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### “THE CONTEMPORARIES’ OPINIONS OF HIM ARE SO VARIED...”: THE PERSONALITY OF VASYL’ KARAZIN (1773–1842) AS SEEN BY THE PEOPLE WHO KNEW HIM

In the present paper, the contemporaries’ impressions about the personality of a famous scientist and public figure Vasylyi Nazarovych Karazin (1773–1842) were researched. For this purpose, the mass of ego-documents (diaries, letters, memoirs) was analyzed. These sources were created by people from different communication “circles” of V. N. Karazin (the family, Kharkiv and Ukrainian-Sloboda community, contacts in the Moscow and Saint-Petersburg) except for his foreign acquaintances and correspondents. Processes of origin, forming and fixing of V. N. Karazin’s images in each defined social groups were described. Also, objective and subjective factors that influenced these processes were discovered. Directions for further research related to the study of the impact of opinions about V. N. Karazin’s personality during his lifetime for the further formation of his historiographical images were defined.

**Keywords:** V. N. Karazin, the late 18th – the first half of the 19th centuries, social contacts, ego-documents.

Vasylyi Nazarovych Karazin (1773–1842) is one of the brightest figures in Ukrainian history from the late 18th till the first half of the 19th centuries. He became famous as the founder of Kharkiv University (the first modern-style university in Ukraine), the first Ukrainian naturalist, a renown public figure and writer. At the same time Vasylyi Karazin was also known to the contemporaries as a man of mixed fortunes. His persona combined the traits of being genuine and philanthropic, innovative and curious, as well as the capacity to light this fire of curiosity in people around him, though he was sometimes rash and rough about what he said and did. It makes the contemporaries’ accounts of V. N. Karazin’s personality very different, almost polarized. As far back as the 19th century famous Ukrainian historian D. I. Bagaley (one of the most known biographers of V. N. Karazin) made a very apt comment, “Karazin’s very character is so complicated, the contemporaries’ opinions of him are so varied, that it is a challenge to make sense of them”<sup>1</sup>.

The study of opinions about V. N. Karazin during his lifetime allows us to have a clearer image of his social contacts, assess their strength and duration, the reasons why they emerged and waned. This data makes it possible to have a more detailed image of the researched person, his way of life, the social standing at a certain period of time, the factors that have certainly left their mark on the results of his labors.

Starting from the mid 19th century until now there have been over 650 publications devoted to V. N. Karazin. They were published by researchers from Slavic countries, like Ukraine<sup>2</sup>, Russia<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразін. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хрідочкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразін (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія; Вовк, О. І. (2016). *Постать Василя Каразіна в історіографії*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна etc.

<sup>3</sup> Грачева, Ю. Е. (2012). «Позвольте мне быть полезным!». *Василий Назарович Каразин на государственной службе и в общественной жизни России первой трети XIX в.* Москва: ПСТГУ.

Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>, Bulgaria<sup>2</sup> as well as from Western European<sup>3</sup> and North American countries<sup>4</sup>.

The existing papers have already tried to collect and interpret the accounts about V. N. Karazin made by people who knew him personally. For example, N. J. Tikhiy's monograph presents numerous quotes from V. N. Karazin's personal ego-documents, as well as those of his contemporaries. However, these accounts are not the subject of the author's research, they are rather used to illustrate the statements made by him<sup>5</sup>. The brochure published to commemorate V. N. Karazin's 225th anniversary is a collection of some quotes about him made by his contemporaries and researchers of his life. However, the format of this publication is rather of popular science, it does provide the reader with the variety of different accounts, but it does not analyze or generalize them<sup>6</sup>.

O. I. Vovk's monograph *The figure of Vasyl' Karazin in historiography* has a Section called "Strokes to the V. N. Karazin's images during his lifetime". This section allowed the readers learn the main milestones of Karazin's life and get a better understanding of the ways how the further historiographical images of his persona are formed. However, the paper did not intend to study this figure's social connections in a greater detail<sup>7</sup>. So, the problem raised in the current paper has not been covered specifically in domestic or foreign research studies.

The aim of the present paper consists of studying the accounts of V. N. Karazin's personality reflected in ego-documents (diaries, letters, memoirs) of his contemporaries. It will present the analysis into a number of "circles" of his contacts, including the family, Kharkiv and Ukrainian-Sloboda community, contacts in the Moscow and Saint-Petersburg. V. N. Karazin's foreign ties are not studied in the present paper.

Vasyl' Nazarovych Karazin was born on January 30 (February 11), 1773, in Kruchykh village of Bohodukhiv Povit in Sloboda-Ukraine province to the family of a retired Russian Army colonel who had Balkans (Bulgarian, Serbian or Greece) roots. His parents were educated people with a wide circle of contacts. Famous Ukrainian philosopher G. S. Skovoroda was a frequent guest at their household. In old age Vasyl' Nazarovych mentioned that in his youth he had the honor of meeting this respected person<sup>8</sup>. There is even an opinion that Skovoroda could be a house teacher for the Karazins<sup>9</sup>. In any case, Vasyl' Nazarovych received good education at home and later at private boarding schools.

When Karazin was ten, after his father's death, he was enlisted first with the Cuirassier regiment, then to the Leib Guard of Semenovsky Regiment. Since 1791 he resided in Saint-Petersburg being formally enlisted with the military service, while in fact he had left it to focus on education (visiting lectures at the Mining Institute, among other things). Sometime later V. N. Karazin decides to come back to his home village of Kurchyk, where he attempts to reform the existing village government system by founding a Village Council<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Perwolf, J. (1878). *Východní otázka – otázka slovanská. Osvěta: listy pro roshled v umění, vědě a politice*, 8, 6, 421-422.

