Church – Consolidating the Georgian Regions

Metropolitan Ananya Japaridze

Saint Ilia the Righteous said from the very establishment of the holy Church of Georgia, that it presented a strong power consolidating the whole population of the state. It was not locked within the narrow ethnic borders but was the belonging of different ethnics residing in the state. According to Holy Writ, it never differentiated Hellenist from Jew, Georgian from non-Georgian, as its flocks were children of Georgia with mutual responsibility to the country and citizenship. Even Saint Nino, founder of the Georgian Church, came from Kapadokia. Saint of Georgian Church, martyr Razhdan, and Saint Evstati Mtskheteli were Persian. Famous 12 fathers struggling against fire-worship and Monophysitism were Assyrian (Syrian). Neopyth Urbani Episcope was Arabian. The famous Saint Abo Tbileli came from Arabia too. The Saint Queen Shushanik was Armenian etc.

The above list shows that Georgian church unified all citizens of the country in spite of their ethnic origin. At the same time, the Georgian church always used to create a united cultural space. The Georgian Church was consolidating regions and different ethnic groups of Georgia.

The Georgian language was the key factor of Georgian Christian culture. Initially, Georgian language and based on it Georgian Christian culture embraced whole Georgia, all its regions. Divine services, all church acts, in mountains and lowlands from the Black Sea to Armenia and Albania were implemented only in Georgian language. Georgian language and Georgian culture dominated all over the Georgian territory. And just this differentiates old Georgia from the present one.

It’s evident that the main flocks of Georgian Church were Georgians of West, South and East Georgia. Also, as seen from the above indicated list, the flocks of Georgian Church were Persians, Arabians, Assyrians, Armenians etc. residing in Georgia. Georgian Church unified flocks of diverse ethnics via the Georgian language and culture.

Georgian literary language – as the basis of integration of Georgian population - due to Old Fathers’ knowledge, was protected by God itself. For example, in the “Life of Syrian Fathers” is described such a story: the fathers were told from heaven, that they were to go to preach in Georgia. They were astonished as they didn’t know Georgian language, some of them hadn’t even heard about this country before. But the Holy Spirit acquired them with knowledge in Georgian language, similar to Apostles who acquired knowledge in different languages. And really, from the very arrival, Syrian fathers were preaching in Georgian language throughout all Georgia and christianized many people.

Georgian language and culture were treated with special care by Saint Fathers originated from different regions. For example Saint Ilarion the Georgian originated from Kakheti region. He served the Divine in Greece and praised God in Georgian
language. Preceptor of one monastery forbade him serving in Georgian, but the Blessed Virgin was shown to the Greek father saying that Georgian language was the “Language of Salvation”. Besides, the Blessed Virgin was shown to Ekvti Mtatsmindeli from Tao, dying in one of the Greek monasteries and taught him Georgian language as he spoke only Greek.

In Abkhazia, Samegrelo Svaneti, Kakheti, Meskheti, Argveti, Takveri, Guria, Adjara, Tianeti and other provinces, only native Georgian was applied in divine service. There were no separate provincial cultures in Georgia but one Georgian culture and a unique Georgian language.

Georgian literary language was not a product of Christianity. Ivane Javakhishvili stated that even in the period of paganism, in all provinces including Samegrelo and Svaneti, Georgian was the language applied in pagan services. It means that Georgian language was not disseminated from one of the provinces of Karthli to different provinces of Georgia, due to the so-called Karthization. Georgian language existed even before Christianity in period of paganism. So far before Christianity, Georgian communities were united by a common Georgian culture and language.

From the epoch of Saint Nino till the appearance of Russians in the Caucasus i.e. from the ancient period to the 19. century, Georgian language and culture unified people of different ethnic origin, settling in Georgia. Generally, all Georgian residents spoke Georgian language. Moreover, Georgian language was used for relation between nations of Caucasian origin. It’s not casual that there are many Georgian lapidary inscriptions even in Caucasus – Dagestan, Chechnya-Ingushetia and North Ossetia. Abkhazia and Shida Kartli always were Georgian cultural centers, not only in good times but in bad times too, when Georgian State power was destructed. During Arabian domination (lasting 400 years) in Tbilisi, in the 8. - 11. centuries, Abkhazia and Tao-Klarjeti represented the centers of consolidation of Georgian nation, Georgian culture and state power. Also afterwards, in the 17. century, when East Georgia was conquered by Persians, Samegrelo defended Georgian state system and culture under the ruling of Levan II Dadiani. The same was in other regions of Georgia. None of the Georgian provinces created local culture. Culture of each region of Georgia was a part of the common Georgian culture.

Hence, the state of Georgia i.e. Karthli, since the period of Apostles, King Mirian and Scent Nino, involved the entire territory of the present day Georgia on which, since paganism was spread the common Georgian culture. Due to the notes of Episcope Leonti Mroveli, there was no other language applied in Georgia 300 years before Christ but Georgian. According to “Karthlis Tskhovreba” (life of Karthli) and “Moqtsevai Karthlisai” (Christianization of Georgia), Mirian was King of United Georgia (from Egristskali to Albania) and Saint Nino due, to the note of Ruis-Urbnisi church meeting, “Enlightener of whole Georgia.” I.e. the Georgian Church from the very establishment at the time of St. Nino involved West and East Georgia. Proceeding from the above mentioned can be noted the following:

Georgian language and culture was spread throughout whole Georgia from ancient times. Since then and till the 19. century, Georgian language and culture served as the basic consolidating source for integration of different ethnos, coming to Georgia
at different times, into the whole Georgian state.

This historically confirmed viewpoint was unquestionable until the 20. century. Inadequate attitude towards the History of Georgia was developed after domination of the Russian Empire in Georgia. Due to the so-called “Kartization” theory, West Georgia was quasi under jurisdiction of Constantinople for 600 years. Then, in 9. - 10. centuries, Georgian church broke into foreign jurisdiction and abolished Greek Episcopacy in West Georgia and established Georgian Episcopacy instead, which created space for spreading Georgian language and culture in West Georgia. I.e. had occurred “Kartization” of west Georgian population. Also Meskhs, mountaineers of East Georgia and even Her-Albanian tribes quasi underwent “Kartization”. The “Kartization” theory, which was the ideology of the Russian imperial politics of the 19. century, is still actual among the circles aiming to separate Georgian regions from the integral Georgian state.

Soviet historiography was used by the Russian Empire as ideological weapon. In particular, if old Georgian historiography stated that integral Georgia was founded centuries far before Christ in the period of King Parnavaz, the Soviet historiography stated the opposite: that integral Georgian State was established only in the 11. century during Bagrat III. If old historiography stated that Saint Nino and Andrew were enlighteners of the Georgian population, new Georgian historiography stated that Saint Nino was enlightener of East Georgia only, whilst Andrew of West Georgia.

According to old Georgian historiography, Georgian culture and language involved whole Georgia from the very period of King Parnavaz. Due to the Soviet historiography, Georgian language was spread in West Georgia only in the 9. - 10. centuries. According to old historiography, Vakhtang Gorgasali and all his predecessors were also kings of West Georgia but according to new studies, they were kings only of East Georgia. In the period of Bagrat III, not the latter, Parnavaz was mentioned to be the first king of Georgia. The Soviet Kartvelology destroyed the viewpoint of Georgians integrity, it stated that Parnavaz was a king only of “Karthli” i.e. East Georgia.

If old Georgian historiography recognized jurisdiction of Georgian church in West Georgia from the period of Saint Nino, the new one considered that West Georgia was under jurisdiction of Constantinople.

The Soviet regime tried to separate Samegrelo, Svaneti and Abkhazia from Georgia. Therefore, it was necessary to create a strong historiographical basis to confirm that in West Georgia there existed Kolhik (Colchis) and then Lazic states with their own language and culture, whilst the sources indicate that Colchic culture was not a narrow local event but the language of common Georgian phenomenon. G. Melikishvili and other famous historians and linguists have stated that the Kolchic language is undivided the so-called Zanur-Georgian language (in other viewpoint the basic Georgian language) and that Kolchic culture involved not only South-West Georgia but the whole present day Georgia. Common Georgian Kolchic state gave birth to ancient state of Karthli established by King Parnavaz.

The contemporary situation in Georgia completely differs from the old one. Now, after 200 years of Russian domination, Georgian is no more a language of relation
between different nations but Russian. The same can be said regarding the culture if in old times Georgian culture served for unification of different regions, today Russian culture is uniting different ethnic groups of Georgia (it means that Azeri, Armenians, Ossetians or Abkhazians, even Georgians communicate in Russian language. Russian culture is common and familiar to them). So, Russian language and culture not only limited Georgian language and culture in Georgia but replaced it completely.

