was to gather evidence of Nazi crimes in the occupied regions of the Soviet Union for the later submission in the post-war trials. Among the various types of ChGK paperwork there are eyewitness accounts, statements by relatives, medical exhumation reports that testified the mass killings of psychiatric patients and people with physical disabilities in the occupied Soviet zones. Aware of the unreliability of the information provided by Soviet sources (with their tendency to overestimate the number of victims, the usage of generalized terms “civilians” in the final reports, often the absence of lists of victims),<sup>20</sup> it is possible to establish minimum and maximum numbers of victims among people with disabilities. In total, 40 sites of mass killings of people with disabilities have been recently identified in the occupied territory of the RSFSR.<sup>21</sup> Among them are 21 psychiatric clinics, 6 specialized institutions for children with disabilities, and 13 homes for the disabled. The total number of victims is 13,000 to 14,000 people with disabilities on Russian soil within the borders of 1939. Of this total, more than 10,000 victims were patients of psychiatric clinics, more than 1,000 were children with physical or mental disabilities, and almost 3,000 were residents of homes for the disabled.<sup>22</sup>

In the Krasnodar region, four medical institutions have been identified, whose patients became victims during the Nazi occupation in the second half of 1942 – early 1943. The first Soviet open trial held in July 1943 in the liberated Krasnodar investigated three out of four known cases in the region. The members of the local ChGK commissions have been gathering the evidences of mass killing of different groups of Soviet citizens from late February 1943. The founded facts became the starting point for the investigations by the members of the “Smersh” (“Death to Spies” [Smert’ shpionam]), an umbrella organization for three counter-intelligence agencies in the Red Army, which ended in the trial case by the Military tribunal of the North Caucasus Front. The investigators accused eleven Soviet citizens in collaboration with the German military administration and members of Sonderkommendo 10a Einsatzgruppe D who

were responsible for the mass killings of Jews, underground leaders and communists, people with disabilities, and other groups of citizens in the occupied city of Krasnodar and the Krasnodar region. To prove their guilt, the ChGK files were cited, 22 witnesses were heard in the courtroom, and the conclusions of the medical examination on the autopsy of 623 corpses were read out during the public court hearings.<sup>23</sup>

All the defendants fully pleaded guilty to complicity with the Nazis and to atrocities against the civilians of Krasnodar and the Krasnodar region.<sup>24</sup> The Military tribunal sentenced eight defendants to death by hanging, which was carried out on July 18, 1943, in the city square of Krasnodar in the presence of local residents. Three other defendants were sentenced to 20 years of hard labor. The involvement of each of the defendants in mass crimes was proven based on the totality of available facts. It is important that witnesses to crimes in the occupied Krasnodar region did not name those who appeared before the court. Preparations for the trial were carried out in a hurry. It was important for the Soviet authorities to show that Nazi criminals and their Soviet auxiliaries would be punished to prevent future collaboration of Soviet citizens with the Nazis, among other goals.<sup>25</sup> As a propaganda piece, it was important to show the public execution of the defendants in the documentary PEOPLE'S VERDICT. And yet, a detailed viewing of the film and subsequent analysis of the collected eyewitness testimonies and interrogation protocols reveals the presence of psychiatric patients as one of the target Nazi victim groups on Soviet soil even under the influence of the Soviet propaganda discourse of the suffering "peaceful Soviet citizens." In more detail, I will dwell on a few case studies to prove this thesis.

### **Case 1. People with Disabilities as Target Nazi Victim Group on Krasnodar Trial**

The main goal of the documentary THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT is to strengthen the



Soviet people in the imminent victory in the war, as well as to send a clear message that all the crimes of Germans and their accomplices will be punished. The plot of the film clearly demonstrates these goals: for retribution to come at the beginning of the film, the footage of destroyed Krasnodar and sites of mass graves of “peaceful citizens” are shown, and the names of individual victims are mentioned. The story of mass killing of patients from the psychiatric hospitals is on display from the fourth minute. The camera shows the main entrance to The Third Krasnodar City Clinical Hospital (the official hospital name). A voice-over informs that “over 300 patients were taken from this hospital by executioners, they were loaded onto special vehicles (i.e. gas van, Gaswagen)<sup>26</sup> and poisoned with carbon monoxide on the way.”<sup>27</sup>

During the Krasnodar (and later other) open trials in the USSR, special attention was paid to mass killings of so-called “sick” Soviet citizens. In the documentary THE PEOPLE’S VERDICT, one can distinguish two main victim groups: those who were treated in hospitals, including children, and those who ended up in the “Gestapo” prison. The documentary shows that the Nazis took the lives of those Soviet people, who were weak and infirm, and those whom they suspected of having links with the partisans or in the underground. At the same time, it is not clear, what kind of “sick people” were killed by the Nazis. It’s impossible to determine from the documentary that the victims were patients of psychiatric clinics and, according to the Nazi ideology, were “useless eaters” and thus should be killed. It becomes clear from the protocols of the Krasnodar trial that patients from three medical institutions were taken out and killed in the mobile gas vans. These are the Psychiatric hospital of the Krasnodar region with around 320 victims, the Children’s psychiatric hospital of the Krasnodar region located in the village of Tret’ya Rechka Kochety (now village of Suvorovskoe) with 42 children victims; and Berezankaya psychiatric colony with around 400 victims. More than a dozen employees of each medical institution and witnesses were questioned by the ChGK members and then by the

investigators of the Krasnodar trial.<sup>28</sup> In their printed testimonies, the witnesses clearly named patients of the psychiatric clinics as Nazi victims. Here, for example, a quotation from the report of the interrogation with Elizaveta Kontonistova, head of the female department of the Psychiatric hospital of the Krasnodar region, dated June 17, 1943:

*The patients of the department, that I was in charge of, were taken out during the first trip. They all were women. The patients were taken out naked on the house porch and placed in the car. I don't remember if any of them were clothed. Many of them resisted when they were put into the car. There was a terrible, heartbreaking screaming of the patients. Those who resisted were forced into the car by the German soldiers.<sup>29</sup>*