<sup>2</sup> Станчев, М., Запрянова, А., Георгиев, Л., Чолов, П. (съст.) (2005). *Василий Каразин: живот и дейност*. София: Марин Дринов.

<sup>3</sup> Abaschnik, K. W. (2003). *Das Konzept des geschlossenen Handelsstaates Fichtes in der Rezeption von Vassilij Nasarovich Karasin. Fichte-Studien*, 24, 143-154. doi: 10.5840/fichte20032478; O'Meara, P. (2015). "The opinion of one Ukrainian landowner": V. N. Karazin, Alexander I, and changing Russia. *Word and image in Russian history. Essays in honor of Gary Marker*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 315-335.

<sup>4</sup> Fadner, F. (1962). *Seventy Years of Pan-Slavism in Russia, Karazin to Danilevskii*. Washington: Georgetown University Press; Flynn, J. T. (1988). *The University Reform of Tsar Alexander I. 1802-1805*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 14-20.

<sup>5</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира.

<sup>6</sup> Зайцев, Б. П., Посохов, С. И., Прокопова, В. Д. (уклад.) (1998). *Василь Назарович Каразин в оцінках сучасників та нащадків (до 225-річчя з дня народження)*. Харків: Бізнес-Інформ.

<sup>7</sup> Вовк, О. І. (2016). *Постать Василя Каразина в історіографії*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразина, 60-90.

<sup>8</sup> Багалеї, Д. И. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 605.

<sup>9</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразин. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразина, 194.

<sup>10</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хрідочкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразин (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія, 52-53.

After coming to power, Emperor Paul I issues a decree obliging all the nobles on military registers to arrive at their respective duty stations. V. N. Karazin ignores this order and loses his rank as an officer along with the salary. Later, in June 1798 Karazin petitions Paul I to grant him the permission to travel abroad<sup>1</sup>, after the request was denied, he dared to cross the border illegally. Though this attempt failed and Vasyly' Nazarovych, his pregnant wife and a servant ended up in prison. On August 13, 1789, he writes a letter to the monarch from the prison, confessing of the trespassings and explaining that his "curiosity" and "the innocent drive to be happy" prompted him to do that<sup>2</sup>. The events then took an unexpected turn: V. N. Karazin has an audience with Paul I that was followed by his pardon and a career at the state treasury department<sup>3</sup>.

This unexpected change in Vasyly' Nazarovych's life laid the foundation for many various speculations. For example, writer V. G. Anastasevich stated in his memoirs that after Karazin's request for a foreign trip Emperor Paul I personally issued an order to put Karazin in a sack, drive him on a boat, making circles around Kronstadt. After that Vasyly' Nazarovych was allegedly locked up in the Peter and Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg, where he was kept until Russian Emperor Alexander I was enthroned. According to V. G. Anastasevich during his visit to the fortress Alexander I noticed Karazin among other inmates. The Emperor talked to the prisoner and noticed his sharp wit, eloquence and sincerity, and so "bestowed upon him the favors and assistance proper to that time"<sup>4</sup>.

Of course, these fantastic tales do not have any documents supporting them and they contradict the verified information from V. N. Karazin's biography<sup>5</sup>. It is even stranger still that the accounts of similar nature were circulating in the capital almost fifty years after the actual events took place. As proven by the daily records of ethnographers, archaeologist and paleographer I. P. Sakharov dated 1841<sup>6</sup>.

At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries V. N. Karazin managed to stay in the capital for a couple of years. He was quickly moving up the career ladder that made him a notable figure in the noble society of the capital and many doors were open to him. Karazin's position made it possible for him to give Emperor Alexander I an anonymous letter with the account of his views of the liberal changes in the Russian Empire shortly after the Emperor was enthroned in March 1801. The author of this letter was quickly identified and already on April 11, 1801, he was quite warmly received by the Emperor<sup>7</sup>.

Since then V. N. Karazin's life entered a really "stellar phase". One of the reasons for that was the Emperor's unlimited trust that allowed the 28 y.o. nobleman from Sloboda Ukraine to have an unrestricted right to send messages to the monarch (not all the ministers had such a privilege)<sup>8</sup>.

The amicable relation between the monarch and the young nobleman is reflected in the letter sent by Alexander I to Vasyly' Karazin, dated December 25, 1801: "Vasyly' Nazarovych! I am extremely grateful to you for the letter of December 6. It gave me great pleasure to read the attachment you sent, I can see how much our thoughts and feelings align"<sup>9</sup>.

V. N. Karazin received the most sensitive tasks from the Emperor. In the beginning of 1802, Karazin managed to collect incriminating evidence against D. A. Lopukhin, the Governor of Kaluga Province. And though the latter was well connected and had influential patrons, the special investigation commission headed by Minister of Justice G. R. Derzhavin managed to hold him accountable. It must be noted that Derzhavin then described Karazin as a "clever and smart person, though, however, not honest beyond reproach"<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Багалей, Д. И. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 609.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 611.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 612-614.

<sup>4</sup> Анастасевич, В. Г. (1861). Записка о Василии Назарьевиче Каразине. *Чтения в Обществе истории и древностей Российских*, 3, 193.

