

UDC 94(47) "1825.12.14"

Decembrist movement: between myth and history (some features of Decembrist studies at the second half of the XIXth century – the beginning of the XXth century)

Vasil'eva Elena Borisovna

PhD (History), associate professor,
Omsk institute of international management and foreign languages,
P.O. Box 64400, Bulatova str., No. 99, Omsk, Russia;
e-mail: elena_vasilyeva@bk.ru

Abstract

The article analyzes Decembrist publications of the second half of the XIXth century – the beginning of the XXth century. The work objective is to identify and define the features of the conceived Decembrist concepts in the conduct of the stated period, to follow up their development, realization contexts depending on the features of source studies and world view orientation. The research results can be used when realizing generalizing works on public opinion history; taken into account in training courses on Russian history, used in works devoted to Decembrist movement. Having examined the research results the author concludes that four prime factors influenced the presentation of the Decembrist movement. The first one – initially the history of Decembrist studies represented collision of two ideological consecutions: revolutionary liberal and conservative. The given circumstance contributed to the fact that at the first attempt of its apprehension a definition was set up – a Decembrist – "a hero or a criminal". The second one – lack of source studies materials and predominance of sources of individual origin led to the shift of accents into ethical plane. The third one – the multiple-subject topic enabled representatives of various socio-political trends to find an alcove in the history of the Decembrist movement thereby forming their own specific image of a Decembrist for extensive sweeps

of people. The fourth one – all the factors listed above were ministerial to creation of an ethical and romantic charisma around Decembrist studies, and it is ever so actual in ideological propaganda.

Keywords

Decembrist movement, myth, Decembrist studies, source studies, historical studies.

Introduction

Historical science has two levels. The first one can be described as accumulative and descriptive. At this level the sources studies' material is collected and processed, narrative canvas is developed, causal relationships are established, and historical events are assessed.

Second one is reflexive and cognitive. It is a process of understanding the historical reality through the prism of social, political, cultural conjuncture, scientific paradigms, and author's personal and ideological features. Variability and subjectivity of these factors lead to a variation of its appraisal and meaningful side. Each generation tries to revise historical plots, give them their own assessment, in line with their needs. It gives many researchers and thinkers grounds and we must say, not without reason, to cast doubt on the existence of "objective" history.

One of the major research paradigms is considering the history as a product of social and cultural mythmaking.

Throughout the long period of time the indicated trends were typical mainly of the Western historiography, but in the last two decades they became also relevant for the national historical science.

Naturally, this could not touch one of the most popular topics of national history – the history of the Decembrist movement. Reading Decembrist historiography, which saw the light of day for the past two decades, you inadvertently catch yourself thinking that one of the most frequently used concept is a myth. And there is a grain of truth. Since the uprising on December 14, 1825 up to the present time the history of movement has often been the "victim" of the social, cultural and political conditions that affected both its scientific study, and the

content of the Decembrist's image in the mass historical consciousness.

"Myth of Decembrists" and ways to overcome it

There are attempts to overcome the "mythology" of Decembrist history in frames of Russian Decembrists study for the time being.

Two ways can be distinguished in this process.

The first one is to redefine the history of the Decembrist movement, when the concept of "myth" is used mainly as a metaphor. Within this framework, the researchers focused on specific failures of the previous Decembrists study. Indeed, it can be stated that abandoning rigidly deterministic estimates allowed historians to expand researching spectrum and greatly enrich the ideas of the Decembrists.

This aspect was highlighted in the research literature many times, its advantages and disadvantages were identified, as well as its controversial moments were found, that were of methodological, source study and terminological nature¹.

1 Kaz'mirchuk, G.D. (2008), "Modern Decembrist studies in the former Soviet Union. Formation, problems, research centers and prospects", *The Decembrists: current problems and new approaches*

At the same time, "reevaluation" and, as a result, the desire "to replace the positive signs with the negative ones"² led to a revival of old and development of new versions of the movement's history, that are not always of strictly scientific nature.

So, interpreting the Decembrists as destroyers, regicides oath-breakers, conductors of malicious non-Russian spirit which nearly ruined the Russia was again increasingly in demand³. However,

["Sovremennoe dekabristovedenie na postsovetском prostranstve. Stanovlenie, problematika, nauchnye tsenry i perspektivy razvitiya", *Dekabristy: Aktual'nye problemy i novye podkhody*], Moscow, pp. 640-663; Fel'dman, D.M. (2008), "Decembrist studies today: terminology, ideology, methodology", *The Decembrists: current problems and new approaches* ["Dekabristovedenie segodnya: terminologiya, ideologiya, metodologiya", *Dekabristy: Aktual'nye problemy i novye podkhody*], Moscow, pp. 663-713.

2 Kaz'mirchuk, G.D. (2008), "Modern Decembrist studies in the former Soviet Union. Formation, problems, research centers and prospects", *The Decembrists: current problems and new approaches* ["Sovremennoe dekabristovedenie na postsovetском prostranstve. Stanovlenie, problematika, nauchnye tsenry i perspektivy razvitiya", *Dekabristy: Aktual'nye problemy i novye podkhody*], Moscow, p. 643.

