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**ELIZABETH IVANIVNA SKOROPADSKAYA-MILORADOVICH (1832-1890).  
A SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

– *Abstract* –

The article, based on documents left by epistolary legacy and research papers, describes the life and socio-political activity of one of the famous Ukrainian nobility, Elizabeth Ivanivna Skoropadskaya-Miloradovich (1832-1890) who was a philanthropist, public figure and one of the founders of the Shevchenko Society in Lviv and was also the aunt of the last Ukrainian Hetman, Pavlo Petrovich Skoropadsky. The article offers a methodical presentation of various references to E. Miloradovich and analyzes her political views and active public position, describes her everyday life, her entourage and her family. Furthermore it illustrates that the Miloradovich house was a real centre of scientific, public and cultural life in Poltava.

*Keywords:* Elizabeth Ivanivna Miloradovich, Poltava, Shevchenko Society, Pavlo Petrovich Skoropadsk, Ukraine.

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Poltava has long been known for its cultural and educational traditions, the active participation of women in the socio-cultural, political life of the region. Among the conscious and progressive women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is worth mentioning the following names Paraskovia Kochubei, Varvara Repnina, Sofia Posen, Kateryna Skarzhynska, Vira Volkova, Olga Drahomanova-Kosach, Lyubov Yanovsky, Lyudmila Staritskaya-Chernyakhivska and many others. Each of the mentioned people is worthy of attention. All these women, through their activities - philanthropic, writer, educational, scientific, and public - served the cause of the awakening of Ukrainian national consciousness.

Poltava region has produced thousands of innovative, talented, vocational women who have enriched its history and culture. Different in origin and life

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circumstances, they were real guardians, gave strength and creative energy to build their own land. This clearly confirms the way of life of our countrywoman, a representative of the famous Skoropadsky family.

A colourful figure in the social and cultural scene in the 1860-1870 period, was the “predictor of will” Elizabeth Miloradovich of the famous Skoropadsky family, which was a part of the Ukrainian aristocracy. She had done so much good for Poltava and Ukraine in general and this deserves the grateful memory of her fellow countrymen. The name Elizabeth Miloradovic must be honored by descendants. Her life was branded by the advantage of the highest social ideals aimed at developing a national identity. Elizabeth Miloradovich was a conscious Ukrainian. Famous Poltava literary critic, ethnographer, writer and journalist Petro Rotach compared her with Lesya Ukrainka and believed that in her heart the Promethean fire was burning <sup>1</sup>.

Elizabeth Ivanivna Skoropadskaya (in marriage - Miloradovich) was born on December 31, 1831 (January 1, 1832), probably in the estate of Kachanivka in the Chernihiv region. She came from two ancient Ukrainian families - Skoropadsky and Tarnovsky.

For several centuries the Skoropadsky family played leading roles in Ukrainian political and cultural life. His best representatives were patriots of his homeland, they were taking care of schools and gymnasias, providing material work for Ukrainian publishing houses, Orthodox churches. The same virtues also featured the representatives of the Cossack-senior family Tarnovsky <sup>2</sup>.

In 1849, at the age of 17, Elizabeth Skoropadskaya married the rich and educated Poltavian Count Lev Miloradovich, who was 25 years old. With the settlement of the family in Poltava began for Elizabeth Ivanivna active participation in public and cultural life. The House of Miloradovich became “a real Ukrainian salon”, the center of cultural activity in the Poltava community. The house of Lev Grigorovich and Elizabeth Ivanivna was on Postmash Street (now - V. Chornovola, 3). Unfortunately, the house has not survived. It was destroyed during the Second World War. In the postwar period the Poltava Gymnasium № 6 was built on that site.

The kindness and affection of the Miloradovich couple, made them popular among the Poltava citizenship of that time. Their Poltava estate of was considered to be the cultural and art center in educated circles.

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<sup>1</sup> Петро Ротач, «Спасибі, мамо, спасибі навіки!» (Демократична Полтавщина). Полтава, 1993, 16 березня, р.2.

<sup>2</sup> Вадим Модзалевский, *Малороссийский родословник.*, Киев, 1912, Т. 3 (Л-О), р.534.

Visitors to the E.Miloradovich's house were the famous composer Modest Mussorgsky, opera and chamber singer Daria Leonova, famous actors from the Ukrainian theatre Marco Kropivnytsky, Mykhailo Staritsky, composer Mikolay Lysenko, and later actors Maria Zankovetska, Ivan Karpenko-Kary, Anna Zatrykevich-Karpinskaya, artist Maria Bashkirtseva and others. Not without reason M.Musorgsky called the house of Miloradovich “the center of arts” and the countess herself “a beautiful, very well educated, modern European woman”<sup>3</sup>.

