

The Revolutionary Youth of Georgii Fedotov

A. V. Antoshchenko

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This article delves into George Fedotov's involvement in the revolutionary struggle; his reasons, motives, and perception of it; as well as the conditions and factors that led to the decision to discontinue his revolutionary activities. The study relies on documents of the local gendarme administration from the State Archives of Saratov Region and private correspondence between G. P. Fedotov and T. Iu. Dmitrieva. Their examination allows for a fresh perspective on his involvement in the revolutionary activities of the Social Democrats in Saratov, shedding light on its existential underpinnings. This research employs the hermeneutics of understanding (*Verstehen*) as a methodological paradigm to explore George Fedotov's youth. This approach involves identifying internal motives behind the external events in the life of the subject in question. It considers individual psychological aspects that contributed to the formation of G. P. Fedotov's personality. The author defines the emerging changes in the personality of G. P. Fedotov as a reorientation of his own fate caused not only by the decline of the revolutionary movement but also by the crisis of his identity. Consequently, crucial moments in his early biography are demonstrated as manifestations of the revision of his identity shaped by the interplay between his personal aspirations and the influences of the social environment, where his closest associates played a significant role.

Keywords: biography of G. P. Fedotov, Russian revolution of 1905 in Saratov province, personal history.

Революционная юность Георгия Федотова

A. B. Антощенко

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В статье исследуется ранняя биография историка, религиозного мыслителя и публициста Г. П. Федотова. В центре внимания находятся причины, мотивы и восприятие им своего участия в революционной борьбе саратовских социал-демократов (большевиков), а также условия и факторы, приведшие его к решению прекратить пропагандистскую деятельность. В основу исследования положены документы местного жандармского управления из Государственного архива Саратовской области, а также источни-

Aleksandr V. Antoshchenko — Dr. Sci. (History), Professor, Petrozavodsk State University, 33, ul. Lenina, Petrozavodsk, 185910, Russian Federation; ant@petsru.ru

Александр Васильевич Антощенко — д-р ист. наук, проф., Петрозаводский государственный университет, Российская Федерация, 185910, Петрозаводск, ул. Ленина, 33; ant@petsru.ru

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ки личного происхождения, в частности переписка Г. П. Федотова с Т. Ю. Дмитриевой, в которую он был безответно влюблен и в письмах к которой подробно характеризовал свои переживания. Рассмотрение этих материалов позволяет по-новому взглянуть на причастность Георгия Петровича к революционной деятельности саратовских социал-демократов, проливая свет на ее экзистенциальную подоплеку. Для изучения юношеского периода его жизни в качестве методологической парадигмы использована герменевтика понимания (*Verstehen*). Этот подход предполагает выявление внутренних мотивов, стоящих за внешними событиями в жизни изучаемого субъекта. В результате в статье подробно представлены индивидуально-психологические аспекты, сопровождавшие формирование личности Г. П. Федотова. Намечившиеся изменения в его личности определены как переориентация им его собственной судьбы, вызванная не только упадком революционного движения, но и кризисом идентичности молодого историка. Переломные моменты его ранней биографии предстают как проявления обновления его идентичности, сформированной взаимодействием его личных устремлений и влияний окружающей социальной среды, где решающую роль играли самые близкие для него люди и, прежде всего, его возлюбленная Т. Ю. Дмитриева.

Ключевые слова: биография Г. П. Федотова, Русская революция 1905 г. в Саратовской губернии, персональная история.

Georgii Petrovich Fedotov (1886–1951) gained fame after his voluntary exile in 1925, following his opposition to the totalitarian dictatorship of the Bolsheviks. Despite being far from his “socialistic” homeland, he remained steadfast in his socialist ideals, which had taken root during his youth when he actively participated in the propaganda work of Saratov’s Social Democrats¹. This article represents the reasons and motives for his involvement in revolutionary struggle, his perception of its results, and finally, the conditions for his refusal to participate further in the revolutionary activities. The documents of the regional gendarme administration, stored in the State Archives of Saratov Region, serve as the basis for the research. They have long been the subject of close attention of local historians, who have considerably contributed to introduction of the most significant of them into the scholarship². A careful examination of the entire pool of archival documents made it possible to identify new, previously unstudied materials. However, the most evident shortcoming of the local approach to the study of the “Saratov period” in the biography of G. P. Fedotov was neglect of other documents from various archives and libraries in Russia, among which private correspondence is are of particular importance. This paper for the first time addresses the correspondence between G. P. Fedotov and T. Iu.