<sup>5</sup> Багалей, Д. И. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 614-616.

<sup>6</sup> Записки И. П. Сахарова (1873). *Русский архив*, 1, 962.

<sup>7</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). В. Н. Каразин. *Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 31-32.

<sup>8</sup> Грачева, Ю. Е. (2012). «Позвольте мне быть полезным!». *Василий Назарович Каразин на государственной службе и в общественной жизни России первой трети XIX в.* Москва: ПСТГУ, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Грачева, Ю. Е. (2012). «Позвольте мне быть полезным!». *Василий Назарович Каразин на государственной службе и в общественной жизни России первой трети XIX в.* Москва: ПСТГУ, 172.

<sup>10</sup> Державин, Г. Р. (2000). *Записки. 1743-1812. Полный текст*. Москва, Мысль, 233.

For the Emperor this episode further strengthened V. N. Karazin's position, at the same time it was another demonstration of the threat he could pose for many other corrupt Russian officials. The personality of the Emperor's extremely active and creative favorite often made them envious and openly hostile. V. N. Karazin's personal traits only contributed to that. It was not always easy for him to be respectful communicating with others, he was often rough as well, therefore, many of the contemporaries viewed him as an unpleasant person.

At the same time, the trust Alexander I had in Karazin made his position in the capital more stable. Since early 1802 he was actively engaged in reforming the system of secondary and higher education in the Russian Empire. Back in 1801 Karazin proposed an idea of opening a university in Kharkiv. In June 1802 Alexander I pledged his full support to this project, in late August – early September of the same year Kharkiv hosted a meeting of nobility from Sloboda Ukraine. V. N. Karazin presented to them his personal plan of opening the future university. On September 1, 1802, he delivered a speech, in which he, with excitement, outlined all the advantages for Kharkiv as soon as the new modern higher educational establishment is opened there.

Even before the meeting, some representatives of the Sloboda Ukraine nobility pledged their support for V. N. Karazin's initiative. For example, on August 18, 1802, I. Kovalevsky wrote, "I always cherish the memories of our conversations, those that I heard and those that formed my holistic opinion about you, I recall how vigorously you were striving to benefit the society... Without a trace of a doubt, I hope that your aptitudes and talents as well as our respected superiors' understanding could bring the much needed success to the projected common good..."<sup>1</sup>.

First, many members of the nobility were quite skeptical about this new endeavor. But V. N. Karazin's fiery and persuasive speech had an effect on everyone. Those who gathered at the convention agreed to all the proposals and pledged to start the fundraising for the University. In January 1803, Alexander I gave his final agreement to opening of the Kharkiv University<sup>2</sup>.

Vasyl' Nazarovych was literally torn between Kharkiv with his preparations for the University opening, and Saint Petersburg, where he worked at the Ministry of Public Education. V. N. Karazin wanted to finish the preparations as soon as possible, so he operated at a breathtaking scale sometimes disregarding formal instructions and reports as well as gaining new adversaries along the way.

His primary concern with the needs of the University gradually made him forgo all his other affairs. Being irritated with the government's delays damaging to the cause of the university, on August 16, 1803, Karazin writes an emotional letter directly to the Emperor. In this letter he lays grave charges against Education Minister P. V. Zavadovsky and passive officials under his supervision. Since there was no response, Karazin dares to come to the Emperor's palace for an audience and gets a reprimand for that. This daring move didn't help with advancing V. N. Karazin's goal, it only irritated Alexander I and increased the number of his adversaries in the capital.

Consequently, one of the first Kharkiv University professors, I. F. Timkovskiy, who was also directly involved in establishing the University, wrote a letter to Karazin on December 12, 1803, "You seem to be distressed with your allies dragging their feet. I know that your work is an all-consuming fire, stay safe! This is the fire that is devouring you completely, it is a storm that breaks everything that can be broken, it tears apart the menacing clouds followed by an eminent blizzard"<sup>3</sup>.

Most likely, the Emperor's trust in his former favorite was ultimately undermined by the fact that some of the details from their confidential correspondence became known to others<sup>4</sup>. With the loss of the monarch's trust, the decision about V.N. Karazin's resignation was only a matter of time. On August 18, 1804, the Emperor issued a decree barring Vasyl' Karazin from having any interventions and interferences

<sup>1</sup> Багалей, Д. И. (1905). *Заметки и материалы по истории Харьковского университета. Новые данные для биографии В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: [б.и.], 20.

<sup>2</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хридоchкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразін (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія, 143-144.

<sup>3</sup> Шугуров, Н. (1891). Илья Федорович Тимковский – педагог прошлого времени. *Киевская старина*, 35 (Сентябрь), 388.

<sup>4</sup> Анастасевич, В. Г. (1861). Записка о Василии Назарьевиче Каразине. *Чтения в Обществе истории и древностей Российских*, 3, 199; Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразін. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна, 22.

with the University affairs, though this resignation was styled as a formal promotion: the civil rank of a State Councilor<sup>1</sup>.

Three months later Alexander I signed the Decree on the Opening of Kharkiv University and the University Charter. On January 17, 1805 Kharkiv University was officially opened with a grand ceremony, though V. N. Karazin was not invited to attend. At the same time the contemporaries and the posterity have closely associated Karazin with the Kharkiv University, and his work in the field of education soon received the well-deserved public recognition.

For example, I. Bohdanovych wrote him, “Your constant fight with the hydra of egoism has demonstrated to the beloved motherland as well as many people, the extent to which a person, who is set on the path of doing good, could contribute to the common and private good”<sup>2</sup>.