In a letter from 1879 to the following friends Maria Ivanovna Fedorova and Pavel Alexandrovich and Sergei Pavlovich Naumov, M.Musorgsky described the Countess as follows: “Glorious, friendly, profoundly enlightened and deeply sensual, E. I. Miloradovich gave Darius Mikhailovna, in her magnificent Poltava house, many beautiful and exquisite Ukrainian embroideries on cloth, and for various every day usage: shirts, pillowcases, sheets, various "plates", etc., and to us including Fedor Dmitrievich, E. I. Miloradovich presented towels with strange drawings and embroidered inscriptions.”

The Miloradovich couple owned 50,000 acres of land in Poltava and Ekaterinoslav. In the summer of Elizabeth Ivanovna lived in her estate in Sanzhary, and in winter - in Poltava. Lev Grigorovich and Elizabeth Ivanivna had a dacha (village) in Gorges, near Poltava, where there was a magnificent park, an arboretum and a botanical garden.

The Countess Miloradovich was seen as an “emancipated” woman — without any prejudices. The way of life led to the following: dressing up in the latest French fashion, partaking in balls with her Parisian clothes, travelling regularly abroad — when she could afford it. She was educated, fluent in French with a good “Parisian dialect” and also in German. E. Miloradovich carefully studied English by herself, with the aim of translating the *History of Rus*, so that her foreign friends could comprehend the mentality of the Ukrainian people.

She often suffered from illness, so she repeatedly travelled to Kiev, Odessa and abroad for treatment in Vienna, Gall, Baden. E. Miloradovich was an unusual, bright, multifaceted and charismatic figure, her non-standard behaviour, freedom of love, activity, she differed from the Poltava nobility in the second half of the nineteenth century.

It is not known for sure whether E. Miloradovich personally met with T. Shevchenko. However, it is known that Elizabeth Ivanivna admired the person T. Shevchenko and his creativity. It is no coincidence that she insisted on the fact that the company founded with her capital, was named in Lviv in honor of the poet. In

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<sup>3</sup> Модест Мусоргский, *Письма*, Москва, 1981, p.216.

the future it was renamed the Shevchenko Scientific Society. Of course, the poetry of T. Shevchenko, his views and way of life greatly influenced the countess and contributed to the formation of her view of the world, beliefs and attitudes.

The house of Miloradovich was visited by the father of the famous Ukrainian historian D. Doroshenko Ivan Yakovich, and from the Countess Elizabeth Ivanivna received a gift - the Prague edition of *Kobzar* by T. Shevchenko.

Active social position and the desire to help the masses of the population contributed to the fact that Elizabeth Ivanivna energetically entered the public life. She was too enthusiastic, extraordinary and trained in other traditions to silently contemplate social change and in those prevailing conditions in quiet provincial Poltava, the countess decided: "And at the worst, find the good and the opportunity to be useful." However, for this purpose, it was necessary to have an appropriately conscious, active and reliable environment. E. Miloradovich found them in the persons of the members of the Poltava community (they were engaged in cultural and educational work, in particular organization of Sunday schools, public readings, popular books for popular reading, staged theatrical performances, collected and studied Ukrainian folklore and antiquities).

In the early 1860s E. Miloradovich through donating material and organizational assistance several Sunday schools for boys and girls in Poltava were established, which the Countess financed herself. Elizabeth Ivanivna herself went to the schools and taught the children, and also she liked to sing with students after classes. In the schools, Ukrainian textbooks were used. Elizabeth Miloradovich made significant contributions for the printing of these textbooks <sup>4</sup>.

An important direction of the activities of the Poltava community was the organisation of public lectures, public readings, the opening of libraries and bookshops. Such events began to attract new audiences to the Sunday schools - even the elderly, were asking "to learn something".

With E. Miloradovich's assistance, a reading room for scientific popular reading, was organised for the Poltava population. The Poltava community organized performances for the general public. E. Miloradovich also looked after the Poltava amateur theatre.

On May 6, 1861, the day of the reburial of T. Shevchenko to commemorate the transportation of the poet's body to the Ukraine, the community and E. Miloradovich planted an oak tree, which is still standing to this day. This was the first living monument for the poet in Ukraine.

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<sup>4</sup> Михайло Гніп, *Громадський рух 1860 рр. Полтавська громада*, Харків, 1930, Кн. I, р.7.