3 Smolin, M.V. (2000), "Janissaries" of night fraternity", *Tol' S.D. Night brothers. Masonic action* ["Yanychary" nochnogo bratstva", *Tol', S.D. Nochnye brat'ya. Manskoe deistvo*], Moscow, pp. 5-22;

if such an interpretation is mainly presented in the publication of promonarchic and religious nature, the idealization of movement's participants not as revolutionaries, but as reformers of the first quarter of the XIX century, is typical of scientific literature as well⁴.

Another trend of modern Decembrists study is closely connected with it as well – highlighting the moral aspects of the movement's history⁵. According to

Filin, M.A. (1993), "About Decembrists and Decembrism: some thoughts on the newly discovered text" ["O dekabristakh i dekabrizme: Nekotorye razmyshleniya nad stranitsami novonaidennogo teksta"], *Zvezda*, No. 6, pp. 166-175; Shcherbakov, A.Yu. (2005), *Decembrists. Conspiracy against Russia [Dekabristy. Zagovor protiv Rossii]*, St. Peterburg-Moscow, 316 p.

- 4 Bokova, V.M. (2001), "The patient is more alive than dead" (Notes on the national Decembrist studies of 1990s), *December 14, 1825. Sources, researches, bibliography. Issue IV* ["Bol'noi skoree zhiv, chem mertv" (Zametki ob otechestvennom dekabristovedenii 1990-kh gg.), *14 dekabrya 1825 g. Istochniki, issledovaniya istoriografiya, bibliografiya. Vyp. IV*], St. Petersburg-Kishinev, pp. 497-561; Tsamutali, A.N. (1997), "The Decembrists in the liberation movement in Russia. Some questions of historiography", *December 14, 1825. Sources of research, historiography, bibliography* ["Dekabristy v osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii v Rossii. Nekotorye voprosy istoriografii", *14 dekabrya 1825 goda. Istochniki, issledovaniya, istoriografiya, bibliografiya*], No. 1, pp. 91-94.
- 5 Narusova, L.B. (1996), "Decembrism moral lessons", *Freedom advocates. Memorable readings dedicated to the*

the authoritative historian S.O. Schmidt, those researchers do right who in their works "... focus on the" moral aspect" of the Decembrists' political action..."⁶. Another modern scientist notes: "moral characteristics of the subject being studied add particular relevance to analysis of the nature and place of Decembrist in social history of Russia"⁷.

The situation is complicated by the fact that these trends can be found not only in the works of generalizable and historiosophical nature, but also in studies on particular problems of the De-

170th anniversary of the Decembrist revolt, December 14, 1995 ["Nravstvennye uroki dekabrizma", *Zastupniki svobody. Pamyatnye chteniya, posvyashchennye 170-letiyu vosstaniya dekabristov, 14 dekabrya 1995 goda*], St. Petersburg, pp. 18-23; Ekshtut, S.A. (1989), "Decembrist movement: the moral aspect of political action" ["Dvizhenie dekabristov: moral'nyi aspekt politicheskogo deistviya"], *Vestnik moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 7, No. 5, pp. 65-75.

- 6 Schmidt, S.O. (2002), "Decembrists in the respect of people of XX and XXI centuries", *Public awareness of the Russian noble class of XVII – first third of the XIX* ["Dekabristy v predstavleniyakh lyudei rubezha XX i XXI stoletii", *Obshchestvennoe samosoznanie rossiiskogo blagorodnogo sosloviya XVII – pervaya tret' XIX*], Moscow, p. 345.
- 7 Kosov, G.V. (1999), *Decembrist movement in the social history of Russia: Author's thesis* [Dekabrizm v sotsial'noi istorii Rossii: Avtoref. dis. ... kand. ist. nauk], St. Petersburg, p. 3.

cembrist movement history, with moral and evaluative aspects being often displaced by strictly scientific ones⁸.

The second way is using the term "myth" in its direct meaning. In frameworks of this concept researchers are trying to answer the question why the story of the Decembrist movement gained such widespread popularity in domestic historical consciousness.

According to this theory, its popularity is due to the history of Decembrist movement having been represented to readers from the very beginning within the mythological constructs, in other words as a life story of Gods and heroes, the declaration of movement's participants as saints. There are different potential roots of this phenomenon – from spontaneous social and cultural to personal mythmaking.

In this connection the question arises, what is the Decembrist: histori-

cal phenomenon or the author's figment of imagination? It is therefore obvious that the problem of identifying historical contexts and precedents giving birth to different concepts of Decembrist history is one of the most vital problems for the modern Decembrists study.

History of Decembrists movement – collision of ideologies

Printing story of Decembrist was born as history of worldviews collision.

In 1855, the monograph by Baron M.A. Korf "The accession of Emperor Nicholas I"⁹ saw the light of day. Written by order of the Emperor, this Korf's work enjoyed great popularity¹⁰ and was first to introduce to a Russian reader the details of uprising at Senate Square and clearly established the image of the Decembrists as people who nearly destroyed Russia.