The process of falsification of the history continues:

Unfortunately, in the issue of “Orthodox Encyclopedia” of 2007, volume 13, the second viewpoint is recognized, that West Georgia was under jurisdiction of Greek church in the 9. - 10. centuries. Accordingly, old Georgian church standpoint is rejected. In volume 13 of the same encyclopedia, Saint Nino is mentioned to be enlightener only of Kartli, East Georgia and the reader is assured that it is the only viewpoint, while according to Ivane Javakhishvili: “Georgians immediately considered Saint Nino to be the enlightener of integral Georgia and not of its separate part”. The authors of “Orthodox Encyclopedia” point to the shortage of sources on West Georgian church jurisdiction, ignoring the fact that the issue was discussed at Ruis-Urbnisi church meeting which accepted appropriate definition. Apparently, authors of “Orthodox Encyclopedia” did not consider the conclusions of Ruis-Urbnisi church meeting to be a source for investigating the case of West Georgian jurisdiction.

In order to meet the globalization process in a worthy manner, Georgian nation should strengthen the Georgian state and promote formation of faithful citizens of different ethnic origins and confessions. Expanding of Georgian culture is the key factor in achieving this goal. Due to such situation, priority should be given to Georgian culture. The government should lead appropriate politics in the country in order to make Georgian language, culture and music accessible for everybody. The minority rights should also be protected.

For implementation of the above mentioned goals, special attention should be paid to all sources of information (media, TV, radio, internet) to apply Georgian language. As practiced in every country, national channels should broadcast in the state language. It’s humiliating for Georgian culture that in most of the Georgian regions, such as Kvemo Karthli, Samtske-Javakheti, north highlands and other provinces, TV and radio space are covered by Azeri, Armenian, Russian and other foreign channels, broadcasting in different languages (not Georgian). Even 30 to 40% of Tbilisi’s radio and TV channels are in Russian.

Georgia, as a small country, should be ready to meet globalization process with a strengthened centralized state. Accordingly, due to territorial-administrative arrangement, Georgia should not be divided into separate regions. This can threaten territorial integrity of the country in future. Such division can promote separatist tendencies of the regional authorities (as in the case of South Ossetia).

Federal arrangement can be fatal for Georgia. More dangerous is the establishment of army (even reserve type), of region prosecutor offices and other power facilities and educational systems. Ivane Javakhishvili stated that communities and provincialism always carried threat for the territorial integrity of Georgia. It became the reason for
division of Georgia in the 15. - 16. centuries: communities won and the King of all Georgia was defeated. In Middle Ages, Georgian territorial integrity was weakened by community. Other countries, expecting globalization, already passed stages of feudal division (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Rumania etc) and were established as centralized states. Now, according to medieval legal model, division of Georgia into regions is a reanimation of ethnic state division. This will prevent consolidation of Georgian nation and integration of local ethnic groups as Georgian citizens. The neighboring empire tries to make Georgian leaders establish Georgia as federal state.

Finally, it should be concluded that before Georgia was annexed by Russia i.e. till the 19. century, Georgian language and culture were important means of consolidation of Georgian population and state integration. Particularly in the 20. century, Russian language replaced Georgian. Nowadays, we hope that Georgian society will manage to solve this problem and develop the Georgian linguistic-cultural space, protect the cultural rights of other ethnic groups and establish Georgian as the state language.

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Russian Church Globalization Project and Georgian Orthodox Church

Ketevan Pavliashvili

World history proved that the creation of globalization projects is a characteristic feature for great empires of theocratic type trying to dominate over the world and using the church for this goal. First universal empire of such type is Byzantium. Russian scientist A. Dvornik notes: “In Byzantium, the empire has the concept of a state body with two heads, the world patriarch and the world emperor. This body involved the whole orthodox world, rather the world which will become orthodox”. Byzantium sharing the theocratic ideology became a pioneer of orthodox globalization and its capital, Constantinople, was called “Eternal City”, “Eastern Rome”, “Center of Theocratic Empire”.

Theocratic ideas became interesting for young states and, when in the middle of the 15. century, the “Second Rome” disappeared from the political map but still remained the idea of imperial globalization, there appeared Moscow to be the “Third Rome” with the vanity of orthodox empire. Russia immediately adopted all signs of theocracy: 1) Khiliiazm – in the form of Russia’s historic mission; 2) Escatologism – with creation of “Third Rome” ideology i.e. exclusion of existence of the “Fourth Rome”; 3) Messianizm – by the theory of Peculiar Russian People. Thereafter messianic ideas became an integral part of Russian nationalistic ideology. N. Berdyaev noted: “From ancient times there exists the opinion on Russia being a country of great activities and that it differs from other ones. Russian nationalism is fed with the idea of their peculiarity and proceeds from the idea of the “Third Rome”. The latter required changes in public-political life of Russia and Moscow aimed to assume Byzantium mission of world saving. It came closer to the Greek Church and turned into a World Orthodox Empire with its church having world status.

Charmed by Byzantium globalization, Russia counterfeited it in projects creation and made the first project just immediately after the collapse of Byzantium (1453) and “Golden Horde” (1480). From this time, Moscow principality began training for formation as Super-Power of Eastern Christianity and usefully used the church in this case.

Russia began simultaneous work on several church globalization projects: for the Near East – holy land, Atone Hill; for Eastern Europe – unification of Rech-Postolita state; for the Caucasus - assimilation of orthodox Georgia with Russia. Survey subject of the present work is the project of the Caucasus Church globalization with leading load of Georgian Church.

Russia was distinguished with perfected church globalization projects; the most complex among them was the Caucasus project. The latter passed the painful way of evolution with changes relative to epoch. The Caucasus project can be divided into several stages: the 16. - 17. centuries, the 18. century and the 19. - 20. centuries. The latter in its part is divided into internal stages: the 19. century, the 1910s, “new”
the so-called “Democratic Russia”, the 1920s of Lenin-Trotsky, the 1930 and 1940s of Stalin, the so-called “reformation” epoch and modern post-Soviet globalization projects. Each stage of the project was connected to the foreign political course of Russia and the Caucasus project as well was a part of a great project envisaging Russia’s domination in the world. It should be noted that government imposed the Russian Church to have decisive function and the latter headed for the Georgian Orthodox Church. The goal of this work is to analyze the results and to make general conclusion about these processes.

The 16. - 17. centuries is the period of struggle between great powers for world redistribution. Contradiction between East and West powers was passing through Georgia and made the so called «Issue of Gurjistan» very urgent. During this time interests of Iran, Europe and Russia intersected and any diplomatic agreement between them became impossible. In such case, the political choice of Georgia was of critical importance. Due to its orthodox belief Russia had an advantage, which determined the methodology of its global project: subordination of Georgia with the help of its church. In such a way, orthodoxy became a basis for Russia’s aggressive politics and the project acquired a church globalization character.

Georgian church, stuck between the European Catholicism and Eastern Christianity, took an option on Russia. The latter diligently studied the pathways to become closer to Georgia and using the difficult situation of Georgia, declared itself to be the defender of the religion. In this way Russia conflicted with Vatican’s interests and condemning popularization of Catholicism precipitated implementation of a globalization project. In diplomatic negotiations of Russia and Georgia was urgent the issue of Catholicism in Georgia. Russian diplomats complained about Georgians loyal politics towards Vatican, blaming them in “Violation of Rules”. True evidence of the above is a deed sent by Russian patriarch to Alaverdi Metropolitan in 1589, describing a mission of Russia on defending Georgia from aggression of Catholicism. Arsen Sukhanov, being a diplomat in the years 1630 - 1640, informed the king of Russia about the situation in Georgia and considered necessary a “Revision of Iberians Religion”. The above facts were followed by requirement of Russia on arranging Georgian church into Russian manner, what was met by Georgian King and clergy with great protest. To punish Georgia, Russia didn’t prevent the invasion of Georgia by Iran. So the first attempt of Russia to implement the Church globalization project in Georgia failed.

In the 18. century, Russia intended to finally conquer the Caucasus. Russia was perfectly familiarized with the problems of the region and decided to use assistance in struggle against Muslim aggressors as enticement. Russia prepared solid theoretical basis for the new project called the “Caucasians Saving Theory”. This theory had several tasks: political, economical and religious. Due to the fact that traditionally Georgia was the key for Russia in conquering the Caucasus, it applied the Georgian Church and exploited it as a foothold in project implementation. Georgian church was imposed to carry out the missionary activities among the Caucasian mountaineers. Missionary work of Georgian clergy strengthened national self-consciousness among the Caucasians and saved their culture and traditions from degradation via introducing elements of the Georgian culture in them. Work of Georgian clergy among the Caucasian mountaineers was positively assessed even by Russia. General Tormasov
noted: "Georgian clergy has done great services to the Caucasus via spreading Christianity. Caucasians owe to Georgian Church".

At the beginning of the 18. century, the international condition was not suitable for Russia to reveal its real interests in the Caucasus but the situation changed in the second half, when Russia showed down its cards being irritated by Georgia's achievements in the Caucasus. Russia began to reject Georgian clergy from the Caucasus. Afterwards, for a long period, Georgian Church left traditional mission by force.

