

History

On Some Issues of Georgian History (In Response to the Interview of V. Putin, the President of Russia)

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ABSTRACT. On July 9, 2019, in Yekaterinburg, the President of Russia misrepresented some issues on the history of Georgia about the relations of Georgia with Abkhazia and the so-called “South Ossetia”. The international organizations (EU, United Nations, NATO, etc.) and almost all the states of the world condemned Russia for recognition of the independence of the separatist units – the so-called “South Ossetia” (Samachablo) and Abkhazia. Russia, having occupied a significant part of Georgia, violated fundamental principles of international law - the human rights were violated, great number of civilians were killed, schools, medical institutions were destroyed. The fact is that the territories where the Ossetians and Abkhazians now live are historically Georgian. This is confirmed even in the Abkhazian (D. Gulia and others) and Ossetian (V. Abayev) historiography. The title of David IV the Builder (Aghmashenebeli) is “The King of Abkhazians, Georgians, Rans, Kakhs, Armenians, Sharwansha and Shahansha“. Those were the names of the lands that belonged to the kingship of the great King. In his last will David the Builder emphasized that his “won” lands covered the territory “from Nicopsis to Daruband and from Ossetia to Aragats”. Similarly, King Tamar's title also reflects the political power and geographic area of Georgia. Dimitri Gulia (Abkhazian himself), the founder of the Abkhazian literature and historiography, emphasized that Abkhazia, which was always an integral part of Georgia, lived one life with it over the course of history, organically participated in the creation of Georgian culture and statehood and played significant role in the struggle for freedom and independence of the country, for unification of individual Georgian tribes and regions into a powerful national state of Georgia. In his monograph “From the history of medieval Abkhazia (6-17th cc.)” and in his articles for the Georgian encyclopedia Zurab Anchabadze, Member of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, the well-known researcher of the history of Abkhazia, emphasizes that “the Kingdom of the Abkhazia“ was “one of the earliest Georgian feudal states.” It should be noted that in Abkhazia the communication language was Georgian, the documents were written in Georgian and the liturgy and prayer were conducted in Georgian. Thus, the official language in every part of the country (including Abkhazia) was Georgian. Mr. W. Putin misinterpreted that in 1774, Russia was joined by the whole Ossetia, while Russia was joined by three Ossetians communes only. Under the Treaty of Georgievsk (1783), all Shida Kartli was first a part of unified Georgia, then it was united into the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. Russia violated the agreement of May 7, 1920 and granted the so-called “South Ossetia” the status of autonomous district with no legal grounds whatsoever. © 2019 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Samachablo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia

The present paper is about some issues on the history of Georgia that the President of Russia tried to

review in Yekaterinburg on July 9, 2019. Unfortunately, he misrepresented the history of

relations of Georgia with Abkhazia and the so-called "South Ossetia". That was not the first time it happened. Similar facts were noticed several times in the past and we properly responded to that [1].

The question of the so-called "South Ossetia" (Samachablo) and Abkhazia is of special interest in Russian politics. The international organizations (EU, United Nations, NATO, etc.) and almost all the states of the world condemned Russia for recognition of the independence of those two separatist units. In particular, the occupation of a significant part of Georgia by Russia is unjustified. Russia blatantly violated fundamental principles of international law – human rights were violated, great number of civilians were killed, houses, schools and medical institutions were destroyed. Russian authorities try to justify their action. Even the Russian population might be partially sure that Russia's intervention in Georgia could be justified, because the mass media tries to show the events that way. The history is being falsified with great endeavor of some Abkhazian, Ossetian and Russian authors.

In fact, everything is quite different.

The territories where the Ossetians and Abkhazians now live are historically Georgian. The northern border of Georgia was along the Caucasus Mountains up to Nicopsis in the north-west and up to the Shamakhi Mountains in the north-east ("from Nicopsis to Daruband").