Patients of the Children's psychiatric hospital who were killed during the occupation of the Krasnodar region are also mentioned in the documentary, which names 42 young patients with epilepsy. On September 21 (23), 1942, armed Germans, members of Sonderkommando 10a of Einsatzgruppe D, arrived at the hospital in two cars (a passenger car and a mobile gas van). On their orders, 42 children aged from 5 to 17 were taken into the gas van and were driven to the outskirts of a farmhouse, about 5 kilometers from the hospital. The bodies of children were thrown into the deep pit, dug by the collective farmers on the order of German local authorities in early September of 1942.<sup>30</sup> The locals buried the children according to the German orders.<sup>31</sup> In June 1943 during the preparation for the Krasnodar trial the exhumation of 42 child remains was carried out (there are several photos of the exhumation in the trial proceedings<sup>32</sup>) and interrogations of medical staff and collective farmers were conducted. In the documentary, the testimony of the "medical worker of children's hospital" Vera Inozemtseva is also recorded.<sup>33</sup>

There is no mention of the children's illnesses in THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT, it is

emphasized instead that the children were “poor” and “innocent.” Inozemtseva told that the boy Volodya Zozulya, before being loaded into the gas van, cried “Goodbye, Comrade Stalin, goodbye to all the nurses and teachers. We shall never see each other again.”<sup>34</sup> Knowing that the children were treated in a special medical institution, this quotation seems to be improbable and invented for the process. It speaks for young patriots who were brutally killed during the occupation. The intentional silencing in the official Soviet culture of war remembrance of the fact that children from psychiatric hospitals and special children’s homes were disabled had a purpose: it reinforced hatred of the enemy during the war time. The used categories of “sick people” and simply “children” does not provide information about who exactly were the Nazis victims and, more importantly, why. That is, the Nazis killed the weakest and most vulnerable Soviet citizens, which fit the purpose of the Soviet propaganda.

### **Case 2. The Crime Sites in the Krasnodar Region: What Was Determined and (Not)Represented**

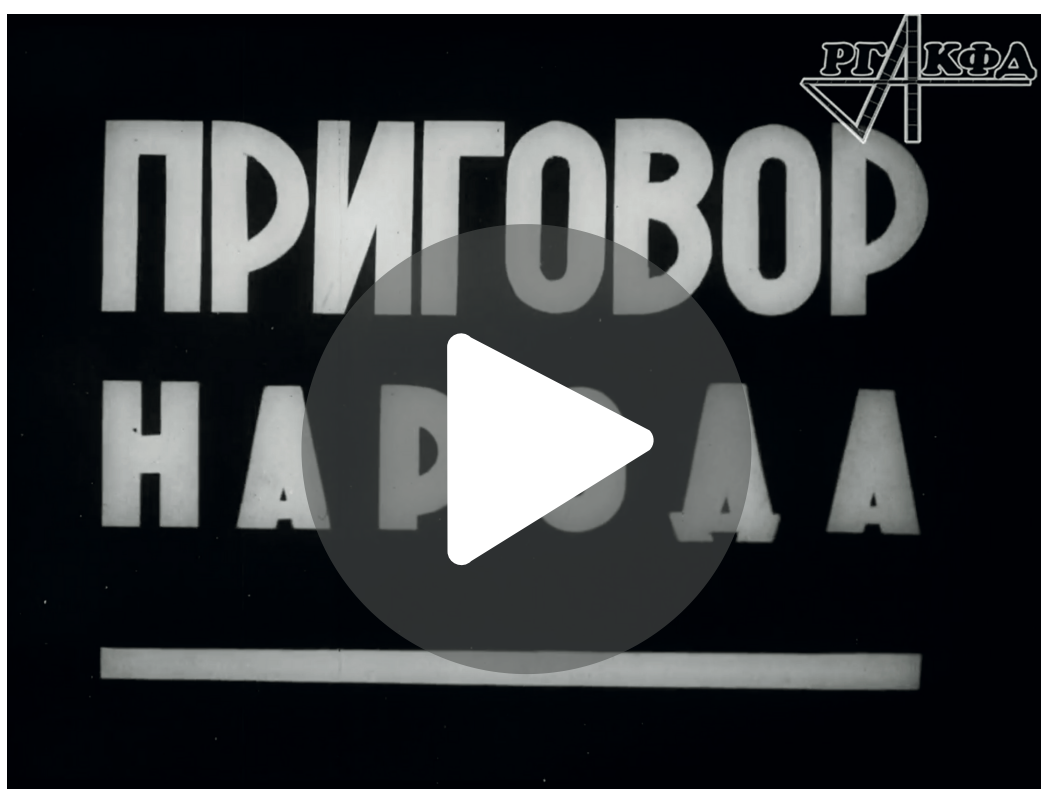
Immediately after the liberation of the Krasnodar region, four sites of mass killings of people with disabilities became known. These are two already mentioned psychiatric hospitals for adults in Krasnodar and in the village of Berezanskaya, and children’s psychiatric hospital in the village of Tret’ya Rechka Kochety. The fourth such institution, an orphanage for the disabled children, was located in the city of Yeysk. Members of Sonderkomando 10a killed 214 children with physical and mental disabilities in October 1942.<sup>35</sup> This case became well known outside the Krasnodar region: already in 1943, a leaflet was issued to the Red Army and Fleet soldiers calling for revenge for the Soviet children, whose names were printed on the back side of the leaflet.<sup>36</sup> In the summer of 1943, parallel to the Krasnodar trial, the corpses of children from Yeysk orphanage were partially exhumed, their solemn reburial was held in the city center, and the first monument was erected to the dead children.<sup>37</sup> As during the Krasnodar trial, the victims’ disabilities were not publicly mentioned in

1943, nor throughout the Soviet and, until recently, modern Russian history.<sup>38</sup>

Somehow the Yeysk case was not exposed during the Krasnodar trial and therefore it was not shown in the documentary. The possible explanation that the exact perpetrators were not found could not be a decisive reason for this. The perpetrators among the Soviet collaborators responsible for the mass killing of the patients of the Krasnodar hospital or the children's psychiatric hospital in Tret'ya Rechka Kochety had also not been identified as of July 1943, which did not prevent the investigative authorities from collecting evidence and eyewitness testimonies on these cases. It is known that criminal proceedings were instituted against doctor Vladislav Anikeev from Yeysk orphanage in September 1943. The Azov military tribunal sentenced Anikeev under Article 58-10 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, which is propaganda or agitation calling for the overthrow or weakening of Soviet power.<sup>39</sup> This was a closed trial that was not widely broadcasted. It is possible that during the open trial, the Soviet authorities did not want to draw attention to the fact that Soviet doctors and medical staff collaborated with the Nazis.<sup>40</sup> After all, during the occupation, Soviet chief doctors were required to provide lists of patients with the diseases on the basis of which the Nazis carried out the so-called "relocation" of patients. On the days of the crimes, most of the medical staff were at their posts and were carrying out the Nazis' orders to load patients into the gas vans, to undress them, and sometimes to escort them to the execution sites. In other words, they were accomplices to the crimes according to the Soviet law: they all collaborated with the German authorities and should be automatically counted as "traitors to the Motherland." Yet, during the open Krasnodar trial, the medical staff appeared as witnesses, which possibly aimed not to cast a shadow upon the Soviet medicine worldwide. The only former male nurse Mikhail Lastovina became a so-called "scapegoat" during this trial.

