

History

Education in the First Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)

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After the restoration of Georgia's state independence in 1918, the Georgian political and cultural elite resolved various problems. The 1918-1921 years were politically highly charged period in the history of Georgia. The declaration of independence brought many problems together with many positive developments. That was related to the preservation and revival of national symbols, as well as to political, social, economic, and cultural reforms that envisaged eventual changes of the consciousness of the Georgian society within the frames of a new state. Along with various state-of-the-art transformations and measures, all the problems that constituted the remnant of Russian rule were to be resolved. This primarily concerned the education system. There was an urgent need to carry out educational work in the Georgian language in schools. © 2020 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

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Fundamental researches and many scientific works have been devoted to different political, cultural, social-economic or religious problems of the history of Georgia. But it is also important to study the issues that will allow to find out how the Georgian nation perceived itself in the course of time and what value system determined its struggle for self-preservation and self-esteem.

The study of educational problems in various chronological sections occupies an important place in the Georgian historiography and numerous works were created in this field. However, the present work aims to investigate the role of education as a means of: 1. A national liberation movement, 2. A national identity and 3. A rapprochement among social layers. The study of the mentioned issue from this point is important and relevant.

Georgia faced new challenges. On the one hand, it had to overcome the problems arisen from the break-up of the feudal system and establish itself in a new socio-economic environment; On the other hand, more importantly, Georgia had to continue fighting for restoration of state independence of Georgia, in a different way, instead of armed protests, through education, knowledge and self-discipline, in order to be in line with the epoch, the interests and capabilities of Georgia.

This was the period when the Georgian cultural elite was trying: to propagate nationalism, raise knowledge, introduce more widely the history of the country to the population, idealize the past, raise the significance of preservation of the national values.

Since the 1890s, new social layers emerged: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; different political

parties with their own visions of independence and future development of Georgia were formed.

With the unsuccessful end of the national-liberation movement in the first half of the 19th century, a new phase of the national movement began in the second half of the 19th century. The Georgian political and cultural elite realized that for mobilization of the masses of people in the struggle for freedom neither only slogans nor endless unsystematic armed protests could bring desirable results. There was a need to reach out people as much as possible and speak comprehensively to them.

From the foregoing, since the 1850s started the period of struggle for freedom and forming the national idea, which created the basis for the restoration of Georgia's state independence in 1918.

The role of education in the struggle for freedom. In modern times, education plays a major role in shaping the society's thinking. The research of the issue of education is important not only from the point of dissemination of knowledge, but also for development of the national consciousness and formation of the national thinking.

The establishment of the capitalist order induced formation of new social strata: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The abolition of domination significantly changed the world political, social and economic system. New requirements and challenges were emerged in the new environment. Not only the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but the whole of society were undergoing fundamental transformations. Especially, in the 19th century the national-liberation movement was greatly enhanced which resulted in the formation of nation-states. Georgia underwent these changes differently. As a conquered part of the empire, it was naturally affected by ongoing processes and while the process of nation-state building in Europe was underway, Georgia was looking for new ways to fight for freedom. The Georgian cultural and political elite through different methods of struggle strived to create a

common Georgian space by raising the national awareness of society and to equally involve all social strata in the struggle for independence.

The role of education in strengthening of the national identity. Once the state independence of Georgia was abolished and the King's main loyalty to the nation no longer existed, as well as the autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox Church, the clergymen faced serious obstacles to the realization of rights that had been established for centuries. The clergy had always been carrying out national ideas and used to serve as the main link between the people. After deprivation of their right partially, as Russia failed to completely eliminate the centuries-old union between the people and the church, it was necessary to create a new body that would promote unity with people and most importantly, propagate national ideas. New epoch put new requirements/demands on school as an educational institution.

The issue of bringing social strata closer. The abolition of domination resulted in the establishment of a capitalist order. The new economic form caused definite changes in the social system. As afore mentioned, new social classes emerged: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In fact, the threat of extinction of the nobility was real and proceeded gradually. Peasantry due to their restricted functions could establish with difficulty themselves in different environment. The bourgeoisie, composed of non-Georgians, represented economically powerful force which was less interested in the problems of the Georgian nation; and the proletariat, at an early stage, was obsessed by class consciousness. All these had a negative impact on the unity of Georgians. Therefore, Georgians could unite only around a firmly established ideology. The given problem is a proper and clear manifestation of the changes in the nation's consciousness and its gradual conversion due to new times, by

maintaining the Georgian national values and forming educated, organized, cohesive society whose main idea was national freedom.