¹ Some facts of George Fedotov’s participation in the propaganda activities of the Social Democrats of Saratov and his arrests are mentioned in biographical sketches. See: *Beaune D. G. P. Fedotov ce qui demeure...* (Réflexions sur la révolution russe). Aix en Provence, 1990. P. 12; *Bel’chevichen S. P., Rybachuk V. B., Kazantseva I. A.* Formirovanie religioznogo mirovozzreniia G. P. Fedotova: ot marksizma k neokhristianstvu i ekumenizmu // *Vestnik TvGU. Filosofii*. 2019. No. 3 (49). P. 115; *Boikov V. F.* Sud’ba i grekhi Rossii (Filosofsko-istoricheskaia publitsistika G. P. Fedotova) // *Fedotov G. P. Sud’ba i grekhi Rossii: in 2 vols. Vol. 1.* St. Petersburg, 1991. P. 6; *Bychkov S. S.* Georgii Petrovich Fedotov (biograficheskii ocherk) // *Fedotov G. P. Sobranie sochinenii: in 12 vols. Vol. 1.* Moscow, 1996. P. 8–10; *Zaitseva N. V.* Logika liubvi: Rossiia v istoriosofskoi kontsepsitii Georgiia Fedotova. Samara, 2001. P. 20 ff. — Alas, researchers often make mistakes in interpreting these facts.

² See for details: *Gusakova Z. E.*: 1) *Iz biografii filosofa, istorika i publitsista G. P. Fedotova* // *Sovetskie arkhivy*. 1991. No. 6. P. 87–89; 2) *Georgii Fedotov i Saratov* // *Saratovskii kraevedcheskii sbornik*. No. 4. Saratov, 2009. P. 171–181; *Katkov S., Lukin S.* Vozvrashchenie: k biografii Georgiia Fedotova // *Gody i liudi*. No. 7. Saratov, 1992. P. 35–41.

Dmitrieva discovered by the author³, which allows for a fresh look at his involvement in the revolutionary activities of the Social Democrats of Saratov and for the revelation of its existential foundation.

The nature of the examined documents determines the research methods for studying George Fedotov's youth. They are based on hermeneutics of the understanding (*Verstehen*) — a methodological paradigm that involves identifying internal motives of the behavior of the subject behind the external events. The latter also requires consideration of the individual psychological aspects of the formation of the personality of G. P. Fedotov, who later became a renowned historian, religious thinker, and publicist. Close attention to the rational and emotional backgrounds of his revolutionary activity make it possible to give the most adequate answers to the research questions. The most important moments of his biography signal of the reorientation of his identity, which is shaped by his personal aspirations and under the influence of the social environment, in which the people closest to him play a special role. In essence, this approach falls within the framework of the emerging concept of "personal history"⁴.

George Fedotov's interest in ideology emerged at an early stage while he was studying at the Voronezh Men's Gymnasium. In the senior classes of the gymnasium, he was actively engaged in illegal meetings of student circles, where political ideas were fervently discussed. Looking back on those times, his classmate Nikolai Nikolayevich Blummer recalled how these discussions were kept secret from the school authorities, and no one could have suspected that Georgii, despite his unassuming appearance and academic excellence, was the driving force behind the student magazine, contributing numerous articles and poems⁵.

N. N. Blummer often referred to Georgii as a "frail little gymnasium student" (*gimnazistik*)⁶, acknowledging his physical infirmity. Georgii had to endure moments of embarrassment, especially after an unsuccessful gymnastic exercise when he would quietly return to his place in line. However, this characteristic sheds light on the formation of his character. Georgii's shyness and preference for solitude were natural responses to such situations. Nonetheless, his physical limitations were compensated by his intellectual pursuits, with his spiritual life becoming the realm of self-affirmation.

This affirmation was evident not only in his academic accomplishments, which earned him respect of both teachers and peers, but also in his impassioned debates about the ideas expressed in illegal literature. Like many young people of his time, Georgii followed a path in his ideological development from the Russian radical democrats of the

³ Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi / sost. i komm. A. V. Antoshchenko // Fedotov G. P. Sobranie sochinenii. Vol. 12. Moscow, 2008. P. 7–256; Pis'ma-ispoved' G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi (1906–1907) / publ. i komm. A. V. Antoshchenko // Mir istorika: istoriograficheskii sbornik. No. 10. Omsk, 2015. P. 397–454.