The title of David IV the Builder (Aghmashenebeli) is "The King of Abkhazians, Georgians, Rans, Kakhs, Armenians, Sharwansha and Shahansha". Those were names of the lands that belonged to the kingship of the great King. In his last will David the Builder emphasized that his "won" lands covered the territory "from Nicopsis to Daruband and from Ossetia to Aragats". Similarly, King Tamar's title also reflects the political power and geographic area of Georgia. Dimitri Gulia (Abkhazian himself), the founder of the Abkhazian literature and historiography, emphasized that Abkhazia, which was always an integral part of Georgia, lived one life with Georgia over the course

of history, organically participated in the creation of Georgian culture and statehood and played significant role in the struggle for freedom and independence of the country, for unification of individual Georgian tribes and regions into a powerful national state of Georgia" [2]. In his monograph "From the History of Medieval Abkhazia (6-17th cc.)" and in his articles for the Georgian Encyclopedia, Zurab Anchabadze, Member of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, the well-known researcher of the history of Abkhazia, emphasized that "the Kingdom of the Abkhazia" was "one of the earliest Georgian feudal states." [3]. It should be noted that in Abkhazia the communication language was Georgian, the documents were written in Georgian and the liturgy and prayer were conducted in Georgian. Thus, the official language in every part of the country (including Abkhazia) was Georgian.

Recently, the media reported that one of the leaders of the so-called "South Ossetia" being on a visit in Karabakh (Stepanakert) expressed condolence to the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament in regard of the 100th anniversary of their genocide and noted that Ossetians also experienced genocide by Georgians. With such lies they poison the minds of Ossetian population living in the indigenous land of Georgia. In the same way, they carelessly speak aloud about their "tortured" life anywhere.

Is that the truth? The truth is quite different.

It is not disputable that Ossetians settled in the North Caucasus (the territory of the present North Ossetia) centuries ago, along with the Scythian-Sarmatian tribes (Ossetian language belongs to the North-East group of Iranian languages of the Indo-European language family). In the 10th -12th cc. the Kingdom of Ossetia had relations with different countries, including Georgia (in 11th-12th cc Ossetia was Georgia's vassal country). The invasions of Tamerlane destroyed Ossetia and the Ossetian population dispersed in different directions (Hungary, Balkan states, etc.). Some Ossetians

tried to settle in Kartli, but due to the resistance of the Georgian feuds they were forced back. In the 17th-18th cc Ossetians came to the foothills and valley of Georgia and settled down in the north borderline territory of Kartli. Some (Kudaro's Ossetians) settled in the Imereti Kingdom.

The lands, where Ossetians settled in Kartli, belonged to the princes Eristavi and Machabeli of Aragvi and Ksani. The Ossetians served the feuds the same way as the Georgian serfs did. It should be noted that the Ossetians and Georgians fought together against the foreign enemy.

Surprisingly enough, Vladimir Putin in his interview on CNN stated that North and South Ossetia (single Ossetia) used to be part of Russia and J. Stalin divided it giving South Ossetia to Georgia, where an autonomous region was created of it. The same way, J. Stalin gave the territory of Abkhazia to Georgia, where the autonomous republic of Abkhazia was created. We cannot require from Mr. Putin (he repeated the above view point in his interview in Yekaterinburg, July 9) thoroughly to know the history of the Caucasus, but those who provided him with such information are mistaken. Unfortunately, many facts of the Russian-Ossetian history are being falsified in the recent period [4].

Ossetian historian, professor G. Togoshvili with his researches and articles for the Georgian Encyclopedia (special volume "Georgian SSR", in particular „South Ossetian Autonomous District, South Ossetia“) [5] helps us to get an idea of the real history of South Ossetia. In this regard, the works by V. Abaev, B. Pliev, O. Tedeeva, Z. Gagloit, P. Doguzov and other scientists are also very important.

Vasily Abaev, the patriarch of the Ossetian Science writes: "The main Caucasus ridge between Georgia and Ossetia is the natural border and any other attempt to blur this border will entail a state of permanent conflict between Georgians and Ossetians ... first of all it is necessary to put an end to the talk about secession of South Ossetia from

Georgia. No Georgian government will ever agree with that and they will be right because it would mean a violation of territorial integrity of Georgia.