In his letter to Karazin dated January 24, 1805, priest Vasyly’ Fotiev addresses him in the following way, “On January 17, our efforts and the ardent care for the common good finally came to fruition. The big congress of nobility and the community from other provinces was inspired with joy and excitement... they were searching for you and asking after you, they admitted that this joy, the biggest joy of all, Ukraine owes to you alone; those loyal to you, those who are more than others privy to your movements of heart and intentions, were excited to bless the work you do”<sup>3</sup>.

On March 1, 1805, F. Kudrytsyn, Kharkiv Director of Colleges, addressed V. N. Karazin with the following words: “The outstanding work that you do for promoting education builds you monuments in the posterity’s minds, those monuments will be bearing the clear signs of your deeds, the intelligence of your mind and heart, your love of all things elegant, your patronage of the arts as well as the sacrifices you are making”<sup>4</sup>.

Interestingly, on the same day V. N. Karazin was elected an honorary member of Moscow University. N. N. Muraviov, Trustee of Moscow Educational District wrote to Karazin, “I have the honor to be the first-hand witness of your educated zeal pursuing the promotion of useful knowledge in the service of our Fatherland, it gives me a great pleasure to send you this Diploma of the Honorary Member of the Imperial Moscow University... Please accept it as the most genuine token of my sincere respect for you”<sup>5</sup>.

In June 1805, Professor J. N. Belin de Ballu initiated the bestowal on V. N. Karazin the status of the Honorary Member of Kharkiv University. Though, at that time this decision was deemed as untimely, this initiative was voted on only in 1811. The final positive resolution was motivated by “the exceptional drive for learning, which is his undisputed advantage, that is coupled with the fiery soul ignited by the thirst for activity” and “it is only his diligence and care that made establishing the University in Kharkiv possible”<sup>6</sup>.

During the first years after V. N. Karazin’s forced exile from the court, he continued corresponding with many officials and statesmen who used to be within his circle of contacts. In his letters he wrote about his ideas of developing the economy, shared his plans of future publications, etc. He also maintained contacts with the representatives of the local intellectual elite. For example, he was a member of the so-called Popivka Academy, an educational society established by A. A. Palitsyn at his own estate in Popivka, Sumy povit of the Sloboda Ukraine province. This poet, translator, architect and a public figure writes in his letter to V. N. Karazin, dated March 30, 1806, “There are people and affections that are unforgettable no matter what, during any separations or changes. You and my feelings for you are of this type, of course. Those who had the pleasure of knowing and loving you, they will always remember you, even when you change”<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хрідочкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразін (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія, 147.

<sup>2</sup> Багалеї, Д. І. (1905). *Заметки и материалы по истории Харьковского университета. Новые данные для биографии В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: [б.и.], 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> Багалеї, Д. І. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 880.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 881.

<sup>5</sup> Тихий, Н. І. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразін. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна, 50.

<sup>7</sup> Багалеї, Д. І. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 882.

Though V. N. Karazin lived a long way from the capital, he did not lose his interest in following the political and social issues and challenges in the Russian Empire. Moreover, he kept sending letters to Emperor Alexander I with the account of his views on the priorities of the Russian foreign policy and advised the Emperor certain diplomatic steps. This activity, of course, triggered the Emperor's irritation. Eventually, it was officially prohibited for Vasyl' Nazarovych to address the monarch with the similar notes, due to "his inappropriate speculations about matters that are none of his concern and could not come to his knowledge"<sup>1</sup>. He was taken into custody, detained in the guardroom, where he spent eight days.

V. N. Karazin's failed attempts to repair his social and political stance made him take active actions to reform the management of his own estate and its economic operation. He reopened the Village Council in Kruchyк and opened the first public school there, the first one in Slobozhanshchyna. According to verbal accounts from Kruchyк, "Vasyl' Nazarovych did everything under the law, the God's law; so he was wronged by the masters for being so good-natured"<sup>2</sup>. It must be noted that Karazin's estate was a safe haven that runaway serfs from the nearby villages were running to seeking refuge and patronage. As illustrated by the words in the Letter of Trust handed to Vasyl' Nazarovych by the peasants, "Not only do we trust you, we are placing all our lives with you: the protection of our freedoms... You, dear sir, have been selflessly involved in our affairs since 1801, you have always protected us, brought our needs before the superiors..."<sup>3</sup>.

The attempts to reform the management of the estate and modernize its economy brought V. N. Karazin to ardent research and scientific studies. Among other things, Vasyl' Nazarovych was interested in forestry in steppe areas, engaged in growing and introducing new agricultural crops, showed his interest in producing food concentrates. In 1810 he opens a weather station in Kruchyк, which was the first one in Ukraine and among the very few in the Russian Empire. He made an original design of a device to store electric energy from the upper atmospheric layers<sup>4</sup>.

V. N. Karazin gladly shared his findings and conclusions at the meetings of various scientific societies. For example, W. K. Küchelbecker made the following note in his diary on August 12, 1841: "The paper (on meteorology), presented by Karazin at the meeting of the Moscow society of naturalists in 1810, puts forward a number of very bold hypotheses, that may be proven in a hundred, fifty years or less. One of the most prominent of those hypotheses, is the assumption that the mankind will be able to subdue the electric power and use it to improve their creations, in the same way as water and steam have been subdued"<sup>5</sup>. It is known that liberal writer W. K. Küchelbecker was a member of the Northern Secret Society of Decembrists and took part in the Senate Square rebellion in December 1825. Therefore, it is even more remarkable that V. N. Karazin's scientific ideas are praised by the person who had completely opposing ideological and political views.