### Case 3. Defendant Lastovina as a "Scapegoat" at the Krasnodar Trial

Mikhail Lastovina was among the defendants at the Krasnodar trial accused under Article 58-1a "Treason to the Motherland." While introducing the defendants in the documentary PEOPLE'S VERDICT, the voice-over said: "A group of traitors to the Motherland, collaborators, and active participants in the atrocities of the Nazi occupiers in Krasnodar and the Krasnodar region appeared before the court of Military tribunal of the North Caucasus Front." Next, all eleven persons were named and shown in a close-up. Mikhail Lastovina was presented as "Lastovina, a kulak, participated in the murder of 60 Soviet citizens" (see fragment 2:48–3:40 min. in the video below).



Video 1. THE JUDGMENT OF THE PEOPLE / ПРИГОВОР НАРОДА / PRIGOVOR NARODA (1943), RGAKFD 5056, VHH-I-0009775, shots 01-45

Interestingly, of all accused, only Lastovina and Tishchenko were not mentioned by their first names in the documentary (Lastovina was described as a kulak and Tishchenko as a traitor). The trial files contain detailed information about all defendants including their biographies.<sup>41</sup> Mikhail Pavlovich Lastovina was born in the village of Novo-Titorovskaya in the Krasnodar region in 1883. His father's farm was prosperous, the family had 6 horses, 5 cows, 60 acres of land. After his father's death Mikhail continued the family business. In 1932 he fled to Donbass, Ukrainian SSR not wishing to join the kolkhoz. There he worked in the mine for a year. The family's property was confiscated as kulak property by the Soviet authorities. Lastovina then returned to the Krasnodar region and worked in Krasnodar for a while. In 1935 he started to work as a male nurse and later as an overlooker in the men's department of the Berezanskaya psychiatric colony.<sup>42</sup>

During the Nazi occupation of the Krasnodar region, Lastovina continued to work in the colony. According to his testimony, at the time of the mass killing of the colony's patients in September 1942, he did not participate in the loading of patients into a gas van. Moreover, no one of the witnesses who gave testimonies for the trial named Lastovina while describing the mass killing of the colony's patients. On the contrary, "the chief doctor of the colony, named [Aleksandr] Kireev, was present when the patients were put into the van."<sup>43</sup> That day, up to 340 patients were taken out of the colony and killed during several gas van trips. The remaining stronger patients continued to work on the colony's farm until the end of the season field works, till December 1942. Then the Germans took about 60 patients in trucks to the anti-tank ditch and shot them.<sup>44</sup> Lastovina and one more person named Vinokurov were on duty that December day. That's why the Germans ordered them to escort the patients. Near the anti-tank ditch, they were ordered to undress the patients (it was wintertime) and put them in rows of four or five people facing the edge of the ditch:

*The Germans were lined up behind the patients at a distance of 10–13 meters with submachine guns. There were seven or eight of them. The command to shoot was given by a German soldier in German. After the execution, when the corpses fell not into the ditch, but to the side, Vinokurov and I should throw them into the ditch.*<sup>45</sup>

According to Lastovina's testimony, it was he and Vinokurov who were on duty in the colony on that day. Since the Germans came to the colony at 6 a.m. and no other medical staff was at work, Lastovina and Vinokurov became accidental accomplices to the crime. Vinokurov was not one of the defendants in the Krasnodar trial, as he was in the Red Army by that time.<sup>46</sup> The chief doctor Kireev and the rest of the medical staff of the colony were not among the accused as well. They, along with a dozen other colony employees, gave testimonies as witnesses to the Nazi crimes.<sup>47</sup> Lastovina, on the contrary, became the main defendant and was punished not so much for his crimes during the war but for his anti-Soviet past. In 1943 he was 60 years old and was the oldest defendant at the Krasnodar trial (the average age of all other accused was 29).<sup>48</sup> Unlike other defendants, who had been arrested in February or March of 1943, Lastovina was arrested on June 29, two weeks before the beginning of the trial.<sup>49</sup> His kulak past and unwillingness to cooperate with the Soviet authorities were emphasized during the trial. It seems that the primary reason for Lastovina's arrest was not his collaboration with the Germans, but rather the fact that he was a former kulak. And yet, Lastovina's case is not unique. For example, the Court of Military tribunal sentenced four people, including Ekaterina Izvolskaya, head doctor of the Litvinov Psychiatric Hospital in the Kalinin (now Tver) region, to death by shooting in December 1941. Izvolskaya's noble background and advanced age were repeatedly emphasized at the closed trial which handled the case of the poisoning of more than 500 psychiatric patients.<sup>50</sup>

Also, none of the witnesses' statements accused Lastovina in mass killings of the psychiatric patients. If one attentively listens to the documentary, he or she can determine two levels of narration: the voice-over and the procurer speech empathies with the human and economic losses accusing "German monsters and their collaborators" while witnesses in the court talked about specific crimes without naming the perpetrators, both Germans and those Soviet citizens who were accused at the Krasnodar trial. Thus, the Lastovina case and his sentence by hanging demonstrated that the class issues continued to play an important role in determining state violence during and after the war in the USSR.<sup>51</sup> His work as an overlooker at the psychiatric colony seems to be an unlucky coincidence that took him to the trial.

