

ACTIVITY OF SURGEON M.Z. DZHINCHVELADZE IN KHARKOV DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to highlight the biography of Georgian native Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze, who was in Kharkov during the Nazi occupation as a prisoner of war.*

Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze was born in 1891 in Tiflis (Tbilisi) into a family of Georgian intellectuals. In 1916, he graduated from the medical faculty of Kharkov University and began working as a surgeon. After the Civil War, the Dzhinchveladze family moved to Akhaltsikhe.

On June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. G.Z. Dzhinchveladze, together with his son Amiran, went to the front. Soon he was captured and taken to Kharkov. The arriving prisoner doctors treated typhus patients, patients with starvation and edema, and wounded prisoners of war.

Soon, Georgiy Zakharovich was transferred to work first in the 7th polyclinic, and later in the 1st city hospital, the 13th school, where the Germans kept seriously wounded captured Red Army soldiers. Grigory Zakharovich escaped and hid with his acquaintances.

On February 15, 1943, Kharkov was liberated and Georgiy Zakharovich was appointed the leading surgeon of the 1st Army sorting hospital. In mid-March, the Germans again occupied the city. Dzhinchveladze decided to stay with the wounded. On March 14–17, 1943, the Germans killed wounded Red Army soldiers: they burned them, shot them, and mutilated their bodies. Thus, about 800 people were killed.

After escaping from the hospital, Georgiy Zakharovich got a job as a resident doctor in the surgical department of the Oleksandrivska Hospital. A traitor found out and betrayed G.Z. Dzhinchveladze, who again became a prisoner of war.

On August 23, 1943, the Red Army entered Kharkov. For some time, M.Z. Dzhinchveladze continued to work in Kharkov. After the Victory over the Nazis, Georgiy Zakharovich returned to Akhaltsikhe.

In conclusion, it can be stated that in difficult historical periods, the Georgian people extended a helping hand to Ukrainians. And the fate of Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze is a vivid example of this.

Keywords: *Mikhail Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze, Kharkov, Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, World War II, prisoner of war, doctor, 1st army sorting hospital*

The Georgian people have helped Ukrainians defend their independence for centuries. World War II was no exception. When the German Nazis launched a war against the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and began occupying its territory, thousands of Georgians were mobilized and voluntarily joined the Red Army. They understood that by defending the western regions of the Soviet Union, they were also defending their native Georgia from Nazi enslavement. However,

the fate of the fighters on the front line varied.

The purpose of this article is to highlight the biography of a native of Georgia, Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze, who was in Kharkov during the years of Nazi occupation as a prisoner of war.

In Soviet times, he was mentioned in the local press, dedicated to the events of 1943, when at the beginning of the second occupation of Kharkov, the Germans burned hundreds of Soviet wounded in the 1st Army Sorting Hospital, located in the clinical town on Trinkler Street, 5. Among those who survived that terrible massacre was also the surgeon G.Z. Dzhinchveladze. Ya. Donskoi and A. Shapoval wrote about this terrible event in the book "Fighters in White Coats". This work tells the story of the rescue of Red Army soldiers by Kharkov medics during World War II [**Donskoy Y., Shapoval A., 1966**].

More detailed information (but still fragmentary) is presented in an article by I. Strel'nik, published in 2014 in the local newspaper "Evening Kharkov" [**Strel'nik I., 2014**]. Periodically, the tragic events of March 1943 are covered on the pages of the university newspaper "Medical University" [see for example: **Il'yin V., 2016**].

The source base is broader. For the first time, G.Z. Dzhinchveladze is mentioned as a witness in the "Final Act of the Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Atrocities of the German-Fascist Invaders in Kharkov on the Destruction of Wounded Red Army Soldiers on the Territory of the 1st Army Sorting Hospital", which is stored in the Kharkov Region State Archive (starting now – KRSA) [**KhRSA**] and in the protocols of the Judicial Process on the Atrocities of the German-Fascist Invaders on the Territory of the City of Kharkov and the Kharkov Region during their Temporary Occupation, which took place on December 15–18, 1943 [**Trial, 1943**].

In the 1960s and 1970s, Ukraine conducted active search and research work to study various facts that occurred during the war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. During this work, participants of World War II were interviewed. G.Z. Dzhinchveladze sent his memoirs to the Kharkov Medical Institute (now the Kharkov National Medical Institute), where they are kept in the museum fund [**Foundation G.Z. Dzhinchveladze**]. The memoirs were published only in 2015 in a collection of memoirs of medics about their participation in the war against the Nazis [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015**].

Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze was born in 1891 in Tiflis (Tbilisi) into a family of Georgian intelligentsia. His father served as a clerk for the famous writer Ilya Chavchavadze. His mother graduated from high school and raised her children. There were twelve of them in the Dzhinchveladze family, and George was the eldest [**Strel'nik I., 2014**]. After graduating from a noble private gymnasium in 1911, the young man entered the Faculty of Medicine at Kharkov University. In 1916, he graduated from the university and remained to work as a surgeon in Kharkov. Here he married Maria Adamovna, the daughter of a local wealthy merchant Ananov, and here his eldest daughter Valentina was born [**Foundation G.Z. Dzhinchveladze; Strel'nik I., 2014**].

After the Civil War, the Dzhinchveladze family moved to Akhaltsikhe. Here, the already qualified surgeon continued to practice medicine and did a lot for the development of medicine in the region. In the interwar period, he was the "only surgeon from Borjomi to Gadauti", achieved the opening of a city hospital, and headed the surgical department there [**Strel'nik I., 2014**]. Already at this time, the physician began scientific work and published the results of his observations in scientific journals [**Fond G.Z. Dzhinchveladze**].

Georgiy Zakharovich did not break off relations with his Kharkov friends and colleagues,

he kept in touch with them, and perhaps they even met sometimes. There is no mention of this in the available documents, but the fact that the Georgian friend and colleague was remembered in Kharkov is evidenced by subsequent events.

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union. G.Z. Dzhinchveladze was already 50 years old and he could have continued to work at home. But the doctor decided otherwise and went to the front with his son Amiran.

Soon G.Z. Dzhinchveladze was captured. He spent eight months in a concentration camp in Germany. With special warmth, Georgiy Zakharovich remembers a German woman named Elsa, who helped him survive (he would later name his granddaughter in her honor) [**Foundation G.Z. Dzhinchveladze**]. In 1942 a group of prisoner-of-war medics was transferred to Kharkov. What Georgiy Zakharovich felt as he walked through the city of his youth is unknown. Perhaps the reason for his appearance in Kharkov was too sad. And in his memoirs, he does not mention his emotions. He only notes that he saw "the burned-down building of the Department Store on Pavlovskaya Square" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015**].

First, the arriving group of doctors was placed in a prison located on Kholodna Hora. Those who arrived at the prison were examined by a doctor – the head of the sanitary unit. After the inspection, they were locked in an empty cell. "Tired and hungry, we lay down on the bare floor together, covering ourselves with one overcoat, since the Germans took away the overcoats of many along the way. It was cold, and after the experience, no one could sleep for a minute" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 26**]. Only the next day the prisoners were given mattresses, lice-infested, "dirty, like floor rags, with traces of various human secretions and blood" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 26**].

The captured doctors who arrived treated typhoid patients, patients with hunger edema, and wounded prisoners of war. They had to work in terrible conditions: "There was no alcohol, iodine and no medications at all; for bandaging they used individual bags and old dirty bandages that had been preserved from the wounded or other prisoners of war" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 26**].

In January 1943 Georgiy Zakharovich was transferred to work at the 7th Polyclinic, which was located near the prison. It was headed by a local doctor, Oleksandr Ivanovych Meshchaninov. Through the Red Cross, Oleksandr Ivanovych managed to open a hospital for prisoners of war in his polyclinic. The Germans provided almost no food for sick prisoners. Then O.I. Meshchaninov and his subordinates went to the market, to people's homes, and asked Kharkov residents for food to improve the nutrition of their patients. In addition, the patients themselves got food for themselves. They lowered cans of food tied to ropes from the windows, and people passing by put bread, vegetables, and even money in them. At first, the polyclinic was guarded by prisoners of war assigned for this purpose. This was used by daredevils from the hospital's patients and made escapes. They were helped in this by medics under the leadership of O.I. Meshchaninov, who supplied fugitives with clothes and documents. Seeing this situation, the Germans transferred part of the prisoners of war medics and patients to the 1st city hospital (known in the city as Oleksandrivska), located in another part of Kharkov. Next to this hospital was the 13th school, where the Germans kept seriously wounded captured Red Army soldiers. Therefore, this area was guarded by the Gestapo and it was more difficult to escape from here.

