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“Love... Fatherland and Freedom!”

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This article is devoted to the 190 anniversary of the Decembrist revolt. It provides information about one of the leaders of the Southern society – Vasily Lvovich Davydov. A poet, a brave officer of the Russian army, a participant of the Patriotic war of 1812, awarded by numerous awards for courage, he became an active republican who was jealously defending the ideas of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Davydov spent 13 years on penal service in Siberia, and from 1839 to 1855 he had been living with his family on the settlement in Krasnoyarsk, where he passed away. His love to Aleksandra Ivanovna Potapova – the Decembrist's wife, became the best part of his destiny. Their unique marriage became the source of admiration for the contemporaries and still continues to inspire our contemporaries by the manifestation of female self-sacrifice, fidelity and true love.

Keywords: Decembrist's revolt, poet, brave officer, republican, link, settlement in Krasnoyarsk, female fidelity and dedication.

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2015 timed to 190 anniversary of the uprising in Senate Square. After its suppression and trial, more than 120 outstanding sons of Russia were sent to hard labor in Siberia. Vasily Lvovich Davydov – a brave officer, the holder of the order, a participant of the legendary Battle of Borodino and the adjutant of Prince Pyotr Bagration was among them.

“In the Siberian desert / There rises an abandoned hill / Covered with withered grass, / Not framed with stones ... / Many words of the epitaph / Were almost erased ... / “Here lies ... the victim ... of tyranny ... / The husband and the father ... forever ... / Shackles... exile ... his whole life ... / Love ... Fatherland and freedom” (Davydov, 2004: 402).

This poem, written in French, was written by V.L. Davydov. Created in 1827-28 at hard labor in Chita ostrog, it became truly prophetic. “Love ... Fatherland and freedom” – in this exact order, in accordance to the degree of their importance for the author, the priorities were highlighted in the poem.

Vasily Lvovich Davydov was a descendant of the ancient and glorious names of Davydov, Raevsky and Potemkin that descendants did a lot for the glory of Russia. Having received an excellent education, Vasily developed a lot of talents: he was a poet, the author of lively poetic improvisations and epigrams, a witty conversationalist, an active Republican, a bold

and fearless officer in the Russian Army, awarded for bravery during the War of 1812 by the Orders of St. Anne and St. Vladimir, the **Order of Merit** of the **Prussian** Crown, and a golden court sword with the inscription "For Bravery" (Davydov, 2004: 11).

Distinguished by freethinking and republican views from his early years, in 1819 he became "not a random fellow traveler, but a zealous member" of the Union of Welfare, vehemently gravitated for the approval of justice, equality and fraternity between people (Davydov, 2004: 12). According to Vasily Lvovich, who was brought up on the progressive ideas of Western Europe of the 18th century, it is a free choice that makes a person capable of moral actions. Researcher E.V. Klimenko writes that "freedom is proclaimed by the Enlightenment not just as good, but as a condition of manifestation of virtue or order, justice or injustice, following the duty or neglecting it ..." (Klimenko, 2014: 11).

In the same year of 1819 Davydov settled in the family estate of the village of Kamenka, Kiev Governorate, where the second most important event of his life took place – civil marriage with Sashenka Potapova.

Alexandra Ivanovna Potapova was the daughter of an early deceased gubernial secretary. Orphaned at the age of 4, she was taken in by Davydov's mother Ekaterina Nikolaevna. According to the memoirs of Decembrist N.I. Lorer she was "very gentle, distinguished by her intelligence and angelic heart" (Laletina, 2001: 13).

The Davydovs love story is unique. Strong feeling that joined them in their early youth withstood many tests. They had their church wedding only in 1825 after Ekaterina Nikolaevna's death, who did not give her blessings to such an unfavorable marriage of her son with an orphan. By this time the Davydovs had already had four children.



Alexandra Ivanovna was expecting a fifth child, when the uprising in Senate Square took place. Vasily Lvovich was arrested in Kiev in January 1826, imprisoned in Peter and Paul Fortress and in July 1826 one of the first was sent in shackles to the place of hard labor in Siberia.