⁴ Cf.: Repina L. P. Ot "istorii odnoi zhizni" k "personal'noi istorii" // Istoriia cherez lichnost': istoricheskaiia biografiia segodnia. Moscow, 2005. P. 55–74.

⁵ Cit. by E. N. Fedotova in her memoirs: *Fedotova E. N. Georgii Petrovich Fedotov (1886–1951)* // Fedotov G. P. Litso Rossii. Sbornik statei (1918–1931). Paris, 1967. P. III. — George's physical weakness was also noted by T. Iu. Dmitrieva in one of her diary entries: "He was so sickly and out of this world". See: *Dnevnik T. Iu. Dmitrievoi* // Nauchno-issledovatel'skii otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi Gosudarstvennoi biblioteki (NIOR RGB). F. 745 (Dmitrievy). K. 1. Ed. khr. 19. L. 55.

⁶ Ibid.

1860s–1870s through populists' ideology to social democracy⁷. However, he exhibited an individual trait within this typical trajectory, which itself bore the hallmark of that era. For Fedotov, this “secret intercommunication” was akin to ideological duels that demanded victory. He viewed them then as a more effective way of thinking than solitary reading and contemplation⁸. These experiences significantly shaped his intellectual growth and outlook.

The fascination with social democratic ideals played a pivotal role in the decision of young Georgii Fedotov to continue his education. After completing his studies at Voronezh Men's Gymnasium, he enrolled at the St. Petersburg Institute of Technology with the purpose of being closer to workers and engaging in propaganda to expose the exploitative nature of capitalism and to advocate for a just social order⁹. Once in St. Petersburg, he yearned to connect with underground revolutionaries. Reflecting on his life in the capital of the Russian Empire, he described moments of intense longing to embrace life fully, running through the foggy, desolate streets, hoping to encounter those he envisioned as heroic and enigmatic figures. These feelings resembled religious reverence, cultivated over time, for the “martyrs” and “heroes” he admired¹⁰.

However, the country's involvement in the war with Japan curtailed the time he had expected to have for transitioning from studies to direct propaganda work. The defeats on the battlefields and the senselessness of the war further fueled discontent among the Russian people, leading to open revolutionary sentiments after the tragic shooting of a peaceful demonstration at the Winter Palace on January 9, 1905. The violence and innocent bloodshed deeply affected Fedotov. Upon returning to Saratov, he channeled his hatred into writing a pamphlet that expressed extreme fanaticism combined with a fervent belief in victory, threatening those in power with dire consequences¹¹.

His life took a significant turn when he met Tatiana Iulianovna Dmitrieva, who was two years older and had been involved in propaganda work. Influenced by her uncle Anatolii Ivanovich Faresov, who had a history of populist activities¹², Tatiana was engaged in dissemination of illegal literature and propaganda actions, which eventually led to her arrest and exile to Siberia, replaced by deportation to Saratov¹³. The encounter with Tatiana stirred conflicting emotions in Georgii, as she involved him in propaganda among workers, while also revealing to him the beauty of the world and igniting feelings of love. This duality in their relationship caused shifts in his worldview, making him question his previous aesthetic nihilism and revolutionary aspirations. Although the “cracks” in his soul emerged due to this internal conflict, Georgii fearlessly embraced the changes and explored different paths. He navigated this ambivalent influence while continuing propaganda work and gradually embracing a new perspective on life.

In the spring of 1905, Georgii Fedotov participated in a May Day event organized by the revolutionaries of Saratov in Parusinovskaia grove on the outskirts of the city. The

⁷ A. N. Akinshin notes that the passion for socialist ideas in Voronezh Men's gymnasium was characteristic of a significant number of its students at that time. See: *Akinshin A. N. Voronezh v biografii filosofa G. P. Fedotova // Voronezhskaia beseda na 1999–2000. Voronezh, 2001. P. 97–98.*

⁸ *Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi. P. 17.*

⁹ *Fedotova E. N. Georgii Petrovich Fedotov (1886–1951). P. V.*

¹⁰ *Pis'ma-ispoved'. P. 398.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See his memoir: *Faresov A. I. V odinochnom zakliuchenii. St. Petersburg, 1900.*

¹³ *Dmitrieva Tatiana Iulianovna. Avtobiografiia // NIOR RGB. F. 745. K. 1. Ed. khr. 21. L. 6–7.*

vibrant gathering of numerous people, fiery anti-government speeches, and crimson flags and banners advocating for a Constituent Assembly and an eight-hour working day left a profound impact on Georgii. Recollecting it a year later, he described how the sight of the red flag moved him as deeply as Napoleon's eagles stirred the spirit of his army¹⁴.