⁸ Edel'man, O.V. Bessmyslennyi, Kiyanskaya, O.I., "Southern revolt: the rebellion of Chernigov infantry regiment" ["Yuzhnyi bunt: vosstanie Chernigovskogo pekhotnogo polka], available at: <http://www.stranaz.ru>; Erlikh, S.E., Edel'man O.V., Karatsuba I.V., Gotovtseva A.G., Kiyanskaya O.V. (2006), "So what he was, the Decembrist Pavel Pestel? Four viewpoints on the book of Kiyanskaya, O.I. "Pestel" ["Tak kakim zhe on byl, dekabrist Pavel Pestel'? Chetyre vzglyada na knigu O.I. Kiyanskoi "Pestel"], *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, No. 6, pp. 139-164.

⁹ Korf, M.A. (1857), *The accession to the throne of Emperor Nicholas I* [*Vosshestvie na prestol imperatora Nikolaya I*], St. Petersburg, 236 p.

¹⁰ Rudnitskaya, E.A., Tartakovskii, A.G. (1994), Free Russian press and Baron Korf's book", *December 14, 1825 and its interpreters (Herzen and Ogarev against the Baron Korf)* ["Vol'naya russkaya pechat' i kniga barona Korfa", *14 dekabrya 1825 goda i ego tolkovateli (Gertsen i Ogarev protiv barona Korfa)*], Moscow, p. 48.

Journalism of A.I. Herzen and N.P. Ogarev became response to it. Written in contrast to the official version, it created a series of bright images of Decembrists, with central place having been held by the image of the hero – martyr who sacrificed himself for the good of Russia.

Source study peculiarities

A general accepted fact is recognition of Decembrists history idealization by the intellectual leaders of the national democratic movement in the middle of XIX century.

However, the most striking work in this direction was the monograph of the modern historian S.E. Ehrlich directly stating that the history of the Decembrist in Herzen's statement is a complete myth¹¹, which includes ancient, pagan and Christian traditions.

Although, absolutizing the mythological essence of Herzen's Decembrist history, in our opinion, is somewhat exaggerated. So, according to the honest remark of B. Winterberg, in an effort to prove its mythological nature the historian had ignored the ideological atmosphere in the middle of XIX century.

11 Erlich, S.E. (2006), *The history of the myth (Herzen's "Decembrists legend")* [*Istoriya mifa ("Dekabristskaya legenda" Gertse-na)*], St. Petersburg, 286 p.

In particular, Ehrlich almost omitted the fact that the main purpose of the Herzen's Decembrists works was a struggle with the official version of the movement's history, and many of his concept's provisions were built on this fact¹². This idea is proven by the fact that the valuation of the Decembrism history has been changing along with the views, and hence with the political agitation objectives of the "Freestyle Russian Publishing" editors¹³.

Whatever it was, it was Korf on the one hand, and Herzen and Ogarev on the other hand to be not only pioneers of Decembrist history for the general read-

12 Winterberg, B. "The Adventure of liberal liberalism in the country of securocrats (Review of books about the historical roots of Russian liberalism.). Individual reserve" ["Priklyuchenie liberal'nogo liberalizma v strane silovikov (Obzor knig ob istoricheskikh kornyakh rossiiskogo liberalizma). Neprikosnovennyi zapas"], available at: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/vi46.html>

13 Vasil'eva, E.B. (2011), "Herzen and Ogarev about the Decembrists (based on the "Kolo-Kola" and "Polyarnaya zvezda"). Actual problems of historical research: a view of young scientists", *Proceedings of the 1st All-Russia Youth Scientific Conference* [Gertsen i Ogarev o dekabristakh (po materialam "Kolo-kola" i "Polyarnoi zvezdy"). Aktual'nye problemy istoricheskikh issledovaniy: vzglyad molodykh uchenykh", *Sbornik materialov I Vserossiiskoi molodezhnoi nauchnoi konferentsii*], Novosibirsk, pp. 67-73.

er, but also developed the vector for perception and characteristics of the movement's history: Decembrist – a hero or a criminal.

Later the publication of the Decembrists became commonplace in the Russian printing, their specific needs to be classified.

Conceptualization of Decembrists from the scientific point of view was in its infancy, the lack of serious studies was connected with the insufficient source base, and mostly the lack of official documentation. The only sources providing relatively reliable information became memories, diaries, letters of Decembrists themselves, their friends, relatives, people who had to do with the history of the Decembrist movement. The predominance of sources with personal attitude inevitably introduced an ethical note in the description of the movement's history.

At the beginning of the 1870s a number of heated debates hit the pages of the Russian press between the relatives of those involved in the events of December¹⁴. Trying to prove the right of

the brother, father and friend participants appealed to the moral concepts, which are close and clear to a wider audience. Taking into account that there was a lack of information on uprising readers just had to believe or not believe in the evidence presented.

Analyzing narrative of first publications on the history of the movement showed that it was the time when one of the main stereotypes in understanding the Decembrist movement was established. According to this idea Decembrists were assessed not only in terms of political action, but primarily as bearers of particular moral and ethical values.

Publication of the Decembrists' memories contributed to the consolidation of this approach in public opinion.

Postreform Decembrists study did not establish a complete history of the Decembrists' movement for various reasons. As a result, many questions remained without answer.

