

ANZOR TOTADZE

**THE OSSETS IN GEORGIA:
MYTH AND REALITY**



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The present book highlights the anatomy of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and on the basis of analysis of Georgian and foreign literary sources and official demographic data it discusses the issues of Ossets migration to Georgia in the XVII-XIX centuries and of the aboriginal population of Tskhinvali. It also displays the absurd consideration of the Ossetian dilettante scholars on “South Ossetia” joining Russia in 1774, the unprecedented facts of distorting the history of Georgia and their efforts to misappropriate the Georgian cultural heritage. By the official statistical data living standard of Ossets in Georgia is the highest in the former Soviet Union.

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ANATOMY OF THE CONFLICT

"I would like to be unbiased and clear up whether there were some hasty, senseless activities of Ossets, who intensified the contradictions through provocation. I would also like to say such events took place then. I mean declaration of sovereignty, which was fully orientated to Moscow with the prospect of uniting South and North Ossetia in the future. Aspirations of South Ossetians to join their Northern tribesmen can be understood from the human viewpoint. However, from the geopolitical viewpoint it is a mistake. The main Caucasus Ridge is a natural border between Georgia and Ossetia and any efforts of removing this border will cause permanent conflicting situation between Georgians and Ossets. To restore traditional friendly relations, first of all, the talk should stop on separation of Ossetia from Georgia. No authorities of Georgia will agree with this. And they will be right, because this will mean violation of Georgia's territorial integrity...

Who wants peace between South Ossetians and Georgians, should reject for ever the idea of South Ossetia's joining North Ossetia. Who wants peace between Georgia and Russia, should also put this idea aside. This is the reality".

VASILII ABAEV,

famous Ossetian professor, renowned scholar

Armed conflicts in Caucasus are often mentioned as ethnic conflicts, which doesn't fully express their nature. The character of these conflicts has shown vividly that an important factor of the conflicts origin and their unsettlement by now is Russia's political, economic, demographic and other interests. That's why Russia has been striving and keeps striving even now to attach completely ethnic nuance to the conflicts and succeeds in this in any way. Thus, the conflicts are of ethno-political character. An exception is a conflict in Chechnya, which is mainly connected with the fight of the Chechen people for freedom and independence; however, ethnic elements are still characteristic to this conflict as well.

Immediately after dissolution of the Soviet Union some big or small conflicts took place in the former Soviet republics on the ethnic ground. This was expected, because in condition of totalitarian regime and dominating soviet ideology it was most dangerous to openly express opposing idea on national problems. The Communist Party possessed a system of opinions, which were considered eternal, among them in the sphere of national relations as well, strictly revealed mostly in the political

form of public consciousness. But the national problems experienced development, ripening and required relevant settlement. Real situation was not taken into consideration in the process of forming the autonomies; everything was being personally decided in the Kremlin. But this was not the only factor of ethnic conflicts origin. Russia had indefinite influence on the former soviet republics and heads of some of these republics couldn't dare to protect national interests of their countries. Suddenly Russia found out that nothing was left from its unprecedented influence. Officially it was impossible to regain the former influence in the post-soviet space. Bipolar world, in which Russia and the USA were super-states, became unipolar. To restore its influence in the post-soviet space, Russia supported the separatist forces in separate republics and especially in the geopolitical and geo-economic regions. Sometimes, still in the period of the Soviet Union dissolution, Russia itself took care of forming such forces and then did its best to widely stir up ethno-conflicts, which took away the lives of some tens of thousands of people. For example, it can be said for sure that unless Russia's support they won't have been Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts in Georgia or, in any case they could have been hushed down without such bloodshed. Russia can even now immediately settle these conflicts, if it makes the separatists understand they won't get any military or economic assistance from Russia and if it honestly conducts its peacekeeping mission. But to fulfill its imperial intentions and to preserve former positions in the post-soviet countries, Russia, wherever it can or sees such need, artificially stirs up or promotes ethnic conflicts, impedes these conflicts deliberately to finally reach its influence again. These conflicts exist through support of Russia and the following conditions witness this.

Striving for independence in the former soviet republics coincide with the conflicts between nationalities, which is not casual. Proceeding from its interests, Russia cannot get used to loss of the spheres of its influence. Close relationship of the events distanced from one another in time and space was not casual either. The events ongoing in Tridnestrian region, Abkhazia and "South Ossetia" were governed from Moscow. The models of armed situations were prepared beforehand. It was thus in Abkhazia, "South Ossetia", etc.

Specific feature of ethno-territorial conflicts was not casual as well. The conflicts in Georgia are of vivid geographical expression – they are along the Russia-Georgia border. There live in Georgia far more multi-numbered national minorities, the amount of which is far more than that of Abkhazs and Ossets. But Georgia has far less problems, as compared with them. The thing is that they live in a distance from the Russia's border and it is far easier and convenient for Russia to form ethnic conflicts in its

neighboring Abkhazs (the amount of which in Abkhazia at present equals 42 000) and Ossets (46 000). Consequently, Abkhazia and “South Ossetia” have become for Russia a lever for influencing Georgia, just as Russia used different levers for influencing other former soviet republics, mostly those, which violated the territorial integrity.

Russia’s influence on Georgia makes it easier for Russia to implement its interests in entire Transcaucasus, which is promoted by Georgia’s geopolitical position. Russia’s main political task is to provide its influence in the Caucasian region. Without solving it Russia cannot be a great state. That’s why it does its best not to allow some other influence upon South Caucasus. However, the USA and western states think otherwise. As it is mentioned Russia cannot now and won’t be able in the near future to play a decisive role in Caucasus and so influential gamblers should intensively participate in the “common Caucasian processes”, first of all the USA and EU.

Centuries-old traditional friendship, relationship and mutual cooperation of the Georgian and Ossetian peoples faced a serious test, imposed on our peoples by some forces from outside. These forces try to impede in restoring “the broken bridge”. With this aim in view they form “ideology” based on false and forged principles. This is witnessed by four thick books, published one after another, by the Ossetian separatist authors in Moscow only in 2006. Thus they want to form false past by rewriting anew the history of the Georgian and Ossetian peoples to change upside-down the true relations of these two nations. All this hampers building of statehood, the process of integration of different ethnic groups living in Georgia.

Such efforts should have a relevant answer. Both for Georgians and Ossets, false knowledge and forged history form rich ground for development of such undesirable and harmful events, which neither now nor in the future may be positive for our peoples.

Within past years there appeared in abundance thick books, written by the Ossetian pseudo-scholars, in fact, dilettantes, forming wrong impression on the history of Georgia and entire Caucasus as well. They compiled their false history on nothing, mercilessly distorting the written sources, statistical data and, doing their best, try to present whatever they wish as real. All this serves one purpose – to justify existence of self-proclaimed “republic of South Ossetia” on the territory of Georgia as an independent state, to violate sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The Ossetian separatists are supported in this by the reactionary forces of Russia, which assist and encourage them. Without their help the separatists would not have dared to toughly interfere into the internal affairs of

Georgia. The Ossetian separatists violate integrity of Georgia's territory and consider care of Georgia for its state territorial integrity to be aggression of Georgia. The dilettante Ossetian scholars make good use of difficult situation in Georgia, which usually accompanies gain of independence, building of a democratic state and through using fabricated history they try to force their people embark on the road of aggression, to stir discord and animosity between the Georgian and Ossetian peoples, which had long history of good neighborly relations and co-living.

