

The theme of water in 'Still white Danube'

by Ivan Vazov



Summary of the plot

"Тих бял Дунав се вълнува" ("Still White Danube Undulates") also known as the Botev March, is a popular Bulgarian patriotic song. The lyrics are based on that of a poem by Ivan Vazov titled Radetsky after the steamship seized by the rebels. The storyline recounts a historically accurate incident from the Bulgarian struggles against Ottoman rule, which has earned the status of modern myth for Bulgarians, to some degree due to this song. On 29 May 1876 Bulgarian revolutionary and poet Hristo Botev at the head of 205-strong company of rebels seized control of the Austro-Hungarian passenger steamship Radetzky by armed force and used it to cross the Danube from Romania to the Bulgarian territories of the Ottoman Empire in order to join the April Uprising. Dagobert Engländer, Captain of the Radetzky, later recounted that "he had rarely met a man so impressive or energetic as Botev". The melody was composed by vocalist Ivan Karadzhov, according to his biography. In some performances of the song, the fourth verse is omitted.

Quote from the song in Bulgarian and English

*„ Тих бял Дунав се вълнува,
весело шуми,
и „Радецки“ гордо плува
по златни вълни.“*

*„ The white Danube trembles,
jolly drubbing,
and “Radetsky” proudly sails,
upon resplendent waves.“*



What does the work symbolize?

“The still white Danube” is a symbol of wisdom and excellence in the public sphere and is one of the most beloved Bulgarian patriotic songs. It was written in honor of Botev’s detachment and its crossing of the Danube. The music is the work of Ivan Karadjov and was composed in 1909 while the revolutionary was in Solun, which angered the local authorities. Crossing the river and coming to liberate the Bulgarian population from the Turks in the ship floating along the Danube river symbolises the hope for freedom of spirit and freedom of nation.

Water as salvation and freedom from the Ottomans

Botev and his detachment, sailing with the ship "Radetsky" on the Danube, headed for the freedom of Bulgaria. Although the detachment set foot on native land at a time when the uprising had already been suppressed, the guerrillas, led by the great Bulgarian hero, were fulfilling their duty to the homeland. And so they reach the path to immortality.



THANKS FOR WATCHING!



By Iva Petrova and Gaby Petrova