

**OBITUARIES**  
*НЕКРОЛОГИ*

**In Memory of A.V. Suvorov**



Photos from the archive of A.V. Suvorov

**A Researcher and Teacher of Generosity**  
A Word About Alexander V. Suvorov

What a world! Why am I  
Stuck in it, irrelevant and ill?  
Who needs my poetry?  
Who needs me as a researcher?  
But perhaps it's not for nothing that they're gathered together  
In a deafblind man — all the world's sorrows,  
To strengthen the world's goodness,  
And so the way ahead is not so bitter...

*Alexander Suvorov*

On January 26, 2024 at the age of 70, Alexander V. Suvorov, Doctor of Psychology, Professor at the Department of Special Psychology and Rehabilitation of the Faculty of Clinical and Special Psychology of Moscow State University of Psychology & Education, left this world. The deafblind student of psychologist Alexander I. Meshcheryakov, the disciple and spiritual heir of philosopher Evald V. Ilyenkov, he was one of the famous "Zagorsk Four" — four graduates of the boarding school for the deafblind in Zagorsk town, Moscow Region (now Sergiev Posad), who became professional psychologists by enrolling in and graduating from the Psychology Department of Moscow State University. In general, there were no "some of" in the "four", there were personalities, but it was Alexander Suvorov who became its "spirit and soul", as he believed, due to E.V. Ilyenkov's special disposition and closeness to him.

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The relations within the "four" were not always simple, and in the late 1980s, a fierce discussion broke out between "Ilyenkov's boys" (how the "four" were unofficially called) on the results of the "Zagorsk experiment" (the main discussants were A.V. Suvorov and S.A. Sirotkin). But this discussion itself testified to the fact that it was about something more than even the most outstanding experiment (the authors, A.I. Meshcheryakov and I.A. Sokolyansky, were posthumously awarded the State Prize in 1980), which went "out of control", into life, into a normal full-fledged human life, in the form of which it, in fact, took place from the very beginning. E.V. Ilyenkov wrote that deafblindness does not pose any special problem, but only extremely highlights the general problems of becoming a human being.

Quite recently Alexander Suvorov sadly stated: "there is only one duo left of the four. First Yury Lerner died, followed by Sergey Sirotkin, and now Alexander Suvorov. Only Natalya Korneeva is left.

It happened so that A.V. Suvorov left the world between two dates, the anniversaries of the most important people for him in the world: A.I. Meshcheryakov (16.12.2023) and E.V. Ilyenkov (18.02.2024). We will not look for symbolism in this. But it is quite natural that the editors of the "Cultural-Historical Psychology" journal approached him with a proposal to write an article about his outstanding mentors, like-minded friends. A.V. Suvorov accepted the proposal and was ready to take up the work. Alas, we will never read this article ...

His unique texts combined confessionality, philosophical reflections, theoretical and psychological reflection, fruits of moral quests, reflections on life, samples of life experience in extreme conditions of its acquisition and the most ordinary everyday situations (in both) he tried to grasp something essentially common. The unimpaired needed him no less than the deafblind. He always gathered children, teenagers, young people around him. Every summer he went to camps for the fellowship he looked forward to all year round. And felt a little lost until the long-awaited meeting took place. And they were waiting for him. A psychologist they were waiting for, waiting for him as a psychologist and maybe a little more (not to the detriment of the need to meet and communicate with a professional of the highest rank) as a person. Perhaps, this is one of the facets of the peculiarity of the correlation between the professional and personal position of a psychologist.



Alexander V. Suvorov remembered his closest person, his mother only by touch: he became blind at the age of 3, deaf at the age of 9. And mother is an embrace. Embraces became Suvorov's native language. He spoke and wrote as if embracing the listener and the reader. Good books when opened also resemble hugs. Especially in mother's hands. Those who have been in young Alexander's embraces will miss them very much.

Alexander Suvorov as a psychologist, teacher, friend helped other children, teenagers, young people, both deafblind and unimpaired to find it. At times it seemed that he saw and heard more and more subtly than those endowed with sight and hearing. The explanation lies in his great talent, on which he worked tirelessly. Brilliant scientific and scientific publicist articles and books, amazing lectures and magnificent, unforgettable reports, poetry, music — he could not hear it, but he learned to listen to it in his own way and even to play the harmonica, traveling and unceasing communication with a lot of different people, growing into friendship, without which he lost himself. Through it all — an intense search for meaning and happy meaning-making from his youth to his last day (he was engaged in this topic in science as well). He involved everyone he trusted in it, and over the years the circle of those involved expanded. Great talent — in the development of an outstanding gift in the form of those ways of productive life, which he creatively adopted from his educators and teachers. Deafblindness coexisted with his giftedness. But giftedness was not (or was only to a certain extent) a hypercompensation for deafblindness, as Alfred Adler would logically suggest. One cannot deduce everything in psychology from compensatory and defense mechanisms.