The 19. century is the period of ascent of the Russian Empire, which increased its ambitions regarding domination over the world. Proceeding from this, globalization project acquired a large-scale form. Religious factor in the project acquired more significant load, because confessional variety of the Caucasus prevented the implementation of Russian goals. Russia's state ideology was Russian Orthodoxy and it was natural that, it would not adapt to the existence of nations with different religions. Defining nationalism and due to the demands of the Empire, assimilation of those ethnus into Russia was envisaged. In such case Russia brought to the forefront Orthodoxy and put it as basis for globalization project.

In a new project, special attention was paid again to the Georgian church but in that case it was aggressive. The first stage of a new project, envisaged via abolition of the Georgian Church, to provide establishment of a Russian Church cell in the Caucasus. The second part of the project envisaged Russification of the Caucasians via the above mentioned cell. Therefore, during the 19. century, Russia was implementing the process of liquidation of Georgian Church. In its activities Russia met serious difficulties. It came across the ancient traditions of the Georgian Orthodox Church, which turned out to be a staunch defender of national interests. Georgian clergy assumed the initiative of the state unification. It was involved in public-political movement and led the cultural life of the country.

In church globalization program, several directions were distinguished: political, economical, cultural-ideological and religious. Each of them involved a sphere of activity. They were to establish the Russian regime, at the expense of degradation of Georgian Church and its clergy to be exploited in popularization of Russian monarchism.

Georgian clergy together with Georgian society declared war to the Russian project and joined common civil commotion. This struggle did not envisage rejection of political orientation towards Russia because the clergy perfectly realized the political-religion essence of Georgian-Russian relations. They just aimed to restore the rights of Georgia and the national church that was in opposition with the church globalization project of Russia. During the 19. century, the above opposition passed a difficult way and in spite of several failures, Georgian vital forces were gaining energy under the leadership of Church and continued stubborn struggle.

The first decade of the 20. century is an agony period for Russian aggressive imperialism and in spite of an internal and external political-spiritual crisis, Russia continued to struggle for the rights of “Third Rome” and developed a new church globalization
Unlike the previous one, the new project was directed towards preservation of political-religion rights achieved in the Caucasus. The target in that case was still the Georgian Church. The project embraced different options for reformation of exarchate: infringe on administrative rights of the Church; violation of metropolitan borders; subordination of Georgian Eparchies to Saint Synod etc. Georgian clergy, both orally and written, expressed strong resistance to the realization of the project and acted due to the processes proceeding in the Empire. Georgian clergy assumed leadership in this struggle. Thus, via inflaming belief and nationalism in Georgians, the clergy prepared the nation for an organized approach towards the state and religious independency, which finally resulted in the victory of national forces.

Events, which took place in 1918-1921 in Georgia, show that forces (provisional government, Bolshevik and counter-revolutionary) acting in Russia after the revolution (1917) still considered the global Caucasus within the borders of "New Russia". They used different methods for achieving the above goal: Bolsheviks with provocation i.e. setting Russian population of the Caucasus against Georgians; provisional government – with reformation of institutes of Tsarism period; White Guard – with military actions. A new preparation of the project began in Russia, which aimed to satisfy requirements of "New Russia". Actually, it did not differ from Tsarism requirements, differences laid only in methods. The new project envisaged the creation of new church cell: the Caucasian Exarchate, which would prepare assimilation through the religion of Caucasians for integration into the Empire under the pretext of Russian Orthodoxy. Thus, for the imperialistic goals of "New Russia", alliance was made between State and Church. One aimed State domination in the Caucasus and the other preservation of church power. The first would be the guarantor of Russian Church domination and the other defender of imperialistic ideas in the Caucasus.

Georgian society immediately guessed a challenge by the so-called democratic Russia and declared restoration of church sovereignty (1917). This was a new struggle of Georgian clergy against the Church project and it finished with complete victory of Georgian church. The Caucasus exarchate was abolished (1920). So, implementation of the new project failed again and simultaneously Russian bourgeois government ceased its existence.

The new government of Russia started construction of socialism from the issue of religion. Approach towards the church policy was the same, yet the methods different.

In global politics of Soviet Russia two directions were distinguished immediately and accordingly two projects developed: Church projects of Lenin-Trotsky and Stalin. Due to the project of Lenin-Trotsky, European atheistic ideology was brought under the State ideology and religion was declared as the survival of Tsarism. According to the project, religion in general was inadmissible for Soviet system and especially Orthodoxy due to its great popularity among the masses. The authors of the project intended to occupy the place of the Church for consolidation of the population and finally to celebrate the victory of socialism. Just in the beginning of the 1920s the project declared to be a strategic plan of the state and its implementation began by discrediting the church. Soon, the contradiction of the project ideology with the Soviet
goals was manifested: demolition of churches, repression of clergy, encroaches on properties etc. acquired large-scale character and public sentiments towards power were distrustful.

Due to the above mentioned, in the late 1920s, corrections were made in church politics which were linked with the beginning of Stalin's church policy. This stage is distinguished by great carefulness and compromises. Stalin's new project was completely opposite to the previous one. The new project did not aim rejection of the atheistic ideology. On the contrary it aimed its strengthening by means of a new church course. For the government it was meaningful to be aware of the political course of the Church. Therefore, it decided to involve the Church in the Soviet state building. Stalin realized the historical function of the Church and exploited it in the establishment of the Soviet System.

Stalin's project envisaged annihilation of the traditional church and instead, formation of a new one, providing introduction of the Soviet ideology among the masses. The project was to assure people that the historical Church could no longer meet modern requirements and needed immediate reformation. The government established a group of clergy supporting the reforms and made them oppose the clergy of the traditional Church. Thus, the so-called "Renewal Movement" began, which prepared the basis for a great schism in the Church. The government recognized the «Renewal Movement», and thus established the new Church in the Soviet Empire, known as «Living Church» in church history. The latter took a function of social ideology in the Soviet State. At the end of the 1930s, the government finished church modernization. "Renewal Movement" completed its mission and the liquidation of the counter-revolutionary wing of church took place. So there was established the so-called "Red Church" acceptable for the Empire.

Soviet globalization politics developed in two directions and accordingly two projects were elaborated: foreign and internal-imperialistic projects. Foreign projects were applied to America, Eastern Europe and the Near East, while internal-imperialistic projects embraced the Soviet Orthodox nations. Both projects reached the full apogee during II World War. Via the foreign policy “Great Merging” of Orthodox churches was implemented. Within the sphere of influence of Russian Church were included the Churches of Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, i.e. the political “Socialist Block” was strengthened by the creation of a “Church Block”. As for the internal projects of the Empire, the Georgian Church was of vital importance here again. The only Orthodox Church of the Caucasus was obliged to unify all Caucasian Orthodoxies under the badge of Russian Orthodoxy. But the event required modernization of Georgian Church itself.

Modernization of Georgian Church was a difficult process. Supporters of church renovation were known as "Kutatars", due to the Church meeting held in Kutaisi. In Russia they were known under the name of "New Georgian Church". "Renewal Movement" in Georgia was presented by two clergy groups: Russian renewals under jurisdiction of Russian Synod and Georgian renewals, which saw survival of national church in envisaging the state interests. These two groups were following different interests: the first aimed to subordinate the Georgian Church to the "Living
Church”, while the second aimed the restoration of the historic form of the national Georgian Church. Proceeding from the above mentioned, exploitation of Georgian “progressives” for the interests of Russia was actually excluded. That’s why the idea of renewal became popular only among non-Georgian flocks.

So, if Soviet government gained domination over the Russian church, it failed with national ones, since the attempts of modernization of the Georgian church collapsed.

Georgian Church and its clergy timely guessed the course of the Soviet Church and completely rejected Church renovation ideology. Georgian clergy understood that ”New Church” was to provide formation of a new society. Due to unsuccessful experiment, the government nominated the Georgian church as outdated, retarded, ”Dead Church”. Following events confirmed that Georgian church, according to World Church Rules, was able to resist to Soviet provocation.

The heavy crisis which took place during the 1980s and 1990s, raised an issue of changing the governing system and Russia had nothing to do but to choose a democratic way of development. In spite of this, in Russian politics the harmonized collaboration of statesmen and clergy was still important. The Church agreed to serve democratic Russia but required Orthodoxy to occupy the place of the ruined Soviet ideology and elaborated appropriated thesis on special mission of Russian Nation in the world for implementing Orthodoxy.

In the 1990s the clergy, supporting the Russian theocracy, established organization ”General Russian Church Meeting”, aiming to popularize the theocratic ideology and develop the Orthodox globalization project.

The project was called ”Neo-imperial-Orthodoxy” in modern science. Three main regulations were distinguished in this project: Orthodox Messianizm, rejection of human’s liberty and ambition of Russia being a judge in ”Dialogue of Civilizations”. The project envisaged division of world according to territorial-religion principle.

In the post-Soviet epoch, the attitude of Russian Church towards Georgia did not change. Russia still threatens the territorial integrity of Georgia and Russian church is quite inactive in this case.