Standing up to his challenges on his own, V. N. Karazin decided to engage the wider nobility in the scientific work and civil activities. In 1811 he founded Kharkiv Philotechnical Society, the first technical society in the Russian Empire. It is believed that this project became the second most important initiative, after Kharkiv University, among those implemented by Karazin in Sloboda region. Vasyl' Nazarovych's organizational and research efforts were commended in several government's letters of appreciation<sup>6</sup>.

V. N. Karazin's strategic idea was to spread the operation of the society across the whole country, though this dream of his was never translated into reality. Yet his proposals and ideas often failed to get support from his closest acquaintances. In this respect the abovementioned G. R. Derzhavin gave the following response to V. N. Karazin's collected papers from the society's session, "Let me

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<sup>1</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 140.

<sup>2</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразін. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 286.

<sup>4</sup> Слюсарский, А. Г. (1955). *В. Н. Каразин. Его научная и общественная деятельность*. Харьков: Издательство Харьковского университета, 49–99.

<sup>5</sup> Орлов, В. Н., Хмельницкий, С. И. (ред.) (1929). *Дневник В. К. Кюхельбекера. Материалы к истории русской литературы и общественной жизни 10-40 годов XIX века*. Москва: Прибой, 126.

<sup>6</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хрідочкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразін (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія, 63.

acknowledge your genuine patriotism and God make our other compatriots as zealous as you are, especially our leaders at the helm of the state, without this quality the success is not likely to materialize”<sup>1</sup>.

Many of his contemporaries and even members of the Philotechnical Society were not ready to accept most of V. N. Karazin’s innovations. His ideas were often treated as a costly folly that could be bring almost no benefit. For example, in 1824 count A. A. Arakcheyev was traveling by the town of Bohodukhiv. Local residents complained to him of the crop failure and asked for help, in response he said, “It is strange that you are starving: by your side you have a sorcerer who brings down the rain and thunder right from the skies at his will; turn to him”<sup>2</sup>.

Not all the contemporaries were that skeptical of V. N. Karazin’s naturalist and economic ideas. In particular, German scholar and humanist K. D. von Rommel, professor at Kharkiv University from 1811 to 1814, notes that he regards the meeting with V. N. Karazin as one of the best memories of his life. The professor characterized him the following way: “He is knowledgeable in languages and literature of almost all the nations, he knows the best inventions made by Europeans in the field of physics and chemistry, he is full of philanthropic ideas, he has devoted himself to scientific research and experiments, he has also tried to enlighten his serfs by introducing the trial by jury and raising them to the level of the bourgeois society”<sup>3</sup>.

Eventually, the enthusiasm of the Philotechnical Society’s founder and his supporters failed to break the wall of inertia and even hostility. The Society operated until the late 1818 and ceased to exist after that. Soon V. N. Karazin moved to Saint Petersburg and dived into the whirlpool of the social life. He was clearly intent on finding the leverage to influence the Russian Empire’s government policy, which could be an explanation for his move to the capital. Vasyl’ Nazarovych no longer had the right to have personal petitions to the Emperor, that is why he was likely to seek the appropriate political platform to draw the government’s attention to his agenda. The Free Society of Lovers of Literature became this platform for Karazin.

In November 1819, V. N. Karazin becomes the full member of the organization, and a month later he is elected its Vice-President. On March 1, 1820, he made a presentation highlighting the need for censorship that would make it impossible for the freethinking literature to spread in the Empire<sup>4</sup>. This statement provoked a long and heated discussion. It is believed to have contributed to the split in the society into two ideologically opposite groups.

At the same time, from the late 1819 to the first half of the 1820s V. N. Karazin wrote a number of memos to Minister of Internal Affairs count V. P. Kochubei. In his memos he raised the questions about the difficult plight of serfs and the abuses of landlords, and he also informed the Minister about the distemper in the capital.

There is no surprise that V. N. Karazin alienated a great many members of the Free Society. On March 15, 1820, they convened the special session of the Society and had a no-confidence vote against the Vice-President, accusing him of disclosing details into tensions within the organization. In the end, Vasyl’ Nazarovych and his allies left the session, and following the two-month deliberations, Karazin was expelled from the Society<sup>5</sup>.

At the turn of the 1810s and 1820s, V. N. Karazin acquired a rather unappealing image in the liberal society of the capital. Economist, writer, member of the Decembrist movement N. I. Turgenev gave the following account of Vasyl’ Nazarovych as a “grumpy person of a restless nature, the one who disregards the admonishments and is bold enough to petition the Emperor with insolent reproaches”<sup>6</sup>, while the sole thing he accomplished was “giving only fiery speeches in support of the serf”, instead of engaging in real actions<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Багалей, Д. И. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 891.

<sup>2</sup> Слюсарский, А. Г. (1955). *В. Н. Каразин. Его научная и общественная деятельность*. Харьков: Издательство Харьковского университета, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Роммель, К.-Д. (2001). *Спогади про моє життя та мій час*. Харків: Майдан, 130.

<sup>4</sup> Багалей, Д. И. (сост., ред.) (1910). *Сочинения, письма и бумаги В. Н. Каразина*. Харьков: В университетской типографии, 571.