#### **Case 4. Witness Kotov: Talented Actor at the Krasnodar Trial**

The story of the witness Ivan Kotov, who survived the trip in a gas van is far from clear-cut. According to the documentary footage, "Ivan Ivanovich Kotov miraculously survived in the gas van. Having lost his voice, he spoke so quiet that it was impossible to record him. He went all the way from the landing into the car of death to the grave site and woke up alive among his breathless comrades."<sup>52</sup> This story was not an exception in the post-war USSR. The cases of escaping the death were known in various cities in the RSFSR and USSR, where gas vans were used to kill specific groups of victims, primarily Jews.<sup>53</sup> According to Ivan Kotov, and other survivors elsewhere in the USSR, people would breathe with a textile soaked in urine during the trip in a gas van and thus could stay alive. The Nazis then threw the breathless unconscious body together with other bodies into a ditch, slightly covering the corpses with earth. A bit of oxygen allowed the person to regain consciousness and wake up in a ditch among the corpses, and later to get out of the mass grave. In his interrogation record Kotov stated:



*I saw that the sick people were being dragged out of the building and pushed into the vehicle. Among them were patients who weren't dressed at all, they were naked. At this time, a German who was standing by the vehicle, rushed at me, shouting things I did not understand. He grabbed me from behind by the collar of my jacket and pushed me into the vehicle. Many people were already in there, both men and women. It was very crowded in the vehicle. The people were standing and pressing against each other. During the journey I noticed that I was beginning to suffocate. I ripped off my shirt, soaked it in urine and covered my nose and mouth with it. After that I sensed some relief. I acted probably instinctively, thanks to the fact that I had had training, and then had led air and chemical defense courses myself, and knew the techniques that should be applied in the presence of gas. After some time, I must have lost consciousness. I regained consciousness as evening was falling. I saw that I was in a pit, where many corpses of men and women had been thrown.<sup>54</sup>*

There is still no relevant research to confirm or refute the effectiveness of this rescue method. As it appears in the trial records, Kotov was a psychiatric patient, so he had mental problems and was treated as an inpatient. The fact that he did not get confused and even remembered the results of his previous work to pull his shirt off, to wet it with urine, and to breathe through can lead to questioning Kotov's illness.

According to all witnesses' testimonies, including Kotov's own, the patients were driven into the van without clothes. Why was Kotov pulled into the van in his clothes? Did he really survive the trip? The trial records provide more information about this person and his deed. Kotov stated that on the day of the mass killings of patients he came to the Krasnodar psychiatric hospital to get a

certificate confirming his recovery and happened to be near the gas van, where he was forcibly pushed in.<sup>55</sup> So far, his legend has worked. But the records of interrogations with the nurse from this hospital Natal'ya Makhno and the other witness, Anna Kharlamova provide new details. These two women were sisters of Ivan Kotov. According to them, Kotov had never been treated in the hospital, but his sister Makhno worked as a nurse there. On the day of the mass killing of patients Kotov was busy at his wife's funeral who died those days. But it was Kharlamova who went to the hospital to see her sister. She intended to tell Makhno about the death of their brother's wife. Kharlamova could not find her sister, she only saw a big car and panicking patients. Frightened, she left the hospital and a couple of days later, when Kotov met her, she told him what she saw in the hospital.<sup>56</sup> This is how Kotov found out what was going on in the hospital during the day when the patients were killed.

Kotov forgot this story of mass killing of patients in August 1942 until the spring of 1943, when members of the local ChGK commission worked in Krasnodar and questioned the medical staff on what had happened with patients. During the preparation for the Krasnodar trial, many witnesses gave their testimonies to the investigative authorities again. At that time Makhno recalled that in May 1943, she had met one of the former patients, Grigory Kolganov, who had been diagnosed with split consciousness and was supposed to be killed by the Germans in the gas van. She asked him – “Are you Grisha?” and he replied that he is Grigory Kolganov. Then he told her the story of his survival,<sup>57</sup> which Kotov would later pass off as his own, having learned it from his sister. In July 1943, the investigators of the Krasnodar trial were unable to find Kolganov, and Kotov readily replaced him testifying from his both sisters' words about what had happened on the day of the mass killing of patients in the hospital and then about the miracle survival from the gas van.<sup>58</sup> In the open courtroom, Kotov was brought in as a valuable witness to testify about the functions of the gas van, about which the Soviet authorities knew very little. But Kotov was

introduced as having lost his voice due to the suffering he had to come through, so that he would not unconsciously give away his lies.

Why the investigating authorities deliberately made this substitution is obvious: the open Soviet trial during the ongoing war had primarily ideological and propagandistic goal which was to maintain the feeling of hatred towards the enemy. Kotov's case became a successful example that fit this intention. At the same time, showing the case of the Soviet people's resistance to the "fascist aggression" was also important during the ongoing war. Soviet investigative authorities deliberately used Kotov's fabricated testimony, which was nevertheless based on the real experience of a gas van survivor. This survival experience links to the skills provided by the Red Army (learning to defend against chemical attacks) which also could be a remarkable link between "peaceful Soviet citizens" and soldiers, who can defeat or at least resist the enemy.<sup>59</sup> Thanks to the chance, the head of the film group of the North Caucasian Front Troyanovsky ended up in Krasnodar on the very day when the facts of mass killings of people with disabilities were being considered in the court. Therefore, he was able to record testimonies of witnesses, including Kotov, which later became part of the documentary THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT.

### **Conclusion**

A close reading of the Krasnodar trial records and of the documentary THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT shows the mechanism of constructing "the convenient story" in the Soviet propaganda of what had happened with the special victim group during the Nazi occupation. People with disabilities was one of the target Nazi victims. So, the cases of mass killings of the patients of the psychiatric hospitals became legal evidence that has been investigated by the Soviets. However, this data has not received much attention for a long time. Firstly, according to the official Soviet ideology, which is well depicted in the THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT, almost the entire "civilian population" suffered under the

Nazi occupation in each Soviet region. Back in the 1940s, the official Soviet version of “peaceful Soviet citizens” as Nazi victims kept silent about its certain groups of Nazi victims, primarily Jews, but also Roma and people with disabilities. Secondly, the Soviet society was prejudiced against the “mentally ill” and deliberately did not single them out as a separate victim group.<sup>60</sup> Also, limited access to many sources of the war and post-war period, primarily to Soviet data of both open and closed trials of Nazi perpetrators and Soviet collaborators, did not allow researchers to study in detail the history of mass killings of particular victim groups.

Coincidentally, out of four days of the court proceedings the members of the film group of the North Caucasus Front could record the witnesses’ statements about the mass killing of psychiatric patients. These cases were deliberated during the third day of the court hearings exactly by the time the film crew arrived in Krasnodar.<sup>61</sup> But the final product, both the trial sentence and the propaganda documentary *THE PEOPLE’S VERDICT*, aimed not to strengthen the real deeds of the accused during the occupation; the Soviet courts judged the defendants not for the killing of people during the occupation, but for their betrayal of the Motherland. The reasons of mass killing of particular Nazi victim groups including people with disabilities were not discussed in the court. It was more important to highlight that the victims were Soviet citizens in general. They were innocent victims and at the same time conscious resisters (as in case of Ivan Kotov). Numerous testimonies of eyewitnesses – forming the backbone of the prosecution’s evidence and attesting directly to the participation of the defendants in the Nazi crimes – became only trivial considerations when it came to sentencing. The documentary *THE PEOPLE’S VERDICT* underlines the “beastly nature” of Nazism and individual Soviet auxiliaries, who defected to the Nazi side and were justly punished by the Soviet judicial system. This also explains why it was necessary to show the mass execution of eight defendants in presence of many thousands of local citizens.