History of the Ossetian people is mainly preserved in the Georgian sources, as the Ossetian people had no written language of their own. It was through the Georgian sources that they knew their ancient history. However, now they read the Georgian sources as it suits them and present the historical realities as if through distorting mirror. They forget that the ancient Georgian historical or literary sources, a part of which has been translated into foreign languages, are known not only to experts in Georgian studies, but to foreign, among them Russian, historians as well. Therefore those, who publish books in Moscow time and again and those, "who want to create the new past through rewriting history anew", should take into consideration that the ancient Georgian sources are being studied by more renowned scholars than the Ossetian dilettante experts. In the works of these dilettantes there is outlined only one idea, desirable to them – there exists Ossetia, consisting of two, North and South, parts. To justify this they have to prove the myth as if Ossets had lived in East Georgia, namely, in Shida Kartli, since time immemorial and that Ossetia had never been the territory of Georgia. They prove this as intensively as they can. In their opinion, in 1774 united Ossetia, both North and South, joined Russia and, consequently, Georgia has nothing to do with the territory of Russia. Within 70 year long period South Ossetia, which was Georgia's autonomous region, experienced colonial oppression and the standard of living of Ossets there was very low and, in their opinion, the problem of South Ossetia should be settled according to the fundamental principles of the international law, acknowledged by the UN, which give **a guarantee for self-determination of peoples**. In June 2006 at the meeting between the Presidents of Georgia and Russia, the President of Georgia made a statement on the ongoing annexation of the Georgian territory saying that Georgia would not concede even "a single meter of its land". Before this statement was made, the Russian diplomacy suspended using even verbal recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity. The foreign ministry of Russia completely forgot de jure being of South Ossetia within Georgia and for the last period had more than once announced that this "is the zone of conflict acknowledged at the international level", the status of which should be

determined through talks. The Russian Foreign Service remembered **“the right of nations for self-determination”**. Thus, what was written in the books was announced at the summit meetings or when such meetings were prepared. Publishing of the books, therefore, justifies itself.

There, probably, exists no state in the world, on the territory of which the representatives of neighboring state do not live. If they start appropriating the territories in these states with the aim of joining their historical homeland, the world would fail to avoid terrible clashes. Big states, therefore, should be guided in this case by common sense, because by permitting such ungrounded precedents, the opportunity would be given to gross violation of fundamental principles acknowledged by the international law.

The Georgia's main river Mtkvari historically determined division of Kartli into Zemo (Upper), Shida (Inner) and Kvemo (Lower) Kartli. According to the Georgian chroniclers, hagiographical monuments of the early feudal time and the VII century Armenian geography, the oldest name of Shida Kartli was Zena Sopeli. This historical province of Georgia, according to Leonti Mroveli, the XI century Georgian historian, embraced the territory “from Tpilisi and Aragvi to Tasiskari and Panavrad”¹. According to the same chronicler, Uplos, a descendent of Georgian ethnarch Kartlos, “ruled in the state from Tpilisi and Aragvi to Tasiskari and Panavrad and built Uplis-tsikhe, Urbnisi, Kaspi and called this area Zena Sopeli from Aragvi and Armazi to Tasiskari, which is now called Shida Kartli”². Parnavaz I (end of the IV century – the first half of the III century), the first King of Kartli(Iberia) Kingdom, divided the kingdom into saeristavos (principalities), one of which was Shida Kartli, Zena Sopeli of the earlier period. Over entire period of our history, be it Greek geographer Strabo (who mentions about Shida Kartli as Middle Iberia) or Vakhushti Batonishvili, an outstanding Georgian geographer of the first half of the XVIII century, the XI century Georgian historian Juansher and other Georgian chroniclers or old Georgian writers, Italian missionaries or European travelers, all of them considered the Caucasus Ridge to be the northern border of Shida Kartli. It's really true that the Caucasus Ridge is the northern border of entire Georgia.

Georgia reached its greatest statehood power in the XII century and the first quarter of the XIII century. Within this period it was the most powerful state in Near and Middle Asia, which was considerably caused by the amount of its population as well. In 1254, according to the census data,

¹ “Kartlis Tskhovreba”, vol.I, Tb., p 24.

² Ibid, p 10.

there lived in Georgia eight million people. It should be mentioned here that in the Middle Ages Georgia was settled entirely by Georgians and this fact did not escape the attention of the Italian missionaries, who conducted their activities in West Georgia for tens of years. “There is no trace of non-Georgian population living”¹ in West Georgia in the Persian sources of the period of Tamerlane (Timur Lenk) raids. As for East Georgia, there lived in some amount the representatives of neighboring, but not of North Caucasian, nationalities.

Georgia played an important role in preserving Christianity in the East. This fact was recognized by the foreign scholars as well. German scholar K.Koch, who visited Georgia in 1836, mentioned: “When Greeks and peoples of Asia Minor gradually started professing Islam, Georgians and Armenians (in a lesser degree) remained faithful to the religion of their ancestors. It was just the Georgian nation that saved East Christianity from complete annihilation”² According to evidences of the Persian historians Tamerlane expressed great astonishment that the Christian religion existed in Georgia surrounded by the Muslim countries. He promised to surely correct mistake made by his ancestors and to do away with this injustice³. Tamerlane managed to make the North Caucasian peoples, a part of Ossets among them, to convert to Islam.

In result of permanent attacks of the enemy, Georgia was disintegrated into separate kingdoms and principalities. In that period Russia intensively kept oppressing the population of North Caucasian lowlands, Ossets among them, and Kabardinians finally blocked Ossets in the highland regions. Thus the North Caucasians had hard conditions for existence and they gradually started to migrate to Georgia – towards the southern slopes of the Caucasus Ridge. In the end of the XVI and the beginning of the XVII centuries there appeared in this way Lesghins in Kakheti, Ossets – in the northern part of Shida Kartli and Apsuas – in Abkhazia. Georgia, disintegrated into separate kingdoms, was too weak to liberate its territory from the comers. In the part of the territory located northwards to Shida Kartli, Ossets first settled as migrants beside the Georgian peasants. Later, first, by force, then due to annihilation of a greater part of the Georgian population in the clashes against enemies on the territory of Shida Kartli, Ossets, together with the new streams of their

¹ K.Tabatadze. The terms designating Georgia and Georgians according to the X-XV century Persian sources. See the book: Foreign and Georgian terminology designating Georgia and Georgians. Tb., 1993, p 248.

² The evidences of K.Koch and O.Spencer on Georgia and Caucasus. Tb., 1981, pp 1717-172.

³ K.Tabatadze, *ibid.* p 249.

kinsmen from the North, gradually advanced to the territory of the Shida Kartli lowlands and settled as migrants in the ruins of the estates mostly owned by the Georgian princes – Eristavis of Ksani, Machabelis, Amilakhvaris and Tsitsishvilis.

The Ossetian scholar, Professor G. Togoshvili described in detail the Ossets migration in Shida Kartli in the XVII-XVIII cc. He cites documentary material on the efforts of feudals to again settle¹ the population in the villages of Shida Kartli desolated in result of the attacks of enemies and intra-feudal clashes and to subject Ossets under their power. In the beginning of the XIX century there appeared the term “South Ossetia”. Appearance of this term, along with the intensive efforts of the Russian imperial forces, was also caused by the condition that Shida Kartli was directly bordered northwards, across the Caucasus Ridge, by historical Ossetia, in the period under research - by the Ossetian communities of Tagauri, Kurtati, Alagiri and Digori. Unless this situation and Ossetia being a direct neighbor of Georgia, the terms mentioned above wouldn't have appeared even in case a greater number of Ossets migrated to Georgia. Neither the issue would arise there of forming their autonomy in Central Georgia, historically and culturally Georgian land, which was dictated by imperial Russia. Ossets started to fight to occupy the Georgian territories. This process finally ended in forming the autonomous district of South Ossetia on the territory of Shida Kartli, earlier Zena Sopeli, in 1922.

Before that, when Georgia declared independence and was a democratic republic in 1918-1921, dictated by Bolshevik Russia several revolts were organized against Georgia on the Shida Kartli territory settled by Ossets. Despite the fact that, according to the agreement concluded on May 7, 1920 between Georgia and Russia the latter recognized Georgia's state independence and shouldered the obligation not to interfere into the internal affairs of Georgia, before and after that Russia kept undermining the foundations of Georgia's independence. In such a tense situation chairman of the government of Georgia N. Zhordania, appealed with the statement to the representatives of England, France, the USA and Italy in Tbilisi: “ We have received de facto recognition, for which we express our deep gratitude, but... only mere recognition gave us no advantage for final preserving our freedom and state existence... The attitude of our allied countries in protecting our northern borders was especially a heavy blow for us, as Bolsheviks try to dissolve our state from there. We have more than once raised the petition for assistance in this struggle with ammunition and

¹ G. Togoshvili. The Georgia-Ossetia relations in the XV-XVIII cc. Tb., 1969, pp 165-224.

food. We were promised this assistance... but have received by now no bullets, no bread from you... Time has come when we cannot wait any more and cannot be satisfied with promises only... We are left alone again, probably, because your governments are unaware of the situation, or dissolution of our republic by the Bolshevik Russia is not considered violation of your interests. In such a situation supreme interests of our people dictate the government of Georgia to immediately find the ways for salvation without your assistance, without taking your interests into consideration”¹.