<sup>5</sup> Грачева, Ю. Е. (2012). «Позвольте мне быть полезным!». *Василий Назарович Каразин на государственной службе и в общественной жизни России первой трети XIX в.* Москва: ПСТГУ, 116-117.

<sup>6</sup> Тургенев, Н. И. (2001). *Россия и русские*. Москва: ОГИ, 500.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 252.

A. F. Voeikov, a poet and literary critic, was even more coarse in his accounts. In his versed pamphlet called *The Asylum*, Voeikov calls V.N. Karazin a two-faced and deceitful “chameleon”<sup>1</sup>.

In the second half of 1820, V. N. Karazin continued informing count Kochubei and through him Alexander I regarding all the social events that could be of concern. At the same time, Karazin believed that the Emperor was primarily and personally responsible for the growing social tension and made him the main object of criticism in his notes<sup>2</sup>.

This straightforwardness was a fatal blow to Vasyl’ Nazarovych. On October 16, 1820, Semenovskiy regiment rebelled against the insolence and violence of the highest military commanders. A week after the rebellion an anonymous note was found in the barracks. It was inciting Preobrazhenskiy regiment to stand together with their comrades from Semenovskiy regiment and bring down the Tsar.

V. N. Karazin was suspected of writing this proclamation. There was no direct proof of his involvement, but on November 25, 1820, the Saint-Petersburg police department received the Emperor’s order from Troppau authorizing Karazin’s arrest and imprisonment at the Shlisselburg Fortress.

Having learned about V. N. Karazin’s arrest, historian N. M. Karamzin made the following note about the event in his letter to general M. A. Miloradovich, dated November 28, 1820, “He was unable to live a quiet life, and look what he has achieved. He has a wife and many children. It is sad. I think that his fault lies in doing something daring: maybe he once again wrote a new reckless letter”<sup>3</sup>. Archbishop Yevhenii Bolkhovitinov’s letter of December 6, 1820, to Vasyl’ Anastasevich contains the following lines, “The news I received from you about V.N. was a big surprise for me. Though this was long to be expected for those overenthusiastic, even fanatical, political proclamations of his”<sup>4</sup>.

It is quite interesting to note how the peasants from Kruchyk reacted to their “master’s” arrest. According to the accounts recorded in the early 1900s, “Vasyl’ Nazarovych was the Tsar’s spy; having learned about the mutiny against the monarch’s life, he recorded the rebels’ plans and forwarded them to the sovereign. His haters, however, completely distorted this case and presented to the Tsar blaming Karazin for designing the plot. The Tsar got furious and ordered to punish Karazin with pillory, and he was bound to die there but for the interference of his wife. She has sneaked a manservant from Kruchyk to the capital, who used to wear a mask with Karazin’s face and change places with Karazin at the pillory, so that his master had an opportunity “to run and stretch his bones”. Vasyl’ Nazarovych spent a year at the pillory, his beard grew almost to his knees. Meanwhile his wife proved Karazin’s innocence, so Tsar was moved with noble sentiments and granted him the power that no other person wielded in the Rus”<sup>5</sup>.

It is obvious that the popular account mixes the two periods from V. N. Karazin’s biography: his successes and friendship with Alexander I in 1801–1804, as well as the imprisonment in 1820–1821 (during that period Karazin’s wife Oleksandra Vasyl’ivna was really petitioning the Emperor pleading for her husband’s pardon). On May 21, 1821, Vasyl’ Nazarovych was escorted by the state courier to Kruchyk, where he was taken into the custody of Bohoduhiv local administrator (*zemstvo*). Not only V. N. Karazin, but also members of his family, including his brother Ivan Nazarovych, were under the close surveillance of the police<sup>6</sup>.

The formal surveillance over V. N. Karazin was officially lifted in 1826, the actual monitoring lasted almost until the end of his life and included the restrictions on his freedom of movement across the country. For example, in 1831 Vasyl’ Nazarovych intended to stay in Moscow for a couple of days, however, those intentions were communicated to Emperor Nicholas I through A. K. Benckendorff, Head of the Gendarmes, and the Emperor banned Karazin’s access to Moscow and he was transported back to his family estate near Kharkiv. Local administrator received an order to ensure that V. N. Karazin did not leave the Kharkiv region, every week he would send reports about Karazin’s behavior. Only in 1839, Vasyl’ Nazarovych

<sup>1</sup> Слюсарский, А. Г. (1955). *В. Н. Каразин. Его научная и общественная деятельность*. Харьков: Издательство Харьковского университета, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Грачева, Ю. Е. (2012). «Позвольте мне быть полезным!». *Василий Назарович Каразин на государственной службе и в общественной жизни России первой трети XIX в.* Москва: ПСТГУ, 128-135.

<sup>3</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 235.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразин. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразина, 96.

<sup>6</sup> Государственный архив Российской Федерации, ф. 1717, оп. 1, д. 138.



received the permission to reside in any city of the country but Saint-Petersburg and Moscow, he was barred to visit those cities for good<sup>1</sup>.