Present opinion of Georgian society on Russian Church is mainly negative. Georgians feel religion intimacy, remember common historical past, respect Russian Saints and divine wonders but simultaneously remember aggressive attitude of Russian Church towards Georgia. So they are careful in their relations with Russia. The above situation was seriously hardened by the events in Abkhazia and Samachablo during the last two decades. It must be the result of Byzantium-Imperial sense of Orthodox globalization deeply adopted by the Russian church.
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Towards the Linguistic-Culturological Analysis of Conflicting Regions of Georgia

Manana Tabidze

Identification of Georgia and the Caucasus, due to their ethnic and linguistic peculiarities, as one of the most diverse and multiple regions in the world, already contains a kind of notification, that regulation of these multiple characteristics is a difficult task and it needs interference of “many arbiters”, in order to obtain internal balance, regulate and protect it.

It should be noted at the beginning that while speaking about diversity, beyond the compliment, one can hear hidden reproaches that Caucasian peoples’ integration is complicated and the population living in this area tends to cultural isolation. It should be noted that such image is imposed and unnatural for the Caucasus. Furthermore it is an injustice for Georgia, which is often blamed to be at the heart of such tendencies.

Rich historical past of these regions and in particular of Georgia revealed perfect examples of social integration. One can find the world ideal of an atmosphere of tolerance, defense of other peoples’ rights and internal integrity revealed in relations with even alien, who came here to find refuge. Since staying in this country for a long time, nobody could complain that under existing circumstances they were forcibly assimilated with the native ethnos, or anyone made them forget their country of origin, or change the religion and language. Only in the 19. century, the precedent was set of describing Caucasian peoples as independent nations according to their local and dialectal varieties, distinguished even from their own brothers. Imperial administration treated Georgian population that way and began to make demographic corrections in administrative units. The mechanism of moving the population from one place to another, mass migrating and settling came into operation and gradually the centers of non-Georgian population were artificially formed. Russian was “offered” to those peoples as an integrating language. Being under the colonial regime of the Tsarist Russian Empire and later under the regime of the Communist Empire, Georgia (sometimes with the status of province and sometimes of republic) was making efforts to pursue its own language policy only through social activities and limited administrative manipulation. Though it never managed (for mentioned

1 For example we will bring an annotation of one typological article: Journal of Refugee Studies 1995 8 (1):48-74; doi:10.1093/jrs /8.1.48 © 1995 by Oxford University Press
B. G. HEWITT, Demographic Manipulation in the Caucasus (with Special Reference to Georgia) ; SOAS, University of London ; The Caucasus contains Europe’s richest patchwork of peoples, languages and cultures. As the Soviet Union collapsed, a number of ethno-territorial problems needed to be handled with extreme sensitivity if open conflict was to be averted. The gross insensitivity on the part of nationalists in Georgia that led to the bloody wars in South Ossetia and, primarily, Abkhazia are examined and placed in the historical context that has seen mainly North Caucasian minorities subjected to frequent demographic manipulation by two of the region’s imperial powers, Russia and Georgia, who have regularly acted in concert over the last 200 years. Parallels between Shevardnadze’s war in Abkhazia and Yeltsin’s assault on Chechnya are drawn, and the case of such minorities in Georgia as the Mingrelians, the Armenians and the Meskh(et)ians is touched upon. The West’s blind adherence to the principle of ‘territorial integrity’ is criticized for abandoning minorities to the whim of the local bully.
two centuries) to declare loudly, officially, the demand, such as the compulsory knowledge of Georgian language for all persons living in Georgia and living an active social life (demands similar to any European state, concerning the level of knowledge in language, from the viewpoint of social activity). Georgia couldn’t declare this demand under the pain of being blamed for nationalism through the influence of Russian propaganda machinery.

Contemporary society is infected with strange disease: when they speak about the Soviet Union and the communist regime, they negatively evaluate those ideological and military measures, which Soviet Union carried out towards Eastern Europe and generally towards the West. But it is tabooed to raise the doubts about the legitimacy of the official borders and existence of the so-called autonomous structures inside the Soviet Republics.

The Soviet Union has carried out many lawless and treasonable acts from the viewpoint of outlining the state and internal state borders. Criminal negligence was characteristic of Russian linguistic policy, accomplishing Russification of the population, stage by stage, and introducing the Russian language as a rival of the constitutional state language. On the basis of specific logic, it encouraged creating centers of ethnic diasporas and autonomous units, so the force was in Russia’s hand.

Introduction of Russian language in Georgia acquired massive character since the 20. century, when after sovietization (since 1921) of Georgia, the Soviet Union started all Soviet “cultural revolution” and accomplishment of a general educational program. Just according to this program, Russian language became a compulsory subject at all schools. This program was to ensure, together with Russian schools, the knowledge of Russian language among the population. Statistic data of 1989, (National Composition of the Population of Georgia, Statistic Collection, according to All Soviet census of population in 1989, the committee of Social- economical information, at the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian Republic, Tbilisi, (1991) clearly shows, that the part of non-Georgian population, who underwent assimilation, while making choice between native and foreign languages, acknowledged foreign as a native language instead of their ethnic language. Due to 1989 data, Georgian in comparison with Russian language was on the second place (the only exception were Georgian Jews. 657 persons out of 14 314 qualified Russian as a native Language).

In 1989, there were 341 172 Russians in Georgia among whom 336 718 acknowledged Russian as their native language. For - 4 000, Georgian language was native and for 454, different national languages of the USSR.

The second language fluently known by the Russian population was: Russian for 2 436 Russians, Georgian for 76 898 Russians and other languages for 9 166. The 252 672 Russians living in Georgia knew none of the languages of the Soviet peoples.

Russian was acknowledged as a native language by: 2 212 Abkhazians (Georgian by 1 233 Abkhazians); 4 246 Ossetians (Georgian by 33 694 Ossetians); 23 069 Ukrainians (Georgian by 1 259 Ukrainians); 3 716 Byelorussians (Georgian by 176 Byelorussians); 3 972 Azeri (Georgian by 2 899 Azeri); 40,312 Armenians (Georgian – by 24,947 Armenians); 1,464 Tatar (Georgian by – 169 Tatar); 5 926 Jews (Georgian
by 3 065 Jews); besides 14 314 Georgian Jews, among whom only 657 named Russian as a native language; 1 261 Assyrians (Georgian by 1 520 Assyrians); 35 084 Greeks (Georgian by 4 987 Greeks, other language by 3 023 Greeks); 4 105 Kurds (Georgian by 3 834 Kurds). According to the data of 1989, Russian was named as the second fluently spoken language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Constant population</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Georgian</th>
<th>Did not know a second language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>3787393</td>
<td>1203788</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2565332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abkhazian</td>
<td>95853</td>
<td>77193</td>
<td>2283</td>
<td>15921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ossetian</td>
<td>164055</td>
<td>60004</td>
<td>53518</td>
<td>42769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>341172</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>76898</td>
<td>252672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>52443</td>
<td>21805</td>
<td>7377</td>
<td>18581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byelorussian</td>
<td>8595</td>
<td>3217</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>3672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azeri</td>
<td>307556</td>
<td>105083</td>
<td>28598</td>
<td>171511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>437211</td>
<td>187666</td>
<td>88699</td>
<td>145467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>4099</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>10481</td>
<td>2517</td>
<td>2905</td>
<td>4542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Jewish</td>
<td>14314</td>
<td>7086</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyrian</td>
<td>6206</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>2234</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>100324</td>
<td>44822</td>
<td>15456</td>
<td>29763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurd</td>
<td>33331</td>
<td>8720</td>
<td>14592</td>
<td>9279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This statistic clearly points to the fact that putting the blame on Georgia for quasi imposing Georgian language upon the non-Georgians residing in Georgia is groundless. On the contrary, due to Russia’s interventionist policy, Russian school represented the institution, which brought up not a citizen of the republic of Georgia but a citizen of Russia, inculcating the Veliko-Russian ideals through Russian history, geography and Russian literature (interesting indeed, but not native). Europeans will better understand, if we offer them such analogy: What will be the reaction of any of the West European countries in case, if it is intervened purposefully by a foreign country, for opening schools for the migrants moved at different times (term of migration is not short), totally ignoring the official state language, controlling the text-books and planning the whole educational processes?

It is evident that in such a situation Georgia, since fastened with interventionist Communist regime, wouldn't be able to have formative influence on the state consciousness and self-awareness of the non-Georgian population living in Georgia. Therefore, generations were brought up in the Republic of Georgia, who instead of natural striving towards unity and might of the republic, were aspired by the feeling to disintegrate the republic.

Even today, among the problems of globalization, the regulation of the linguistic situations (if there were such points?) appeared to be one of the burning questions
in the post-soviet republics.