Those who want peace between South Ossetians and Georgians, must forever reject the idea of joining South Ossetia to North Ossetia. Also, those who want peace between Georgia and Russia, must abandon this idea. Such is the reality" [6]. This is the opinion of the true Ossetian patriot, great scholar and public figure. No more comment is necessary here. Unfortunately, neither Ossetian nor Russian functionaries took into consideration such a wise point of view.

Recently, the Russian mass media tries to spread an absurd statement as if in 1774, under the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty signed between Russia and Ottoman Empire, Russia was joined by not only one part of historical Ossetia, but rather all Ossetia including even the northern part of the Georgian province Shida Kartli, the subsequent Autonomous District of South Ossetia (this was repeated by Mr. Putin in Yekaterinburg on July 9). On July 10, 2004, the Russian Duma made an irresponsible and absurd statement that in 1774 Ossetia voluntarily joined Russia and therefore it was their duty to protect the rights of citizens of Ossetia. It is just ignorance of history. The fact is that the geographical notion of "Ossetia" did not exist at that time and, of course, there was no such state. The Ossetians who lived in the Kartli highlands considered themselves fugitives. Russian officials tried to introduce the invented terms "North Ossetia" and "South Ossetia" from the second half of the 19th century. Until the 19th century, there was no document to prove that the Shida Kartli mountains could be called Ossetia. In 1774 the Russian Empire was joined by three Ossetian communes of Alagiri, Kurtati and Tagauri. The fourth commune of Digor was in Kabarda and joined Russia in 1781. As for the northern part of Shida Kartli, where the so-called Autonomous District of South Ossetia was subsequently established, first it was a constituent part of unified

Georgia, then of the Kartli Kingdom and finally of the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom.

The materials attached to the Treaty of Georgievsk, 1783, allow us to assert that the northern part of Shida Kartli, with its northernmost province Dvaleti was a province of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom. After the annexation of Georgia by Russia (1801), the northern part of Shida Kartli including Dvaleti was joined to the Imereti Gubernia (province), then to the Gori district, Tbilisi Gubernia (government). In 1858 by the decree of the viceroy of Caucasus Alexander Bariatinski, Dvaleti was attributed to the Ossetia Okrug (District). Thus, North Ossetia was joined by Dvaleti only and not the entire territory of Shida Kartli, where the so-called "South Ossetian Autonomous District" was formed later.

Under the agreement signed between Russia and the Democratic Republic of Georgia on 7 May, 1920, the Georgian-Russian border was established to be along the main ridge of the Caucasus. Hence, Dvaleti, the extreme northern part of Shida Kartli naturally remained in Georgia.

Russia intended to annex the Shida Kartli region and for that reason tried to stir up a conflict between Ossetians and Georgians. Soviet Russia managed to provoke armed uprising in Ossetia and Shida Kartli intending to establish Soviet power in "South Ossetia", to wrest it from Georgia and to annex it to Russia. After that, they could occupy the entire Republic of Georgia.

In 1920, Soviet Russia and the Bolsheviks supported the rebellious Ossetians in order to establish the Soviet power in the so-called South Ossetia and to declare the territory part of Soviet Russia. That act was against the international standards: the territorial integrity of Georgia was blatantly violated, the opinion and will of the Georgian population ignored. The decree by the Caucasus Committee of Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) of March 23, 1920, reads: "1. Organize a revolutionary committee in South Ossetia ... 2. Declare Soviet power ... 3. Immediately form an

armed detachment. 4. Get in touch with North Ossetia ... release 100 thousand rubles (one hundred thousand rubles) at the disposal of the Revolutionary Committee.

The documents include the report: "Moscow, Central Committee, RCP (B), Comrade Lenin and Chicherin. In compliance with the order of the Caucasian Regional Committee of March 23, confirmed by special couriers of the same Committee ... Soviet power was proclaimed on June 8 in South Ossetia".

There are other documents too, which make clear who was inciting Ossetians to a fratricidal war. Thus, accusing the Georgian "nationalist chauvinist" government of the "genocide" of the Ossetian people is immoral, to say the least.