E. Miloradovich actively engaged in charity work throughout her life. She never spared her strength and money for public needs. Contemporaries testified that no charity event in Poltava was conducted without the active participation of Mrs. Elizabeth.

After the abolition of serfdom in 1861, E. Miloradovich gave each of her peasants 10% more land than was stipulated by the reform law. She took care of the pupils of the Poltava diocesan women's college. From 1878, until her death, she chaired the Poltava Women's Charitable Society. There is evidence that the Countess acquired a large estate and donated 6 thousand rubbles to the Society<sup>5</sup>.

E. Miloradovich created a women's association to care for orphans and opened an orphanage. For sick children, the patroness arranged a separate room in her dacha in Gozhuly.

The first women's high school and real college in Poltava also received significant assistance from E. Miloradovich. In 1879 Elizabeth Miloradovich donated her house on Kuznetsk street (then Pushkin, 85) to the Alexander high school. In the building there were also apartments for the school's inspector and the director. The Poltava Electrotechnical College is now housed in this building, Pushkin No. 83-a<sup>6</sup>.

Countess Miloradovich was also caring for orphans and their accommodation and giving children the opportunity to gain experience in various crafts and so on.

Mrs Elizabeth founded a Philanthropic Society in Poltava. She attempted to organize a local independent newspaper. In addition, the Countess was a member of the Poltava Agricultural Society. E. Miloradovich was known to be a good pianist and she participated in charity concerts in Poltava.

According to contemporaries, there was no charitable organization in the city in which Elizabeth Ivanivna would not participate. Her name was often mentioned, together with other Poltava patrons, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Ivanivna helped poor students by paying for their studies

In her house in Poltava for the New Year, Elizabeth Miloradovich arranged a Christmas tree for the orphans and children from the area. It was such a Christmas tree during the mid-1880s that Galina (Anna) Yevhenivna Morokhovets, married name Akimova, born October 24, 1879, died May 25, 1965.

The author of this article, Dr. Irina Petrenko, was contacted by Tatyana Antonenko, from Kiev, an engineer and translator. In the letter she wrote: "It was by

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<sup>5</sup> К. Єлизавета Іванівна Милорадовичка (Зоря), 1894, № 3, р.70.

<sup>6</sup> Анатолий Чернов, *Гетьманиа* (Режим доступу: [http://duxovna-stolitca.blogspot.com/2011/12/blog-post\\_24.html](http://duxovna-stolitca.blogspot.com/2011/12/blog-post_24.html)).

accident that my girlfriend, the great granddaughter of Yevheny Morokhovets (who was the Miloradovich's manager, whom you mentioned in your essay), recently heard a radio broadcast, where your essay was mentioned, and it seems that Skoropadsky was mentioned. A friend wrote down your name, I found your contact details. She asked me, my girlfriend is unfortunately computer illiterate, send you the memories of her grandmother, Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets, who was the daughter of the manager Miloradovich. There is a mention of the case of lost money, leaving the manager and his family without a place to live and they were forced to move to Kharkov, where his brother, Valery Morokhovets, helped him"<sup>7</sup>.

I immediately understood what was going on, because on December 18, 2016, Ukrainian radio was broadcasting the author's program "Exlibris", which is conducted by well-known Ukrainian writer, literary critic, publicist and public figure Mykhailo Slaboshpitsky. At that time, the broadcast was dedicated to Elizabeth Miloradovich. The author mentioned my book *Elizaveta Miloradovich (1832-1890) in the Ukrainian social-political movement* (Poltava, 2013).

Then between Mrs. Tatiana and myself a correspondence began, as well as a telephone conversation with Elena Vasilyevna Lukashova, who lives in Zaporizhzhya and is the granddaughter of Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets.

It happens that her grandmother Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets often talked about her life, her childhood and her youth. The brightest memories of her childhood were of the Christmas tree in Elizabeth Miloradovich's house in Poltava. Such bright and unforgettable children's memories remain a lifetime in their memories, even in old age Galina Yevhenivna remembered the merry Christmas tree of Miloradovich and his wife - Elizabeth Ivanivna, who was kind to her and orphans.

Memories of Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets and her grandchild Olena Vasylivna Lukashova, which are stored in the family archive, were the basis of this article. Truly, good deeds do not pass in vain; there is always someone who will authenticate them.