During the summer of 1905, Fedotov lived in a dacha near the "Robbery" station, where Tatiana often came to meet with students from the Intercession Sunday School for Workers, where she taught. Their encounters at the railway platform served as the backdrop for Georgii's first secret meeting with Aleksandr Iakovlevich Vetrov, the head of the Social Democrats in Saratov, leading to further connections with other propagandists¹⁵. While Tatiana's mother decided to take her away from the growing revolution to Gelendzhik, Georgii continued to visit the city twice a week to study in a workers' circle, in which Tatiana had participated. He shared the latest news with Tatiana, who was residing in Pereval with Tolstoyans, among whom were some revolutionaries¹⁶.

Participating in propaganda activities among Saratov workers marked a natural progression in Georgii's spiritual evolution. This involvement not only expanded his ideological understanding but also played a significant role in the formation of his personality. He expressed deep gratitude to Tatiana for involving him in this meaningful work, which, as he believed, gave a sense of purpose to his life during the turbulent revolution. In a heartfelt letter to Tatiana, he confessed that his participation in this collective effort was liberating and filled him with the prospect of shaping a desired future. George wrote to Tatiana in Gelendzhik on June 19, 1905, "I would have absolutely nothing to live on if it were not for the case that you left me, even against your will. I am very grateful to you for it. It is painful to wait for the desired end, to move from hope to disappointment when you yourself stand on the sidelines as an idle observer. Another thing is when you take part in the common work and know that both your will and your efforts will bring, even for an insignificant moment, this desired future. They gave me a circle with whom I can talk about capitalism and surplus value, about the proletariat and the tendencies of historical development — In a word, about anything. At least I will get rid of the consciousness of my uselessness. And then the matter draws in with its fascinating side, the possibility of influencing human souls (in a word, as with Christians: first, goodness 'for the sake of saving the soul', and then for itself!)"¹⁷.

However, gendarmes in Saratov viewed Georgii's activities differently. On August 24, Captain Fedorov received an order to search the apartment of a tradesman Mendel' Elev Shushkov on Astrakhanskaya Street, and Fedotov was among the sixteen propagandists found there. While they were briefly detained, no incriminating evidence was discovered. Fedotov had burned a notebook containing a political pamphlet shortly before the arrest, and the notes found in his pockets were insufficient to hold him accountable for anti-government activities. The police authorities eventually released him but issued a warning¹⁸.

Concerned about potential repercussions and eager not to compromise his comrades, Georgii decided to leave Saratov on his own, which proved to be the right turn. An in-

¹⁴ Cf.: *Osipov V.A.* Saratovskaia organizatsiia RSDRP v 1905–1907 gg. Saratov, 1947. P.62–63; Pis'ma-ispoved'. P.420.

¹⁵ Pis'ma-ispoved'. P.413–415.

¹⁶ Ibid. P.427–428.

¹⁷ Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi. P.7.

¹⁸ Pis'ma-ispoved'. P.429–430.

investigation led by Captain Pastriukhin linked the activities of Saratov's Committee of the RSDLP to a number of trade unions working towards an armed uprising to overthrow the existing social system. Several propagandists were convicted under Article 120 of the Criminal Code, leading to exile, while others were called as witnesses¹⁹. Georgii was among the latter but had already left the city²⁰.

In summary, the spring and summer of 1905 marked a transformative period for G. Fedotov as he immersed himself in revolutionary activities alongside Tatiana. These experiences left a lasting impression on him, shaping his ideologies and prompting him to embrace the path of propaganda work, despite the risks involved.

