

Mariam Kereselidze's Life Twists and Turns (According to Mariam Kereselidze's Epistles)

Mariam MARJANISHVILI*

Abstract

It is scientifically proved that genetic heritage, irrespective of a person's wish or will, is passed down from parents, which connects him/her with their predecessors' world.

The same can be said about constitution, nervous system, temperament, character – they are all inherited. From this point of view, Mariam Kereselidze was a copy of her father, general Leo Kereselidze. She was determined, self-sacrificing and daring like her father. The love of Georgian gene and origins, the striving towards freedom were inspired by her father from her very childhood. Mariam was the only child so her father brought her up in a manly manner, tried to develop the features which she would use in difficult situations. The general wished his daughter to continue his political course.

Brought up in her father's political surrounding, all Mariam's actions were directed to restore Georgia's statehood.

During the World War II, at the age of 19, Mariam Kereselidze helped the Germans to bomb English bases in Gibraltar for three years, according to KGB. On her "achievements" list, there was also a revelation of secret negotiations between American and Portuguese ambassadors. That was why she was hunted by: Soviet KGB, English Intelligence, French police and even German Nazis... In the World War II, Mariam Kereselidze fought among anti-Soviet group, on the Germans' side for others' interests, formally, but in reality, she fought for Georgia.

After the war she moved to South America and while living in Peru, in 1960, she wrote a play "Maita" in Spanish, her second play was "Roots of Stars" which was staged by Rosa Wonder's cast of Peru Theatre. Due to hard life conditions in Peru, Mariam Kereselidze started her activity in Communist Party.

Keywords: Kereselidze, lost, Peru

* PhD, Scientific Worker, Kutaisi State Historical Museum. E-mail: Mari_teron@yahoo.com

Introduction

It is scientifically proved that genetic heritage, irrespective of a person's wish or will, is passed down from parents, which connects him/her with their predecessors' world. The same can be said about the constitution, nervous system, temperament, partly character – all these are hereditary. Taking this into account, it can be said that Mariam Kereselidze, like her father, General Leo Kereselidze was a determined, devoted, risky and brave. Her father planted the Georgian roots and genes, longing for freedom in his little daughter, who brought up his only child in a manly manner; he tried to develop the qualities which would be useful in difficult situations.

The General greatly wished Mariam to follow his political course, that's why he made her aware of the miserable fate of their occupied country. From her father's stories, she knew that historically, at different times Georgia experienced the power of Muslim countries, which brought the country to the verge of extinction. The conquerors made a great influence on the country's politics, economics, culture and other walks of life.

Apart from Muslim surroundings, from late 18th century, Georgia became the aim of the Russian Empire, which gave rise to another period of historical misfortunes. The first and the second occupation of Georgia was followed by the annexation of the country. So, in order to restore independence, each Georgian political emigrant had to fight with either a sword or a pen and a word.

Mariam became aware of the fact that being born a Georgian was both a blessing and a curse, as she had to struggle for independence since her early childhood and, like a soldier, obey the orders of her father.

In 1925, on the day of the establishment of "Tetri Giorgi"¹, at the age of 4, the follower of her father's political course, she was politically baptized and made the motto of "Tetri Giorgi" – "Georgia first of all" – her life credo.

According to the statute, this motto, in its essence, referred: "For Tetri Giorgi the nation is the most important. All the rest must have a subordinate part. The nation is eternal, all the rest is transitional. Temporary must be sacrificed to permanent..." (Manvelishvili, 1990, p. 168).

It can be said that Mariam Kereselidze made this statute the motto of her life. Having the qualities of great endurance, a wide-ranging vision, brought up in her father's political surrounding, Mariam directed all her actions to restoring the Georgian statehood.

Georgian Mata Hari

During the World War II, she was referred to as Georgian Mata Hari. This beautiful erotic dancer from Holland, Margaretha Geertruida MacLeod, was a double spy during the World War I. According to the sources, she informed France about the German fleet and the army. She was also accused of anti-France links with German intelligence.

The same accusations were used against the 19-year-old Mariam Kereselidze during the World War II, who, according to KGB information, helped the Germans bomb the Gibraltar English bases for three years. The list of her "achievements" included revealing the secret negotiations between accredited American and Portuguese ambassadors. Due to this fact Mariam Kereselidze was hunted by the Soviet KGB, the English Intelligence, the French police and even the German Fascists...