Having returned to Kruchyk V. N. Karazin did not want to be excluded from the public life, he carried on with his scientific experiments. He sent many such letters to local newspapers and was actively engaged in corresponding with local officials. However, now he earned himself a reputation of a public figure who fell out of grace due to his political convictions. There is no surprise that his actions were, therefore, often restrained. For example, the government did not approve his election as the judge of the conscience court in 1824 and his nomination as the Head of the Chamber of the Criminal Court in 1828<sup>2</sup>. In the last two decades of V. N. Karazin's life, his relations with the people around him were not always smooth either. Kharkiv architect V. I. Yaroslavskiy made the following observation about V. N. Karazin, stating that by the 1820s, "the latter had completely undermined the good opinion and affection for him"<sup>3</sup>.

In the 1830s the courts heard numerous lawsuits filed against Vasyl' Nazarovych. The plaintiffs accused him of oral and written insults<sup>4</sup>. Though many of the lawsuits dealt with harboring the runaway peasants, what was already mentioned above. In his late years V. N. Karazin was engaged in the conflict with H. F. Kvitka, a prominent Ukrainian writer, known by his pen name Osnovianenko. According to Hryhorii Fedorovych's letter to P. A. Pletnirov, dated March 1, 1841, "The person (Karazin) whom I have never harmed in any way started insulting me from the most vulnerable side, literally. He was spreading slander about me here and even sending it to the highest leadership"<sup>5</sup>. In his final years, Vasyl' Nazarovych for some unknown reasons also fell out with his younger brother Ivan Nazarovych, who had been his loyal friend and supporter, including in his efforts to open Kharkiv University<sup>6</sup>.

Such metamorphoses could be, on the one hand, accounted for by his directness and emotionality of V. N. Karazin throughout his life. On the other hand, in their final years people's traits they used to have when young tend to grow more pronounced, making them even more vulnerable and irritable. Psychologists' explanation for that is the overall physical fatigue and being more prone to sickness, as well as the mental discomfort, the growing feeling of failed self-actualization, uselessness and abandonment.

We can assume that V. N. Karazin at the dawn of his life experienced something similar; moreover, he had all objective reasons for that. In winter of 1836, his mansion in the village of Kruchyk burned down. It was a real blow to Vasyl' Nazarovych, the fire destroyed a great deal of his valuable books and manuscripts, thus undermining his intellectual work, the sense of his life. His younger contemporary, writer G. P. Danilevskiy, recalled, "I remember a stormy winter evening, a thin gray old man, who came to my father's hamlet, was telling us about the fire and crying... This man was Vasyl' Karazin"<sup>7</sup>.

In 1837 one of Vasyl' Nazarovych's son, Oleksandr, died at the age of twenty. The grief-stuck father made the following comment about that, "Two Oleksandrs were the favorites of my soul. I have lost them both, before they managed to bring joy to my life, before my dreams about them came true"<sup>8</sup>. Most likely V. N. Karazin was thinking about Emperor Alexander I and his son.

At the same time, we cannot say that the last two decades in V. N. Karazin's life were pessimistic without any trace of joy. He would find it in his family. According to one of his sons, Filadelf Vasyl'iovych, "If only you could know what a perfect family man he was! What a man, what a father, what a master!... I really do not know anyone like him; I am completely unbiased about this, I am not telling you

<sup>1</sup> Болебрух, А. Г., Куделко, С. М., Хрідочкін, А. В. (2005). *Василь Назарович Каразін (1773-1842)*. Харків: Авто-Енергія, 69.

<sup>2</sup> Слюсарский, А. Г. (1955). *В. Н. Каразин. Его научная и общественная деятельность*. Харьков: Издательство Харьковского университета, 144.

<sup>3</sup> Ярославский, В. И. (1887). Еще о В. Н. Каразине. *Харьковский сборник*, 1, 69.

<sup>4</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 289-290.

<sup>5</sup> Квітка-Оснoв'яненко, Г. Ф. (1981). *Зібрання творів в 7 томах*. Київ, Наукова думка, 7, 295.

<sup>6</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 288.

<sup>7</sup> Данилевский, Г. П. (1866). *Украинская старина. Материалы для истории украинской литературы и народного образования*. Харьков: Типография Зелинского и Любарского, 150.

<sup>8</sup> Бабкин, Д. С. (1966). *А. Н. Радищев: литературно-общественная деятельность*. Москва, Ленинград: Наука, Ленинградское отделение, 41-42.

this as his son. And there are so many people he has helped in his life, so many people he has defended against the people of power!... ”<sup>1</sup>.

As much and as long as he could V.N. Karazin extended his patronage to many different areas. Namely, he provided financial support to young, low-income families by giving them the opportunity to receive education. In one of the letters from an unknown author to T. I. Selivanov, we read the following lines, “As for assisting the poor, for really bringing relief to an upset person... for pulling this person out of the abyss of misery, then yes, oh yes! You can go right to Vasyl’ Nazarovych, and there is no need to ask for help, No!... This kind soul is so keen to help everyone who asks, there is even no need to ask, as long as the favor is within his reach!...”<sup>2</sup>.

V. N. Karazin was also highly praised by many representatives of Kharkiv University, that he has maintained contacts with until his death. He contributed to the University Library some rare books and cartographic publications and visited many events at the University.

L. Nichpaievsky, a student at Kharkiv University Medical Department from 1823 to 1828, recalls: “With the feeling of profound respect to Karazin’s memory I now remember Vasyl’ Nazarovych, whom I had the pleasure of seeing multiple times at the University. In 1827, V. N. Karazin was present at the public exam for law students. At the time he was quite old, gray-haired, but he was following the students’ answers with the energy typical of the youth; he himself asked a couple of questions. I recall that Vasyl’ Nazarovych told a lot of pleasantries to student Volodymyr Oldenberg for answering his question on stylistics”<sup>3</sup>.