In such a difficult situation, when the units of the Russian Red Army were approaching Georgia’s borders, Ossets in Shida Kartli arranged several uprisings. The commanders of the Russian 11th army put hopes on revolted Ossets with the aim of attacking Georgia and expanding Soviet power in it. In the memorandum adopted by the revolted Ossets, they supported the “communist revolts started in South Ossetia, in Tbilisi and Kutaisi gubernias, where everything was matured and even over-matured for an upheaval”². The revolted Ossets demanded autonomy and integration into the Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik Russia annexed Georgia in 1921 and on February 25 declared it to be the Soviet republic. For their assistance in this case, Ossets received in 1922 autonomy with the status of an autonomous district on the historical Shida Kartli territory. By forming an autonomous district a delayed-action bomb was laid for pressing Georgia in an analogous situation, which was successfully used by the Russian reactionary forces after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and declaration of Georgia’s independence in 1991. These forces take no heed of regular processes of historical development and try to return the processes back to former space. That’s why they aspire to expand, deepen and prolong the conflict as much as they can and thus to press Georgia, as the country is located in such geopolitical and geo-economic space, where the interests of numerous big countries are crossed. Acad. Mariam Lordkipanidze justly mentions that settlement of the conflict “depends on Russia and the USA, we should suit the interests of these two super powerful states”³, but they don’t give such an opportunity to us.

Thus, the existing conflict is a political conflict between Russia and Georgia. Russia has tried to turn it into the ethnic conflict between Georgians and Ossets and succeeded in it.

¹ A. Menteshashvili. The Ossetian separatism in 1918-1920. See the appendix The Ossetian issue, Tb., 1996, pp 308-309.

² Ibid., p 304.

³ The newspaper “Sakartvelos Respublika”, August 11, 2004

This is a brief history of the problem. The Georgian people do their best to settle the conflict in a peaceful way, without any blood. The presidential program of Georgia involves many important measures for conflict peaceful settlement. The government of Georgia suggests a state formation with autonomous status with more expanded rights than in conditions of an autonomous district. President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia stresses the need for fixing in the Constitution of Georgia a political status of the former South Ossetian autonomous district within Georgia, because this territory is not mentioned in the Constitution now. Along with maximum autonomy the power will be mostly distributed at the level of central government for full-value participation of the autonomies in central governance of the country. The bodies of local self-governance will be formed. Quota will be allocated in the Parliament of Georgia for the representatives of these territories. The Ossetian language will have the status of the official language along with the state language. The authorities of Georgia are ready to conduct other significant measures as well. Implementation of the program started in 2004. It foresees return of ethnic Ossets, which left Georgia in 1991-1992.

The authorities of Georgia, mentions President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia, are ready to do much more, but at the same time they will never permit division of Georgia and legalization of the status of independence for any territory of our country. Isolation of any territory from Georgia will face maximum resistance and until there exists Georgia and it has its authorities this will never happen, no one should have such illusions¹. Historical justices should be restored through peaceful talks, which will become a firm basis for restoring the bridge broken between the Georgian and Ossetian peoples, for the future co-living of these two nations. The Georgian authorities strive for this as well. Still in 2004 the President of Georgia used to say: “We are ready to sit around the table of talks with the representatives of South Ossetia and to give them firm guarantees far more than North Ossetia - Alania has within the Russian Federation”².

To take into consideration the events and processes developed within last century around the conflicts mentioned above, we may say that history repeats. The events developed in 1918-1920 and in the present-day period are as like as two peas. Dictated by the Russian reactionary forces, the present Ossetian separatists, like those in the past, demand the status of

¹ The speech delivered by President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia in Batumi at the international conference, see: International conference “Initiative of the government of Georgia in regard to peaceful settlement of the South Ossetian conflict”, Batumi, 2005, pp 38-42, 50.

² The newspaper “24 Saati”, July 15, 2004.

“independent republic” on the territory of central Georgia and integration into Russia.

This groundless unsubstantiated demand was responded by a renowned scholar, head of the department for ethnography of Caucasian peoples, the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Academy of Science of Russia, S. Arutinov. Answering the correspondent’s question: “Remember how this terrible fire burst out in South Ossetia only because Ossetia declared itself a state independent from Georgia”, he wrote in the journal “Rodina” (#1, 1992, p 71): “the conflict was unavoidable, if we take into consideration that it is not Ossetia at all, but the central Georgia from time immemorial, where the Ossetian population settled in abundance within last centuries. Ossets, surely, have the right to live there, but they have no right to declare their independent state on the mentioned territory. North Ossetia is a different case”¹.

That’s true; North Ossetia is a different case. To take no care of past mistakes may face jeopardy of repeating greater tragedy.

¹ Cited from: A. Menteshashvili. The Ossetian separatism in 1918-1920. See the book: “The Ossetian Issue”, p 297.

THE OSSETS' MIGRATION INTO GEORGIA

The first appearance of Ossets in Georgia was caused by attacks at Ossets conducted by Mongols and Tamerlane on the central lowlands of North Caucasus, followed by annihilation of their great amount. In result of these raids Ossets were forced to leave their dwelling places and find shelter in the gorges of Central Caucasus.

In the second half of the XIII century numerous attacks of Mongols and their rule weakened Georgia to a great extent. The population of lowlands considerably reduced in number. All this formed the situation favorable for appearance of the armed groups of Ossets in the environments of Shida Kartli. It was also in the interests of Mongols, as they considered Ossets to be their supporting force in conducting their expansionist policy in Georgia. As the Georgian chronicler mentioned, in 1292 in the period of no royal rule in Shida Kartli, "Ossets started destruction and raids in Kartli"¹. Ossets stayed in Kartli for 30 years.

Analogous evidence was presented by Vakhushti Batonishvili, Georgian historian of the first half of the XVIII century: "Ossets started to destroy Kartli and isolated and occupied city of Gori". Ossets wanted to settle in Kartli, thus forming a danger to the land ownership of Georgian nobles. "That was why the eristavis of Kartli gathered together ... and headed towards Gori. Many Ossets and Georgians died in this clash and Gori was burned". Ossets appealed for help to Mongols in Mukhrani, which proceeding from their interest, supported Ossets and shouldered their mediation. Mongols managed "to reach peace" between Ossets and Georgians. As Vakhushti Batonishvili mentioned, from that time on there began animosity between Georgians and Ossets till the rule of King Giorgi Brtsqinvale (the Glorious). King Giorgi drove away Ossets, which came together with Mongols. He "took back the villages and castles occupied by Ossets in Kartli, subordinated those unyielding to his power, made them pay contribution and brought peace to Kartli by occupying all the approaches to it"².

Thus, in the end of the XIV century, when King Giorgi implemented important measures in the country for bringing peace and cleared Georgia off Mongols, he annihilated ravaging groups of Ossets and ousted them from Georgia. The Georgian sources did not mention about compact settlements of Ossets for nearly two centuries since then.

¹ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. II, p 296.

² Ibid., vol. IV, p 256.

As relevant literary sources clarified, the new settlements of Ossets in Kartli highlands were formed in the mid-XVII century. This is also witnessed by the evidence of Ambassador of Russia to Georgia, according to which there lived about 200 Ossets in those places. In the XVII-XVIII cc Ossets gradually came to live in the Kartli highlands. However, they faced here limited and unfavorable conditions for living and barren soil. Vakhushti Batonishvili mentioned: "Fertility of these places was poor", Ossets "failed to sow grains due to lack of fertile soils". So Ossets' striving for the southern regions was natural. It was also promoted by reduction of the Kartli population caused by endless fights against conquerors. Their number was filled up by the Georgian population from the highlands. Ossets appropriated the dwelling places left by them. This process is characteristic even to our century as well. Mass migration of the Georgian population from the eastern highland regions of Caucasus to lowlands resulted in voluntary appearance of the North Caucasian population there and their efforts to occupy the Georgian territories.

Ossets used force to appropriate the Georgian lands and the process of their migration was sometimes most acute. Namely, according to one deed of purchase, compiled in the first half of the XVII century, no Ossets lived in Zemo Java either. The document said: "Zemo Java was made desolate by Ossets. God witnesses that not a single trace of man was left"¹. Ossets completely annihilated Georgians living in the village Zemo Java. The Machabelis later settled it with Ossets. The process of Ossets settlement on the Georgian territories was mentioned by Vakhushti Batonishvili as well: "Ossets settled in the places, where first Georgian peasants lived and then their lords settled Ossets there. After that Georgians came to live in the lowlands as the number of population reduced there"².