It is known that Davydov behaved courageously during the investigation and trial, but it was very hard for him to endure the separation with his wife and children. With all his courage in the battles, in life's trials his character turned to be not very firm. Vasily Lvovich's friends said that "misfortune broke his weak nature", on the way to Siberia he was often sad and crying (Laletina, 1997: 10).

In confirmation, Davydov's letter written on the way to hard labor, is quoted, "My invaluable friend, my angel ... 6000 versts separate me from you and the children. The only thing supports me, gives me some life – the hope to see you. When I am deprived of it, then it is all over for me. God is merciful. I pray Him with tears for you and me, whether He will not take pity on such a great misfortune, as mine? ... All misfortunes are nothing to me; all the miseries are insignificant in comparison with our terrible separation... If you see me, you will find me a different person, amended by a terrible misfortune with the grace of God; but my love for you is still the same, it is impossible to diminish or to add it ..." (Laletina, 1997: 11).

Davydov was withheld from despair with the hope of meeting his wife, but for that period it was hard labor at **Blagodatsky** mine and in Chita dudgeon.

Only in March 1828, 26-year-old Alexandra Ivanovna came to her husband in Chita, leaving five children to the relatives. At this time the older daughter was eight years old, and the youngest son was one year old. None of the Decembrists' wives made greater sacrifice than Alexandra Ivanovna. Her moral act of heroism was glorified by the Decembrist himself in the expressive poem that manifested his feelings, which was created on 21 April, 1828: "Oh Thou, the only one / Who gave me a chance to know the happiness of existence / And who has managed to turn in joy / Both my exile and my suffering. / Heavenly angel, my sweet friend! / What can I offer you this day? / Everything belongs to you, my heart and my life, / Which I have only because of your love. / But also take my portrait, as you wish, / Which I now put your feet. / And say, looking at it – / Who could love as he did?" (the original in the French language) (Davydov, 2004: 403).

In Chita, a life full of work, worries and hardships, which she bore with great humility, causing deep respect from others started for Alexandra Ivanovna. Decembrist A. Rosen noted the extraordinary gentleness of her character, always smooth mood. From the place of hard labor, in a letter to General N.N. Raevsky (her husband's brother), Davydova wrote: "You have not forgotten me and your poor brother, informed us about our children as a father and a true brother ... My husband is in deep grief for our children, but trust in God and you, as well as I. I have already devoted myself to my poor husband, and no matter how much I regret separation with my children, but I am consoled by the fact that I am fulfilling my sacred duty" (Laletina, 1997: 11).

This is an example of the Great Women sacrifice, which is an integral part of true love!

In Chita and Petrovsky plant four children were born in the Davydovs family. Upon expiration of hard labor the Decembrist was told to move to a settlement in Krasnoyarsk. On 25 August 1839 M.N. Volkonskaya wrote to her daughter-in-law A.M. Raevskaya: "My uncle Vasily is going to Krasnoyarsk; he has become so aged; his extended family gives him a lot of worries – six children left behind in Russia without any patronage and friends ... The boys have a very uncertain future" (Davydov, 2004: 49).

For long 16 years Krasnoyarsk would become Davydov's resort. In one of the letters to his daughters to Russia Davydov wrote: "Our family leads a quiet and peaceful life, no one is offended by anyone, the authorities treat us decently" (Davydov, 2004: 101). The Decembrist avoided the pleasures of the Krasnoyarsk society that, in his opinion, lacked taste, originality and idea. But Davydov's famous relatives and his European culture, excellent education and independence of judgment, emotional responsiveness and generosity left the most favorable opinions about Davydov in the urban society. The most eminent owners of gold mines: N.P. Tokarev, P.I. Kuznetsov, V.F. Bazilevsky, D.E. Bernardaki, et al considered it the honor to appear in his house or do him a favor.

Krasnoyarsk old resident, the author of the city chronicles of the first half of the 19th century I.F. Parfentev wrote: "The local youth called V.L. Davydov "the tote of education", as he was educated and well-read. He lived here with his family, visited no one, although family went out for walks, but they did not established contacts... He seldom visited church services" (Davydov, 2004: 51).