14 Murav'ev-Apostol, M. I. (1871), Chernigov Regiment revolt ["Vosstanie Chernigovskogo polka"], *Russkii arkhiv*, No. 1, Clms. 0229–0238; Gebel', A.G. (1871), "From the notes of guard colonel Alexander Gustavovich" ["Iz

zapisok polkovnika gvardii Aleksandra Gustavovicha"], *Russkii arkhiv*, No. 6, Clms. 1717-1728; Gebel', E. (1873), "Col. Gebel' in 1825" ["Podpolkovnik Gebel' v 1825 g."], *Russkaya starina*, No. 8, pp. 237-241; Yakushkin, E.I. (1872), "The Congress of "the Union of Welfare" members in Moscow in 1821 (response to Orlov, N.M.)" ["S"ezd chlenov "Soyuza Blagodenstviya" v Moskve v 1821 g. (otvet N.M. Orlovu)], *Russkaya starina*, No. 11, p. 598.

In contrast, the Decembrists' memoirs contained many specific facts that often became the main reason for their publication.

Quite a lot is written on the specifics of the Decembrists memories in research literature, and we will not labor the point. However, we note that by exploring the memories of movement's participants the reader perceived the image of "Decembrist the hero" who is ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of the motherland.

Narrative variation as one of the main factors to establish the concept of Decembrists

History of Decembrist consists of several thematic layers: the history of secret societies, the uprising on December 14, 1825 at the Senate square, Chernigov Regiment Uprising, investigation, trial, prison, exile etc. Each of these stories is not just a part of the movement's history but a separate event-marker with special message. This circumstance gave representatives of various historical and political thought the possibility to find a niche in the history of the Decembrist movement and establish one's own Decembrists' image in the general public. Thus, liberal historians and philosophers

in the second half of XIX – early XX centuries addressed mainly to the secret societies. Their history contained proofs of Decembrists' liberalism. Revolt on December 14, 1825 at the Senate square and in south of Russia were often ignored by them. But it was these events to raise interest by radical movements' representatives as they demonstrated real actions and brutality of the regime.

Apart of the political component, i.e. activities of secret societies the history of Decembrists also provides the interesting "Siberian" story.

In 1895 a monograph of AI Dmitriev-Mamonov "Decembrists in Western Siberia" saw the light of day. The book was written on the basis of archival materials and contained 48 biographies of Decembrists. That was the first time in Russian history the author used the term "Decembrist" in the title of the monograph. In the image of Dmitriev-Mamonov Decembrists were ordinary people who lived their lives in the search of daily piece of bread, setting up their homes. The author noted that the Decembrists left "... hope for a better future and sorrow for a link with a past life lost forever"¹⁵.

15 Dmitriev-Mamonov, A.I. (1905), *The Decembrists in Western Siberia. Historical survey of official documents [Dekabristy v Zapadnoi Sibiri. Istoricheskii ocherk po*

The monograph went through several editions, thus one may conclude that Siberian period was not only tied to the "European one" in the minds of Russian audience, but the concept of "Decembrist" consisted among the political meaning the other social and domestic one as well.

It is noteworthy that the Siberian history of Decembrism was adopted even by conservative movement, as evidenced by the review of the A.P. Belyaev memoir published in the "Russian Journal". According to the reviewer, the majority of the Decembrists in Siberia "achieved spiritual enlightenment" and memories were compared by the author with the religious work "Journey to the holy places by monk Parthenius".

Very interesting in this case is the comparison with the A.I. Herzen's characterization of the movement's participants – ideological opponent of the "Russian Journal", who also used the Bible metaphors by calling the Decembrists, "holy fathers", "holy martyrs of December 14", "heroes of holy phalanx" and liken their return from Siberia to the "resurrection". But if for Herzen in line with his ideological and political ideals the "holiness" of Decembrists was mani-

ofitsial'nym dokumentam], St. Petersburg, p. 23.

festated primarily in their quest of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, the "Russian Journal" focused on humility and repentance. And in this case the theory on social value of religion seemed to be reflected, thanks to which the convicted Decembrists were able to return to public life. This theory was especially popular in conservative circles.

Ideological preferences influencing upon understanding of Decembrist's history presentation to the general reader

It was the Decembrist discourse of the second half of XIX – early XX centuries to meet the realities of the political discourse. By intellectual elite's studying the movement's history such questions were actualized as "moral dimension of political action", "choosing a path of social struggle," "reforms and Revolution," "political identity", etc. In the wake of social and political movement's development these questions were very relevant.

Moreover, one should take into account the fact that Decembrists' movement has been remaining the only "available" topic in frames of the social struggle history for a long time. There-

fore, rival ideological "interest groups" presented their ideological projects of Decembrist by using symbolism and rhetoric of Decembrists' motion to justify their versions of the past, the present and the future of Russia.

One of the distinctive features of liberal's appreciating the Decembrists' history was an emphasis on reform intentions specific for secret societies' members, their desire to cooperate with the government and on government's unfair decisions in respect of the Decembrists.

At the end of the XIX century, when the Liberals were virtually removed from the real political activity by the government, these trends have become even more relevant. So when you read a review of the abovementioned book by D.A. Dmitriev-Mamonov "Decembrists in Western Siberia", it seems that the reviewer tried mostly not to evaluate the monograph, but rather to make reader take it in a special manner. The main attention is focused on poor circumstances of Decembrists. Having listed some salary figures obtained from the Treasury, the reviewer concluded that it was not enough for a life worth living¹⁶. The great attention in the review was also paid to Decembrists' being oppressed by

16 "Literary review" ["Literaturnoe obozrenie"], *Vestnik Evropy*, 1896, No. 2, p. 874.

local authorities: " ... there was usually no grounds for denunciation, because first of all the exiles were not in mood to indulge to some free-thinking, and secondly in those slums in which they often lived among the wild populations, there was no basis for this, but every time the investigation was initiated due to the denunciations..."¹⁷.