This witnessed that in that period Ossets settled in the places earlier belonging to Georgians in the Kartli lowlands. Analysing the maps, compiled by Vakhushti Batonishvili, J.Gvasalia justly pointed that "there were no villages with compact settlement of Ossets in the Shida Kartli foothills and lowlands, such villages were only at the mouths of the gorges." The territory populated with Ossets involved only a northern highland part of the so-called "South Ossetia". On the map, compiled by Georgian geographer Vakhushti Batonishvili in 1735, Ossetia was located beyond the Caucasus Ridge.

The fact is of special mention that along with evidences preserved in the Georgian and foreign written sources, the verbal material, Ossetian

¹ Cited from: J.Gvasalia. Shida Kartli and the Ossetian problem. See the book: "The Issue of Ossets", p 95.

² Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. IV, Tb., 1973, pp 363-364

folklore, architectural monuments of the Shida Kartli highlands, toponyms and epigraphic vividly proved migration of Ossets mostly from the XVII century. For example, an Ossetian scholar V.Abaev mentioned: “Historical and linguistic facts prove that Ksani Ossetians settlement in the present places of the Ksani Gorge took place not a long time ago, within last 200 years”¹. Trace of the Ossetian culture was seen nowhere in Shida Kartli. All the architectural monuments there were Georgian. P.Zakaraia observed: “In that part of Shida Kartli, called “South Ossetia”, everything, taken out from the earth by archaeologists and all the monuments erected overland, was Georgian. This pointed to Georgians always living there. If anyone created anything there, it was all Georgian. The traces of other nations were seen here only in regard to destruction and destroy”².

One of the oldest big churches, which after many reconstructions and changes reached us in the form of a cupola church, is Nikozi church. It is located near Tskhinvali. Its walls preserve fragments of Georgian inscriptions. It was first built in the V century. According to the evidence of Georgian chronicler Juansher, King Vakhtang Gorgasali “built the church of Nikozi in place of St Razhden burial and put a bishop there”³. Thus, King Vakhtang constructed the church of Nikozi in the place, where the altar was formerly erected for fire and St Razhden was buried. Vakhushti Batonishvili also gave us evidence on construction of

Nikozi church: “The king put Petre as bishop in Mtskheta and Samoel as bishop in the upper church and he also put other bishops: in Klarjeti, Erusheti, Tsuna, Manglisi, Bolnisi, Rustavi, Ninotsminda, Cherami, Cheleti, Khornabuji, Agaraki, Nikozi at St Razhden burial place”⁴.

Thus, Vakhushti named the Georgian land plots where the King “put” bishops.

Epigraphic monuments of the Shida Kartli highlands give grounds for making analogous conclusions. Prof. G.Otkhmezuri has studied 32 epigraphic monuments of this region. Inscriptions on these monuments are nearly all Georgian (only very few of them are Greek and Armenian). The oldest inscription is dated of the VIII century, majority of them – of the IX-X cc. We can come across many Georgian inscriptions made in the XVIII century as well. No trace of the Ossetian population is seen here. Study of epigraphic monuments of the Shida Kartli highlands enabled Prof. G.Otkhmezuri to make the following conclusion: “The Georgian

¹ V.Abaev. The Ossetian language and folklore, M., 1959, p 501.

² P.Zakaraia. On the history of Shida Kartli highlands architecture, see the book: “The Issue of Ossets”, Tb., 1996, p 125

³ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol.I, p 199

⁴ Ibid., vol. IV, pp 113-114

inscriptions are scattered all around the territory of the former South Ossetian autonomous region...As the epigraphic monuments clarify, the population here was Georgian. The region was governed by the eristavis or local grand feudals, who were Georgians and the language of state and church was Georgian¹".

That Shida Kartli and, namely, its highlands, was populated with Georgians from the time immemorial, was witnessed by expanded geographic names, i.e. toponyms, along with other factors. These names were of oldest Georgian origin and embraced many centuries. Toponyms are one, if not the only, of the measures to determine settlement of a nation in the long past in any region. Most renowned Georgian historian S.Janashia said: "Toponymy was the only source for determining the composition of the Georgian population for the period, when there were no written sources as of yet"². Formation of the Georgian language toponyms in the Shida Kartli territory implied settlement of the Georgian population on this territory from the time immemorial. According to the research works by Georgian scholars, in mid and upper parts of Liakhvi, Ksani and the other gorges, i.e. the places in later periods settled by Ossets, a major part of geographical names was formed according to the Georgian language. Many toponyms, namely, Kutskhoveti, Chkhoreti, Satskhumeti, Chkhuneti, Tskhmori, Geri, Pachuri, Lapachi, Largvisi, Laguri and others, which are spread on the territory of the former South Ossetian autonomous district, are of Svan and Chan-Megrelian origin. It is supposed that "Shida Kartli probably represented that part of the territory, where the old Kartvelian language divided into Georgian, Svan and Zan languages"³.

In general, Shida Kartli and its highlands are overfilled with toponyms. "Change of the names took place on the territories, where Ossets were occupying the desolated and unused places"⁴. After formation of the South Ossetian autonomous district, struggle started against the Georgian toponyms and in some cases it was successful. Fortunately, the evidences on the old Georgian toponyms are preserved both in Georgian and foreign written sources.

Migration of Ossets to inner lowlands of Kartli started from the end of the XVIII century and this process continued within entire XX century.

¹ G.Othkhmezuri. Shida Kartli highlands toponymy, see the book: "The Issue of Ossets", p 156.

² S.Janashia. Works, vol. III, Tb., 1929, p 117.

³ J.Gvasalia. Essays historical geography of East Georgia (Shida Kartli), Tb., 1983, p 168. Cited: K.Kharadze. Against forgery of toponyms in Shida Kartli, see the book: "The Issue of Ossets", p 167.

⁴ K.Kharadze. Op.cit. p 167.

This was promoted, along with Ossets strivings for populating Kartli fertile fields, by the interests of some Georgian feudals – to increase the number of serfs in their estates emptied in result of numerous attacks of enemies and intrafeudal wars. The evidence brought from “Life-Will” of Iese Baratashvili, secretary to King Erekle, pointed to this: “I have sent a man to Ossetia to get Ossets, for which I spent much money, they promise, but are not seen yet, thus I try to increase the amount of serfs”. The Georgian population reduced considerably due to permanent wars and mostly to raids of Lezghins, so that King Erekle II was forced to bring Ossets from North Caucasus and to form conditions favorable for them. He even granted rank of a noble to certain Osset Tujuki Kudukhashvili for assisting in bringing Ossets to Georgia.

In the XVII-XVIII centuries and the first half of the XIX century Ossets lived in Georgia generally in a small amount. Mass migration of Ossets to Georgia from their historical home land – North Ossetia – started from 1860. Reliable evidences, based on trustworthy sources, are given in the Encyclopedia by Brockhaus and Effron. They say that in 1860 the amount of Ossets living in North Ossetia was 46 802 and in Georgia, namely, in the Kartli highlands – 19 324¹. So, in that period, there lived 2, 5 times more Ossets in North Ossetia than in Georgia. According to the same encyclopedia by the evidences of 1833 there lived in the Russian Empire 35 750 Ossets and if we take into consideration the proportions mentioned above, then in 1833 the amount of Ossets in Georgia equaled 14 000. According to other sources of the same period, there lived 14 000 Ossets in Georgia². Earlier, by the beginning of the XIX century there lived 25 000 Ossets in the Russian Empire³.