Even so, several medics, including G.Z. Dzhinchveladze, decided to escape. However, something unexpected happened: two doctors were transferred to a tractor plant, and two more were released by local doctors earlier. Left alone, Grigory Zakharovich did not dare to escape. Soon he was transferred to the 13th school itself, which made escape almost impossible. However, it was possible. One day (most likely shortly before the first liberation of Kharkov), a German

officer announced the departure of the wounded Red Army soldiers to the rear. "I didn't sleep all night," G.Z. Djinjveladze wrote in his memoirs, "at dawn, I quietly went downstairs, saw that the guard went into the guardhouse to warm up, carefully passed by, went out into the street and decided to run away" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 28**]. The escape was successful. Grigory Zakharovich reached Klochkovska Street, then crossed Dzerzhinsky Square (now – Freedom Square) and reached his acquaintances.

He stayed with them until February 1943. Early that month, Soviet troops launched an offensive on Kharkov, and the city was liberated from the Germans on the 10th. "Everyone was crying, hugging, kissing, and congratulating each other on the liberation. I ran out into the street and threw myself to hug and kiss the soldiers and commanders passing by me" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 28**]. Learning of G.Z. Djinjveladze's specialty, he was sent to the headquarters to the chief of the medical service of the 69th Army Morozov. On February 18, Georgiy Zakharovich was appointed the leading surgeon of the 1st Army sorting hospital, located in the buildings of the clinical town on Trinkler Street.

But at this time, the situation at the front changed. On March 4, the Nazis launched an offensive and on the 10th of March, they again occupied Kharkov. A few days before this, the evacuation of the wounded began. But there were so many of them that they did not have time to evacuate. According to G.Z. Djinjveladze, about a thousand people remained in the army hospital where he worked. Therefore, Georgiy Zakharovich decided to stay with them. When the Germans entered the city, the chief of the medical unit of the hospital, Yevhenii Katkov, who had not managed to evacuate, came to him and said that the German command had offered Soviet doctors to continue to treat wounded Red Army soldiers. "I came to the hospital and was horrified," the surgeon recalled, "the corpses of dead Red Army soldiers were lying in the corridors, windows were knocked out in all departments, glass was everywhere, plaster was crumbling in the operating room. In the corridors and passages, along with the corpses, completely helpless wounded are lying and sitting, many have begun gas gangrene, and they need urgent operations" [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 29**].

When the Germans returned to Kharkov, they burned down houses with fierce hatred, throwing grenades into basements and cellars where people could hide. On the morning of March 14, an officer of the SS Division "Adolf Hitler" named Schultz arrived at the hospital and ordered all the wounded to be placed in building number 8. Around three o'clock in the afternoon, a large group of soldiers arrived. They nailed the doors of this building shut, doused it with gasoline, and set it on fire. People burned alive. Anyone who jumped out of the windows was shot with machine guns. In this massacre, more than 300 Soviet, Czech, and Slovak soldiers and officers were killed. 53 people survived. Anyone who jumped out of the windows was shot with machine guns. In this massacre, more than 300 Soviet, Czech, and Slovak soldiers and officers were killed. 53 people survived [**Donskoy Y., Shapoval A., 1966: 86**]. According to G.Z. Djinjveladze, about 350 people died and about 70 were saved [**Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 30**]. Among the survivors was G.Z. Djinjveladze. Here is how he describes this event in September 1943: "I was in the operating room on the second floor of the building, preparing to operate on the wounded. At about 3:00 pm, I heard a dull explosion on the first floor and ran out into the corridor to find out what had happened. A nurse told me that the Germans had set fire to the building and nailed the entrance doors shut. I tried to lead the sisters and the wounded who could move around to the doors on the north side of the building, but they were also nailed shut. I ordered everyone to go up to the second floor and take shelter on the stairs and in the bathroom. Soon the second floor caught fire and the stairs were filled with smoke. Flames were approaching

them. Suddenly, the shooting outside stopped and we saw through the window that the Germans got into their cars and drove away from the hospital. We jumped out of the burning building through the windows on the second floor. A few minutes later, the floors in the burning building collapsed, and the wounded who were in the building burned to death. About 30 wounded who had jumped out of the windows and been shot by the Germans were lying near the building" [KhRSA: 49-50].