One of the most pressing issues in conservative circles was the question of the place and role of the nobility in the political and cultural life of reformed Russia. As you know, in this process the conservatives assigned nobility to the leading role, considering it to be the focus of "mental and moral forces of society," which is able to engage not only the private interests, but also public affairs. Therefore, by publishing a review in the "Russian Gazette", T.I. Tikhonov highlighted key points in a somewhat different way.

According to the author, in the exile Decembrists were able to find adequate forms of implementing their youthful aspirations: "In the environment of the Decembrists in Western Siberia – the author wrote, – intellectual and moral interests they were bound up in a happier time in Russia were preserved, in tortures of exile in the settlement they were

17 Ibid.

even helpful for Siberian society being a distant and partly wild region". Developing this idea the author noted that "the public mind is not only preserved by the Decembrists, but continued to develop in the same direction, and after having returned to Russia they were at the same level with the society aspirations ... in sympathy with the new movement of subsequent reforms, they contributed and added their share to the latter".

Beginning of XX century became a new stage in the development of domestic Decembrists study.

Studying testimonies of Decembrist's movement participants allowed not only to enhance the research spectrum, but also to highlight a number of new issues, which resulted in rethinking and supplementing the already existing views.

Primarily, this was due to the testimonies of the Decembrists. The historian P.E. Shchegolev showed the most typical response to familiarity with cases of the movement's participants: they introduced "... a bitter disappointment in the modern consciousness, full of reverent memory of the heroes of December 14. Conspirators being under the investigation – from ensign to general – did not show any resistance and with amazing unrestrained hurry tried to tell

their judges all the secrets of the action, thought, even the most intimate ones; hastened to tell many names, because they knew well that any punishment entails arrest and sometimes stopped at no end to slander their comrades and repented, repented without end"¹⁸.

While determining the place of the Decembrists in the history of the liberation movement the idea of Decembrists' passivity in the implementation of their ideas came to the fore. The historian and public figure, populist N.P. Pavlov-Sylvansky was the one to express this opinion most succinctly. He noted that in 1825 many participants of the secret societies were not equal to the situation, as they were not able to switch from a short inspiration to constant struggle. The historian wrote: " In the subsequent time when "instant rush" was replaced by self-denial, every revolutionary looked upon himself as a doomed man"¹⁹, which was typical of the Democrats of the 1860s, the people.

However, we cannot talk about the romantic interpretation of the De-

18 Shchegolev, P.E. (1926), *Decembrists [Dekabristy]*, Moscow, p. 138.

19 Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, N.P. (1906), "Pestel before the Supreme Court (for unpublished sources)" ["Pestel' pered verkhovnym ugolovnym sudom (Po neizdannym istochnikam)"], *Byloe*, No. 2, p. 157.

cembrist image's being fully "irrelevant" for revolutionary propaganda. However, it was not absolute, and the authors approached the problem of assessing the Decembrist very flexible, depending on the social, cultural and political situation.

Thus, according to P.E. Shchegolev, the distinctive feature of the Decembrists was a love for the motherland. As the historian wrote This feeling: "... penetrated and embraced the whole human psyche and was so powerfully real as the populists' love for the people, the love of sincerely religious person for God"²⁰.

This image became even more popular by describing the Decembrists arrest into the Petropavlovsk fortress.

In 1906 Shchegolev published the article with a very notable title "Nicholas I – Decembrists' jailer". According to the author, the emperor himself regulated the conclusion of the Decembrists in order to obtain evidence from them, "so it did not look like the "punishment prior "to the sentence, it was already either punishment or a long torture"²¹. The

registry was attached at the end of the article which thoroughly regulated the routine of the Decembrists in the fortress. This note could be considered even more curious because commenting on the behavior of the Decembrists at the inquest Shchegolev wrote in another article: "... the investigative processes that make a dismal impression of completely unsystematic testimonies, abundance of messages, confessions, and repentances"²².

Conclusion

Thus, to summarize, we can draw the following conclusions. The process of understanding the Decembrists' movement history and its presentation to the Russian reader was initially exposed to a certain "mythologizing."

Development of ideas about the Decembrist was mostly influenced by the following factors:

1) From the beginning the history of the Decembrist movement was presented to the Russian reader as a clash of two ideological movements: a revo-

20 Shchegolev, P.E. (1907), "Peter G. Kakhovsky. Historical and psychological study" ["Petr Grigor'evich Kakhovskii. Istoriko-psikhologicheskii etyud"], *Byloe*, No. 1, p. 139.

21 Shchegolev, P.E. (1906), "Emperor Nicholas I – Decembrists jailer" ["Imperator

Nikolai I – tyuremshchik dekabristov"], *Byloe*, No. 5, pp. 192-204.