1. Sudebnyy protsess po delu o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov i ikh posobnikov na territorii g. Krasnodara i Krasnodarskogo kraya v period ikh vremennoy okkupatsii (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1943); *The People's Verdict: A Full Report of the Proceedings at the Krasnodar and Kharkov German Atrocity Trials* (London – New York – Melbourne: Hutchinson & Co, 1944), 7–44.
2. Dmitry Astashkin, ed., *Protsessy nad natsistskimi prestupnikami na territorii SSSR v 1943–1949 gg.: katalog vystavki* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy tsentral'nyy muzey sovremennoy istorii Rossii, 2015), 4.
3. Ilya Bourtman, "'Blood for Blood, Death for Death': The Soviet Military Tribunal in Krasnodar, 1943," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, no. 2 (2008): 259.
4. See: "Sudebnyy protsess po delu o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov i ikh posobnikov na territorii goroda Krasnodara i Krasnodarskogo kraya v period ikh vremennoy okkupatsii," *Izvestiya*, July 15–20, 1943; *Idem*, *Pravda* July 15–19, 1943; Elena Kononenko, "Pered sudom naroda," *Bol'shevik*, July 16, 1943; Ilya Selvinsky, "Sud v Krasnodare," *Znamya* 11 (1945): 25–28.
5. Aleksey Troyanovsky, "Arhivnye materialy frontovogo kinooperatora Marka Troyanovskogo," Online Museum dedicated to the Central Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner Documentary Film Studio, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://csdfmuseum.ru/blog/25>.
6. Sudebnyy protsess po delu o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov, 52.
7. See the longer version of the film, fragment 9:15–10:30 min., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esKAWROLhAQ&rco=1>.
8. The first mass killing of patients of Berezanskaya psychiatric colony took place in October of 1942. More than 300 men and women were driven away in the special gas van. They were suffocated by exhaust fumes during the trip. A small group of 18 patients were killed in October 1942 and the last patients were killed in December

1942. The total number of victims in this colony is 385 (418) people. See: "ChGK Act of the Vyselkovsky district commission on the extermination of patients and workers of the Berezanskaya psychiatric colony by the Nazi occupiers," of February 22, 1944, in State archive of Krasnodar region (hereafter GAKK), f. R-897, op. 1, d. 1, vol. 2, p. 214; Maksim Vatutin, "Massovoe ubiystvo patsientov Berezanskoy psikhkolonii: istoriya okkupatsii v pamyati pokoleniy," in Irina Rebrova, ed., "Pomni o nas...": lyudi s invalidnost'yu – maloizvestnye zhertvy natsistskogo rezhima v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskiy Dom, 2022), 188–207.

9. "Krasnodarskiy protsess," in Astashkin, ed., *Protsessy nad natsistskimi prestupnikami*, 10.

10. "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov i ikh posobnikov na territorii goroda Krasnodara i Krasnodarskogo kraia v period ikh vremennoy okkupatsii," 14 vol. in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive (hereafter USHMM), RG.06-025, Reel 15–17: Central Archive of the Federal Security Service [Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti, FSB] of the Russian Federation, Records Relating to War Crime Trials in the Soviet Union, 1939–1992 (bulk dates 1945–1947), H-16708.

11. Bourtman, "'Blood for Blood, Death for Death'; Tanja Pentter "'Das Urteil des Volkes': Der Kriegsverbrecherprozess von Krasnodar 1943," *Osteuropa* 60 no. 12 (2010): 117–132; Jeremy Hicks, "'Soul Destroyers': Soviet Reporting of Nazi Genocide and its Perpetrators at the Krasnodar and Khar'kov Trials," *History* 98 no. 332 (2013): 531–547; Irina G. Tazhidinova, "Dynamic Lighting Atrocities Occupiers and their Collaborators in the Soviet Press in 1943: the Question of the Preparation of the Information Krasnodar Process," *Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts* 6 no. 2 (2016): 78–86.

12. See more about the creation of the term "peaceful Soviet citizens" in the wartime Soviet media: Karel Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 149–153, 160–164; Idem, "Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population: The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941–45," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 1 (2009): 86–87; Arkadi Zeltser, "Differing Views among Red Army Personnel about the Nazi Mass

Murder of Jews," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 3 (2014): 564.

13. Uwe Kaminsky, "Die NS-'Euthanasie'. Ein Forschungsüberblick," in *Tödliches Mitleid. NS-"Euthanasie" und Gegenwart. Berichte des Arbeitskreises, Band 4*, ed. Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung der nationalsozialistischen "Euthanasie" und Zwangssterilisation (Münster: Klemm und Oelschläger, 2007), 70. See also: Ernst Klee, "Euthanasie" im Dritten Reich. Die "Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens" (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2010); Meike Rotzoll et al., ed., *Die nationalsozialistische "Euthanasie"-Aktion "T4" und ihre Opfer: Geschichte in ethische Konsequenzen für die Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010); Götz Aly, *Die Belasten. "Euthanasie" 1939–1945. Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2013); Brigitte Bailer, Juliane Wetzels, ed., *Mass Murder of People with Disabilities and the Holocaust* (Berlin: IHRA, Metropol Verlag, 2019).

14. See: John Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *Central European History*. Cambridge University Press 32, no. 1 (1999): 1–33; Aly, *Die Belasten*; Wolfram Wette, *Die Wehrmacht. Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg, Legenden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2002).

15. See: Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

16. Tatyana Sysoeva, "Patsienty psikhiatricheskikh klinik i voennoplennye krasnoarmeytsy v okkupirovannykh Vermakhtom regionakh RSFSR: vzaimosvyaz' sudeb," in "Pomni o nas...": *lyudi s invalidnost'yu*, ed. Rebrova, 231–232; Dmytro Tytarenko, "'Euthanasie' in der Ukraine während der deutschen Okkupation: Opfergruppen, Akteure und Umstände der Vernichtung," in "Euthanasie"-Verbrechen im besetzten Europa: *Zur Dimension des nationalsozialistischen Massenmords*, ed. Jörg Osterloh, Jan Eric Schulte, Sybille Steinbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022), 249.

17. Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und*

*Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrussland 1941–1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Ed., 1999), 1068. More about the mass killing of patients in this clinic see: "Psychiatric Clinic in Kolmovo," official website of the project "Remember us...", accessed April 28, 2023, <https://nsvictims.ru/russia/karta/38>.

18. Dieter Pohl, "Nemetskie prestupniki i massovye ubiystva lyudey s invalidnost'yu na okkupirovannoy sovetskoy territorii," in "Pomni o nas...": *lyudi s invalidnost'yu*, ed. Rebrova, 76.

19. The full title of the established in November 1942 commission is "Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Crimes of the Fascist German Invaders and Their Accomplices, and of the Damage They Caused to Citizens, Collective Farms, Public Organizations, State Enterprises, and Institutions of the USSR." "Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR 'On the Formation of the ChGK on Reporting and Investigating the Atrocities of the German Fascist Occupiers and their Accomplices and the Damages they caused to Citizens, Kolkhozes, Public Organizations, State Enterprises of the USSR,' November 2, 1942," in Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History [Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoy istorii, RGASPI], f. 17, op. 125, d. 79, l. 15–20. The decree was published in *Pravda*, November 4, 1942.

20. More about this commission: Marina Sorokina, "People and Procedures: Toward a History of the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the USSR," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 4 (2005): 10–21; Andrej Umansky, "Geschichtsschreiber wider Willen? Einblick in den Quellen der 'Außerordentlichen Staatlichen Kommission' und der 'Zentralen Stelle'," in *Bewusstes Erinnern und Bewusstes Vergessen: Der Juristische Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in den Ländern Mittel und Osteuropas*, ed. Angelika Nußberger and Caroline von Gall (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 355–357. For the most detailed study of different forms of ChGK paperwork based on regional cases see: Irina Rebrova, *Re-Constructing Grassroots Holocaust Memory: The Case of the North Caucasus* (Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020), 64–83.

21. 2018–2022 several projects have been realized to study history and memory of



mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied regions of the RSSR and the memory of mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied regions of the RSSR and the memory of this victim group in Russia. See the official website of the project "Remember us...", <https://nsvictims.ru/>.

22. Irina Rebrova, "Pomni o nas...": *Topografiya massovykh ubiystv lyudey s invalidnost'yu v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR v gody Vtoroy mirovoy voyny: spravochnoe posobie* (2023), <https://nsvictims.ru/russia/catalog/>, 12. For more information about each killing site in the RSFSR see: The official website of the project "Remember us.." in Russian language: <https://nsvictims.ru/russia/karta/> (accessed December 20, 2023).

23. "Kranodarskiy protsess," in *Protsessy nad natsistskimi prestupnikami*, ed. Astashkin, 10.

24. See the verdict of the Krasnodar trial: *The People's Verdict*, 39–44.

25. More about the role of the open Soviet trial in Krasnodar see: Bourtman, "Blood for Blood, Death for Death," Hicks, "Soul Destroyers"; Penter, "Das Urteil des Volkes."

26. The asphyxiation of people with disabilities in mobile gas vans was used in the south of Russia in the summer-fall of 1942 by the members of the Einsatzgruppe D. See more about gas vans: Otto Enoch, "Records Relating to War Crime Trials in the Soviet Union, 1939–1992 (bulk dates 1945–1947)," in USHMMA, RG-06.025, Reel 42: Central Archives of the FSB of the Russian Federation, K-110815; Mathias Beer, "Die Entwicklung der Gaswagen beim Mord an den Juden," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1987): 403–413.

27. Prigovor naroda, 1943, Access: Project Visual History of the Holocaust, <https://www.vhh-mmsi.eu/mmsi/objects/48852/summary/media/9533> (accessed December 20, 2023), 4:24–4:35 min.

28. See: "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 3, 5, 7.

29. "Interrogation protocol with the witness Elizaveta Kontonistova" of June 17, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, p. 1104.

30. "Protocol of inspection of the children's burial site, Chernyshevka village dated June 20, 1943," in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, p. 1512.

31. "ChGK act for the village of Tret'ya Rechka Kochety" of February 13, 1943, in Archival department of the Ust-Labinsk district administration, f. R-4, d. 9, p. 6; "Detskaya kraevaya psikhiatricheskaya bol'nitsa v khutore Tret'ya Rechka Kochety," in: Rebrova, "Pomni o nas...": *Topografiya massovykh ubiystv*, 118–119.

32. "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 14, Photos 57–62.

33. See the longer version of the film, fragment 6:12–6:21 min.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esKAWROLhAQ&rco=1>.

34. PRIGOVOR NARODA (1943), Access: Project Visual History of the Holocaust, <https://www.vhh-mmsi.eu/mmsi/objects/48852/summary/media/9533> (accessed December 20, 2023), 6:12–6:21 min.

35. "ChGK act about the atrocities against children from Yeysk orphanage" of April 15, 1943, in GAKK, f. R-897, op. 1, d. 2, vol. 1, p. 36; "Eyskiy detskiy dom Krayso," in Rebrova, "Pomni o nas...": *Topografiya massovykh ubiystv*, 120–121.

36. "Germans killed 214 children" (leaflet), in State Archive of the Russian Federation (hereafter GARF), f. R-7021, op. 16, d. 3, p. 20; Nikolay Krasnopol'sky "Eyskie palachi," *Eyskaya pravda*, June 1, 1943.

37. See more about this case: Irina Rebrova, Alexander Friedman, "Behinderte Kinder als Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Mordpolitik. Die Beispiele Schumjatschi (Gebiet Smolensk) und Jejsk (Gebiet Krasnodar)," in "Euthanasie"-Verbrechen im besetzten Europa, ed. Osterloh et al., 289–306.

38. In 2018, some FSB files on this case were declassified. One of the lists of the victims included the level of their disability. See: "V Rossii opublikovany dokumenty ob ubiystve 214 detey v Eyske v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny," RIA Novosti, October 7, 2019, <https://ria.ru/20191007/1559498762.html>.

39. "Verdict of the Military Tribunal of the Azov Military Flotilla of the Black Sea Fleet" of September 30, 1943, in GARF, f. R-7021, op. 148, d. 29, p. 30.

