

«THE KHERSON TITANIC»

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Self-edited

«The Kherson Titanic» – this is how the steamship «The Knyaz Potemkin» was called after its collision with the cargo steamer «The Askold» in 1912.

«The Knyaz Potemkin» was built in 1892 in Mykolaiv and was considered to be one of the best in the Russian Shipping and Trade Association. The ship was in excellent condition, as it had just been thoroughly repaired for more than 50 thousand rubles. The steamer under Iván Krutikov's command followed the route Kherson – Mykolaiv – Odesa, and on the thirteenth of July, near island Berezan at about two o'clock in the morning, «The Knyaz Potemkin» collided with the cargo steamship «The Askold», which was on its way to Kherson.

According to the newspaper «The Southern Rus», the cause of the accident was unknown. The eyewitnesses only mentioned that strong crackling was heard, and, a minute later, water poured into the steamer. Incredible panic began among the passengers. Hundreds of people, including women and children, ran out of their cabins wearing only lingerie, they rushed about the steamer praying for help. Screams «*We are about to share the Titanic's fate!*» were heard from everywhere. It should be mentioned that the sinking of the RMS Titanic occurred on the fourteenth of April of that same year, 1912.

There were 278 passengers aboard «The Knyaz Potemkin» including 20 prisoners and 10 guardsmen. To make things worse, a riot began on the ship. The prisoners demanded liberation to at least have a chance to survive.

«The Knyaz Potemkin» sank within an hour. The steamers «The Askold», «The Harax», «The Orion» and «The Hercules» took part in the rescue operation. Unfortunately, because of tsarist censorship many facts were hidden, and, as a result, the number of victims remains unknown to this day. The information that we do have is that among the survivors there were such prominent people as Governor General and Member of Parliament Mr. Selivanov, a colonel's wife

Lyubov Lerk and the singer of the Odessa Opera Anastasia Smolievskaya. An interesting fact: upon arrival in Odessa, the passengers Serebrenyuk and Leonov made a report to the police about theft. According to the victims, someone had stolen their wallets during the panic on the ship, which contained 1700 rubles in total.

One of the possible causes of the catastrophe may have been revenge of the competitor –The Dniepr Shipping Company that owned «The Askold». The sunken steamer was raised, repaired and left in Mykolaiv. «The Knyaz Potemkin» served until 1944, and within these years it sank more than five times! Although it continued to go under the same name, people called it «The Kherson Titanic» and tried not to use it, preferring other steamships.

Based on: <http://mycity.kherson.ua/avtory-ag/andreev-anatolij/kn-potemkin.html>

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