22 Shchegolev, P.E. (1907), "Decembrist Prince Shahovsky (Biographical Note)" ["Dekabrist knyaz' Shakhovskii (Biograficheskaya zametka)"], *Byloe*, No. 10, p. 282.

lutionary liberal one and a conservative one, with the definition of "hero or a criminal" having been established;

2) lack of official sources for studying the movement's history and the predominance of personal-origin-sources contributed mostly to subjective factors' influencing the interpretation of the movement's history. As a result, the moral and ethical element became decisive in the estimates of the Decembrist movement;

3) multi-subjectness of the topic allowed representatives of various social and political movements to find their niche in the history of the Decembrists, the Decembrist movement and develop

their own image for the Decembrist in the general public;

4) Despite the familiarity with cases of movement's participants, heroic halo of Decembrists was somewhat shaken, but extensively used in political propaganda.

And in conclusion we would like to add that despite its "mythology", the story of the Decembrist movement remains a part of scientific history and its study shall be approached from the scientific standpoint, one should avoid the ideological considerations' influencing its analysis, and methodological studies' becoming part of the historical material, otherwise we run the risk of becoming myth-makers.

References

1. Bokova, V.M. (2001), "The patient is more alive than dead" (Notes on the national Decembrist studies of 1990s), *December 14, 1825. Sources, researches, bibliography. Issue IV* ["Bol'noi skoree zhiv, chem mertv" (Zametki ob otechestvennom dekabristovedenii 1990-kh gg.), *14 dekabrya 1825 g. Istochniki, issledovaniya istoriografiya, bibliografiya. Vyp. IV*], St. Petersburg-Kishinev, pp. 497-561.
2. Dmitriev-Mamonov, A.I. (1905), *The Decembrists in Western Siberia. Historical survey of official documents* [*Dekabristy v Zapadnoi Sibiri. Istoricheskii ocherk po ofitsial'nym dokumentam*], St. Petersburg, 261 p.
3. Edel'man, O.V. Bessmyslennyi, Kiyanskaya, O.I., "Southern revolt: the rebellion of Chernigov infantry regiment" ["Yuzhnyi bunt: vosstanie Chernigovskogo pekhotnogo polka], available at: <http://www.strana-oz.ru>

4. Ekshtut, S.A. (1989), "Decembrist movement: the moral aspect of political action" ["Dvizhenie dekabristov: moral'nyi aspekt politicheskogo deistviya"], *Vestnik moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 7, No. 5, pp. 65-75.
5. Erlikh, S.E. (2006), *The history of the myth (Herzen's "Decembrists legend")* [*Istoriya mifa ("Dekabristskaya legenda" Gertsena)*], St. Petersburg, 286 p.
6. Erlikh, S.E., Edel'man O.V., Karatsuba I.V., Gotovtseva A.G., Kiyanskaya O.V. (2006), "So what he was, the Decembrist Pavel Pestel? Four viewpoints on the book of Kiyanskaya, O.I. "Pestel" ["Tak kakim zhe on byl, dekabrist Pavel Pestel"? Chetyre vzglyada na knigu O.I. Kiyanskoi "Pestel"]], *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, No. 6, pp. 139-164.
7. Fel'dman, D.M. (2008), "Decembrist studies today: terminology, ideology, methodology", *The Decembrists: current problems and new approaches* ["Dekabristovedenie segodnya: terminologiya, ideologiya, metodologiya"], *Dekabristy: Aktual'nye problemy i novye podkhody*, Moscow, pp. 663-713.
8. Filin, M.A. (1993), "About Decembrists and Decembrism: some thoughts on the newly discovered text" ["O dekabristakh i dekabrizme: Nekotorye razmyshleniya nad stranitsami novonaidennogo teksta"], *Zvezda*, No. 6, pp. 166-175.
9. Gebel', E. (1873), "Col. Gebel' in 1825" ["Podpolkovnik Gebel' v 1825 g."], *Russkaya starina*, No. 8, pp. 237-241.
10. Gebel', A.G. (1871), "From the notes of guard colonel Alexander Gustavovich" ["Iz zapisok polkovnika gvardii Aleksandra Gustavovicha"], *Russkii arkhiv*, No. 6, Clms. 1717-1728.
11. Kaz'mirchuk, G.D. (2008), "Modern Decembrist studies in the former Soviet Union. Formation, problems, research centers and prospects", *The Decembrists: current problems and new approaches* ["Sovremennoe dekabristovedenie na post-sovetskom prostranstve. Stanovlenie, problematika, nauchnye tsentry i perspektivy razvitiya"], *Dekabristy: Aktual'nye problemy i novye podkhody*, Moscow, pp. 640-663.
12. Korf, M.A. (1857), *The accession to the throne of Emperor Nicholas I* [*Vosshestvie na prestol imperatora Nikolaya I*], St. Petersburg, 236 p.
13. Kosov, G.V. (1999), *Decembrist movement in the social history of Russia: Author's thesis* [Dekabrizm v sotsial'noi istorii Rossii: Avtoref. dis. ... kand. ist. nauk], St. Petersburg, 23 p.