And it all began as follows. Galina was born on October 24, 1879 in Kharkov, to the parents Yevheny Y. Morokhovets(1848-1915) and Anna Yegorovna Minitskaya. The family had four children. In the early 1880s, the family moved to Poltava, where Yevheny Morokhovets began to work as the manager of Elizabeth Miloradovich's house in Poltava. There were two brothers Yevheny (? -?), Valery (1869 -?), and sister Zinaida (Poznan) (1876-1961).

The best memories of Galina Yevhenivna's childhood were her stay in Poltava. She, along with her brother and other children, played, read, boat rides and

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<sup>7</sup> Personal archive of Olena Lukashova.

other entertainment. Galina Yevhenivna wrote: "I remember the wonderful Christmas tree in Miloradovich's house, which she arranged annually for children from the orphanage, to which we also received an invitation. We were amazed by the beauty and riches. They danced, played, were treated perfectly and allowed to run everywhere in the 21 room house. There was a special room for the parrots. There were so many of them: Arara, cockatoo, small parrots, we fed them with nuts, candies and began to tease them and one of them began to shout with a loud scream: "we are being attacked, save us!". Then Elizabeth Ivanivna (Miloradovich) came and drove us away. We went further and found ourselves in a gazebo, one wall was glass and it was covered with ivy, magnificent porcelain plates decorated another wall and there were pictures from the best artists. There was some kind of dark hall between the columns and we fled with fear because when I was 18 years old I during a visit to Castle Shiyon on Lake Geneva and we went into a room (probably a prison) where in the past prisoners were hung on the columns and this immediately reminded me of this".<sup>8</sup>

Galina Yevhenivna recalled that in the summer the Miloradovich family went their house in the village of Sanzhary on the Vorskla river. Children often walked with my mother along the Vorskla coast, where my mother sang the song "there is a tall mountain" and, indeed, there was a high green mountain high, a real paradise. The children loved to celebrate their mother's birthday, the father brought sweets from the city, the children painted colour lanterns, which decorated the boats, baked cakes and roasted poultry. These dishes and the samovar were carried to the boat. The celebration took place in the evening. Vorskla was illuminated by the moon, wonderful Ukrainian songs made an unforgettable impression on the little Galina. Remembering them, she could not sleep for a long time.

When Galina was 5-6 years old, the family went to stay in Yalta. Her older brother painted and one of them portrayed the whole family. In 1935 Galina visited the place where they stayed, she did not find the house and Chekhov's house had replaced it.

Homeland happiness and well-being in Poltava did not last long. There was an unpleasant story that forced the Morokhovets to leave Poltava forever. This story was associated with Elizabeth Miloradovich. In Galina Yevhenivna's memoirs it is said that nephew of Elizabeth Ivanivna asked her father, Yevheny Y. Morokhovets, to help him with a loan of 5,000 rubbles, otherwise he would be shot. He promised to return the money in 2-3 days and asked him not to mention this to Elizabeth Miloradovich.

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<sup>8</sup> Personal archive of Olena Lukashova.

Yevheny Y. Morokhovets took the necessary amount from the bank and gave it to the nephew, but the nephew refused to return the money, stating that he had not taken anything. When Yevheny Morokhovets then went on to explain all the Countess Miloradovich, she replied: "I believe my nephew more than you! Please return the 5 000 rubbles, or I will sue you."

Talking about the Miloradovich nephew brought back Galina Yevhenivna's memories, but as these memories are very old, many details have already been forgotten. Elizabeth Ivanivna Miloradovich had only one son, Gregory, whom she loved infinitely. That son did not meet the maternal expectations. He was a true playboy and burned the candle at both ends. Gregory led a magnificent life, played cards, led a luxurious life, so he had large debts. Furthermore as he was in Paris as an attaché at the Russian Embassy, in a few years squandered the great Miloradovich fortune. A telegram demanding 100,000 francs broke the maternal sufferance. From this, Elizabeth Ivanivna became ill - the emotional crisis undermining her health. The estate of more than 50 thousand acres, went to pay the son's debts. During the night of 13th to 14th February 27th 1890, E. Miloradovich, deeply depressed by the news of her son, died of a heart attack in Poltava.

The funeral took place on February 17, 1890. The great procession accompanying her coffin to the Poltava Holy Cross monastery testified to the great respect of this public figure in Poltava. E. Miloradovich was buried in the monastery cemetery.

So there is every reason to believe that Gregory, the son of Miloradovich borrowed the money from Yevheny Yevlumpyevich and then refused to repay it. Of course, Elizabeth Ivanivna took the side of her only son, whom she loved infinitely.

