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Ethnic Politics of Russian Empire

Russian Empire had always been fighting against Georgian sovereignty with the use of different theories and concepts and this fight continues to these days. It must be noted, that concept of Sakharov – „Georgia – Little Empire“ was in full accordance with the plans of Russian Empire architects – Alexander I, Nicholas I, Decembrists, Alexander II, Stalin, Gorbachev, Primakov, Dugin, Putin, Zhirinovskiy.

In 19th century Russian Empire decided to completely remove local population from entire coast spanning from river Kuban to town Poti and instead settle Russian military personnel there. This plan was carried out by Alexander I and Alexander II by conducting the genocide and mass-deportation against local population. With these methods entire coast of Sochi-Adler-Tuapse was cleansed from Circassians and Ubykhs, they were deported to Turkey. The same methods of cleansing were used for the coastal settlements of Abkhazia. Genocide of years 1864-1869 had following results:

Shapsugs were initially 300 000 people, remained only 1983.

Abzakhs were 260 000, remained – 14 660

Natukhais – 240 000, remained – 175

Temirgoys were 80 000, remained – 3140

Bzhedugs were 60 000, remained – 15 263

Mamkhegs – 8 000, remained – 1204

Adamiels – 3000, remained – 230

Ubykhs – 74 000, remained – 0.

From nearly 100 000 Zhaneys and Khakuchs none remained alive.

This plans of Russian Empire was also declared in constitution adapted by Decembrists (Pavel Pestel), its second and third paragraphs mentioned: „2. Caucasus shall be divided into two groups: peaceful and troublemaker. The firsts shall be left untouched in their settlements under Russian rule, though the seconds (Georgians, Circassians, Adygheans, Kabardians, Chechens, Ingushs, Avars, Lezgins...) must be forcefully relocated in the mid-Russian Volosts and diffused into the small groups. 3. Bring Russian population into the Caucasus and settle them down on the lands previously owned by the locals. With these actions, all the footprints of aboriginal population had to be erased and this area should be turned into the quiet and well-organized Russian oblast“. (They are trying to erase Georgian footprints from the Georgian monasteries of Gudauta, Ilori, Bedia, which is out of accordance with declared principle of „common belief“, not to mention vandalism, which is a crime). In the year 1880 Russian emperor Alexander II officially declared Abkhazian people as

criminals (because of the failed coup against rule of Empire in 1877-78). This order prohibited Abkhazians to settle down at the shoreline, close to the roads, in Sukhumi, Gudauta and Ochamchire.

In the same period there were attempts to disintegrate Georgian people by creating cyrillic-based alphabet for Megrelian and Svan „languages“, which were developed by the Russian officials on the base of Megrelian and Svan dialects of common Georgian language. The same was done for Abkhazian language, while also carrying out anti-Georgian propaganda. Russian chauvinist scientists insisted, that Abkhazian language would vanish soon and assimilation of Abkhazians would be unavoidable. As an act of appreciation for not participating in revolution of years 1905-07, Tsar regime abolished the order regarding criminal-nation and Abkhazians were released from that status. In response to that now Georgians went under scrutiny and same limitations were imposed on them as Abkhazians had before. By that action they put a tension on Georgian-Abkhazian relationship.

Soviet government continued its confrontational politics between two brother nations. By alternating privileges between them, government managed to get their loyalty. Years when Abkhazia was privileged were 18- 20's, 30s', 50's, 70-80s', for the remaining periods Georgia was the one getting political privileges. For example, if we look at the statistics of 1880s', every prestigious government position were granted to Abkhazians, only second-rated positions were available for Georgians, Armenians and Russians... This made relationship between two nations very complex. Similar meeting to Likhni Meeting was held in 1917 (then time Georgia was fighting for independence). Very important event was speech of Giorgi Shervashidze (last lord of Abkhazia, brother-in-law of Konstantine Dadeshkeliani) at the „Congress of Abkhazian People“ on November 8, 1917. Anti-Georgian pathos of the „Congress“ provoked sense of protest of Georgian politicians.

Giorgi Shervashidze addressed the Congress in Abkhazian language, explained to them what was happening in Russia, congratulated upon nearing independence and indicated on possible dangers: „You shall follow your older brothers and fight with them for freedom. I know some may not like my advice, because they look towards Moscow and I look towards Tbilisi. There is no other way for Abkhazia except of having close relationship with Georgia and be with him through good and bad times“. General Paskevich (By his order 20 000 Muslim Georgians were killed and more 55 000 were expelled to Turkey... In their place 30 000 Armenians and Greeks were settles and by doing so he changed ethnic profile of Javakheti region). Nicholas I issued new order after his success in Russian-Turkish war (1828-29 years): „Now, as you finished one great task, another one is waiting for you, even more important than the first – to completely wipe out aboriginal population of North Caucasus“. Before

Sakharov, Stalin was the one who declared Georgia as a little empire, which found expression in his fake and hostile definitions: „Georgians are militarist chauvinists – they bully other nations: Armenians, Azerbaijanians, Abkhazians, Adjarians, Ossetians; Georgians are not a nation, but a conglomerate; Georgia cannot exist without Russia“. Stalin begin freeing up Ingilo people conquered by historical Georgians by granting Saingilo to Azerbaijan (Stalin is the one who signed the order granting Saingilo to Azerbaijan), later this practice was continued by Shevardnadze who „set free“ Abkhazians and Ossetians.