The territories of the national autonomies, population and density of separate territorial groups, obviously point to the fact that a large percentage of autonomies is noticeable just in the Caucasus. Here the number of population, territory and density of population significantly layed behind the regions where the vast areas and historical territories, belonging to various nations and nationalities. Only one or two autonomous republics (the more, autonomous region) are created. E.g. the North European part (territory 574 811 sq.km, population 471 891, density 0,8%) – National Autonomies: Komy (Zirian) Autonomous Region, the Autonomous Republic of Karelia. From this point of view, the situation in Georgia is special with two autonomous republics and one autonomous region. To make it presentable, a large statistic picture is enclosed:

1. The North of Siberia – (territory - 4 023 407; population - 278 809; density -0, 06 %), Autonomous Republic of Yakutsk.

2. Volga-Ural (territory - 382 962; population - 8 171 850; density - 21,3 %) the Autonomous Regions of Marri, Votsk, Kalmyk and Chuvash, Tatar, Bashkir, Volga-embankment Autonomous Region of the Germans.

3. The South European part of Russia (territory - 34 063; population - 1 287 333; density - 37, 3%) Autonomous Republics of Crimea and Moldova.

4. The South Siberia (territory - 505 200; population - 622 093; density -1,2%) Autonomous Republic of Buriat-Mongolian and Autonomous Region Oirat.

5. The North Caucasus (territory - 97 900; population - 1 745 621; density - 17,8%), The Autonomous Republic of Dagestan and the Autonomous Regions of Ingush, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachi, North Ossetia, Chechen, Cherkez.

6. Trans-Caucasia (territory - 23 050; population - 643 829; density-26.8%), Autonomous Republics of Achara, Nakhchevan, Abkhazia and the Autonomous Regions of Mountainous Karabakh and South Ossetia.

7. Kazakh and Middle Asia (territory - 3 378 133; population - 8 619 586; density 2,5%) Autonomous Republics of Cossack, Kirghiz, Tajik and Kara-Kalpak and the Autonomous Region of Mountainous Badakhshan.

For today, the Russian Federation consists of 16 autonomous republics (Bashkir, Buriat, Dagestan, Kabardo-Balkar, Kalmyk, Karel, Komi, Mari, Mordov, North Ossetia, Tatar, Tuva, Udmurt, Chechen-Ingush, Chuvash, Uakutsk), 5 Autonomous Regions (Adyghe, Mountainous-Altaï, Jews, Karacha-Cherkez, Khakas), 6 regions, 49 oblasts and 10 national okrugs (districts).

The former USSR consisted of the following Autonomous Republics: Bashkyr, Buriat-Mongol, Daghestan, Cossak, Karelia, Kirgiz, Crimea, Volga-embankment of Germans (in 1928 it was entered in Lower-Volga-coastal region), Tatar, Chuvash and Yakutsk.

Autonomous regions:

In the SSR of the Ukraine: Moldova;
In the SSR of Georgia: Abkhazia and Adjaria;
In the SSR of Azerbaijan: Nakhichevan
In the SSR of Uzbek: Tadzhik
Autonomous regions of RSFSR: Votsk, Kalmik, Kara-Kalpak, Komis, Mari, Oirat (in Siberia) and of the North Caucasus: Adygehay (Cherkez, Ingush, Kabardo-Balkar, Karachi, North Ossetia, Cherkessk and Chechen.
In the SSR of Georgia: South Ossetia; in the SSR of Azerbaijan: Mountainous Karabakh; in the SSR of Uzbek: Mountainous Badakshan (in the Tajik Autonomous Republic)

“The Soviet linguistic policy, with its harmful results, was manifested particularly on the conflicting territories. In Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian interrelations, Russian language became the reason of conflict. Those Abkhazians and Ossetians who had received education in Russian language transmigrated to the Russian language speaking world. Thus, they actually became part of Russian nation and in the process of widening the state sovereignty of Georgia, they opposed Georgians and the Georgian oriented Ossetians and Abkhazians” (Pukhaev, 1989, 42).

“Those Abkhazians and Ossetians, who knew Georgian, i.e. who had become part of the Georgian culture, showed faithfulness and defended the interests of Georgia. Georgian language, besides communication, was the language of culture, religion and education. Replacement of Georgian language by Russian language caused ethnic alienation of Abkhazians and Ossetians, who set off against Georgian (Bakradze, 2005, 314-315) (This material is brought from Nino Markozi's work, Language discussions in Georgia of the 1970s to 1990s", supervised by professor M.Tabidze).

Bilingualism was a serious danger for the native languages and this is attested by statistic data, e.g. according to census of 1959, in the whole Soviet Union, about 10 million non-Russian citizens declared Russian as their native language. Due to census of 1970, the figure raised to 13 000 000 (The problems of bilingualism and poly-lingualism, 1972, 24), due to census of 1979 the number reached 16 300 000 (Topuria, 1989, 11). According to the data of the same year in the Soviet Union, 214 800 000 people i.e. 82% of the whole population, fluently spoke Russian (Khidasheli, 1989, 6).

According to the data of 1989 in Georgia, Russian was acknowledged as a native language by 8 877 from 3 787 393 Georgians; 2 212 from 95 853, Abkhazians; 4 246 from 164 055 Ossetians; 3 972 among 307 556 Azeris; 40 314 from 437 211 Armenians etc. (National composition of Georgia; 1991, p.62-63).

From this point of view, the situation was especially difficult in the autonomous republics and regions.

Taking into consideration the above indicated, it becomes clear that “the mixing of nations”, i.e. their Russification, disappearing of the languages under the hegemony of Russian language, were the real facts. “During the first Soviet census of population in 1926, more than 190 ethnic unities and about 150 languages were registered. Due

2 Anzor Pukhaev; “Brotherhood must be taken care”, "Soplis Tskhovreba”. #192, 19.VIII.89.
to the census of 1959 the number of ethnic unities decreased to 90” (Demographic encyclopedic dictionary, 1985, p.433). It was written in 1972: "Loosing of Karelian (their number is more then 100 000) language is taking place under our eyes. They are transferring to uni-lingualism (Russian becomes the native language)” (Problems of bilingualism and poly-lingualism, 1972, p.24). The analogous situation was with Abkhazians. Many Abkhazians did not know Abkhazian language. Russian was a colloquial language for some mixed Abkhazian-Georgian families. Such transmission of the population from one language to another was considered to be a natural phenomenon in Soviet Union” (Problems of bilingualism and poly-lingualism 1972, p.24).

One of the key issues that should be envisaged in Georgian reality, while qualifying the so-called unwritten languages of minorities, is to evaluate those perspectives, which are contained in the following measures of evaluating Georgian speeches, as languages (in particular, unwritten language of minorities);

According to international standards, un-written languages must be saved via making them written. I.e. it must be delimited from a bookish language. It means that the history of education and culture must begin from a clean page and the first note will be the folklore of a local region. The creation of a written version is connected with many measures:

a) Define a status of a language and relevantly of an ethnos and formulate the juridical aspects of its using;

b) Formation of writing coin: it is a complex problem, as it needs tradition. But the deficiency of tradition complicates the standardization of a newly created literary language. Generates discussions on prevalence of different sub-dialects. Issues of educational system and media working language are artificial.

c) The newly created language cannot develop the branch languages and apply some other “medial language” as bookish language. (This happened to e.g. Abkhazian, which uses Russian on the second stage, 3 - 4 grades, of primary education and its linguistic situation gives the interfered variants of functional styles. At home and in some social spheres Abkhazian is used but in scientific branches and political and economic spheres Russian is used.)

Now, let’s discuss the difficulties arising while moving from an unwritten language to a written one.

Which language problems are mostly discussed in the North Caucasus?

1. Which dialect must be the basis of a written language? How many written languages can one ethnos have? For example in Dagestan, over the last period, three new languages were distinguished. Kabardians and Circassians are denominated as one or two nations with two literary languages, which are known under the name Kabardian or Kabardian-Circassian languages. Ossetians have two literary languages: the basis of one language is the Ironian dialect of the other the Digorian dialect etc.

2. Which alphabet can be exploited by people with same nationality and same spoken language but residing in different places (in different states)?
3. The key issue of the linguistic discussions is the cultural belonging of the so-called Russian-speaking writers. The lingual structure and the language policy of the educational system in the North Caucasus supported the creation of a specific literary culture of North Caucasian peoples: a Russian-speaking writer. The discussion contains several aspects, from which the most noteworthy are: 1) Do the Russian-speaking Caucasian writers “translate” or “create” their works? 2) Who these works belong to? Are they Russians (the language used in the creating process) or to Adyges, Dagestanians, Ossetians and others (whose culture fed the authors understanding and taste)? It seems difficult to resolve the problems connected with state language and actual fulfillments of the relevant regulations of constitution or subordinated legislative documents.