They made their escape to the town of Atkarsk, where Georgii's grandparents lived, but it only served as a temporary shelter. Once Tatiana arrived as planned, they both journeyed to Petersburg. During their autumn stay in the capital, they grew closer spiritually. Tatiana found lodging with acquaintances of Dmitriev's at the apartment of Senator Stepan Borisovich Vraskii's family. Almost daily, Georgii visited her there, although he admitted feeling quite embarrassed in that environment²¹. Described as having a propensity for "aristocratism" by G. P. Fedotov, T. Iu. Dmitrieva introduced Georgii to the world of Petersburg theaters and tried to involve him in literary circles. However, his participation in the circle of the poet Iakov Polonskii didn't excite him²². Likewise, Tatiana wasn't enthusiastic about the crowded demonstration on October 2, 1905, where they bid farewell to Sergei Nikolaevich Trubetskoi²³, who had passed away the day before, an event Georgii had suggested attending. He later confessed to feeling her dislike, even hatred for everyone around, including himself²⁴. Tatiana confirmed his observation, as she feared revolutionary fervor would jeopardize her dreams of personal happiness²⁵, which she believed to be incompatible with a revolution requiring complete dedication²⁶.

Despite their differing views, they found themselves drawn further into the revolutionary movement. Together and separately, they took part in demonstrations. Georgii even spoke twice at rallies, with success. The October 17 manifesto angered him, as he viewed it as a "trap" for revolutionaries. However, the triumph of the tsarist regime was short-lived, and Georgii found himself at the Technological Institute the next day, witnessing a battle between students and troops. Later, G. P. Fedotov recalled this situation: "He was just at his institute, occupied by troops, when the battle began there. The area is covered with rubber galoshes — victory trophies. But it wasn't funny, oh no; now Tarle²⁷

¹⁹ О производстве дознания о состоившейся 24 августа 1905 г. в г. Саратове в квартире meshchani-na Mikhaia Shushkova skhodke s revoliutsionnymi tseliami // Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Saratovskoi oblasti (GASO). F. 53. Op. 1 (1905). D. 143. L. 67.

²⁰ Ibid. L. 20–20 ob., 67, 68, 84.

²¹ Pis'ma-ispoved'. P. 433.

²² Ibid. P. 444.

²³ Trubetskoi Sergei Nikolaevich (1862–1905) was elected rector of Moscow University after a partial restoration of university autonomy. Because of student unrest, the Minister of Public Education summoned him to the capital for an explanation. During a reception at the minister, S. N. Trubetskoi died due to a brain hemorrhage.

²⁴ Pis'ma-ispoved'. P. 438–439.

²⁵ Ibid. P. 409.

²⁶ Ibid. P. 453.

²⁷ Since 1903 the historian Evgenii Viktorovich Tarle (1874–1955) was Privatdozent of St. Petersburg University. On October 18, 1905, E. V. Tarle was wounded by mounted gendarmes at a rally near the Technological Institute in St. Petersburg.

has been carried away from here with a broken head, and the squadron is already driving up again, brandishing sabers. That is how that day began... And when, little by little, the heart could not stand it, succumbed to the general wave of jubilant joy, and he, happy as a child, marched behind his red banners — then — shots, blood. It was the first time he saw people being killed. That blood on the snow and on the face was startlingly light, he wouldn't have believed it. And that was what he associated with horror..."²⁸ The scene of violence left a deep impact on him. He felt his uselessness in Petersburg and wanted to leave for native Saratov²⁹.

Meanwhile, news from Saratov indicated the brewing of a revolutionary uprising there. An armed clash between the Black Hundred and the fighting squads of the Social Revolutionaries and Social Democrats on October 19, 1905, triggered a series of Black Hundred pogroms. In response, numerous rallies and demonstrations erupted, leading to the proclamation of a general political strike on December 10 by the Committee of the Social Democrats in Saratov. Calls for armed uprising were heard at rallies, and the retaliatory measures of authorities proved insufficient. A tragic incident occurred on December 16 when the Cossacks opened fire on a crowded rally, resulting in the deaths of over thirty people. Subsequently, Saratov province was placed under a state of siege, which caused arrests among revolutionaries and members of the council of workers' deputies. Despite the authorities' efforts, representatives of combat squads held an underground meeting on December 29 to discuss the possibility of an armed uprising in Saratov on January 9, 1906³⁰.

