

Contribution of Sergey Ivanovich Mitskevich to the development of healthcare in Yakutia

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«We know nothing more about Srednekolymensk except that it is impossible to live there. That's why we send you there.»

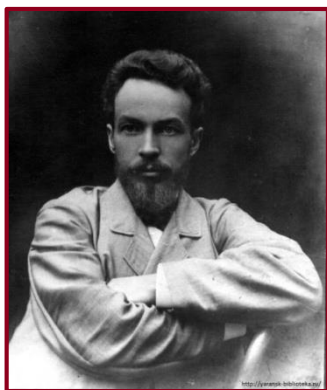


Fig.1. Sergey Ivanovich Mitskevich

S.I. Mitskevich (1869-1944) is a legendary person, was born in Yaransk, Vyatka province, now Kirov region. In childhood, he moved with his family to Libava (Liepaja, Latvia).

After graduating from university in 1893, S.I. Mitskevich began working as a statistician at the Sanitary Bureau of the Moscow Provincial Zemstvo. In 1894 he was arrested and imprisoned in Butyrskaya, and then in Taganskaya prison, where he spent 2 years and 2 months in strict solitary confinement.

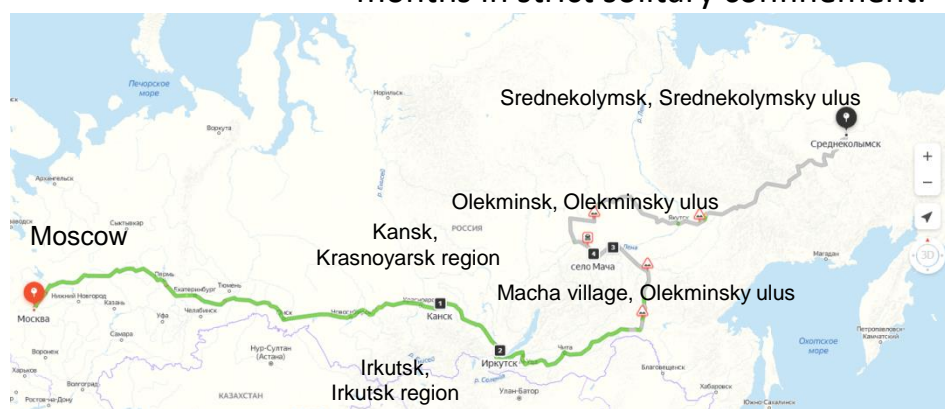


Fig.2. S.I. Mitskevich reached Olekminsk for almost 8 months.



Fig.3. A group of political exiles in Srednekolymensk. Sergey Ivanovich Mitskevich - the first from the left in the second row. 1900.

In 1897, S.I. Mitskevich was exiled for 5 years to the Yakutsk region. Mitskevich and three other political prisoners were released from custody upon arrival in Olekminsk. Here he spent a year working as a doctor in gold mines. Sergei Ivanovich met the cheerful daughter of a local dressmaker Olympiada Popova. She was born and raised here on Lena. The father was an exiled Don Cossack.

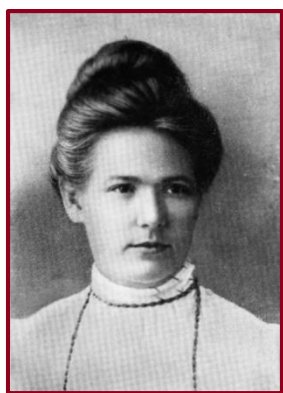


Fig.4. Olympiada Nikolaevna Mitskevich (Popova)

March 25, 1899 S.I. Mitskevich left Olekminsk with his bride O. N. Popova. The couple arrived in Srednekolymensk on May 15, 1899, after 37 days of travel. As a doctor, S.I. Mitskevich was forced to become a generalist: he performed eyelid surgery for trachoma and performed other operations; took birth; struggled with syphilis and leprosy; he performed dental treatment and provided psychiatric care, which was his main medical specialization. Being in exile S.I. Mitskevich learned the Yakut language and spoke freely with local residents.



Fig.6. S. I. Mitskevich's medical department

«The Kolyma District, its territory is huge - 540 thousand square miles, has been without a doctor for eight years already. Seven thousand people live there - Russians, Yakuts, Yukaghirs, Evens, Chukchi.»



Fig.7. A trip to the Kolyma district. S.I. Mitskevich is third from the right.

Forever in the memory of the people



Fig.8. Hospital in Srednekolymensk and a memorial plaque. 1957 and today. Monument-bust to S.I. Mitskevich in Srednekolymensk.

In such an amazing way Latvia and Yakutia intertwined in a vivid biography of S.I. Mitskevich. He was the first doctor in the North of Yakutia. His work in the distant Kolyma was varied and complex. Medicine, scientific research, the fight for the fate of lepers and with various epidemics. He organized the collection of donations to help the starving, saved many from death, and often traveled to the land.

He opened the first medical centers in Nizhnekolymensk, Verkhnekolymensk and built a hospital in Srednekolymensk. Grateful Kolyma residents named the hospital in his honor.

References:

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2. <https://mr-srednekolymskij.sakha.gov.ru/o-munitsipalnom-obrazovanii/istoricheskaja-spravka/>;
3. https://adzharaj-kut.blogspot.com/2019/09/2-2-2019_19.html



Fig.5. S.I. Mitskevich with his wife in front of his apartment in Srednekolymensk, when he was in exile (1899-1901). Photo from 1901