The insidious plan of Soviet Russia and the Bolshevik Party was implemented. In February 1921, Georgia became Soviet against the will of the Georgian people, which was, in fact, another annexation (repeated). Thus, Soviet Russia violated the Agreement of 7 May, 1920. In April 1922, Bolsheviks granted the so-called South Ossetia the status of autonomous district, without any legal grounds whatsoever.

As for North Ossetia, historic homeland of Ossetians, it was granted the status of an autonomous republic in July 1924 and remained in Russia. The so-called South Ossetia included the Ossetian-settled regions and Georgian city Tskhinvali together with several neighboring Georgian villages. Tskhinvali was deliberately united in it (According to "Kavkazskii Calendar" of 1900 Tskhinvali was settled by Georgians, Georgian Jews and Armenians). That happened with the use of force causing the fair outrage of the Georgian population [7]. The creation of an autonomous district in which the Georgian population became a national minority in its own homeland was a gross violation of human rights and freedoms.

It should be emphasized that Ossetians had all the necessary conditions for development of their culture and economy in Georgia. In 1990-91,

before the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were 100 secondary Ossetian high schools in Georgia, with 90 of them in South Ossetia. Education was given in Ossetian language with Ossetian language and literature taught as independent subjects. In Tskhinvali there was a Pedagogical Institute, an Institute of Teacher Training, an Agricultural College, Medical, Musical and Art Schools, Vocational and Technical Schools, and more. According to the census 1979, South Ossetia was ranked second in the Soviet Union by the number of University graduates per thousand capita. In 1927, the Institute of Historical Studies was established, which was later transformed into the Institute of South Ossetian Language, Literature and History (within the Academy of Sciences of Georgia). Several volumes of the History of Ossetia (documents and materials), two volumes of the History of South Ossetia, a four-volume Explanatory Dictionary of Ossetian Language, several volumes of the History of Ossetian Literature, three-volume collection of Ossetian Tales, four-volume collection of Ossetian songs (with musical notes) were prepared and published in Tskhinvali. They had the State National Theater, the Museum of Natural History, Art Gallery, Public Library, Writers Union, Artists Union, Composers Union, Musical and Choreographic Society, National Ensemble of Song and Dance. In South Ossetia the radio was broadcasting in the native language; newspapers, magazines and literary works were published in Ossetian language. In 1988, the Autonomous District of South Ossetia published 5 times more books per 10 thousand Ossetians than in North Ossetia, with 3-times more copies. As we see, Georgian state and Georgian people provided every opportunity for national-cultural, socio-political and economic development of Ossetians.

As for the situation existing in the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia being a part of Russia, it is well described in the following excerpt from the publication of the Chairman of the Supreme

Council of the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia A. Galazov:

“I am always sincerely sorry for young people of my nationality, when despite the knowledge of foreign languages and world civilization, they feel uncomfortable at home due to the ignorance of the elementary foundations of Ossetian culture For example, national youth were deprived of their native language. In fact, until last year, there was not a single school with the Ossetian language of education in North Ossetia.” [8].

When Georgia became Soviet (1921), Abkhazia was a part of Georgia and remained so thereafter. Therefore, nobody (be it Russia or J. Stalin) could transfer that territory to Georgia, as Mr. Putin states. The Treaty of May 7, 1920 recognized Abkhazia as an integral part of Georgia.

Despite the well-known unfounded claims (approved by Russian officials), the territory of present Abkhazia has historically always been an organic part of the Georgian ethnic and political state [9]. On June 11, 1918, an agreement was signed between the People's Council of Abkhazia and the Democratic Republic of Georgia, by which Abkhazia was united with the rest of Georgia with the right to autonomy. The decision was approved by the newly elected People's Council of Abkhazia on March 20, 1919. On October 16, 1920, the Constitution of Abkhazia was adopted, which definitely established the autonomous status of Abkhazia within the Democratic Republic of Georgia. This provision, in turn, was enshrined by the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, adopted by the Constituent Council on February 21, 1921. After the overthrow of Georgian legal authorities and the establishment of Soviet power, under a special "Union Agreement" of December 16, 1921 Abkhazia was a part of Georgia as the so-called "Treaty Republic", though from the very beginning it was actually considered as an autonomous unit of Georgia. In 1931, Abkhazia was transformed into an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) of Georgia.