Linguistic situation needs to be evaluated and regulated in the sphere of education. The following issues will be set forth: the language of education, the languages to be learned, bilingual education, providing education in the official state language in all segments of education etc. Among the disputing themes, one of the burning questions is the educational language in the North Caucasian Republics. Existence of more than one state language in each republic and impossibility of setting the whole educational program into operation on the language of autochthon population (in spite of a state status), makes this problem difficult. Education in the language of the titled ethnics is possible only on primary grades. On other grades, education is carried out in Russian and national languages are taught as subjects (educational discipline: -language and literature)⁶. For example, after receiving the so-called sovereignty of Karach-Circassian within the Russian Federation, the following languages were declared as the state languages: Abaza, Karachi, Noga, Russian and Circassian, i.e. the languages of education on primary grades are five.

The republic counting 428 600 people has 189 secondary schools, 5 vocational lyceums, 3 vocational schools, 10 evening schools, 12 children sport schools, 20 children school-out institutions, 86 pre-schools and 38 departmental institutions. The linguistic situation in these institutions is the following: after incorporating Karach-Circass into the Russian federation, in 99 schools education is carried out in Russian in accordance with educational plans of national schools. Abazian language is taught as a subject in 13 schools, Karachian in 57, Nogai in 10, Circassian in 20 secondary schools.³ Besides, in 53 schools (with multinational composition) the conditions are created for teaching the native languages (there a “mother language” is a subject and not a language of education). In 9 secondary schools several languages of the peoples of the Republic of Karach-Circassian are taught.⁴ Abundance of languages makes consolidation of population difficult.

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⁶ from 5 till 7 o’clock in a week
⁴ In Hable Adyghe School the Kabardian-Circassian and Nagudian Languages are taught, in Plizh schools #1 a #2 – Abaza and Kubarhan-Circassian languages. A National boarding-school teaches through making a choice Abaza, Karachian, Balkarian, Nogahan and Kabarhan-Circassian. In regional schools of Habez for the first time in the Karach-Circass all subjects in the primary schools are taught in Kabardian-Circassia. The state languages are taught in the Karachi-Circassian state pedagogical institutions where the ”History and literature of the peoples of Ksrsch-Circassian republic,” ”Culture of the peoples of Karach-Circassian republic,” ”Etiquette of mountainous countries. There are also facultative courses for deep learning the Russian and other national languages of the Karach-Circassian republic.
Instead of integration we have disintegration. Applying of the state languages in the secondary, special and high education seems to be impossible at this moment, owing to multinational composition of the population and the lack of teachers.” (Shishkanova A.B., 2003, 187-188)

Ossetian literary language is not uniform. It consists of two dialects and both dialects are literary (and accordingly, educational). These are: the Ironian and Digorian dialects (now, languages) (which are native, accordingly for 70% and 30% of North Ossetian populations).

In 1992, the draft law of North Ossetian Autonomous Republic was published in the republic newspaper: “About the languages of peoples of the North Ossetian SSR”. It was of major importance for the society of the republic, especially for Ossetians speaking the Digorian dialect.

In 1934, the Ironian dialect was applied as basis of literary Ossetian language. At the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, the Digorian society wanted Digorian to gain the status of separate (independent) language. This problem became burning in the period of discussing the above mentioned law (a language law).

At the beginning of 1996, a new commission was formed in the republic to work out a new draft law “On the languages of the North Ossetian peoples”. In 2000, the membership of the commission was significantly renewed. In 1998-2002, parliamentary committees and the whole Ossetian social-political movement “Alanti Nikhas” discussed the variants of the law many times, but the final variant has not been processed until now. In 1999, according to a decree of the president of North Ossetia, the commission on protection and development of the Ossetian language was formed, though no tasks have been fulfilled by this commission yet.

In 1994, the constitution of the Republic of North Ossetia, Alania, was declared. Here Ossetian (together with Russian) is announced as a state language (item 15, paragraph 10). “The Ossetian language (Ironian and Digorian dialects) is the basis of protecting the national consciousness of the Ossetian people. Protection and development of the Ossetian language is the main task of administrative organs of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.” (paragraph 15,2)

Despite the constitutional decree, owing to some objective and subjective reasons, the status of Ossetian as a state language is often nominal.

According to the supposition of linguists and sociolinguists, the modern ethno-linguistic situation in North Ossetia and the dynamics of its development are not optimistic i.e. the Ossetian language (like the languages of much numerous titled ethnos in the Russian Federation) cannot gain an equal status to Russian, in its own Republic, in the nearest decades.

“The concept of national schools development in North Ossetia” is connected with a language law, which was brought for public discussion in 1992. The stages of school development were planned to embrace the period up to 2000. According to the
project, the teaching of Ossetian language must have begun from 2000 in secondary, special and high institutions. Though the conception, envisaging the real situation has not been worked out. In August 2000, a law “about education” was adopted. Out of the 60 paragraphs, only two deal with the issues of language and culture (item 6 “educational language (languages)” and item 7 “upbringing”: teaching the history and culture of the North Ossetia - Alania.

The issue of Ossetian language in comprehensive educational schools was as follows: in 2002-2003, primary education of Ossetian children in the native language was carried out in 62 schools of the Republic in mainly two regions inhabited by a majority of Ossetians speaking the Digorian dialect. In 22 primary schools from 28, education is carried out in the native Digorian dialect.

In 2002-2003, in primary schools of North Ossetia, 4 000 pupils were educated in Ossetian, i.e. 17% of the pupils of Ossetian nationality. Ossetian language is taught (as a subject) in primary schools of all regions of the Republic, besides the “Russian” Mozdoki Region (where 9% are Ossetians and 50% Russians).

Georgian school counts 117 years of existence in Vladikavkaz, in which education is carried out in Georgian. In 2000-2003, there were 250 pupils (at the beginning of 2002, in the North Ossetia, mainly in Vladikavkaz resided 12 300 Georgians).

In 2000-2002 a 30% of telecasts on TV-company “Alania” was broadcasted in Ossetian, 50% of radio broadcasting was in Ossetian.

In 2002, in North Ossetia, 2 Republican newspapers were published in Ossetian ("The Rastdzinad” in Ironian dialect, and "The Digora” in Digorian dialect). Some other newspapers are in Ossetian: “The Alanti Nikhas”, “The Nog Gazet” (a new newspaper’), "The Iri Nipsi” (Hope of Ossetia”) etc. The magazines of the “Union of Writers” are published in both dialects: in Ironian and Digorian. There are several theatres in the North Ossetia: the Dramatic Theatre of North Ossetia (in Ironian dialect) and the Digorian theatre of North Ossetia (in Digorian dialect), the North Ossetian Musical Theatre (in Russian), the Children’s theatre "Sabi” (in Russian and Ironian) and the Russian Dramatic Theatre.

The linguistic problems manifested in North Ossetia are familiar to other multi-lingual state entities. The language, which tends to function as a state language, should respond to so-called basic conditions, specified in special literature:

- Energetic potential provides communicative potential of the language. It has 1) Linguistic aspect: an inner structure, dialects, types of speech action; 2) Linguistic-cultural aspects: writing, literary form, recorded written history, social functions;
- So called transporting character (allows to express and to disseminate information in this language);
- Demand on protection (existence of self protecting means of this language);
- Productivity (implies the volume and importance of the texts existing in this language) and informative natures (is implied readiness to
In the list, the energetic potential is considered to be the most important aspect (Karaulov Y.N.2005). For a deep study of the language situation in the North Caucasus all the above mentioned aspects, first of all energetic potential, are to be analyzed particularly.

It’s a fact, that the demographic situation of Shida Karthli was always in favour of Ossetians (since 1926 till 1989) and not of Georgians or other. This is clearly seen in the statistics that are enclosed below. Furthermore, the mentioned period is the period of the Soviet regime, when the republics could not govern their own inner or external policy. Provoking of ethnic conflicts is the fault of that regime and not of the course ‘adopted’ by the republic.
Russian Language Policy in Abkhazia and Its Results

Teimuraz Gvantseladze

The present work, by recalling the history, serves the purpose of revealing the linguocultural arsenal of modern anti-Georgian and anti-Abkhazian politics of Russia that was inherited from Tsarism and the Soviet regime.