¹ I.e. "White St. George"

During the World War II, when fascist Germany came to its end, Mariam Kereselidze, together with other Georgian emigrants, was ready to hand over to the English, which gave her a great chance to get into the field of English Intelligence.

According to KGB materials, on April 29, 1945, while trying to transfer to partisans' side Mariam Kereselidze was arrested by the soldiers of Georgian SS regiment. According to SS Georgians, Leo Kereselidze's authority in anti-Soviet emigration was so great that they couldn't hand over his daughter to the Fascists.

Despite these accusations, Italian partisans trusted Mariam: "At the end of the war I was a partisan in the Italian mountains. I took 600 Georgian men. German SS soldiers nearly shot me down but I managed to survive. My mother had a terrible time, she waited to receive the news that I was dead. Later, they wanted to give me an award but it didn't interest me. There, in the Italian mountains, they admire the Georgians and it was officially announced that "it was due to the Georgians and due to Mariam that we survived. But for their help, a lot of people would have died as the Italian partisans cowardly ran away".

During the war, Pridon Tsulukidze himself handed me over to the SS Germans to be shot! Somehow, I managed to survive. In Italy, after the war, the Italian government asked me if it was possible to free Pridon from the concentration camp and I agreed" (Peru, 1958).

Initially, the head of the "Tetri Giorgi", Leo Kereselidze watched his daughter's actions, behavior and relations with the society.

In 1942, she preached her father's interests and agitated for anti-Soviet ideology in captive camp. Mariam took part in the Georgian singing and dancing event (conductor – Pavle Magradze) organized in the camp. She sang in the choir in Georgian and beautifully performed Caucasian dances. The choir travelled throughout Germany

and its occupied territories. She made a lot of Georgian friends in the camp and improved her Georgian language skills.

At that time, there were a lot of anti-Soviet amateur groups in Germany, whose purpose was to promote Georgian art and culture abroad.

In this respect Mariam Kereselidze was very popular as from her childhood, she performed Georgian dances, sang and wrote poems in Georgian: "The highlight of this group was the Georgian dance performed by Mariam Kereselidze and Givi Kadnashvili", recalled Givi Gabliani.

With her perfect dancing, Mariam, who was accused of being a German agent during the World War II, who later fought with the Italian partisans against the Germans, who was handed over by Pridon Tsulukidze to the SS German soldiers to be shot and who forgave her traitor, reveals some resemblance with Mata Hari and her life episodes, who, before being shot, also forgave her killers and sent them an airy kiss.

During bombing Berlin by the English-American aviation in 1943, Leo Kereselidze was killed. Mariam wrote to her aunt: "On November 22, 1943, father told us that he had had a dream in which he saw himself dressed in white and all his relatives, his parents who were dead – dressed in black, and said: 'It is bad, I am going to die soon' and on 23 November he died" (Kereselidze-Glurjidze, 1956).

Torn from his home country, the honorable son of his homeland, Leo Kereselidze devoted his talent and skill to struggling for the better future of his country...

"Father always said: I won't live to the day when we return to Georgia but you will", remarked Mariam in her letter to her aunt (Ibid, 1956).

Therefore, her dream was to fulfill her father's will: "Today, when I went to Talara, my heart was beating excitedly and I thought that something extraordinary would happen in the post

office. And I found your letter with father's photo inside! You cannot imagine what it meant for me! I was in a hurry as I wanted to return to Mankora (which is 80 kilometers from Talara) in order to give the photo to my mother. She is so thankful! For mother and me this photo is the most valuable thing..." (1957).

After the World War II, Mariam was supported by her mother's family. Her uncle took them to Switzerland. In 1948, Mariam entered the University of Switzerland. At the same time, she taught European languages at schools. Later she worked in the United Nations Organization as an interpreter.

"In 1948, my uncle (from my mother's side) took me to Switzerland, where I studied at University, taught languages at schools, then I started work at UNO as an interpreter and earned good money there. Everything was good and I hope everything will be good in Lima..."

Your letter is a source of life for us. Mother and I always look forward to your letters. I haven't finished my novel yet as everyday problems and struggle for life leave no time" (1957).

Alongside other features, Mariam received from her father his talent for writing: "14 years ago, I wrote small poems in Georgian which I sang to the accompaniment of panduri. It is surprising and very painful for me that I have completely forgotten my mother tongue!

Recently, I have written two dramas. I will see if they will accept it in the theatre!" (1958).