40. See more about involvement of the medical staff in the mass killings of people with disabilities in the occupied Russian regions: Valentina Manoylova, "Otraviteli ponevole: tragediya patsientov i vrachey Kurskoy oblastnoy psikhiatricheskoy bol'nitsy," in "Pomni o nas...": *lyudi s invalidnost'yu*, ed. Rebrova, 267–284; Irina Rebrova, "Gehilfen oder Opfer? Die Rolle des lokalen Pflegepersonals im Zuge der NS-Verbrechen gegen Menschen mit Behinderungen in den besetzten Gebieten Russlands," in *Die Rolle der Pflege in der NS-Zeit: Neue Perspektiven, Forschungen und Quellen*, ed. Pierre Pfütsch (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2023), 245–270.

41. See also the detailed information about defendants: Bourtman, "'Blood for Blood, Death for Death'," 250–256.

42. "Interrogation protocol with Mikhail Lastovina" of June 28, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 7, 739–740.

43. "Interrogation protocol with the witness Elizaveta Shapovalova" of June 27, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, 1205–1207.

44. "ChGK act of the Vyselkovsky district commission on the extermination of patients," 214.

45. For the detailed reconstruction of the mass killings of the colony's patients see: Vatutin, "Massovoe ubiystvo patsientov Berezanskoy psikhkolonii," 188–207; "Berezanskaya psikhiatricheskaya koloniya," in "Pomni o nas...": *Topografiya massovykh ubiystv*, ed. Rebrova, 116–117.

46. "Interrogation protocol with Mikhail Lastovina" of June 25, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 7, 267.
47. PRIGOVOR NARODA (1943), Access: Project Visual History of the Holocaust, <https://www.vhh-mmsi.eu/mmsi/objects/48852/summary/media/9533> (accessed December 20, 2023), 4:45–5:55 min. See also: "Interrogation protocol with Timofey Kozel'sky" of June 27, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, 1120–1124.
48. See the summary table of the age, place of birth, and education of all defendants in: Bourtman, "Blood for Blood, Death for Death," 251.
49. "Indictment of the 'Smersh' department of the North Caucasus Front against Mikhail Lastovina" of June 29, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 7, 752.
50. See: Rebrova, "Gehilfen oder Opfer?," 261–262; Galina Feoktistova, "Tragediya v Burashevo," *Veche Tveri*, January 20, 1999. The materials of this process are still classified in Russian Federation.
51. More about class struggle and Soviet trials see: Friedrich-Christian Schroeder, "Das Sowjetrecht als Grundlage der Prozesse gegen deutsche Kriegsgefangene, in Sowjetische Militärtribunale," in *Die Verurteilung deutscher Kriegsgefangener 1941–1953*, vol. 1, ed. Andreas Hilger, Ute Schmidt, and Günter Wagenlehner (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2001), 71; Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 172; Bourtman, "Blood for Blood, Death for Death," 255.
52. PRIGOVOR NARODA (1943), Access: Project Visual History of the Holocaust, <https://www.vhh-mmsi.eu/mmsi/objects/48852/summary/media/9533> (accessed December 20, 2023), 7:09–7:28 min.
53. See: Leonid Shifrin, "Furgon zakryli, vklyuchili dvigatel', i stalo nechem dyshat',"

Website about Voronezh, <https://moe-online.ru/pro/pomnim/article/1147> (accessed December 25, 2023).

54. "Interrogation protocol with Ivan Kotov" of June 17, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 7, 1111–1114.

55. Ibid.

56. "Interrogation protocol with the witness Anna Kharlamova" of June 14, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, 1058–1059.

57. "Interrogation protocol with the witness Natal'ya Makhno" of June 15, 1943, in "Delo o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov," vol. 5, 1078–1081.

58. "Interrogation protocol with Ivan Kotov" of June 17, 1943, 1111–1115.

59. I thank Valérie Pozner, who drew my attention to this reasonable explanation for bringing Kotov into open court.

60. See: Nikolai Krementsov, "From 'Beastly Philosophy' to Medical Genetics: Eugenics in Russia and the Soviet Union," *Annals of Science* 68, no. 1 (2011): 61–92; Aleksandr Podrabinek, *Karatel'naya meditsina* (New York: Khronika, 1979); Carl Gershman, "Psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union," *Society* 21, no. 5 (1984): 54–59.

61. Troyanovsky and other members of the film group came to Krasnodar in the afternoon of July 16, 1943. It was already the third day of the court hearings. Troyanovsky, "Arhivnye materialy frontovogo kinooperatora Marka Troyanovskogo."

**References**

Aly, Götz. *Die Belasten. "Euthanasie" 1939–1945. Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2013.

Astashkin, Dmitry, ed. *Protsessy nad natsistskimi prestupnikami na territorii SSSR v 1943–1949 gg.: katalog vystavki.* Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy tsentral'nyy muzey sovremennoy istorii Rossii, 2015.

Bailer, Brigitte, and Juliane Wetzel, ed. *Mass Murder of People with Disabilities and the Holocaust.* Berlin: IHRA, Metropol Verlag, 2019.

Beer, Mathias. "Die Entwicklung der Gaswagen beim Mord an den Juden." *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1987): 403–413.

Berkhoff, Karel. "Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population: The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941–45." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 1 (2009): 61–105.

Berkhoff, Karel. *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Bourtman, Ilya. "'Blood for Blood, Death for Death': The Soviet Military Tribunal in Krasnodar, 1943." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, no. 2 (2008): 246–265.

Connelly, John. "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice." *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 1–33.

Feoktistova, Galina. "Tragediya v Burashevo." *Veche Tveri*, January 20, 1999.

Gerlach, Christian. *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrussland 1941–1944.* Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999.

Gershman, Carl. "Psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union." *Society* 21, no. 5 (1984): 54–59.

Hanebrink, Paul. *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018.

Hicks, Jeremy. "'Soul Destroyers': Soviet Reporting of Nazi Genocide and its Perpetrators at the Krasnodar and Khar'kov Trials." *History* 98 no. 332 (2013): 531–547.

Kaminsky, Uwe. "Die NS-'Euthanasie'. Ein Forschungsüberblick." In *Tödliches Mitleid. NS-"Euthanasie" und Gegenwart. Berichte des Arbeitskreises*, edited by Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung der nationalsozialistischen "Euthanasie" und Zwangssterilisation. Vol. 4. 15–46. Münster: Klemm und Oelschläger, 2007.

Klee, Ernst. *"Euthanasie" im Dritten Reich. Die "Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens."* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2010.

Kononenko, Elena. "Pered sudom naroda." *Bol'shevik*, July 16, 1943.