This period is one of the most difficult times in the history of Georgia. On the one hand, the ideological forms of the national movement were established and on the other hand they continued evolving, the foremost expressions of which was the educated and knowledgeable society, knowing their own history, which had to play a great role in the struggle for Georgia's independence.

After the restoration of Georgia's independence in 1918, the Georgian cultural and political elite had to resolve various problems. The period of 1918-1921 was very difficult in the history of Georgia. Declaration of independence, together with many positive developments brought also many problems. This was related to the preservation and revival of national symbols, as well as to political, social, economic, cultural reforms that eventually brought the Georgian public consciousness into new state borders. Along with various state-of-the-art transformations and measures, all the problems that constituted the remnant of Russian rule had to be resolved. This primarily concerned the education system. There was an urgent need to introduce the Georgian language for education of society in schools.

The opening of educational institutions and increasing the number of pupils and teachers' contingents naturally served one purpose – to raise the educational level and national awareness of the society. Under the control of the Russian Empire, there were schools in different parts of Georgia but receiving education was hampered due to applying the Russian language in the process of education. After the restoration of Georgia's state independence, the government continued the course, taken after the bourgeoisie-democratic revolution of February 1917 and accelerated the process of nationalization of schools. This was primarily expressed by the increase of the rights of the

Georgian language, but ethnic composition of pupils in schools complicated the process.

In addition, the curriculum was designed and applied in grades 1-8. Naturally, the full program cannot be covered here, although there may be mentioned the authors whose works were taught in schools. These are: Jacob Khutsesi, Ioane Sabanisdze, George Merchule, Basil Zarzmeli, Shota Rustaveli, Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani, David Guramishvili, Ilia, Akaki, Vazha, Raphiel Eristavi, Sophrom Mgaloblishvili, Ekaterina Gabashvili, Niko Lomouri, Shio Aragvispireli and etc.

Primary, low and upper secondary schools were included in the overall system of education and training, but were registered separately. In 1919 there were acting 1,860 primary schools throughout Georgia, out of which, only 120 were non-Georgian schools [1: 262].

As it has been mentioned, since the restoration of Georgia's state independence, the government implemented many important reforms. Among them were transformations in the field of education. The leading part of the Georgian society, while still part of the Russian Empire, was trying maximally to raise the level of education among the broader layers of society. Naturally, after the restoration of state independence this issue became the subject of primary discussion. This was expressed primarily in the nationalization of schools, since the bourgeoisie-democratic revolution of February 1917 and continued upgrading after 1918. All this was related to the school reorganization program, which primarily involved teaching and education in Georgian and incorporating Georgian history, Georgian language and literature and Georgian geography into the curricula.

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ისტორია

განათლება საქართველოს პირველ რესპუბლიკაში (1918-1921)

ნ. სონღულაშვილი

საქართველოს ტექნიკური უნივერსიტეტი, სამართლისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობების ფაკულტეტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

საქართველოს სახელმწიფოებრივი დამოუკიდებლობის აღდგენის შემდეგ ხელისუფლებამ არაერთი მნიშვნელოვანი რეფორმა განახორციელა. მათ შორის იყო გარდაქმნები განათლების სფეროში. ქართული პოლიტიკური ელიტა ჯერ კიდევ რუსეთის იმპერიის შემადგენლობაში ყოფნის დროს მაქსიმალურად ცდილობდა ფართო ფენებში განათლების დონის ამაღლებას და, ბუნებრივია, დამოუკიდებლობის აღდგენის შემდეგ ეს საკითხი უპირველესი განხილვის საგანი გახდა. ეს პირველ რიგში გამოიხატებოდა სკოლების ნაციონალიზაციით, რომელსაც საფუძველი 1917 წლის თებერვლის ბურჟუაზიულ-დემოკრატიული რევოლუციის შემდეგ ჩაეყარა და 1918 წლიდან ახალი აღმავლობა განიცადა. ეს ყოველივე კი დაკავშირებული იყო სკოლების რეორგანიზაციის პროგრამასთან, რაც პირველ რიგში გულისხმობდა ქართულ ენაზე სწავლა-განათლების წარმოებას და სასწავლო საგნებში: საქართველოს ისტორიის, ქართული ენისა და ლიტერატურის, საქართველოს გეოგრაფიის შეტანას.

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