Once Tsarism gained power in Georgia, it started a massive “russification” of the local population. The ideologists of the empire had elaborated various plans. For example, in the 1830s, one of the most influential ideologists of Tsarism, Platon Zubov, wrote: “...Assuage [i.e. obedience - T.G.] of the mountainous population imply the following: introduction of predilection for luxury among them by means of developing trade relationships; making luxury as their necessity and enlighten the mountainous with the light of Christianity. [...] The mountainous will live in valleys, far away from the main roads... and first of all they will receive - with the help of the government - necessary houses, especially beautiful churches in all important villages; ... schools shall open in these churches, for them to learn Russian, even if for the beginning the service is carried out in their native language; however, step by step we shall turn the situation so that they abandon their dialects and get acquainted with the Russian language, which will become a dominant language for their heirs, as their dialects without writing will easily vanish in time” (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997, p. 308-309). As we see, several major methods of russification of the Abkhazian population are named in this plan: a) moral corruption of the population by generating love for luxury; b) their resettlement from mountains (that is difficult to control) to valleys and their concentration in areas far away from central roads; c) converting this population to Christianity and domination of the Russian language; d) use of church-based schools so that populations forget their own language. Tsarism had used almost all of these methods except the first one (for the inculcation of luxury great sums were needed) and even elaborated new methods later:

At the beginning of 1860s, when it became obvious that long lasting war between Russia and the Caucasus, ongoing in North Caucasus, would end by the victory of the Empire, Tsarism commenced active work in Abkhazia to change ethnic and demographic situation there. It also separated the Abkhaz and Ossetian population from the Georgian cultural world and counter-positioned these two ethnosc to Georgian people. The following means were used to reach these goals: creation of Russian graphic-based alphabets for the Abkhaz and Ossetian languages, withdrawal of Georgian missionaries from the Abkhaz and Ossetian villages, announcing the Georgian population of Samurzakano (currently Gali region) as Abkhazians, restriction to use Georgian language in churches and at schools etc.

Abkhaz language was not a written one before 1862. The Abkhazians were using the Georgian literary language for official correspondence, for religious and cultural purposes. The representatives of the Abkhaz aristocracy as well as parts of lower social layers of the society knew Georgian language very well. Moreover, the Abkhaz archons and other nobles were using only this language during the 19. century for conducting official correspondence with the Russian authorities, whilst the intelligentsia considered Georgian language and written culture as their native language and culture. For example, the son of the last principal of Abkhazia, Giorgi Shervashidze, perfectly knew Georgian literature and was writing splendid poems in this language himself. Naturally, close relationship between Georgians and Abkhazians was unacceptable for the Russian authorities and that is why in the mid 19. century, a special accent was put on destroying this relationship and generate animosity among these two ethnos. Already in 1862, general of the Russian army, Peter Uslar, started scientific research
of Abkhaz language but encountered a problem: which writing was to use to express Abkhaz sounds? The general knew that the Georgian alphabet was the most appropriate one for those Caucasian languages, which had no writing. However, he did not want to use this language for purely political reasons. He wrote: „... [Georgian alphabet] is the most perfect among the existing alphabets... each sound has an equivalent sign and each letter always means the same sound. There exists an obstacle in every European language, this is orthography. Georgians have almost no such difficulty thanks to their alphabet...This means that the Georgian alphabet system may be taken as common basis for all Caucasian languages that do not have writing so far. If we borrow from Georgians not only the alphabet system, but the graphics of their letters, we will accidentally create difficulties, which will become more obvious upon spread of the Russian language in the Caucasus (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997 p.353). He added: „If contrary, we create a risk to establish Abkhaz autonomy along with Georgia and other autonomies" (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997, p.720). P. Uslar did not hesitate long and created Russian graphics-based (Cyrillic-based) alphabet for the Abkhazian language. It is interesting to mention that at the same time the group of authors under the leadership of general I. Bartholomei was working to create the first book of alphabet on the same language. General Bartholomei took the decision to use Georgian graphics for writing down the Abkhazian words, extremely irritating P. Uslar by this. Uslar forced the group of Bartholomei to change their decision and use the Russian graphics-based alphabet, newly created by P. Uslar (Abkhazian alphabet of I.Bartholomei was published in 1865). It is worth mentioning that the Abkhazian alphabet was never used in practice until 1912, when Dimitry Gulia first published his book of poems in Tbilisi, which marks the start point of the history of the Abkhaz literature. Because of this very reason it was impossible to organize national and religious education in the Abkhazian language: there existed no literature in this language for pupils to learn. Like this, the dilemma was artificially created: the authorities were announcing that since Abkhazians were not Georgians, it was inadmissible for them to learn Georgian language and conduct church service in this language. Since Abkhazians neither had their own original or translated literature, thus it was appropriate for Abkhaz children to learn and pray in Russian language. Such quintessence of russification and „divide and rule“ was voiced by numerous Russian clerks. Here is the proof, a quotation of one of them, Evgeni Veidenbaum, who honestly admits: “Abkhaz language, which has neither writing nor literature, by all means is deemed to vanish in the nearest future. The issue is as follows: which language will replace it? It is obvious that in [Abkhaz - T.G] population the role of inculcator of cultural ideas and notions shall be played not by the Georgian, but by the Russian language. This is why I consider that the establishment of the Abkhaz written language shall not be an end in itself, but it should become, with the help of the church and the school, the means of weakening the need for Georgian language, and its [i.e. Georgian - T.G.] replacing by the state language [i.e. Russian].” (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997, p.720)

Identification of the true objectives of Tsarism helps explain why Tsarism ignored proposals of Georgian national and religious leaders to conduct education and divine services in Abkhaz language in Abkhazia. For example, prior to official annulling of the principality of Abkhazia by Russia, when it already strictly controlled the situation in this region, the personal priest of the Abkhaz principal, deacon Johane Iosseliani, raised the issue of establishing a religious school in village Likhni, where Abkhaz children would learn the native language along with other subjects. This project was denied by the Russian authorities. Similar proposals were often made later as well, but always remained unresolved. Here is another example: some 100 years after, at the beginning of 20. century, the episcopate of Abkhazia, Kirion (Sadzaglishvili), was supportive of the idea of creating an Abkhazian literature and establishment of divine service. The same proposal was made by the great Georgian pedagogue and statesman Jakob Gogebashvili in 1907: “Some newspaper correspondents are negative about translation of the religious books and church services in this language. This extremely surprises me. It is true that Abkhazia, for many centuries, was a part of the political body of Georgia, with church services in Georgian. Writing was in Georgian as
per will of the Abkhazians themselves, but it is a doubtless fact that Abkhaz language is not a Georgian dialect, but an independent language, though it relates to Georgian language. As an independent language it has the doubtless right to be the language for church services, right for being a written language, right for its folk [i.e. national - T.G.] literature”. I Gogebashvili was calling on Georgians from Sukhumi to assist the Abkhaz statesmen in creating school manuals in Abkhaz, and if they faced difficulties in printing such books, asked them to send the texts to Tbilisi, where the Educational Society would publish them at its’ own expense (I.Gogebashvili was member of the Society’s board) (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997, p. 473-474).

Thus, creation of the Abkhaz alphabet in 1862 though was an extremely important fact in the history of the Abkhaz language, but it was not an event caused by natural historic development of the ethnos that was the carrier of this language. Abkhaz writing was created based on political views and aimed at, on the one hand, to isolate Abkhazians from the Georgian cultural field and, on the other hand, to create basis for their final russification by getting used to Russian graphics. The correctness of this conclusion is proved by the fact that the officials of Tsarism often rejected even the mere fact of existence of the Abkhaz language. Restricted use of Abkhaz and Georgian languages at schools and churches of Abkhazia forced Georgians and Abkhazians to study and serve in Russian language etc. For example, in 1864, the “Society for Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus” issued "Rules of Parishioners’ Schools", which allowed such schools, that opened under the aegis of this society, to use native language as well. However, in Samurzakano, where absolute majority of population was Georgian, only small number of these schools used Georgian language. In other schools, as well as in Abkhaz villages of Abkhazia, children were taught in unfamiliar Russian language, which was not giving any result. In 1884, the same society had totally banned education in Georgian and Abkhazian in Samurzakano and Abkhazia. According to the order of “Georgia-Imereti” synod office of March 17, 1889, the services in churches and parishioners’ schools of Abkhazia and Samurzakano, were to be organized only in Russian. Similar restrictions were periodically repeated afterwards: in 1896, 1898 (for more, please see: Gvantseladze, Tabelde, Sherozia, Chanturia, 2001, p.105-106; Gamakharia, 2005, p.669-672). Tsarism was justifying these restrictions by the following “logic”: under the official decision of 1868, Abkhaz language was announced as an undeveloped language, as it had no writing. There existed no literature, neither religious nor national in this language. This is why Abkhazians should study and pray in Russian. Abkhazians were not Georgians, this means there was no need for them to learn and pray in this language. As for the population of Samurzakano, according to the empire’s ideologists, they were not Georgians but Abkhazians, and for this same reason they did not require education and religion in this language. Thus, Samurzakano population as well shall study and pray in Russian. In such way the empire was trying to totally “russify” the population of this region. Unfortunately, after the mass deportations of 1878, Abkhazians, who turned into a minority in Abkhazia and resided in two reservations only, were officially labelled as "guilty people". They were restricted from inhabiting the territories adjacent to coastline and main roads, had almost no intelligentsia and leaders and were not able to oppose the “russific” policy of the empire. This is why the burden of fighting to save Georgian and Abkhazian language-religious-cultural identity was undertaken by Georgian leaders residing in Abkhazia-Samurzakano:

When “Georgia-Imereti” synod office restricted again the use of Georgian language for education and church purposes at parishioners’ churches and schools of Sukhumi districts on March 17, 1898, this was followed by a tough protest of the Georgian population of Abkhazia-Samurzakano. The protest was so powerful that this fact reached the Russian Emperor himself. The Emperor requested the Holy Synod of the Russian Church to solve the matter. The synod issued order of September 3, 1898, which determined that those congregations of Sukhumi district with the Georgian parish had to use Georgian language for educational and religious (service) purposes, whilst in the Abkhaz congregations ... in old Slav language. This order was implemented only in 3
congregations out of 42. Georgian statesmen continued their fight. One of them, Tedo Sakhokia, managed to publish a protest article in the Petersburg newspaper “Sanct-Peterburgskie Vedomosti” in which the author demanded introduction of Abkhazian and Georgian languages. In a response the authorities initiated a criminal case against T. Sakhokia and other leaders of the “Georgian party”. In a result, the Council of self-governor of the Caucasus sentenced on May 1, 1904, eight “guilty” persons to termless deportation from the Caucasus (for more, please see: Silagadze, Gurugli, 1999).