Fake-information machine of Empire blamed Georgians, that their motto was „Georgia for Georgians“ (Rodionov – author of 9th April tragedy). First time terms „Zviadists“, „Provincial Fascism“, „Bunker“ were used in newspaper „Izvestia“ to relate National Government to fascism, and their supporters to pagans...

So-called Likhni meeting in time of Georgian national movement was well-planned provocation against Georgian and Abkhazian people. One of its outcomes was anti-Abkhazian speech about abolishing Abkhazian autonomy at the Republic Square on 4th April, 1989 (which served the interests of only people willing to maintain Empire and was against the interests of these two nations). This provocation, organized by Moscow was exposed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava, and they gave a new direction to the protests –towards only requesting independence of Georgia (all the banners against Abkhazia vanished from the mass-protest scene).

Kremlin wanted to worsen relationship between ethnic groups and became irritated about changing direction of the protests towards requesting only Georgian independence. That was the reason they oppressed the mass-demonstration by force on April 9, 1989. Idea of the „Renewed Soviet Union“ belongs to A. Sakharov, who is the author of the phrase „Georgia – the Small Empire“.

Soon after the agreement between Gorbachev and Bush on Malta, process of creating new legislation for „Renewed Soviet Union“ started according to the project of Sakharov-Mamardashvili, by which autonomous republics and autonomous oblasts were granted the same rights as Soviet republics with regards to decision of staying or leaving Soviet Union and their respective republics (this was the legalization of separatism).

This law has become the ground for Gorbachev's threat to Gamsakhurdia on phone: „Georgia can leave Soviet Union but without Abkhazia and South Ossetia“.

On the basis of Sakharov's concept „Georgia – Small Empire“ Prague resolution number 24 was issued by Russian Empire, regarding so called „oppression of ethnic minorities and genocide against Ossetians conducted by Georgia“. After „freeing up“ Abkhazians and Ossetians Russia plans to do the same with regards to Svanetians, Megrelians (Putin's former advisor Dugin spoke about that openly), Adjarians, Javakhians and others, until the demise of the State of Georgia.

Sakharovs concept of the “Small Empire” was predated by the language politics of Russian Tsarism and Soviet Empire. Russian statesmen tried to belittle the role of Georgian language, they declared Georgian dialects as separate languages without an alphabet. Their (I. Vostorgov, K. Patkanian) goal was to present sub-ethnic groups of Georgians as separate nations.

...Ideologist of Bolsheviks’ I. Zhvania says: “Why there is no Megrelian nation? Samegrelo has all the signs of nation: 1. similarity of culture and everyday life; 2. territory; 3. economic relations; 4. language and etc... „I. Zhvania has not only planned to restore Megrelian separatism, but also tries to start Svanietian separatist movement“, Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

In short, the same politics of freeing up Samegrelo, Adjara, Svaneti, Javakheti from Georgians just like Heretia-Saingilo, Abkhazia, Samachablo, Qsani, Dvaleti, Samurzakano, Dali Svaneti (Sanigeti) is being carried out to these days. Goal is to move Russian border further to Turkey (see statements by Russian politician Zhirinovskiy).

In the years 1990-91 no ethnic minority rights were abused in Georgia, constitution declared international law supremacy over local laws with regards to human rights, process of Abkhazian integration within Georgia was carried out successfully. On March 31, 1991 referendum was conducted regarding independence of Georgia. Out of 3 657 477 voters 3 295 493 voted in favor of Georgian independence. In the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia 97,73% of the voters voted in favor of Georgian independence.

In 1991 commission of Georgians and Abkhazians (without the participation of Russians) accepted the new temporary Election Law, according to which Abkhazians were granted 28 seats in high council (43% of total seats), in place of previous 40,7%. For Georgians 26 seats were assigned (40%) instead of previous 37,9%. Other ethnic groups were left with 11 seats (17% instead of previous 24%). Number of Georgian deputates was 47,6% (which was the relative number of Georgians living in Abkhazia, in place of previous 52,4% of seats). In the previous High Council pro-Georgian deputation was 37,9%, hence Georgian seats number was increased by 10%.

This law improved previously tensed situation created by Kremlin in Abkhazia and made it possible to avoid military conflict...

28-26-11- by the help of temporary Election Law Georgians and Abkhazians made diplomatic win over Moscow, because: 1. Conflict in Abkhazia was avoided, as well as „genocide of local population and ethnic cleansing of Georgians“; 2. By getting 43% of the seats by Abkhazians instead of previous 17% the myth about „Small Empire“ was demolished. 3. Triggered by the example of elections in Abkhazia process of independence in North Caucasus started, building of Caucasian House speeded up. Russia sensed the danger of losing Caucasus and conducted military coup in Tbilisi with the help of local criminals and provoked the conflict by the hands of its puppets. By flaming conflict in Abkhazia Shevardnadze, Kitovani and Ardzinba betrayed Georgian and Abkhazian

people and sold Abkhazia to Russia. President of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia was killed, 30 000 people were killed, 300 000 were moved away from their homes from Abkhazia, Samegrelo was raided five times, villages were burnt, 1 500 000 Georgians were made into migrants on foreign land, darkened entire Georgia, stole 20 billion worth of bank deposits from the people, destroyed state economy. Unfortunately this war had terrible impact on both – Georgians and Abkhazians, war results were disastrous for every citizen of Georgia.