There is also another testimony to the University community’s respect for V. N. Karazin. In 1833 Vasyl’ Nazarovych had an outstanding debt of 2,400 roubles to count Podgorichani-Petrovych, though he did not have this money. Having learned about that, Kharkiv University professors and instructors collected the necessary amount and thus saved Karazin’s estate from bankruptcy<sup>4</sup>. It must be noted that four out of seven Karazin’s children graduated from Kharkiv University.

Interestingly, some Karazin’s contemporaries who initially held a poor opinion of him changed it later after getting to know him better. For example, it was exactly the case with I. Y. Betsky. He mentioned that his first meeting with Vasyl’ Karazin was in the early 1840s. This meeting did not impress the twenty years old Betsky much. He wrote that his first impression of Karazin was that of a person full of hot air, Betsky felt uncomfortable listening to the man’s tales of the past, especially his successes and the prominent station at the Emperor’s court in the early 1800s<sup>5</sup>.

But I. Y. Betsky’s opinion gradually started to change. Primarily due to the fact that V. N. Karazin was one of the first people who “reached out with a helping hand” and supported his idea of publishing Ukrainian Literature Almanach called *Molodyk*.

After V. N. Karazin’s death I. Y. Betsky wrote to historian M. P. Pohodin, “It seems to me that had the circumstances not turn this restless scholar inside out, he could have achieved much more, he could have made a lot of good, taking into account the energy of his exuberant mind and the passion for being useful...”<sup>6</sup>.

It is noteworthy that historian V. G. Anastasevich has a similar opinion, “Our good, clever and even pensive Vasyl’ Nazarovych, if only he had limited himself to one field only, either literature, or scholastic endeavors, or even economics, he could have managed to till it, reap the generous harvest and share it with the compatriots and the posterity”<sup>7</sup>. And V. N. Karazin himself admitted at the dawn of his life, “Yes! I was ignorantly overconfident. I was a butterfly that burned its wings and lost its vision in the sphere where I, a modest laborer in the field of science, should not have dared to fly into”<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Вовк, О. І., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2015). *В. Н. Каразін. Діалоги у часі й просторі: дослідження і матеріали*. Харків: ХНУ імені В. Н. Каразіна, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 286-287.

<sup>3</sup> Зайцев, Б. П., Івашенко, В. Ю., Куделко, С. М. (уклад.), Посохов, С. І. (ред.) (2010). *Харківський університет ХІХ – початку ХХ століття у спогадах його професорів та вихованців* в 2 томах. Харків: САГА, 1, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Тихий, Н. И. (1905). *В. Н. Каразин. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*. Киев: Типография императорского университета Св. Владимира, 267.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 281.

<sup>7</sup> Анастасевич, В. Г. (1861). Записка о Василии Назарьевиче Каразине. *Чтения в Обществе истории и древностей Российских*, 3, 198.

<sup>8</sup> Данилевский, Г. П. (1866). *Украинская старина. Материалы для истории украинской литературы и народного образования*. Харьков: Типография Зелинского и Любарского, 111.

Vasyl' Nazarovych carried on with his scientific research until his very death. In 1842 he got interested in potential improvement of viticulture and winery in Crimea, so he had the intention to visit Nikitsky Botanical Gardens. However, he caught cold on his way there and on November 4 (16), 1842, he died on the hands of his son Filadelf Vasyl'iovych in Mykolaiv where he was put to final rest. Already after his death I. Y. Betsky wrote, "It is a pity that he did not die in Kharkiv, it would have been a great pleasure for me to take care of him in the last moments of his life because the deceased did not have friends"<sup>1</sup>.

It was F. I. Karazin and I. Y. Betsky that became one of the precious few who invested their efforts to commemorate the memory of V. N. Karazin right after his death, thus they started the new ("obituary") development stage of his historiographical images<sup>2</sup>.

To sum up, it can be argued that the ego-documents of V. N. Karazin's contemporaries reflect quite a wide spectrum of accounts about this historical figure. The nature and the tone of those accounts depended not only on V. N. Karazin's personal traits and circumstances of his life, but also on a number of objective factors (social, geographic, spatial, temporal). The closer the people knew him (in the social and territorial contexts), the more generally positive accounts they made.

His children remembered him as a clever and caring father. For the peasants from Kruchykh he was a kind and fair master, a person with a strange character who was also demonstrating extraordinary and to some extent supernatural capacities. The educated community of Kharkiv remembered him primarily for his prominent role in founding the University in Kharkiv as well as his philanthropy. However, in his final, rather difficult decades of life, the local society associated V. N. Karazin's name with a number of scandals and court trials.

Of course, the attitude towards V. N. Karazin in his home region was affected by the "waxing and waning" of his career in the state service and the position in the social and political life of the Russian Empire, and the personal disposition of the monarchs. However, the Saint-Petersburg society was more prone to react to those factors. In the eyes of the many V. N. Karazin's image was transforming from an active and energetic person who can be potentially dangerous to a conservatively minded figure who has fallen out of grace, a man charged with treason and he was finally painted as someone who brought those misfortunes on himself.

Of note that both V. N. Karazin's supporters and opponents acknowledged his talents for research and remarked that he could have had much better results, if he had focused only on research.

Finally, the findings presented in the paper will be used further in a more detailed study of the role that V. N. Karazin's images during his lifetime had on the development of his historiographical images.

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