Indeed, the Davydovs often visited the picturesque surroundings of Krasnoyarsk. The children, who loved drawing, did watercolor sketches in their albums, two of which have

preserved to the present time in Moscow museums.

Nine more Decembrists lived on settlement in Krasnoyarsk: P.S. and N.S. Bobrishchev-Pushkin, S.G. Krasnokutsky, M.F. Mitkov, V.N. Petin, M.I. Pushchin, M.M. Spiridov, M.A. Fonvizin and F.P. Shahovsky. Uniting fellow sufferers, Vasily Lvovich took care of them. Sensitive to the sympathy and assistance, Davydov himself was infinitely kind to the lonely Decembrists who did not have families. Friends often came together, discussed not only the current political and economic events, but also became familiar with the recent works of the Russian literature and listened to Davydov's new poetic opuses. These evenings were filled with music, because "Alexandra Ivanovna was a good singer and played the harpsichord, which was brought in 1839 from St. Petersburg, and Sashenka Davydova, who was studying music, pleased the visitors by her successes in playing the piano" (Prigyn, E. (1), 2011: 143).

Recall that due to touring musicians and the Decembrists, music came into the life of the local aristocracy, becoming an important part of leisure. Playing music in the secular salons exerted a great influence on the aesthetic education of the urban elite. Thus, the largest Krasnoyarsk gold miner Pyotr Kuznetsov "maintained friendly relations with the Decembrists, especially with V.L. Davydov. Kuznetsov's daughter, after marriage Passek, told from her mother's words who personally communicated with the Decembrists, that following the Decembrists example, the city residents started to form coteries to discuss the books and listening to music. Quite often Kuznetsov's house was the place of gathering" (Prigyn, E. (1), 2011: 143).

From the Krasnoyarsk residents Lieutenant Colonel of Gendarmes Corps Y.D. Kazimirsky, State Councillor M.A. Bezobrazov, architect E.P. Ledantyu, a poet and satirist P.V. Schumacher,

merchants-owners of gold mines N.V. Latkin and P.I. Kuznetsov and others visited his house. In 1848, Davydov's house was visited by English traveler Gile, the newly elected governor-general of Eastern Siberia N.N. Muraviev, and in 1849 by a cellist from Europe Lisa Christiani who toured Siberia.

In Krasnoyarsk three more children were born in Davydov's family, so all the seven "Siberian children" grew up, delighting their parents with their talents and successes in studies. The Davydovs themselves organized homeschooling and this "private school" was also attended by the children of the local officials and nobles. There is an opinion that the education program, compiled and used by Vasily Lvovich for educating his children later became the basis for the curriculum of Krasnoyarsk boys' gymnasium, opened in 1868. Another important city events associated with the name of V.L. Davydov is construction of the Public Assembly building in 1854, built according to the construction design of Decembrist Gavriil Stepanovich Batenkov. Among local historians it is widely believed that Vasily Lvovich Davydov personally appealed to the architect with a request to create a construction design for the club premises in Krasnoyarsk (Prigyn, E. (2), 2011, p. 196).

Epistolary heritage of the Decembrists is an invaluable depository of information about the social and artistic life of the city: "Our Krasnoyarsk is the most anti-musical city that I know. There is battalion music in the local garrison, but it exists only to put the enemy that would try to capture the territory to flight: I can assure you that the most courageous army would waver hearing our flutes, and clarinets would complete to defeat without a fight ..." (Davydov, 2004: 129-130).

Through Davydov's correspondence, we find out about the existence of private musical and pedagogical practice in Krasnoyarsk as



early as in the middle of the 19th century. In the correspondence dated 15 February 1845 Vasily Lvovich informed: "Your sister Sasha takes music lessons, a charming woman, a talented, wonderful pianist lives here. Your sister is making a remarkable progress; I am very satisfied with it" (Davydov, 2004: 211). Here he writes about Yulia Feodorovna Richier, a pianist and a singer, who gave music lessons in Krasnoyarsk.