Here is what he writes about himself: "I became blind at the age of three, and deaf at the age of nine. It turned out so that since childhood, creativity has become the true meaning of my life. At first, of course, it was precreation, a fantasy play; then the first experiments in poetry, journalism and, finally, science.

Creative motivation reached the level of obsession. Outside of creativity, without creativity, I could not and cannot imagine my existence..."

But it "turns out so" and often "turned out so" for another personality who does not know the boundary between life and creativity. And usually everything starts with "fantasy play" after 3 years, when it appears in a child, being necessary for normal vision and hearing. Including for their development as part of something larger, a personality, which defines the norm, according to L.S. Vygotsky. I think that the scale of Alexander V. Suvorov's talent, if he had been endowed with sight and hearing, would have been no less than with all the originality that deafblindness gave to this talent. But he was not driven by it, but by the motivation of obsession with creativity, addressed to "a planet of people" (Exup ry).

One thoughtful reader of A.V. Suvorov's works (not a psychologist) insightfully wrote in social networks: "I first learned about him from an article in the "Children's Encyclopedia" when I was in elementary school. It was a real shock to me. He seemed to me a kind of Gagarin, who broke out of the limits of sensory darkness to the high orbits of knowledge and communication ... A kind and sympathetic man. Especially striking is the expression of his face, apparently the deepest reserve of thought, interest in life and kindness gave his face lively emotions, usually uncommon to blind people".

And indeed, sometimes it seemed that he was able to see and hear, and not just imagine and speculate on the world that is open to the sighted and hearing. And even to distinguish in it what the sighted and hearing people cannot always do.

Of course, behind the "Gagarin" of psychology stood the "Korolevs" of philosophy, psychology, pedagogy: Alexander I. Meshcheryakov, Evald V. Ilyenkov, Felix T. Mikhailov, Boris M. Bim-Bad, Alvin V. Apraushev (director of the Zagorsk boarding school). With all of them he developed close friendships. But, in the end, the "Gagarin" himself, Alexander V. Suvorov, became a "Korolev". Here we cannot not mention Alexander Suvorov's mother, Maria Tikhonovna, who always encouraged her son's education. She even reprinted for him the abstract of F.T. Mikhailov's dissertation. In their relationship, love and friendship were probably equal.

"Friendship" was one of the key words in Alexander Suvorov's vocabulary. The first book about the "four", published in Alma-Ata in 1974, was called "You Will Find Friends". A.V. Suvorov believed that social relations, local and global, in the ensemble of which people are involved, literally lose their meaning if they are not friendly or at least amicable. Mikhail Prishvin called his writing "an act of friendship with the reader," with the reader, whose existence the writer may not even be aware of. The spirit of friendship with the protagonists and readers permeates A.V. Suvorov's books. Once he complained to his supervisor F.T. Mikhailov about the difficulties in his formative experiments — the friendship with the participants does not develop. Friendship presupposes generosity. Not always an excuse, but at least an explanation based on understanding. And this, in professional form, is already a matter of science.

And the "Zagorsky experiment" was not staged at all to confirm the omnipotence of public education, organized in various forms of activity. The little man in this experiment becomes "big" at the point of independence. When learning to use a spoon (as A.I. Meshcheryakov describes this process), the child's hand in an adult hand, having already mastered under adult "guidance" the general pattern of action, at some point begins to resist in order to create its own pattern with the preserved method of action — sending food into the mouth. A.I. Meshcheryakov urged not to miss this moment, in which the action for the first time is independently filled by the child with cultural meaning. And those effects of self-development of the personality, which were studied by A.V. Suvorov in different ages — are comprehended in the development of this line. An adult who is convinced that each of his actions, by definition, is motivated by high social significance (which sometimes replaces the interests of the cause), therefore, it is difficult to understand and accept the reality of children's self-development and easier to present it as something inevitable, but "incidental", "background", etc. One lacks the friendly generosity to sort it out scientifically.

The outstanding scientist and psychologist Alexander V. Suvorov was a wonderful friend, a man of the greatest soul. A researcher and teacher of generosity.

This is how he will remain in the memory, thoughts and feelings of all who knew, listened and read him. And will come to know, hear and read him.

*Editorial Board of the "Cultural-Historical Psychology" journal* »