From March 15 to 17, the Nazis continued to come to the hospital and kill the wounded in other buildings. In those three days, they shot people right in the wards, killing another 400 people. They also tortured the defenseless people, gouging out their eyes, knocking out their teeth, and carving stars on their bodies. And they crucified one Red Army soldier at the gates of the hospital [Donskoy Y., Shapoval A., 1966: 86-87].

After escaping from the hospital, Georgiy Zakharovich lived with acquaintances for three weeks. He had no documents. And without them, it was dangerous to go outside, as he could be arrested. A woman helped him get a passport, which made it possible not only to walk around the city but also to get a job. In late April or early May, G.Z. Djinjveladze got a job as an ordinary doctor in the surgical department of the Oleksandrivska Hospital (the same hospital where he worked as a prisoner of war in 1942–1943). The department's consultant was Professor Holoborotko. He recognized and gave away his colleague. G.Z. Djinjveladze again became a prisoner of war. He no longer had the right to move freely around the city, to receive food. He had to endure the abuse and even beatings of German soldiers.

In August 1943, Soviet troops again launched an offensive on Kharkov. The Germans began preparing the prisoners of war for evacuation to the west. Georgiy Zakharovich decided to escape. He managed to hide with a university friend. But, in order not to expose his friend to danger, he moved to other acquaintances. So, he hid for 17 days [Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 31]. On August 23, 1943, the Red Army entered Kharkov.

"In the last two weeks before the liberation, the guns were constantly thundering, shells and mines were exploding, houses were burning, bridges, power plants, and factories were flying into the air. By noon on August 23, everything had calmed down. There was a terrible silence, only occasionally single shots were heard from afar. At dawn, the advanced units of the Red Army appeared. Behind the infantry and cars followed a line of cars with artillery, anti-aircraft guns, etc. A mass of people appeared on the streets, everyone ran out to meet our Red Army. It was again the 69th Army, and I was again appointed the leading surgeon in one of the evacuation hospitals," Georgiy Zakharovich recalled [Memoirs of a doctor, 2015: 31].

For some time M.Z. Jinchveladze will continue to work in Kharkov.

In September 1943, the Kharkov Regional Extraordinary State Commission was established to establish and investigate the atrocities committed by the German-fascist invaders and their accomplices, and the damage they caused to citizens, collective farms, public organizations, state enterprises, and institutions of the USSR. It included representatives of the Soviet, party, Komsomol, trade union organizations, journalists, and doctors. The bodies of the dead were exhumed from opened graves on the territory of the clinical town. The commission established the causes of the death of the Red Army soldiers. When drawing up the act on the results of the exhumation of the graves, witnesses and surviving participants of the events of March 1943 were interviewed [KhRSA]. Among those interviewed was Georgiy Zakharovich.

On December 15–18, 1943, an open trial was held in Kharkov against three German soldiers and a local collaborator. During the court sessions, the event that took place in March 1943 on the territory of the 1st Army Evacuation Hospital was also considered. Surgeon

G.Z. Djinjveladze testified to this episode at the court hearing on December 17, 1943 [**Trial, 1943: 69**].

After the Victory over the Nazis, Georgy Zakharovich returned to Akhaltsik. He continued to treat people and headed the surgical department of one of the city hospitals. He performed operations until he was 80 years old. He was also involved in scientific activities. His scientific articles were published in the Ukrainian journal "Surgery" [**Foundation G.Z. Dzhinchveladze**].

Georgiy Zakharovich Dzhinchveladze died in 1973.

After the victory over the Nazis, Georgiy Zakharovich returned to Akhaltsikhe. The neighbor of the surgeon, who was respected in the city, Larysa Oksuzyan sadly recalled in 2014: "I remember when his mother was alive, she often went for walks in the park with Georgiy and his wife, where an orchestra played in the evenings. The mother always wore national Georgian clothing – very beautiful. Georgiy always had an unchanging cane. Now neither Georgiy nor his children are alive, but there are grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They now live in Tbilisi" [**Strel'nik I., 2014**].

In conclusion, it can be stated that in difficult historical periods, the Georgian people have extended a helping hand to Ukrainians. And the fate of Georgiy Zakharovich Djinjveladze is a vivid example of this.

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