When Elizabeth Ivanovna refused to believe Yevheny Yevlumpyevich, he was desperate and decided to commit suicide. However, his wife Anna Yegorovna managed to assure him of the recklessness of his decision and found a way out of the situation. The house in Poltova in which the Morokhovets family lived had been given to them by Miloradovich. A few days later the house was sold and the money was returned to the bank. The family of Morokhovets moved to another apartment and then planned to leave the city. They went to live with Yevheny's brother Andrei in Kharkov, who had his business there and subsequently transferred the business to Yevheny Yevlumpyevich.

Nearly 50 years (from 1883 to 1936 and during the occupancy) the promenade on the River Lopan in Kharkov was called Morohovetskaya. There is an assumption that such a name could related to one of two well-known Morokhovets families which resided in Kharkov at the end of the XIX century namely Valery



Yevgeniyovych or Andrei Yevlumpyevich. Valery Morokhovets was a well-known public and business personality at the beginning of the 20th century. His cousin Andrei was an entrepreneur and philanthropist. Representatives of this family played a prominent role in the life of the city.

In 1901, Galina Yevhenivna married Julian Petrovich Akimov, who was an engineer and worked in a factory in Yekaterinoslav (later Dnipropetrovsk, then Dnipro). The couple formed a happy family.

According to the memoirs of Tatyana Antonenko, Lidiya Yulianivna Akimova (mother of Olena Vasylivna Lukashova) was a very interesting, lively and educated woman. Her children and those of her neighbours, relaxed at her home. She, like her mother Galina (Anna) Yevhenivna played the piano, the children sang, received some scarves and peacock feathers from her grandmother's chest and dressed up to play in some amateur performances. Tatyana remembers how at home they once tried to make "Evenings on a farm near Dikanka". She had been taught how to make different kinds of dishes since her childhood, she was already excellent in the second grade. Subsequently, Lilia Yulianovna married Vasily Pavlovich Lukashov. The couple had three children - Nikolay, Elena, Valery.

The second daughter of Galina (Anna) Yevhenivna Morokhovets (Akimova), Tatyana Julianivna died in infancy. Unfortunately, Igor Yulianovich's son, has not kept any information.

Currently, the great-great-granddaughter of Yevheny Yevlumpyevych Morokhovets, Elena Vasilyevna Lukashova lives in Zaporozhye. For a long time she worked as a librarian. She often remembers her grandmother Galina (Anna) Yevhenivna Morokhovets (Akimova), who almost to the last days of her life remembered the Christmas tree in Elizabeth Miloradovich home - the best memories of childhood.

Elizabeth Miloradovich lived a decent life, after her death she was remembered for a long time by those who she helped. Being one of the richest women in Poltava region, she never spared her funds for charity. She demonstrated how to live an active life, with an indestructible spirit and the need to put social ethos above one's own needs. This can serve the next generation of business representatives who must be socially responsible, generous and not indifferent to social needs in society.

E. Miloradovich was an extraordinary, bright, charismatic and versatile person, her non-standard behaviour, love of freedom and her actives, diverged from the standards of the Poltava nobility in the second half of the nineteenth century. She

was able to join others around herself, she had excellent organizational skills, was sincere and courageous.

The name of Elizaveta Ivanivna Skoropadskaya-Miloradovich must be given a golden inscription in the history of Poltava region and Ukraine. Undoubtedly, Elizabeth Skoropadskaya-Miloradovich deserves to remain in the memory of all present and future generations of Ukrainians.

I would like to thank Tatyana Antonenko and Olena Lukashova for their knowledge, help, desire and readiness to tell about the good deeds of our ancestors who deserve our respect.



Photo 1. Elizabeth Miloradovich.



Photo 2. The Miloradovich residence, viewed from the courtyard.



Photo 3. Poltava Gymnasium № 6 (photo from school site).



Photo 4. Elizabeth Miloradovich (portrait by I. Trush, from a photo).



Photo 5. Yevheny Y. Morokhovets.



Photo 6. Valery Yevgenovich and Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets, Kharkov, 1895.



Photo 7. Anna Yegorovna Morokhovets (Minitskaya) with her granddaughter Iryna (daughter of Valery's son).





Photo 8. Wedding photo of Galina Yevhenivna Morokhovets and Julian Petrovich Akimov (1901).



Photo 9. Galina Yevhenivna and Julian Petrovich Akimov.



Photo 10. Galina (Anna) Yevhenivna Morokhovets (Akimova) and Julian Petrovich Akimov with their children Lydia (March 27, 1913 - November 23, 1984), Igor (-), Tatyana (1903 - 1917).