In the 50s of the last century the separatist movement began in Abkhazia, that reached its peak in the 80s - 90s when the separatists managed to stir up a fratricidal war. In the autumn of 1993, with the support of regular Russian military units, Abkhaz secessionists achieved a "triumph" in the armed confrontation with Georgia. For the last 20-25 years, as Georgian authorities could not control them, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali remained beyond Georgian jurisdiction.

The units of Russian army were directly involved in the Abkhazia conflict against Georgia. The former President of Russia Boris Yeltsin admitted it himself at the Georgian Academy of Sciences during his visit to Georgia.

Russia intended to send a punitive expedition to Georgia and to take over the control of the country, that was clearly expressed in the statement of the Russian Duma threatening to "punish" and as if to protect Russian citizens.

The desire for war was especially strongly expressed by the words of the President of Russia on September 11, 2002. The main point in the thesis was: if the Georgian government is still going to "ignore the UN resolutions and will not put an end to gangster attacks from the territory of the Pankisi Gorge", Russians will have the right to defend themselves with arms, i.e. to use armed forces.

In fact, the statement of the head of the Russian state was an ultimatum [10]. That meant the threat of using force in case of turning down the request. Such a threat is the simple example of aggression (aggression is not only the use of force but the threat of the use of force). The statement of the president was followed by the unprecedented criticism in the Western press. The Russian National Committee "Stop the War in Chechnya and Establish Peace" declared: "Any attempt of intervention in Georgia will become an absolute catastrophe for Russia ... A blow to Georgia will become a grave crime against Russian history and its statehood. This will be a blow to the heart of

Russia itself, the terrible consequences of which will have to be redeemed by many more generations."

Due to various factors the mission of Georgia's "punishment" was postponed. But not for a long time. The course of time and the situation showed that Russia did not respect the independence of Georgia and its sovereignty (as that of the other post-soviet countries).

It should be noted that in 2008 by the order of the newly elected president D. Medvedev, the Russian army entered Georgia and massacred people and occupied the country. V. Putin noted himself in his first interview after the August war saying aloud that the decision about the war was made by President D. Medvedev. The result was a catastrophe. Probably a lot will be written about that in future, but today one thing can be openly said: it was a pre-planned and well-considered operation of Russia. Georgia was strictly "punished".

Sergei Markov, the Duma deputy very sincerely expressed the opinion of the Russian ruling elite. To the question of the correspondent of the information agency GHN about when the war would be over in the Caucasus, he replied: "The wars in the Caucasus will end only after Russia will establish full and indefinite dominance in the region" [11]. Thus, everything is clear.

Today, watching the houses ruined by the enemy and the burnt down villages, thousands of people hounded out from their homes, thousands of internally displaced people, it makes us sore and offended being defeated. The sad fact is that in the 21st century, in the so-called Century of Good Hope, the human being is greedy and evil as in previous centuries. Violence still has a great prospect.

Georgian nation has a long and proud history and it will always protect it. Any attempt to falsify history, in particular the history of Georgia, is misdoing.

ისტორია

საქართველოს ისტორიის ზოგიერთი საკითხი (რუსეთის პრეზიდენტის ვ. პუტინის ინტერვიუსთან დაკავშირებით)

რ. მეტრეველი

აკადემიის წევრი, საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა ეროვნული აკადემია, თბილისი, საქართველო