14. "Literary review" ["Literaturnoe obozrenie"], *Vestnik Evropy*, 1896, No. 2, pp. 872-876.
15. Murav'ev-Apostol, M. I. (1871), Chernigov Regiment revolt ["Vosstanie Chernigovskogo polka"], *Russkii arkhiv*, No. 1, Clms. 0229–0238.
16. Narusova, L.B. (1996), "Decembrism moral lessons", *Freedom advocates. Memorable readings dedicated to the 170th anniversary of the Decembrist revolt, December 14, 1995* ["Nravstvennye uroki dekabrizma", *Zastupniki svobody. Pamyatnye chteniya, posvyashchennye 170-letiyu vosstaniya dekabristov, 14 dekabrya 1995 goda*], St. Petersburg, pp. 18-23.
17. Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, N.P. (1906), "Pestel before the Supreme Court (for unpublished sources)" ["Pestel' pered verkhovnym ugolovnym sudom (Po neizdannym istochnikam)"], *Byloe*, No. 2, pp. 124-157.
18. Rudnitskaya, E.A., Tartakovskii, A.G. (1994), Free Russian press and Baron Korf's book", *December 14, 1825 and its interpreters (Herzen and Ogarev against the Baron Korf)* ["Vol'naya russkaya pechat' i kniga barona Korfa", *14 dekabrya 1825 goda i ego tolkovateli (Gertsen i Ogarev protiv barona Korfa)*], Moscow, pp. 5-64.
19. Shchegolev, P.E. (1906), "Emperor Nicholas I – Decembrists jailer" ["Imperator Nikolai I – tyuremshchik dekabristov"], *Byloe*, No. 5, pp. 192-204.
20. Shchegolev, P.E. (1907), "Decembrist Prince Shahovsky (Biographical Note)" ["Dekabrist knyaz' Shakhovskii (Biograficheskaya zametka)"], *Byloe*, No. 10, p. 282.
21. Shchegolev, P.E. (1926), *Decembrists [Dekabristy]*, Moscow, 361 p.
22. Shchegolev, P.E. (1907), "Peter G. Kakhovsky. Historical and psychological study" ["Petr Grigor'evich Kakhovskii. Istoriko-psikhologicheskii etyud"], *Byloe*, No. 1, p. 139.
23. Shcherbakov, A.Yu. (2005), *Decembrists. Conspiracy against Russia [Dekabristy. Zagovor protiv Rossii]*, St. Peterburg-Moscow, 316 p.
24. Shmidt, S.O. (2002), "Decembrists in the respect of people of XX and XXI centuries", *Public awareness of the Russian noble class of XVII – first third of the XIX* ["Dekabristy v predstavleniyakh lyudei rubezha XX i XXI stoletii", *Obshchestvennoe samosoznanie rossiiskogo blagorod-nogo sosloviya XVII – pervaya tret' XIX*], Moscow, pp. 329-349.
25. Smolin, M.V. (2000), "Janissaries" of night fraternity", *Tol' S.D. Night brothers. Masonic action* ["Yanychary" nochnogo bratstva", *Tol', S.D. Nochnye brat'ya. Masonsksoe deistvo*], Moscow, pp. 5-22.

26. Tsamutali, A.N. (1997), "The Decembrists in the liberation movement in Russia. Some questions of historiography", *December 14, 1825. Sources of research, historiography, bibliography* ["Dekabristy v osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii v Rossii. Nekotorye voprosy istoriografii", *14 dekabrya 1825 goda. Istochniki, issledovaniya, istoriografiya, bibliografiya*], No. 1, pp. 91-94.
27. Vasil'eva, E.B. (2011), "Herzen and Ogarev about the Decembrists (based on the "Kolo-Kola" and "Polyarnaya zvezda"). Actual problems of historical research: a view of young scientists", *Proceedings of the 1st All-Russia Youth Scientific Conference* [Gertsen i Ogarev o dekabristakh (po materialam "Kolo-kola" i "Polyarnoi zvezdy"). Aktual'nye problemy istoricheskikh issledovaniy: vzglyad molodykh uchenykh", *Sbornik materialov I Vserossiiskoi molodezhnoi nauchnoi konferentsii*], Novosibirsk, pp. 67-73.
28. Winterberg, B. "The Adventure of liberal liberalism in the country of securocrats (Review of books about the historical roots of Russian liberalism.). Individual reserve" ["Priklyuchenie liberal'nogo liberalizma v strane silovikov (Obzor knig ob istoricheskikh kornyakh rossiiskogo liberalizma). Neprikosnovennyi zapas"], available at: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/vi46.html>
29. Yakushkin, E.I. (1872), "The Congress of "the Union of Welfare" members in Moscow in 1821 (response to Orlov, N.M.)" ["S"ezd chlenov "Soyuza Blagodenstviya" v Moskve v 1821 g. (otvet N.M. Orlovu)"], *Russkaya starina*, No. 11, pp. 597-604.

**Движения декабристов: между мифом и историей
(некоторые особенности декабристоведения второй
половины XIX – начала XX вв.)**

Васильева Елена Борисовна

Кандидат исторических наук, доцент,
Омский институт международного менеджмента и иностранных языков,
64400, Россия, Омск, ул. Булатова, 99;
e-mail: elena_vasilyeva@bk

Аннотация

Статья посвящена выявлению особенностей формирования представлений об истории движения декабристов во второй половине XIX – начале XX вв. Автором рассмотрены причины обращения авторов к истории движения, охарактеризовано влияние источниковедческого материала, тематического и идеологического фактора на конструирование различных концепций истории движения. В заключение делается вывод, что обращение к истокам формирования декабристских концепций позволяет в определённой степени избежать их мифологизации на современном этапе изучения.