The information on the amount of Ossets by 1880, cited from this encyclopedia, is most interesting for us in regard to migration of Ossets to Georgia for settling there. In particular, in 1880, according to the data of the Caucasian statistics committee, in North Ossetia there lived 58 926 and in Georgia – already 51 988 Ossets. Therefore, within 20 years – from 1860 to 1880 – the amount of Ossets in North Ossetia increased by 12 000, i.e. only by 1, 2 times, in Georgia – by 33 000, i.e. by 2, 7 times. In North Ossetia 47 000 Ossets increased only by 27 000 within 20 years, while in Georgia the amount of Ossets living there in far less number, namely 19 000, increased by 33 000. Such natural growth of the population could not have happened in such a short period. That means that in that period Ossets come to live in Georgia from North Ossetia in large amounts. We can determine the amount

¹ Encyclopedic dictionary, vol. XXII, St.Petersburg, 1897, p 263

² The newspaper “Tiflisskie vedomosti”, #72, 1830

³ A.Goldstein.Castles in the mountains, M., 1977, p 283

of Ossets that came to live. In the end of the 70s of the XIX century there were born annually average 35, 7 babies and 14, 3 persons died per each 1000 Ossets¹. Thus, natural growth in Ossets per each 1000 equaled 21, 4 persons. If we admit that within these 20 years annually natural growth was 21, 4 per each 1000 Ossets, then in 1880 the amount of Ossets in Georgia should have been 29 014. That year the amount of Ossets in Georgia was 23 000 more, which made up the amount of Ossets from North Ossetia together with their natural growth. We can also make rough calculations. If in 1860 the amount of Ossets in Georgia equaled 19 000 and in 1880 – 52 000, then in that period there lived annually in Georgia approximately average 35 000 Ossets; within a year natural growth of Ossets in Georgia made up 749 (35 x 21, 4) and within 20 years 14 980. If in 1860-1880 the amount of Ossets in Georgia increased by 33 000 and natural growth was 14 980, then it is clear that the rest 18 020 Ossets, i.e. as many as there lived in Georgia in general in 1860, were migrated from North Ossetia. Here we should take into consideration one essential moment. We have already mentioned that in the 1870s within a year 14, 3 died per each 1000 Ossets living in Georgia. This indicator of the death rate was very low for that period. It is twice higher among the representatives of other ethnic groups. To explain this we should take into consideration that Ossets coming to live in Georgia from North Caucasus were mainly healthy and of young and middle age, among whom the death rate is low.

Well-known Russian scholars G.Chursin, V.Pfaf, N.Dubrovin, L.Zagurski and others consider Ossets to be migrants from North Ossetia to Shida Kartli. In G.Chursin's opinion, "On the territory of South Ossetia Ossets are comparatively newcomers. There lived other peoples there, which preserved memories about themselves in geographic names of many places"². This opinion is also shared by Prof. V.Pfaf: "All the Transcaucasian Ossets remember that they migrated from the north"³. Both G.Chursin and V.Pfaf consider Ossets to be newcomers to Georgia, which migrated there mostly in the XIX century. As for the opinion of Acad. N.Dubrovin, he is well aware that there existed no South Ossetia and he mentioned about Southern Ossets as "the so-called". He wrote: "Due to lack of agricultural land plots, a part of Ossets migrated to the southern slopes of the Main Caucasus Ridge...Occupying the gorges of the rivers of Didi and Mtsire Liakhvi, Ksani and its tributaries, Ossets became serfs to the princes Eristavis and Machabelis. Just these migrants are the so-called South

¹ Collection of evidences on Caucasus, vol. IX, Tiflis, 1885, pp 238, 267

² G. Chursin. Ossets, coll. South Ossetia, 1924, p 133

³ V.Pfaf. Ethnologic research on Ossets, coll. Of evidences on Caucasus, # 2.

Ossetian population”¹. It is clear for an expert in the Caucasian studies that North Ossetia is a historical home country of Ossets: “Autochthonic Ossetia is located on the northern slopes of the Caucasus Ridge”².

The Amount of Ossets in the Russian Empire

	1833		1860		1880		1897	
	absolutely	%	absolutely	%	absolutely	%	absolutely	%
Russian Empire	35750	100.0	66125	100.0	110914	100.0	171716	100.0
Among them Tergi region (mostly North Ossetia)	25450	72.0	46802	71.0	58926	53.0	96621	56.3
Georgia	10300	28.0	19324	29.0	51988	47.0	71508	41.6

Source: Encyclopedic dictionary, vol. XXII, St.Petersburg, 1897. A. Goldstein, Castles in the mountains, M., 1977, p 283. Ossetia and Ossetians, St.Petersburg, 1994. According to this source the amount of Ossets in Georgia in 1833 was 19 324. It should be a correction error, as in the encyclopedic dictionary published in St.Petersburg in 1897, in its volume XXII, the amount of Ossets in Georgia in 1860 was 19 324. The first national census in the Russian Empire in 1897. General code on the empire, vol. II, St.Petersburg, 1905, pp XV, 43.

In the XX century the opinion of Russian scholars on this issue did not change, as the facts give no opportunity to express different considerations. We have already mentioned above about the views of the Russian and Ossetian scholars on migration of Ossets from North Caucasus to Georgia in the beginning of the XVII century and, especially, in the second half of the XIX century. Among all these opinions we can point to the consideration of

¹ N.Dubrovin. The history of war and rule of Russians in Caucasus, 1871, p 187

² L.Zagurski. Administrative departments of the Caucasian region, Proceedings of the Caucasus department, Tbilisi, 1877-78, p 118.

scholar A.Goldstein, according to which Alans penetrated into the North Caucasian mountainous parts in the VI-IX cc and mixed up with the native population. In the X century they formed new people – Ossets and gave them their language and name – “assa”, Georgians called Alans “Ossets” and their country – “Ossetia”, from where the Russian name of this place and this people follows. Consequently, the language of Ossets comes from Alans, their culture, customs and psychic composition is mostly the same as of the highlanders of North-East Caucasus: Vainahs, Dagestanians, Georgians living in northern part of Georgia.

A considerable part of Alania in the XVII century was dependent on Georgia. In the X-XII centuries Christianity spread from Georgia in highland Ossetia. Georgians built churches there. Scholar V.Pfaf came across one of such remarkable churches in a remote gorge. According to the elements of décor and other traits the church was dated by the XI century.

In the XIII century Alans living in the river Don basin and lowlands of Front Caucasus got a fatal blow from the raids of Tatar-Mongols. Their lands were occupied by the Golden Horde. Alans were completely annihilated by Tamerlane in the end of the XIV century.

After weakening of Tatars the steppes of Front Caucasus were occupied by Kabardinians. Within the XV-XVIII centuries a permanent war was ongoing between Kabardinians and Ossets. Kabardinians conquered the foothill lowlands of Ossetia and started penetration into the mountain gorges. Ossets living in foothill and lowland places subordinated to Kabardinian power, adopted Islam and started paying contribution to Kabardinian feudals. The highland region population living in remote places difficult for access was destined to poor wretched existence. In that period Ossets moved to the southern part of the Caucasus Ridge (the present territory of the South Ossetian autonomous district of the Georgian Soviet Republic), where they usually became serfs to the Georgian feudals¹.

The fate of Ossets, forced to be in the most distressed condition by Kabardinians, attracted the attention of many European travelers. For example, Jacob Rainegs (1744-1793) mentioned: “Kabardinians, being in the period of independence owners of plain territories, forced Ossets to work as their serfs and sold them as soon as managed to catch them. There still exist old Ossets, who are afraid and do not leave their mountains and never worry about whether there exist any other world and people except Caucasus and themselves”². It is natural that Ossets living in the remote gorges of the Caucasus Ridge moved to live to the southern slopes of the

¹ A.Goldstein. Castles in the mountains, M., 1977, pp 282-283.

² Jacob Rainegs. Travel to Georgia, Tb., 2002, pp 208-209.

Caucasus Ridge, highlands of Shida Kartli due to hard living conditions and permanent feeling of fear. Then to improve their conditions they started moving to lowlands and settled on the lands of the Georgian feudals as migrants. A famous French traveler Jean Chardin, who visited Georgia in 1672-1673, mentioned that Alans lived to the north of the Caucasus Ridge¹. He, certainly, meant Ossets in those Alans.

The information about Ossets, living on the slopes of the Caucasus Mountains, was also presented by German scholar-traveler Moriz Wagner, who visited Caucasus in 1843-1846, in Tbilisi to earn some money through carrying baggage and doing other hard jobs... to accumulate some money and... to return back to the mountains”².

The present Tskhinvali region was entirely Georgian territory, which is clearly seen from the work by Ottoman author Gurjizade “The Book of Tbilisi Conquest”. The book involves information important for the history of Kartli in the first quarter of the XVIII century. Gurjizade mentioned that King of Kartli Vakhtang VI was in his domain – known as Tskhinvali, Georgians’ vast places for hunting. It was just the very place where the Ottoman army “approached the place called Tskhinvali. Georgians, revolted against Islam... preferred fight to talks”³.