2019 წლის 9 ივლისს ქ. ეკატერინბურგში რუსეთის პრეზიდენტმა არასწორად წარმოადგინა საქართველოს ისტორიის ცალკეული საკითხები, ურთიერთობები აფხაზეთსა და ე.წ. სამხრეთ ოსეთთან. ე. წ. სამხრეთ ოსეთისა (სამაჩაბლო) და აფხაზეთის – ამ ორი სეპარატისტული ერთეულის დამოუკიდებლობის აღიარება რუსეთის მიერ პრაქტიკულად მსოფლიოს ყველა ორგანიზაციამ (ევროკავშირი, გაერთიანებული ერების ორგანიზაცია, ნატო და სხვ.) და თითქმის ყველა სახელმწიფომ დაგმო. საქართველოს მნიშვნელოვანი ნაწილის ოკუპაციით რუსეთმა უხეშად დაარღვია საერთაშორისო სამართლის ფუძემდებლური პრინციპები – მოხდა ადამიანის უფლებების ხელყოფა, დაილუპა დიდი რაოდენობით მშვიდობიანი მოსახლეობა, დაანგრეს სახლები, სკოლები, სამედიცინო დაწესებულებები. საქმე ისაა, რომ ტერიტორიები, რომელიც ოსებსა და აფხაზებს უჭირავთ, ისტორიულად ქართულია. ეს დადასტურებულია თვით აფხაზურ (დ. გულია და სხვ.) და ოსურ (ვ. აბაევი) ისტორიოგრაფიაში. დავით IV აღმაშენებლის ტიტულატურაა – „მეფე აფხაზთა, ქართველთა, რანთა, კახთა, სომეხთა, შარვანშა და შაჰანშა“. აქ დიდი მეფის მფლობელობაში შემავალი ქვეყნებია დასახელებული. დავით აღმაშენებელი თავის ანდერძშიც ხაზგასმით მიაჩნებდა, მისი მამული გადაჭიმულია „ნიკოფსიდიდან დარუბანდის ზღუდამდე და ოვსეთიდან არეგაწამდე“. დავით აღმაშენებლის ტიტულატურის ანალოგიურია მეფე თამარის ტიტულატურაც. აქაც რეალურადაა ასახული საქართველოს პოლიტიკური სიძლიერე და გეოგრაფიული სიდიდე. აფხაზური ლიტერატურისა და ისტორიოგრაფიის ფუძემდებელი, ეროვნებით აფხაზი, დიმიტრი გულია საგანგებოდ აღნიშნავდა: „Абхазия которая всегда была неотъемлемой частью Грузии, жила с нею на протяжении всей истории одной жизнью, органически участвовала в созидании грузинской культуры и государственности и играла существенную роль в борьбе за свободу и независимость страны, в борьбе за объединение отдельных грузинских племен и областей в единое мощное национальное грузинское государство“ (Д. Гулия, О моей книге „История Абхазии“). საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა აკადემიის წევრ-კორესპონდენტი, აფხაზეთის ისტორიის თვალსაჩინო მკვლევარი ზურაბ ანჩაბაძე როგორც თავის მონოგრაფიულ ნაშრომში „Из истории средневековой Абхазии (VI-XVII вв.)“, ისე ქართული ენციკლოპედიისათვის დაწერილ განმარტებულ სტატიებში, ხაზგასმით აღნიშნავდა, რომ „აფხაზთა სამეფო“ „ერთ-ერთი ადრინდელი ფეოდალური ქართული სახელმწიფოა“ (ქსე, ტ. II, სტ. „აფხაზთა სამეფო“). ამ თვალსაზრისით სხვა აფხაზი ავტორების დასახელებაც შეიძლება. ნიშანდობლივია, რომ ურთიერთობები და ენა აფხაზეთში ქართული იყო. ქართულ ენაზე მიმდინარეობდა

საკანცელარიო საქმიანობა, წირვა-ლოცვა. ერთი სიტყვით, ქვეყნის ყველა კუთხის (მათ შორის აფხაზეთის) სახელმწიფო ენა ქართული იყო. 1774 წელს რუსეთს, როგორც არასწორად ბრძანა ბატონმა ვ. პუტინმა, არ შეერთებია მთელი ოსეთი, მხოლოდ სამი ხეობის ოსური თემები შეუერთდნენ. გეორგიევსკის ტრაქტატის (1783 წ.) ძალით მთელი შიდა ქართლი ჯერ ერთიანი საქართველოს, შემდეგ ქართლ-კახეთის სამეფოში შედიოდა. რუსეთმა დაარღვია 1920 წლის 7 მაისის ხელშეკრულება, ყოველგვარი სამართლებრივი სტატუსის გარეშე ე.წ. სამხრეთ ოსეთს ავტონომიური ოლქის სტატუსი მისცეს საქართველოს შემადგენლობაში.

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