Restoring this damage is only possible by the reconciliation and reintegration of Georgian and Abkhazian people.

Majority of Abkhazians, Ossetians, Armenians, Azerbaijanians voted in favor of Georgian independence and territorial integrity on referendum... Foreign policy of independent Georgia was founded upon the principles of United Nations, protection of human rights, principle of self-determination (in 1976 Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava created „Helsinki Group“ to protect human rights), took into consideration the general values of mankind. For Zviad Gamsakhurdia political orientation was not towards entirely Europe or America, but he considered Georgian's place to be in Caucasus (from historical experience he knew that foundations of „Caucasian House“ were made by King Gorgasal, David the Builder, King Tamar, Giorgi V the Brilliant, and that was the reason why Georgia was so strong in their times). And because of that he tries to form political institutions in relation to the West (he choose French model of governance in the beginning of his political career... prefectures, councils...) The West appreciated Georgia in the initial stage of its fight against the „Evil Empire“ (Georgian dissidents were mentioned in Reagan's doctrine), which was followed by famous „Kazbegi Meeting“ on the territory of Georgia, in Kazbegi, with the leader of Russian Federation on March 23 1991, for resolving the conflict surrounding Tskinali region. In Kazbegi the Head of Russian High Council Boris Yeltsin and the Head of the Georgian High Council Zviad Gamsakhurdia met. Very important actions were planned. The most important from them was new bilateral agreement between Georgia and Russia, which was planned in Tbilisi. Protocol of the meeting and agreement was made...

By the April 1991 template of agreement between Georgia and Russian Federation shall be ready, for that purpose representative groups from both sides must be formed in order to help stabilizing situation in the former South Ossetian autonomy. For the purpose of mutual action, sides agreed, that Defense Ministry of USSR would recall soviet army parts remaining in the territory of South Ossetia. Ministerial Councils of Russian Federation, Georgian Republic and North Ossetia Autonomy shall start working mutually immediately to ensure refugees' comeback to their homes and restoration of local legitimate government organs. Governments of Russian Federation, Georgian Republic and North

Ossetia Autonomy shall create a commission for finding out amount of damage refugees experienced and ensure their rehabilitation. Final goal for these commissions and groups was to restore peace in the region. Permanent group was created for overseeing implementation of this protocol and discussing ongoing issues should they arise. By the signed agreement of town Kazbegi on March 23, 1991, the State Head of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the State Head of Russia – Boris Yeltsin agree upon abolition of South Ossetian Autonomous District. Everywhere in the agreement text „Former South Ossetia“ is used! It was not even a subject of discussions as an existing entity...

Also, agreement mentioned – „Recalling Soviet Army parts still dislocated on the territory of former South Ossetia“. Avoiding conflict in Tskhinvali region, recalling Soviet Army forces from Samachablo and Abkhazia, abolishing South Ossetian Autonomy – were great achievements of National Government.

Unfortunately, Russian could not appreciate positive effect of Gamsakhurdia's politics in solving problems by creating the dialogue between Caucasian people (Russian continued its politics of „Divide and Rule“ by creating Confederation of Mountainous People with Sukhumi as its capital) and finally Russian became the victim of its own politics in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan.

After March 23, 1991 Gamsakhurdia-Yeltsin meeting, on May 14, 1991 Georgian, Russian and USSR parliaments (with Ossetians as observers) implemented the document which mentioned necessity to immediately move out USSR (Russian) army from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. Solving the Tskhinvali region's problems had become discretion of Georgia.

Russian parliament and President Yeltsin also confirmed abolition of South Ossetia Autonomy and term „Former South Ossetia Autonomy“ entered the use.

USSR presidium issued the order with similar content on the basis of this document. Conducting elections by 28-26-11 principle, ethnic minorities' support of Georgian independence and territorial integrity in referendum, Kazbegi meeting protocol, USSR presidium order and orders issued by parliaments (USSR's, Russia's and Georgia's) were the great victory of Georgians, Ossetians, Abkhazians and it enabled avoiding bloodshed and save peoples' lives. These were the great achievements of National Government.

Lastly, it shall be said, that Kremlin fake-news machine often insinuated for the purpose of discrediting national government. These incidents were often reported by western media and diplomacy as true. To name one:

In 1991 influential French newspaper „Le Monde“ printed, that Gamsakhurdia issued the law in Georgia, which prohibited Ossetians to have more than one child! After several years, when Editor of this newspaper was asked by upset Georgians, what was the source of such news, he replied that informer was somebody he trusted very much, this person was Merab Mamardashvili.