As we have mentioned above, the issue of Ossets’ migration from their historical home country North Ossetia to Georgia causes no doubts in the Georgian written sources and works by Georgian scholars. But here we mostly preferred to present views of only Osetian and Russian scholars. One fact should be mentioned in regard to this issue. The Georgian word “daosebuli” appeared in the Georgian speech from the period of Ossets’ migration into Georgia. According to the explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language the word “daosebuli” means very tired, exhausted, very weakened. Ossets that migrated to Georgia were very weak due to extreme poverty. This fact too, we think, points to migration of Ossets. Generally, ethnic names in the Georgian speech are often used for negative evaluations, e.g. Judah, Hurria, Chachan, Javakh, etc.

We think the material cited is enough for elucidation of the problem under analysis and in other chapters of our book we cite analogous considerations of the Georgian, Ossetian, Russian and European scholars.

From the 60s of the XIX century mass migration of Ossets started to Georgia. They settled in the lowlands of Kartli having no restrictions in this. Compact settlements of Ossets appeared on the right bank of the river

¹ Travel of Chardin, Tb., 1975, p 294.

² Moriz Wagner on Georgia. Tb., 2002, pp 33-34.

³ Gurjizade. “The Book of Tbilisi Conquest”, Tb., 1975, pp 26-28.

Mtkvari in the regions of present Kareli and Borjomi (e.g. 71 Ossets lived in Bakuriani in 1885), etc.

An Ossetian scholar G.Togoshvili said that “Ossets tried to purchase land plots from landowners, to settle as migrants on the state-owned lands. This, surely, does not concern South Ossetians. Like the XVIII century situation, Ossets of Tagauri seemed to be much interested in migration to Georgia... Settlement of Trialeti Ossets is dated by the 40-50s of the XIX century”¹. The relevant documents witnessed that in the end of the XIX century the Ossetian villages were formed in Kakhети as well. An Ossetian scholar Prof. B.Kaloev mentioned about it: “Within the XIX century a great amount of Ossets settled in the Georgia’s regions of Dusheti and Gori; in the beginning of the XX century more than 30 Ossetian settlements were formed on the territory of Zeda (Upper) and Kveda (Lower) Kakhети. These Ossets settled on the princes’ lands”².

Intensive settlement of Ossets on the territory of the Kartli and Kakhети lowlands continued within the entire XX century. If in 1926 the amount of Ossets in Georgia was 113 000 and 60 000 from them lived on the territory of the former South Ossetian autonomous district and 53 000 beyond its borders, in 1989 their amount was already 164 000, among them 65 000 in the former autonomous district, nearly 100 000 beyond its borders, mostly in the cities and regions of East Georgia.

If we analyze the data mentioned above, we’ll first of all turn our attention to the fact that in 1926-1989 the amount of Ossets in the former autonomous district did not increase much – by 4,8 thousand, i.e. 8%, beyond its borders in Georgia – by 47 000, i.e. 87%. That was because a part of Ossets moved from the former autonomous district to live in the cities and regions of Georgia. That means ethnic mastering of the territory of Georgia by Ossets continued intensively within the entire XX century.

Just in result of this, according to the data of the 1989 year census, Ossets made up 15% of the entire population in Kareli region, in Akhmeta region – 11%, in the regions of Gori and Kaspi – 10-10%, of Lagodekhi and Borjomi – 8-8 %, etc. The amount of Ossets largely increased in Tbilisi. If in 1886 there lived 314 Ossets in Tbilisi and 1446 – in 1922, the amount of Ossets living in the capital of Georgia in 1989 was already 33 000. That means that within one century their amount in Tbilisi increased by 105 times, over last 60 years – by 23 times. According to 1989 year census only half of Ossets living in Tbilisi (16 000) were born there.

¹ G.Togoshvili. The relations of Georgian and Ossetian peoples in 1801-1921, Tb., 1969, p 26.

² B.Kaloev. The Ossets, M., 1967, p 61, cited from S.Lekishvili, op.cit., p 271.

Ossets migrated to Georgia through different ways. Prof. N.Berdzenishvili considered a main way of their appearance in Georgia from North Caucasus was the way Didi Liakhvi gorge – Dvaleti. The routes of this way are given in the Georgian historical sources and in the works of Vakhushti Batonishvili. This is very essential, because as Ossetian professor G.Togoshvili mentions “Even now some scholars consider Ossets in Kartli came from Darubandi and think groundless the consideration of their movement by the western way”¹. Prof. D.Gvritishvili dedicated a special work to this issue. According to his consideration, based on the evidences of historian-travelers and on his personal observations, the ways and paths from North Caucasus mostly passed the gorge of the rivers Aragvi, Ksani, Patara Liakhvi and Didi Liakhvi and from there towards the Kartli fields. Main passes in the mentioned gorge were: 1. Rocki pass, which connected Didi Liakhvi gorge with Ossetia; 2. Bakh-Pandagi pass, leading westwards of Rocki; this way was called by Ossets “horse way”, unlike “bullock cart way”, “sledge way”, “path way”, because “bakh” in Ossetian means “horse” and “pandag” – “way”. Westwards to Bakh-Pandagi pass there was located Zekari pass, which joins Rocki pass; 3. Dzedo pass, which divides into several branches. One joins Rocki pass at Khvela, another joins Java-Oni, the so-called “chaavali” pass, it passes to Oni; 4. Mamisoni pass, through which Ossetian Military Road passed the Ardoni Gorge. This way was most intensively used and it was much reinforced by Georgians; 5. Sbi pass, which passing different gorges in the end joins Rocki and Kobi passes. Along with these main ways there were also minor ways as well. Through them Ossets could have relations with Georgia. Those, who owned these ways and paths, could also exercise control over the territory.

Therefore, the state authorities of Georgia permanently took care for reinforcement of these passes, “to protect them from Ossets”. When Georgia failed to defend this border of the north, the result was proper. Georgia lost the above-mentioned regions, where Ossets settled, which migrated from the north”².

¹ G.Togoshvili. Nico Berdzenishvili and some aspects of Georgia-Ossetia relations, see the book: Research of the history of Georgia and Caucasus, Tb., 1976, p 39.

² D.Gvritishvili. On the issue of Dvals identity and Ossets migration, see the book: Observer, I, Tb., 1949, p 118.

ABORIGINAL POPULATION OF TSKHINVALI

Ossets have never lived in Tskhinvali, the capital of the former South Ossetian autonomous district, till the XX century.

Archaeological excavations in Tskhinvali and its environments witnessed that Tskhinvali was one of the oldest settlements of Georgia. In the opinion of Sh.Meskhia, a famous expert in the history of feudal Georgian cities and city system, Tskhinvali was an important point in pre-Christian period as well.

The name Tskhinvali comes from the plant “rtskhila” - hornbeam. In old Georgian it was called “krtskhila”, that was why in old Georgian sources Tskhinvali was mentioned as Krtskhinvali. In one of the deeds of 1344 it was mentioned as the settlement populated with traders¹, which was surely promoted by its location. As a city, Tskhinvali was first mentioned in the Mtskheta deed of 1392. According to the historical sources in the XIV-XVI cc Tskhinvali was populated with serfs of the Svetitskhoveli monastery. Catholicos of Mtskheta had serf traders even in the XVIII century.

According to Vakhushti Batonishvili in the first part of the XVIII century there were 14 important commercial centers in Kartli, among them most important were only two – Tbilisi and Gori. The rest 12 were “small cities” and among them Tskhinvali was of special importance. Al.Amilakhvari, a renowned Georgian political figure of the first half of the XVIII century, in his “Georgian History” mentioned about Tskhinvali as “always Kartli city” and gave it “a second place after Gori”².

Tskhinvali, as a city, had fortifications. In relevant documents the Tskhinvali fortress was mentioned and the “Krtskhinvali fortress fence,” which was specially fortified with a ditch around it. Sh.Meskhia points to the cities of late feudal Georgia, which were protected along with the fortress with city walls and fortifications (ditches, towers), being Tbilisi, Gori, Akhaltsikhe, Kutaisi and Tskhinvali.

It is interesting to mention that Vakhushti Batonishvili informed about Giorgi Saakadze being “steward of Tpilisi, Krtskhivali and Dvaleti.” For a long period of time the kings granted the position of steward of Tskhinvali to the members of the Amilakhvari family – the Amilakhvrishvilis. However, there were cases when Tskhinvali had no steward and his duties were performed by another official.