It is uncertain whether Georgii Fedotov, who returned to his hometown before Christmas, attended the meeting, but he was undoubtedly aware of it and was actively engaged in the ideological struggle of the local Social Democrats to mobilize the masses. At the meetings preceding the State Duma elections, he vehemently advocated radical ideas of armed struggle to overthrow the existing political system. The security department's agent, Pushkarev, reported on Fedotov's speech at a pre-election meeting organized by the Cadets on January 24, 1906. His speech was forceful, condemning the government's actions and asserting that the Social Democrats used agitation against the Duma, emphasizing the necessity to fight the autocratic government outside the Duma until a Constituent Assembly was established in Russia³¹.

His fervent support for the resolutions of the Tammerfors conference of the Bolsheviks held in December 1905 drew attention of Saratov's gendarmes, who feared the potential for worker-led armed uprisings similar to those witnessed in Moscow. As a result, Georgii came under surveillance and was referred to by the nickname "Sukhorukii" in the reports of surveillance on "unreliable elements". The reports highlighted that he actively participated in rallies and meetings organized by the local Social Democrats and consistently delivered speeches with a strong revolutionary tone³².

Sensing the growing threats, Georgii decided to leave Saratov once more and sought refuge in a remote small town within the Saratov province. The letter intercepted by the gendarmes on March 11, 1906, read: "Three good, the best workers left today"³³. Among them,

²⁸ Pis'ma-ispoved'. P. 452.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See for details: *Osipov V. A.* Op. cit. P. 107–138.

³¹ Cit. in: *Katkov S., Lukin S.* Vozvrashchenie: k biografii Georgiia Fedotova. P. 38.

³² O nabludeniia za deiatel'noct'iu komiteta RSDRP v g. Saratove // GASO. F. 57. Op. 1 (1906). D. 29. L. 194 ob.–195, 198 ob.

³³ Ibid. L. 83 ob.

as it turned out during the search activities, was G. P. Fedotov, who left “by the morning train with free tickets on the Riazan-Ural Railway to the station Kozlov”³⁴. However, this information was clearly too late — Fedotov was already in Vol’sk, his mother’s hometown. In Vol’sk, he used the alias “Vladimir Aleksandrovich Mikhailov” to conceal his identity.

Georgii’s letters to T. Iu. Dmitrieva from Vol’sk revealed different facets of his character, shaped by self-education during his gymnasium years. Beyond his involvement in ideological debates, propaganda work, and organization of various events, these letters reflected a more introspective mood. Influenced by reading “heretical” and populist literature, like the periodical “Russian Wealth”, he was drawn to the romantic era of revolutionary struggle. Additionally, he explored the works of Maeterlinck, which presented beautiful and subtle images akin to Danish fairy tales. Amid these literary influences, Georgii’s thoughts often turned to a beloved young woman who aspired to spiritual perfection through her studies, a person he deeply admired and cared for³⁵.

Unfortunately, Georgii Fedotov’s return to Saratov shortly after Easter brought disappointment. He discovered that his beloved had developed feelings for his comrade, Vladimir Alexandrovich Al’tshuller. Despite this situation, their friendly relations remained unchanged. Georgii’s name reappeared in gendarme reports alongside those of other individuals, indicating their active involvement in preparations for a significant event — the celebration of May 1³⁶. Although the police managed to prevent a repetition of the previous year’s large-scale May Day demonstration in Parusinovskaia grove, where workers from Saratov factories began to come at noon soon to be dispersed by the Cossacks, the efforts of the revolutionaries were not in vain. About two hundred boats under the guise of water walks gathered near Green Island in the middle of the Volga, and the demonstration took place in such an unusual setting, and in the evening a rally was held in the city park Lipki³⁷. The streak of rallies that followed — on May 5, 9, 14, 19, 20, and 21 — provoked retaliatory measures from the authorities. First, Saratov gendarmerie provincial administration compiled and handed over to the governor a “List of persons whose stay is unacceptable in order to protect the state and public peace in Saratov province”, which included the name of G. P. Fedotov³⁸. Then the governor received a notification from the Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which again mentioned G. P. Fedotov as one of the seven most active participants in political rallies, whose affairs had to be stopped³⁹. On the basis of these documents, Count Sergey Sergeevich Tatishchev, who acted as governor of Saratov, prepared a report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in a special meeting of which on July 7, 1906, a resolution was adopted to exile five of the most dangerous “troublemakers” to remote provinces of the Russian Empire⁴⁰. The choice was quite accurate and justified, as evidenced by the fact that three of the deportees — V. A. Al’tshuller, P. A. Lebedev, and G. P. Fedotov — were elected about a month before the decision on ex-

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi. P. 12–23.