Vasily Lvovich's letters to the children is an expressive portrait of the father, whose love to his children was unconditional. Sensing the emotional state of mind of his daughters Elizaveta and Ekaterina, he sent delicate guidance about occupations, the proximity to each other, at the same time not suppressing their initiatives. His statements about Alexandra Ivanovna Davydova are expressive: "an incomparable mother", "the martyr of duty, love and self-sacrifice," "the best

of mothers." One of the letters to his daughters contains such lines-testament: "Without her, I would not live in this world ... Pay, my dear children, my duty to her by your love and respect for her. And when I am gone, recompense her for all the good she has done to your unfortunate father" (Davydov, 2004: 57).

The years passed, bringing both joy and irrevocable losses. In 1845, their favorite daughter Maria, the "guardian angel" of the family died in childbirth. In 1849 there was another loss – the death of "fellow sufferer" M.F. Mitkov. He was buried in the Trinity Cemetery. Could Davidov think, paying the last respects to his friend that in six years he would find eternal rest next to him?

In the letters to his daughters the Decembrist had repeatedly pointed out that he did not complain about his fate, that he had chosen himself. On the ring, made from its shackles, Davydov told to write the inscription: "Nothing will change me." However, few Davydov's evaluations of contemporary political events (the revolutionary events of 1848-49 in Western Europe) are critical and even negative, "... nothing is told about freedom or patriotism, or even about equality and fraternity. Selfishness, personal ambitions, depravity, godlessness and anarchy of ideas – this is what lies at the heart of these revolutions ..." (Davydov, 2004: 289). In other experiences the Decembrist could see the undesirable ways and activities that discredited revolutionary actions.



In 1854 the Davydovs were caught up with the tragic news of the death of their son Ivan in the Caucasus. Repeatedly experienced family dramas, diseases progress due to the lack of proper medical care and a sedentary lifestyle contributed to the physical destruction of the Decembrist. On 25 October 1855, less than a year before the amnesty, at the age of 62, Davydov died and was buried in the Trinity Cemetery near the grave of M.F. Mitkov.



In the summer of 1856 Alexandra Ivanovna with children left Krasnoyarsk. She was 50 years

old. Returning to Kamenka, she lived another 40 years, surrounded by love and respect of her children and grandchildren. P.I. Tchaikovsky, who in 1878-79 visited Kamenka and his sister Alexandra who was married to Davydov's son Lev Vasilievich, wrote: "All the large Davydovs family adores the head of the family, which this truly holy woman is worthy of... She experienced a lot of grief in her youth, but her old years are full of a quiet family happiness. I consider myself being lucky as the fate brought me to them, and so often gives me an opportunity to see man's spiritual perfection through them" (Laletina, 1997: 14).

In July, 1883 Vasily Lvovich's nephew Alexander Petrovich Davydov visited Krasnoyarsk. At his request, there was prayer service in the Trinity Church and a marble monument was raised on the grave of the deceased.

Lines of the poetic text by V.L. Davydov's turned out to be prophetic: "Here lies ... the victim ... of tyranny ... / The husband and the father ... forever ... / Shackles... exile ... his whole life ... / Love ... Fatherland and freedom" (Davydov, 2004: 402).

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«Любовь... Отечество и свобода!»

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Статья посвящена 190-летию со дня восстания декабристов. Василий Львович Давыдов являлся одним из лидеров Южного общества. Поэт, бесстрашный офицер русской армии, участник Отечественной войны 1812 года, награжденный многочисленными орденами за храбрость, был активным республиканцем, защищая идеи свободы, равенства и братства. Давыдов провел 13 лет в ссылке в Сибири, с 1839 по 1855 г. проживал с семьей в г. Красноярске, где и скончался. Его любовь к Александре Ивановне Потаповой, жене декабриста, была лучшей частью его судьбы. Их уникальное супружество восхищало современников и до сих пор продолжает вдохновлять проявлением женского самопожертвования, преданности и истинной любви.

Ключевые слова: бунт декабристов, поэт, храбрый офицер, республиканская, ссылка, поселение в Красноярске, женская верность и преданность делу.

Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология.