To take into consideration the mentioned above and other documents

¹ T.Zhordania. Chronicles, vol. II, p 197. Cited from: Sh.Meskhia, Historical research, vol.II, Tb., 1983, p 229.

² A.Amilakhvari. Georgian History, “Mnatobi”, #8, 1939, pp 128, 153, 154. Cited from: Sh.Meskhia, op.cit. p 229.

and papers, we may surely say that Tskhinvali with other cities intensively participated in economic life of Georgia.

The information on the amount of Tskhinvali population of the XVIII century and earlier period has not been preserved. The only thing we know is that by the census of 1770 there lived in Tskhinvali 700 households. However, the literary sources and documents of different periods give us precise information on Tskhinvali ethnic composition.

We see that Georgians, Jews and Armenians lived there from time immemorial and no representatives of other ethnic groups had ever lived there. Vakhushti Batonishvili mentioned that “there is a small town of Tskhinvali at the edge of Didi Liakhvi, populated with Georgians, Armenians and Hurrians. We come across analogous evidence about the ethnic composition of Tskhinvali population in “Dasturlamali” by King Vakhtang VI.

Tskhinvali and entire Shida Kartli in general were always discussed in the Georgian sources as an integral part of Kartli. Vakhushti Batonishvili said: “King Luarsab (King Luarsab II, King of Kartli, reigned in 1606-1614 – A.T.) stood with his army at Ktskhinvali”¹. Tskhinvali had been many times devastated and ruined by the enemies; the internal enemies also damaged it rather often. For example, captain I.Lvov informed count N.Panin from Kakheti in 1772 that prince Khidirbegishvili, who was offended with King Erekle II, moved from Georgia to Akhaltsikhe and in a few days at night came back to Tskhinvali with Turks and Lezghins, plundered the city and took 306 Georgian hostages of both sexes and took them to Akhaltsikhe².

It is interesting to know what caused Jews and Armenians to live in great amounts together with Georgians in Tskhinvali. Tskhinvali, as well as Oni in which Jews lived in abundance from the olden times, was located on the roads coming from Kartli, Zemo Racha and North Caucasus and therefore was an important trade place from the very beginning. Jews and Armenians were known for being mostly engaged in trade.

The ethnic composition of Tskhinvali population has not changed within the entire XIX century either. The census and other documents proved that only Georgians, Jews and Armenians lived in Tskhinvali. However, it was not mentioned in that period as a city, it was mentioned everywhere as a Georgian village. The Russian officials living in Georgia in the XIX century also mentioned about it.

In the first half of the past century the Russian generals more than

¹ “Dasturlamali” of King Vakhtang VI. Tb., 1888. p 122; cited from Sh.Meskhia, op. cit., p 332.

² V.Macharadze. Materials on the history of Russia-Georgia relations in the second half of the XVIII century, part III, section II, Tb., 1997, p 350.

once pointed to plundering, raiding of Georgian villages and murdering of Georgians by Ossets. A famous public figure of the XIX century S.Mgaloblishvili remembered: “Raids of Lezghins cannot be compared with those of Ossets. Ossets were serfs of the princes Machabeli and Eristavi, by and by they multiplied and migrated to the estates of other princes and nobles and embraced mountains and forests of entire Kartli.... They lived there; Ossets had no land plots to plough and sow... A part of them earned their living by stealing... Peace left the villages, Lezghins stopped troubling villages, but Ossets were far worse”¹. The Russian generals considered it urgent to conduct relevant measures for suspending this situation. General Tormosov in 1809 sentenced to death five Ossets through hanging for banditry. Later, in 1824 General Khonev sent a report to General Ermolov:” To suspend attacks on Georgians and their plundering by Ossets, the population of Kartli should be given an opportunity to defend themselves from bandits, just as the population of Kakheti protects themselves from Lezghins. We should not persecute Georgians through the rule of law for killing bandits. We should make them understand they won’t have to answer for killing bandits and robbers. They should only inform the local authorities about every case of this, i.e. this or that Osset is killed during conducting attacks or plundering”².

There were so many frequent cases of murders, plundering and kidnapping of people by Ossets in Gori region that general Akhverdov, in his report sent to general Tormosov, considered it necessary” to give a special permit of prince Revaz Machabeli and Eristavi to Ossets coming to the Georgian villages for trade, especially to the Georgian village of Tskhinvali³.

Thus, the Russian generals named Tskhinvali a Georgian village, which Ossets were forbidden to enter without a special permit.

If we bring here the concrete data of the population census, the Tskhinvali population amount and ethnic composition becomes more vivid. In particular, in the 1886 family lists 3832 people lived in Tskhinvali, from them: 1135 – Georgians, 1953 – Jews and 744 – Armenians, In 1886 not a single Osset lived in Tskhinvali⁴.

Ethnic composition of the Tskhinvali population changed only in the beginning of the 1920s, especially after 1922, when the South Ossetian autonomous district was formed and Tskhinvali was called its capital. According to the population census of 1922, conducted in the cities of

¹ S.Mgaloblishvili. Recollections. Tbilisi, 1938, pp 22-23.

² Acts of Caucasian archeographic commission, vol. VI, Tiflis, 1874, p 690.

³ Acts of Caucasus archeographic commission, vol. VI, Tiflis, 1874, p 460.

⁴ Code of statistical data on the population of Transcaucasus region, taken from the family lists of 1886, Tiflis, 1893.

Georgia, a majority of the Ossets in Tskhinvali was comers and one third of them had not lived in Tskhinvali even for a year¹. The entire population of Tskhinvali was 4543 and majority of them were still Georgians (1436), Jews (1651) and Armenians (1465). Only after this Ossets started coming in great amounts to Tskhinvali for permanent living. This was determined by the need for ethnic staff in the governing bodies of Tskhinval as a capital of the autonomous republic and for turning it into a cultural centre. In 1926 the Tskhinvali population was already 5818. Among them 1920 were Georgians, 1152 – Ossets, 1772 – Jews and 827 – Armenians. According to this census Georgians in Tskhinvali were still more in number than Ossets, but in the following years numerical correlation between Georgian and Ossets changed rapidly in favor of Ossets. In 1959 there lived in Tskhinvali 4652 Georgians and 12432 Ossets, in 1989 – only 6905 Georgians and 31537 Ossets. That means the oldest Georgian city “at the edge of Didi Liakhvi” became completely Ossetian. Along with violation in numerical correlation, Tskhinvali turned into the centre of only Ossetian culture.

At present, in result of the “activities” of the Ossetian extremists and artificially roused ethnic conflict there are no Georgians living in Tskhinvali. There are no exact data as how many of them left the city; it is only known that no Georgians live in Tskhinvali now any longer.

Dynamics of Tskhinvali Population Amount in 1886-1889

	1886	1922	1926	1959	1970	1979	1989
Georgian	1135	1436	1920	4652	5475	5584	6905
Jew	1953	1651	1772	1649	1475	652	396
Armenian	744	765	827	860	768	712	734
Osset	-	613	1152	12432	20846	25319	31537
Russian	-	64	114	1583	1180	1737	1836
the rest	-	14	33	465	567	787	925
total	3832	4543	5818	21641	30311	34791	42333

Now in the Tskhinvali region the Georgian people are searching only for the peaceful ways of the conflict settlement, Georgians demand only peaceful co-existence with Ossets and it is their just demand. They believe the contradictions there may be settled in conditions of mutual trust and good will. The data cited below show vividly that Georgians welcomed Ossets in Tskhinvali and were good neighbors to them. To bring Jacob Gogebashvili’s words, even now Georgians wanted nothing except the same attitude that they had towards others.

¹ Results of entire Georgian city population census of November 30, 1922, part 1, section 2, Tbilisi, 1923, p 36.

WHEN DID THE TERM “SOUTH OSSETIA” APPEAR IN USE?

There is no evidence of use of the term “South Ossetia” before the XIX century either in Georgian or foreign written sources. In the understanding of that period Ossets’ country was Ossetia, located in North Caucasus. A Georgian scholar S.Lekishvili worked hard to study when the term “South Ossetia” appeared and how frequently it was used.

The term “South Ossetia” was first used in 1830 in a series of letters, published in “Tifliskie Vedomosti” (# 72-86). It seems that the correspondent used this term on his own initiative, because in 1830 it was mentioned in the report presented to Chernishov, military minister of count Paskevich:” To calm the Ossetian tribe I consider it expedient to conduct a small military operation. This expedition will be directed against North Kartli Ossetians, located southwards of the Caucasus highlands”¹.