Ключевые слова

Движение декабристов, миф, декабристоведение, источниковедение, историческая наука.

Библиография

1. Бокова В.М. Больной скорее жив, чем мертв (Заметки об отечественном декабристоведении 1990-х гг.) // 14 декабря 1825 г. Источники, исследования историография, библиография. – СПб-Кишинёв, 2001. – Вып. IV. – С. 497-561.
2. Васильева Е.Б. Герцен и Огарев о декабристах (по материалам «Колокола» и «Полярной звезды») // Актуальные проблемы исторических исследований: взгляд молодых ученых: Сборник материалов I Всероссийской молодежной научной конференции. – Новосибирск, 2011. – С. 67-73.
3. Винтерберг Б. Приключение либерального либерализма в стране силовиков (Обзор книг об исторических корнях российского либерализма) // Неприкосновенный запас. [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/vi46.html>.
4. Гебель Э. Подполковник Гебель в 1825 г. // Русская старина. – 1873. – № 8. – С. 237-241.
5. Гебель А. Г. Из записок полковника гвардии Александра Густавовича // Русский архив. – 1871. – № 6. – Стлб. 1717-1728.
6. Дмитриев-Мамонов А.И. Декабристы в Западной Сибири. Исторический очерк по официальным документам. – СПб., 1905. – 261 с.

7. Казьмирчук Г.Д. Современное декабристоведение на постсоветском пространстве. Становление, проблематика, научные центры и перспективы развития // Декабристы: Актуальные проблемы и новые подходы. – М., 2008. – С. 640-663.
8. Корф М.А. Восшествие на престол императора Николая I. – СПб., 1857. – 236 с.
9. Косов Г.В. Декабризм в социальной истории России: автореф. дис. ... канд. ист. наук. – СПб., 1999. – 23 с.
10. Литературное обозрение // Вестник Европы. – 1896. – № 2. – С. 872-876.
11. Муравьев-Апостол М. И. Восстание Черниговского полка // Русский архив. – 1871. – № 1. – Стлб. 0229-0238.
12. Нарусова Л.Б. Нравственные уроки декабризма // Заступники свободы. Памятные чтения, посвящённые 170-летию восстания декабристов, 14 декабря 1995 года. – СПб., 1996. – С. 18-23.
13. Павлов-Сильванский Н.П. Пестель перед верховным уголовным судом (По неизданным источникам) // Былое. – 1906. – № 2. – С. 124-157.
14. Рудницкая Е.А., Тартаковский А.Г. Вольная русская печать и книга барона Корфа // 14 декабря 1825 года и его толкователи (Герцен и Огарёв против барона Корфа). – М., 1994. – С. 5-64.
15. Смолин М.В. «Янычары» ночного братства // Толь С.Д. Ночные братья. Массонское действо. – М., 2000. – С. 5-22.
16. Фельдман Д.М. Декабристоведение сегодня: терминология, идеология, методология // Декабристы: Актуальные проблемы и новые подходы. – М., 2008. – С. 663-713.
17. Филин М.А. О декабристах и декабризме: Некоторые размышления над страницами новонайденного текста // Звезда. – 1993. – № 6. – С. 166-175.
18. Цамутали А.Н. Декабристы в освободительном движении в России. Некоторые вопросы историографии // 14 декабря 1825 года. Источники, исследования, историография, библиография. – 1997. – Вып. I. – С. 91-94.
19. Щеголев П.Е. Император Николай I – тюремщик декабристов // Былое. – 1906. – № 5. – С. 192-204.
20. Щеголев П.Е. Декабрист князь Шаховский (Биографическая заметка) // Былое. – 1907. – № 10. – С. 282

21. Щеголев П.Е. Декабристы. – М., 1926. – 361с.
22. Щеголев П.Е. Петр Григорьевич Каховский. Историко-психологический этюд // Былое. – 1907. – № 1. – С. 139.
23. Щербаков А.Ю. Декабристы. Заговор против России. – СПб. – М., 2005. – 316 с.
24. Шмидт С.О. Декабристы в представлениях людей рубежа XX и XXI столетий / Шмидт С.О. Общественное самосознание российского благородного сословия XVII – первая треть XIX. – М., 2002. – С. 329-349.
25. Эдельман О.В. Бессмысленный и ... Киянская О.И. Южный бунт: восстание Черниговского пехотного полка. [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <http://www.strana-oz.ru>.
26. Якушкин Е.И. Съезд членов «Союза Благоденствия» в Москве в 1821 г. (ответ Н.М. Орлову) // Русская старина. – 1872. – № 11. – С. 597-604.
27. Экштут С.А. Движение декабристов: моральный аспект политического действия // Вестник московского университета. Серия 7. Философия. – 1989. – № 5. – С. 65-75.
28. Эрлих С.Е. История мифа («Декабристская легенда» Герцена). – СПб., 2006. – 286 с.
29. Эрлих С.Е., Эдельман О.В., Карацуба И.В., Готовцева А.Г., Киянская О.В. Так каким же он был, декабрист Павел Пестель? Четыре взгляда на книгу О.И. Киянской «Пестель» // Отечественная история. – 2006. – № 6. – С. 139-164.