³⁶ O nabliudeniĭ za deiatel'noĭiu komiteta RSDRP v g. Saratove. L. 165–165 ob.

³⁷ *Tsittel' E. F. Maevka na lodkakh // Bylye gody. Saratov, 1937. P. 49–50.*

³⁸ O nabliudeniĭ za deiatel'noĭiu komiteta RSDRP v g. Saratove. L. 194 ob. — 195, 198 ob.; *Perepiska s pomoshchnikami nachal'nika zhandarmskogo upravleniia v uezdakh ob arestakh, proizvedennykh v dekabre 1905 g. i v ianvare 1906 g. // GASO. F. 53. Op. 1 (1905). D. 203. T. 1. L. 309–310, 318 ob. — 319.*

³⁹ O vysylke v poriadke 34 st. Polozheniia o gosudarstvennoi okhrane // GASO. F. 1. Op. 1. D. 7112. L. 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid. L. 12–12 ob., 23–23 ob.

ile, on June 11, to the City Committee of the Social Democratic organization of Saratov⁴¹. G. P. Fedotov received the largest number of votes among all candidates in support of his candidacy — 98, with three abstentions. Following him was “Gromov” (pseudonym of V. A. Al'tshuller). In addition, G. P. Fedotov belonged to the combat squad⁴², whose members were preparing for active operations, as determined by the City Committee of the Social Democrats of Saratov⁴³. Immediately upon receipt of the decision of the special meeting, the local gendarmes and police carried out arrests on the night of July 8–9. However, Georgii Fedotov was not among the detainees, since he was named Grigorii in the arrest warrant. The unlucky policemen had to report to their chief and to the governor that “Fedotov disappeared into the city of Riga about a month ago, where, according to rumors, he was arrested”⁴⁴. To check the “rumors”, S. S. Tatishchev sent a request to the governor of Livonia, who, of course, refuted them⁴⁵.

Despite his deep involvement in the revolutionary struggle, Georgii seemed to become disillusioned with it. He made no attempt to escape arrest when his comrades were taken into custody. It appears that he consciously chose not to resist, possibly indicating a desire to distance himself from the revolutionary cause.

He sought a new direction in his life and applied for a place in the Department of History and Philology at St. Petersburg University⁴⁶. After his arrest, he did not oppose his mother's petition to replace his exile in Arkhangel'sk province with expulsion to Germany, where he could pursue his studies at a German university. Some of his comrades followed a similar path, and many, particularly nobles, received permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to pursue their studies abroad⁴⁷. The course of events pointed to Georgii's growing disengagement from the revolutionary movement, as he sought a different path for his future.

The reasons behind G. P. Fedotov's decision to step back from the revolutionary struggle, to apply for a transfer to the Department of History and Philology at St. Petersburg University, and to accept his mother's plan for exile abroad can be traced in his letters to Tatiana. He expressed that the decline of the revolution played a role in his choice. Living with enthusiasm was easier when the revolutionary wave was growing, but the lack of mass movement and the onset of reaction left him feeling depleted⁴⁸.

However, deeper motives can be found in Georgii's spiritual realm. He experienced an identity crisis, which he metaphorically likened to a “slowly ripening fracture” leading to a turning point in his life. The revolution exhausted the possibilities of his spiritual development and the values that guided him in his propaganda efforts⁴⁹. His love for Tatiana played a significant role in this crisis.

⁴¹ Protokol soedinennogo obshchegorodskogo komiteta i tsentral'nykh kruzhkov g. Saratova 11 iunia 1906 g. // GASO. F. 53. Op. 1 (1907). D. 94. L. 42.

⁴² Spisok boevoi druzhiny g. Saratova // GASO. F. 57. Op. 1 (1905). D. 42. L. 53 ob. — 54.

⁴³ O nabliudeniia za deiatel'noct'iu komiteta RSDRP v g. Saratove. L. 212–212 ob.

⁴⁴ O vysylke v poriadke 34 st. Polozheniia o gosudarstvennoi okhrane. L. 52–52 ob., 58 ob.

⁴⁵ Ibid. L. 55 ob. — 56.