Krasnopolsky, Nikolay. "Eyskie palachi." *Eyskaya Pravda*, June 1, 1943.

Krementsov, Nikolai. "From 'Beastly Philosophy' to Medical Genetics: Eugenics in Russia and the Soviet Union." *Annals of Science* 68, no. 1 (2011): 61–92.

Manoylova, Valentina. "Otraviteli ponevole: tragediya patsientov i vrachey Kurskoy oblastnoy psikhiatricheskoy bol'nitsy." In *"Pomni o nas...": lyudi s invalidnost'yu – maloizvestnye zhertvy natsistskogo rezhima v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR*, edited by Irina Rebrova, 267–284. Saint Petersburg: Evropeiskiy dom, 2022.

Penter, Tanja. "'Das Urteil des Volkes': Der Kriegsverbrecherprozess von Krasnodar 1943." *Osteuropa* 60, no. 12 (2010): 117–132.

Podrabinek, Aleksandr. *Karatel'naya meditsina*. New York: Khronika, 1979.

Pohl, Dieter. "Nemetskie prestupniki i massovye ubiystva lyudey s invalidnost'yu na okkupirovannoy sovetskoy territorii." In *"Pomni o nas...": lyudi s invalidnost'yu –*

*maloizvestnye zhertvy natsistskogo rezhima v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR*, edited by Irina Rebrova, 74–81. Saint Petersburg: Evropeiskiy dom, 2022.

Rebrova, Irina, and Alexander Friedman. "Behinderte Kinder als Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Mordpolitik. Die Beispiele Schumjatschi (Gebiet Smolensk) und Jejsk (Gebiet Krasnodar)." In *"Euthanasie"-Verbrechen im besetzten Europa: Zur Dimension des nationalsozialistischen Massenmords*, edited by Jörg Osterloh, Jan Eric Schulte, and Sybille Steinbacher, 289–306. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022.

Rebrova, Irina. *Re-Constructing Grassroots Holocaust Memory: The Case of the North Caucasus*. Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020.

Rebrova, Irina. "Gehilfen oder Opfer? Die Rolle des lokalen Pflegepersonals im Zuge der NS-Verbrechen gegen Menschen mit Behinderungen in den besetzten Gebieten Russlands." In *Die Rolle der Pflege in der NS-Zeit: Neue Perspektiven, Forschungen und Quellen*, edited by Pierre Pfütsch, 245–270. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2023.

Rebrova, Irina. "Pomni o nas...": *Topografiya massovykh ubiystv lyudey s invalidnost'yu v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR v gody Vtoroy mirovoy voyny: spravochnoe posobie*. Berlin: ZfA TU Berlin, 2023. <https://nsvictims.ru/russia/catalog/>.

Rotzoll, Meike, ed. *Die nationalsozialistische "Euthanasie"-Aktion "T4" und ihre Opfer: Geschichte in ethische Konsequenzen für die Gegenwart*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010.

Schroeder, Friedrich-Christian. "Das Sowjetrecht als Grundlage der Prozesse gegen deutsche Kriegsgefangene, in Sowjetische Militärtribunale." In *Die Verurteilung deutscher Kriegsgefangener 1941–1953*, edited by Andreas Hilger, Ute Schmidt, and Günter Wagenlehner. Vol. 1, 69–92. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2001.

Selvinsky, Ilya. "Sud v Krasnodare." *Znamya* 11 (1945): 25–28.

Shifrin, Leonid. "Furgon zakryli, vklyuchili dvigatel', i stalo nechem dyshat'." Website



about Voronezh. <https://moe-online.ru/pro/pomnim/article/1147>.

Sorokina, Marina. "People and Procedures: Toward a History of the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the USSR." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 4 (2005): 1–35.

"Sudebnyy protsess po delu o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov i ikh posobnikov na territorii goroda Krasnodara i Krasnodarskogo kraya v period ikh vremennoy okkupatsii." *Izvestiya*, July 15–20, 1943.

Sysoeva, Tatyana. "Patsienty psikhiatricheskikh klinik i voennoplennye krasnoarmeytsy v okkupirovannykh Vermakhtom regionakh RSFSR: vzaimosvyaz' sudeb." In "Pomni o nas...": *lyudi s invalidnost'yu – maloizvestnye zhertvy natsistskogo rezhima v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR*, edited by Irina Rebrova, 231–251. Saint Petersburg: Evropeiskiy dom, 2022.

Tazhidinova, Irina. "Dynamic Lighting Atrocities Occupiers and their Collaborators in the Soviet Press in 1943: the Question of the Preparation of the Information Krasnodar Process." *Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts* 6, no. 2 (2016): 78–86.

Tytarenko, Dmytro. "'Euthanasie' in der Ukraine während der deutschen Okkupation: Opfergruppen, Akteure und Umstände der Vernichtung." In "Euthanasie"-Verbrechen im besetzten Europa: *Zur Dimension des nationalsozialistischen Massenmords*, edited by Jörg Osterloh, Jan Eric Schulte, and Sybille Steinbacher, 245–267. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022.

Umansky, Andrej. "Geschichtsschreiber wider Willen? Einblick in den Quellen der 'Außerordentlichen Staatlichen Kommission' und der 'Zentralen Stelle'." In *Bewusstes Erinnern und Bewusstes Vergessen: Der Juristische Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in den Ländern Mittel und Osteuropas*, edited by Angelika Nußberger and Caroline von

Gall, 347–374. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

“V Rossii opublikovany dokumenty ob ubiystve 214 detey v Eyske v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny.” RIA Novosti, October 7, 2019.  
<https://ria.ru/20191007/1559498762.html>.

Vatutin, Maksim. “Massovoe ubiystvo patsientov Berezanskoy psikhkolonii: istoriya okkupatsii v pamyati pokoleniy.” In “Pomni o nas...”: *lyudi s invalidnost'yu – maloizvestnye zhertvy natsistskogo rezhima v okkupirovannykh regionakh RSFSR*, edited by Irina Rebrova, 188–207. Saint Petersburg: Evropeiskiy dom, 2022.

Weiner, Amir. *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Wette, Wolfram. *Die Wehrmacht. Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg, Legenden*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2002.

Zeltser, Arkadi. “Differing Views among Red Army Personnel about the Nazi Mass Murder of Jews.” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 3 (2014): 563–590.

### **Credits**

1. RGAKFD 5056 © original copyright holder.
2. RGAKFD 5056 © original copyright holder.