During investigation of this case military governor of Kutaisi “gubernia” (province), Gershelman, was demanding the permission from the highest authorities to send only Russian (or at least Abkhaz) religious personnel to Georgian- and Abkhaz-inhabited congregations, to foster the process of “russification” and to replace Georgian teachers of the district by Russians. (Silagadze, Guruli, Document N°2, p.83-84).

The main characteristics of the language policy carried out in Abkhazia by the Tsarist Russian authorities were their aggressive and “russificatory” nature. The result of this policy was observed already during the revolution of 1905-1907, as first indications of resistance between the Abkhaz and the Georgian population of the region occurred.

On March 4, 1921, the Soviet regime was founded in Abkhazia and continued the provocative language policy of Tsarism. The most important methods all over the Soviet Union were: 1. Split-up of ethnos according to false language and ethnic signs; 2. Self-willed declaration of autonomy of regions and administrative-territorial division provoking conflict between various ethnics; 3. Intensification of the problematic of legal language status in poly-ethnic regions; 4. Modification of parochial schools and creation of the so-called „national schools”; 5. Change of graphic bases for the written languages (first into Latin after into Russian); 6. Imposing of the Russian language to the entire population of the Soviet Union, attempts of wide-spreading Russian mono-linguism after the stage of national-Russian bilinguism; 7. Support the artificial increase of percentage of „rusizms“, „sovietizms“ and „internationalisms“ in non-Russian languages; 8. Provoke „toponimic-onomastic and historiografic wars“ between the neighbouring ethnics; 9. Resettlement of Russians and so called Russian-language populations on the territories of other ethnics and fostering poly-ethnicity of regions; 10. Achieve domination of the Russian language in mass media; 11. Limiting triage of the national-language literature; 12. Labelling of entire ethnoses as „guilty people“ and their massive deportation from places of origin and many other similar methods. Almost all of these methods were used in Abkhazia. It is worth mentioning that the tactics of rotational „privileges“ between Georgians and Abkhas was paid a special attention in this region, which was typical for all above mentioned methods. With the help of this method the „Methropolia“ was able to maintain permanent animosity among these two ethnos and to prevent their unification to fight against the imperialistic policy.

For example, in the 1920s, a mass campaign commenced all over the Soviet Union to change the writing of newly created literary languages (written languages) to Latin-based graphics. This campaign followed the objective of fulfilling a tactical manoeuvre to make these people believe that Russia never planned their russification. This massive process of changing various alphabets to the Latin continued till 1936. Afterwards, all of them were changed to the Russian alphabet (Cyrillic) again. The process of „latinisation“ tackled the Abkhaz alphabet as well: it was turned into „Analysed Alphabet“ invented by N. Mari in 1926. As from 1928 it started to use a Latin based alphabet unified by Prof. N.Jakovlev and since 1938, when the process of massive use of Cyrillic was ongoing, writing of Abkhaz and Ossetian languages, spread in Georgia at that time, were changed to the Georgian graphics instead of the Russian ones. This measure was planned in Moscow in the Central Committee for New Alphabets (The Central Soviet Committee of new alphabet) and was carried out in Abkhazia and South Ossetia under their supervision.

The mentioned fact was preceded by a special order adopted in the mid 1930s. According to this order, Latin alphabet of the „title nations“ of the autonomies, making part of the Soviet republics, as well as alphabets of those ethnus without autonomies,
should have been changed from Latin to graphics, which represented the bases for the language of the „title nation“ of a given Soviet Republic. Only two languages all over the USSR - Georgian and Armenian - had original, different from Russian, alphabets. Based on this reality, only Abkhaz and the southern version of Ossetian were changed to Georgian graphics during the process of russification of alphabets. Whilst in Armenia the Kurdish language was changed to the Armenian alphabet. (See for more: Essays, 2007, p.324-327). The most important here is that the Empire skilfully managed to direct dissatisfaction of the Abkhazs regarding this issue towards Georgians.

The Abkhazian separatists blame the Georgian for closing the Abkhazian schools and restricting the teaching of Abkhazian language in 1945. It was impossible to close down Abkhazian schools for a simple reason that unfortunately there never existed such an institution called „Abkhazian School“ neither in times of the principality of Abkhazia and during Tsarism era, nor in Soviet times. What is the most surprising even nowadays - in so-called „Independent Abkhazia“ - there exists nothing like that. The school which was functioning in 1945 and functions from 1954 till present is a Russian school, with certain elements of teaching Abkhazian language. The majority of subjects on its first level (grades I-III) are taught in Abkhaz. In parallel, with the intensified teaching of the Russian language, as from stage two and three (as from grade IV), all humanitarian, nature-sciences and technical disciplines are taught only in Russian. Abkhaz language and Abkhaz literature are taught in Abkhazian. In 1945, teaching of Abkhaz language and literature was not cancelled in the so-called Abkhaz schools. Georgian language had only replaced Russian, which was a result of delayed implementation of the 1938 decision of the Central Committee organisation bureau of the Soviet Union Communist Party. The decision said: „...it is necessary to reorganise national schools by means of introduction of standard soviet manuals and teaching programs, in the language of the given republic or by means of introducing teaching in Russian“.(see Essays, 2007, p.327). However the empire again reached its objective: many people believe, that cancelling Abkhazian schools did occur in reality.

Let us stop here and answer the main question: what were the results of the language policy, implemented by Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union for more then two centuries for the Abkhaz people?

Let us start from the positive ones:

a) Creation of the Abkhaz alphabet was of obvious importance, despite the political purposes of this act;

b) Publishing of the first Abkhaz language original novels in 1912, creating a basis for Abkhaz literature. However it's worth mentioning that Russian authorities did not take any part in this action;

c) It was doubtlessly a positive development that right after the establishment of the Soviet rule, the population of Abkhazia was granted a massive possibility to receive school education. School manuals were created and published and later, the Abkhaz section of the philological faculty was opened at the Sukhumi pedagogical institute.

d) State-sponsored edition of newspapers and magazines, as well as publication of various original or translated literatures has to be evaluated as a positive development. The establishment of the Abkhaz theatre and opening of Abkhaz editorial boards for TV and radio were as well very important facts, etc.

Negative results of almost 200 years old imperialistic language policy for the Abkhaz people are heavier and more numerous. We will draw your attention to the most essential ones:

a) Abkhazian language, culture and identity became the target of well planned aggression coming from Russian language, culture and identity, which - if it continues so - questions the existence of Abkhazian people;

b) The so called Abkhaz school, which is actually Russian and represents a strong
tool of “russification”, made many generations used to the world-images system and separated them from national roots. A majority of modern Abkhazians do not read newspapers or literature in their native language, do not listen to radio programs or watch Abkhaz-language TV programs, laugh at specific characteristics of its own language, is not able to talk about nature-sciences, technical and other issues in Abkhaz. They prefer to write, read and speak, even about daily life issues, in Russian. This type of school is the modified variant of the Tsarism parochial school. Its aim is the russification process of the non-Russian ethnoses (the so-called national schools still exist in Tskhinvali region, in the non-Russian regions of the Russian federation and in the countries of Middle Asia).

c) It is true that Abkhaz language is granted the status of the official state language as from 1925, but neither it nor Georgian fulfilled functions relevant to this status. The Abkhaz language remains as a non-prestigious language and it is used by a very limited mono-ethnic society. The most alarming is the fact that the Abkhaz youth neither learns nor uses this language. Even in villages, where as a rule any language is preserved best in its ecology and natural origin, youth does not speak Abkhazian well enough and use a Russian-Abkhaz conglomerate instead.

e) The quasi-state, seeming independence of which was provocatively recognized by Putin-Medvedev's Russia, makes no practical efforts to widen the area of functioning and increasing the prestige of Abkhaz language among local population. Pseudo-authorities of Bagapsh do not dare and will never be able to work seriously on these issues, as Moscow will never allow them to do so (as the Kremlin might lose the result of the efforts of its language policy, carried out in the region over 2 centuries. And besides, people of the North Caucasus would as well demand protection of their languages!).

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