⁴⁶ Proshenie Fedotova Georgiia Petrovicha ot 17 iunia 1906 g. // Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga. F. 14. Op. 3. D. 47244. L. 2; G. P. Fedotov: gody magisterskoi podgotovki // Srednie veka. 2014. Vol. 75, no. 1–2. P. 314.

⁴⁷ O vysylke v poriadke 34 st. Polozheniia o gosudarstvennoi okhrane. L. 53, 61–63, 67, 82, 83, 85, 144, 145–145 ob., 164, 177, 269.

⁴⁸ Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi. P. 53.

⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 30–31.

His unrequited love was intertwined with the revolution and the cruel and fanatical aspects that it brought into his life. Influenced by the nihilism of revolutionary democrats, Georgii developed a nihilistic attitude towards life, which gave rise to bitterness and hostility. However, falling in love with Tatiana was the remedy that softened his soul. The introduction to her spiritual world, with its perception of literary characters, mysticism, and fantasies, had a profound impact on Georgii.

Tatiana's world of beauty, unfamiliar to George, challenged his conventional ideas, but he learned to accept and respect her convictions, even if they differed from his own. He saw the beauty in her "delusions" and could not offer her more beautiful truths than the ones she held⁵⁰. This love for Tatiana opened up a path of spiritual transformation for Georgii, shifting his priorities away from the revolutionary struggle towards a deeper understanding of beauty and his own inner world.

Indeed, Georgii Fedotov's love for Tatiana was not reciprocated, which he keenly felt and deeply worried about. Despite the pain and suffering caused by this unrequited love, it did not make him bitter. In fact, his love was pure and profound, elevating his soul even in the midst of suffering⁵¹. He referred to his loss of hope for reciprocity as his "pessimism", as he struggled with the clash between the revolutionary ideals and the truth of love.

The revolution demanded sacrifices, including suppression of personal emotions and dreams of happiness in order to focus on the greater cause. Georgii likened the revolution to a beautiful but vampiric woman, a powerful rival for his soul's possession. In this struggle of passions, Tatiana's beauty seemed like a calm blue sky, while the revolution appeared as an alluring yet dangerous vampire. Ultimately, he recognized that Tatiana had won the battle for his soul⁵², not in a sense of rejecting socialist ideals, but rather in understanding the limitations of the revolutionary ideology.

Participating in the revolutionary struggle had been driven by his desire to serve a great and holy cause, but he realized that his understanding and knowledge were limited. The once great truth that guided him now seemed small and tarnished. This realization led him to seek knowledge through study as a way to expand his consciousness and to transcend his ignorance. He wrote to Tatiana from Saratov prison about his motives for participating in the revolutionary struggle and his escape from it: "I had only one need to get rid of my capital, move on to activities, give everything — I knew for what purpose. Well, now I have given everything, and I have nothing more. I worked joyfully, with all my being, as long as I was convinced that I was giving people something of value. Now I don't have that consciousness. True, yesterday's truth has remained it today. But it seems to me so small and tarnished, like a copper penny. Always the same, the same. Great truth, which is no higher than a newspaper article, ceases to be God. The cause I served remained great and holy. But I myself, I feel, should become higher. After all, I am so ignorant, and I am so conscious of it, that I was genuinely surprised when you, remember, pointed out to me my self-confidence. Ah, this habit left over from the heavenly days of omniscience. Well, enough. That's why I wanted to study"⁵³.

Thus, Georgii's involvement in and eventual rejection of the revolutionary struggle were existential choices that gave meaning to his life. Both rational and emotional aspects

⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 36.

⁵¹ Ibid. P. 402.

⁵² Ibid. P. 413.

⁵³ Pis'ma G. P. Fedotova k T. Iu. Dmitrievoi. P. 31.

were deeply intertwined in his perception of the world and in evaluating his relationship with the people close to him, especially with Tatiana. His negative attitude toward the social order and life, initially influenced by revolutionary ideologies, transformed into an ecstatic passion for revolutionary struggle during the period of upheaval. However, the influence of Tatiana's ethical and aesthetic attitudes prompted him to reevaluate his views on life, broadening the rational foundations of his worldview. Through love, Georgii's personality underwent significant changes, culminating in a reorientation of his identity. This transformation included expanding his horizons and embracing a broader perspective of the world without completely abandoning socialist ideals. This process deepened his understanding and allowed for adopting a more complex worldview, encompassing both rational and emotional elements, and recognizing the crisis of his identity as a catalyst for this transformation.

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