During her life and work in Peru, Mariam Kereselidze, 38, wrote a play "Maita" in Spanish: "In September they are putting on my first play – drama written in Spanish. I am sending you the newspaper where it is written that I am Georgian. My nickname is Leo Kereli! I hope my second drama will be staged in 1960 and if it is good, it may be staged in Europe and, who knows, it may be accepted by the Soviet Union. Because this

drama is about life in Peru. I hope that my play "Maita" will reach Tbilisi and Moscow and it will give us a great chance to meet" (1960).

Mariam Kereselidze's second play is "The root of Stars", which was performed by Rosa Wonder's cast in Peru Theatre. Maria Euxenia Gonzalez Olaecha wrote: "Following Fernando Tovari's advice, La Cabania Rosa Wonder's cast staged Leo Kereli's three-act drama "The root of Stars". In 1961, the play became the winner of the

National Theatrical Contest and was received a prize.

Leo Kereli is originally European who settled in Peru. In "The root of Stars" she overturns the unknown world which was strictly censored up to now. With outstanding bravery, the author destroys the wall where the individual undergoes degradation and becomes the victim of cruel intrigues..." (Theatre Critique, 1963).

In Peru, because of hard social conditions, Marian Kereselidze was involved in the activities of the Communist Party. "I am greatly appealed to these poor people". Due to this fact, the Americans looked at her with suspicion, as she openly talked about people's serious social problems: "The other day, a scoundrel arrived here, whose name is CESAR ORTEGA FLORES, he is a doctor and an MP. He was our comrade, I respected him because he is talented and an Indoen (you know well that real Peruvians are called Indoens) and I generally like these poor people. Ortega proposed to me but I refused, which made him angry. Imagine how dangerous it was for me when he handed me over!" (Mankora, 1960).

Despite this warning, Mariam Kereselidze continued her active struggle for improving the people's social conditions, not only with words but also with a pen. She referred to different institutions for help.

It is surprising but it is a fact that the daughter of the famous leader of right-wing

Georgian emigration, Leo Kereselidze, the follower of her father's ideology and the opposer of Soviet regime, supported communists in Peru and recognized Fidel Castro.

At one of the conferences, Mariam met her future husband, a Spaniard, Manuel Herrera Aspauza: "It is true that she has always been a political figure but later in her life she didn't accept her father's political mistake. In 1964, Mariam left Peru Communist Party (pro-Russian) as the pro-Maoist wing couldn't take over within the party. She was struggling for the victory of the Maoist wing".

The main reason of Mariam Kereselidze's disagreement was exceeding subordination to Moscow's orders and the party bureaucracy.

While in Peru, she left the conservative wing of the party and moved to the south of the country, 200 kilometers away, where she taught English at the Faculty of Marine Biology. Here, she established "Service d'Extension Culturelle de l'Universite vers le Peuple" (the service of extending university culture for people), where Marxism was secretly taught.

Finally, Mariam and her husband, according to the latter: "ran away from Peru with only one bag and everything that belonged to Mariam was left behind in Lima".

Mariam spent the last years of her life in Paris with Manuel Herrera. She read lectures at Sorbonne University. In the last years she lost touch with the families of her uncle Giorgi Kereselidze and her aunt Elene Glurjidge.

In her last years she often remembered her father's last will: "I won't live to the day when we return to Georgia but you will".

It was February 2002. Mariam Kereselidze was counting her last minutes when she once again reminded her husband to scatter her ashes in the family cemetery in Gori.

On May 24, 2013, Manuel Herrera visited Georgia as a tourist, he was accompanied by his friend. They couldn't find Kereselidzes' family cemetery in Gori. Unfortunately, the Orthodox church didn't allow them to scatter the ashes, so Manuel had to bury Mariam's ashes in the center of Gori, in the corner of Stalin's house-museum, under the right post.

"I am the only witness who was present at the burial of Mariam's ashes in Gori. These were several minutes of great emotions..."

Mariam was the woman who deserves attention, her life deserves to be studied and her message for her people deserves to be analysed... She was the woman who never backed and never betrayed her principles.

As for Mr. Herrera, he fulfilled Mariam Kereselidze's will – to return her to her homeland", said Martha Donos.

Her father's prediction came true. Georgian land received Mariam Kereselidze's ashes.

Conclusion

Today, when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the independence of Georgia, it is essential to give a fair evaluation of the political emigrants struggling for restoration of the country independence in 1921, who, during the World War II joined anti-Soviet groups in order to fight on the Germans' side formally but in reality they fought for the freedom of Georgia.

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