In the correspondent’s opinion a total amount of the population of the zone named by him “South Ossetia” was 7 200.

Scholar S.Lekishvili worked on all the historical documents existed on Ossetia and concluded that before 1830 there was no fact of using any determinant – “South” or “North” – in regard to Ossetia in both the Georgian and foreign written sources. The foreign scholars and travelers did not know the term “South Ossetia”. Only German professor K.Koch fixed the term “South Ossetia” to designate Georgian historical province Dvaleti in the XIX century. The following was mentioned on Dvaleti in the Russian written monuments: “Dvaleti (Nar-Mamisoni hollow) was an integral part of Georgia within the entire Middle Ages. After East Georgia was joined to Russia it was in Tbilisi gubernia and only in 1859 it joined Vladikavkaz (Ossetia) region”². It should be noted here that the Russian scholars call North Ossetia a historical Ossetia³.

On the basis of conducted research S.Lekishvili pointed to rare use of the term “South Ossetia” within the entire XIX century. He mentioned that in 12 volumes of Caucasus archeological commission acts, which concerned 1864-1917 and involved more than 10 000 documents in the Georgian, Arabian, Russian, Persian and Turkish languages, the term “South Ossetia” is fixed only once. In the 1852-1915 Georgian periodical press, in particular, in more than 30 newspapers and journals, the term “South Ossetia” was used only twice.

¹ S.Lekishvili. When did the term “South Ossetia” appear? See the book: “The Issue of Ossets”, p 261. (Acts, vol. VII, p 354)

² Essays on the history of the South Ossetian AR, vol. I, 1985, p 120

³ D.Lavrov. Essay on Ossetia and Ossets, jrnal. “Terskie Vedomosti”, # 20, 1874

In political terminology the term “South Ossetia” appeared in the 60s of the XIX century and since then it had been used by the Russian officials. Before that several measures were undertaken for administrative unification of “Ossetia”, which would provide the Russian rule not only in Ossetia itself, but in the entire space of the Caucasus Ridge. Baron Rozen said: “Our firm rule in Ossetia would surely cut the Caucasus Ridge into two parts, while now only the Georgian Military Road crosses union between the peoples half-occupied by us and with animosity against us”¹ Soon the regions of compact settlement of Ossets in the northern part of Shida Kartli were called “Ossetia”: in 1843 “Ossetian okrug” was formed in Tbilisi gubernia, which was divided into Java, Patara Liakhvi and Nari (historical Dvaleti) sectors. Later Nari sector was transferred from Tbilisi gubernia to the Ossetian military district (formed in 1959 in North Caucasus), which some time after joined Tergi region and in 1924 entered North Ossetian ASSR. Thus Georgia lost its historical territory – Dvaleti. Through all these measures, in particular, through forming Ossetian okrug in 1843, “farsighted toponymic sabotage, substantiated ground was prepared for future mutation of Ossetians’ territorial claims for the native land of Georgia, named as “Ossetia” or “South Ossetia” and for implementation of the idea on further unification of “two Ossetias”. These measures turned into aggressive Ossetian separatism in the XX century². Assistant professor R.Lominadze justly announced that formation of “Ossetian military district” in North Caucasus and of “Ossetian okrug” (later “Ossetian district” in Tbilisi gubernia became the basis for new names – “North Ossetia” and “South Ossetia”. The first officially published document, where these terms were used, was the 1860 year report, prepared by the committee for organizing the society for restoring Orthodox Christianity in Caucasus. It said: “The committee concluded that great attention should be turned to restoration and strengthening of Christianity.... In Samurzaqano, Svaneti, **South Ossetia** (stress by A.T.), Tusheti and Khevsureti, from where the light of Christianity will further penetrate into Abkhazia, Balkanians and Circassians, **North Ossetia** (stress by A.T.), among Kists and other Chachan tribes”³.

¹ Cited from : R.Lominadze. Who and when called Shida Kartli highlands “South Ossetia”? newspaper “Ganatileba”, October 30, 1991

² V.Itonishvili. South Ossetia in Central Georgia?! See the book: The Issue of Ossets, p16.

³ Cited from R.Lominadze. Op.cit.

DID “SOUTH OSSETIA” REALLY JOIN RUSSIA IN 1774?

The Ossetian scholars do not find it hard to use any forgery and even declare about some historical document, according to which united Ossetia joined the Russian Empire in 1774.

On July 10, 2004 the Russian Duma adopted an unprecedented, provocative statement that Ossetia voluntarily joined Russia in 1774 and that Russia shoulders the obligation to protect the rights of its Ossetian population. In their opinion, both South and North Ossetia joined Russia then – from Tskhinvali through Vladikavkaz. Therefore they say that the Russian soldiers, located on the territory of independent Georgia, protect their population now and that Russia won't abandon its population in distress. Thus they try to make Ossets a shield for satisfying their imperial intentions.

Before the XIX century no historical document existed, in which the Shida Kartli highlands were called Ossetia. In the past no Osset, living in the Shida Kartli highlands would ever say he lived in Ossetia, because he knew well: he was a migrant on the Georgian land. Shida Kartli was an integral part of Georgia. Erekle II, King of Kartli and Kakheti, whose military talent was highly evaluated in the West, in particular, by Friedrich II, King of Prussia and great German writer Lessing, warned unfaithful Ossets in a document, “if you don't obey my orders, I'll punish you severely and won't allow any of you to stay in our country.” That's true as Shida Kartli always was “our country”, but the officials, starting from the 60s of the XIX century artificially and expediently invented the terms “North Ossetia” and “South Ossetia” and introduced them in use. Some forces were always interested in such division of Ossetia for implementing their imperial policy. Just these very forces involved us into the conflict existing now. It resembles the situation, when we may call the territory of Georgia, populated now by Armenians, Azerbaijanians and Greeks, North Armenia, West Azerbaijan or East Greece, respectively. There exists in the nature only one Ossetia, located in North Caucasus. As for the process of Ossetia's joining Russia, it ended in the 20s of the XIX century and, surely, did not concern Ossets living on the territory of Georgia, who were subjects of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom. In 1774 not all the Ossets living in North Caucasus joined Russia (there existed in that period no Ossetia as an independent state formation), but as the documents prove only a part of them. In the XIII-XIV centuries, in result of raids of first Tatar-Mongols, then of Tamerlane's hordes, Ossets, living on the fertile fields of Transcaucasus, were mercilessly destroyed. Kabardinians got hold of the lowlands abandoned by Ossets, who were forced to seek shelter in

highlands with barren soils. There were formed the Ossetian communities of “Alagari”, “Kurtati”, “Tagauri” and “Digori”. A founder of the Ossetian literature K.Khetagurov mentioned about these communities having such limited relations that failed to make one another understand, about what we should talk below. A renowned expert in these issues, the late young scholar V.Itonishvili pointed: “From the mid-XVIII century pro-Russian orientation finally prevailed in Ossetia. Within the centuries the Ossetian people, forced to shelter in narrow gorges of Central Caucasus and oppressed by the Kabardinian feudals, made their historical option in 1774, when Alagiri, Kurtati and Tagauri Ossetian communities joined Russia together... In 1781 the same step was adopted by Digori Ossetian community as well”¹.

The basis for joining Russia by Ossets and other ethnic communities, living in Georgia, was the Georgievski treaty, signed in 1783.

Dictated by Russia, president of self-proclaimed South Ossetian Republic, Eduard Kokoiti

raised the issue of joining Russia. His vice-premier Boris Chochiev supported the idea of his president and made an absolutely wrong excursus into the history of Georgia. On the request of the “Regnum” information agency correspondent the issues, raised by the premier of “South Ossetia”, were commented in his article by an American politologist and professor, an expert in Caucasian issues, a representative of Kalgari University military-strategic research centre Andrew Andersen. As the Ossetian “scholars” always consider the responses of Georgians to be biased, we have decided to cite the article by Mr. Andersen in full despite its being long. To misappropriate the history of others, to misinterpret the historical sources is impossible. Neither foreign nor serious Ossetian scholars believe in history of the so-called “South Ossetia”, fabricated by the Ossetian dilettante scholars based on the political motives

and political viewpoints, in the myth of Ossets’ settlement in East Georgia from time immemorial, in existence of single Ossetia.

Mr. Andersen mentions: “Some time ago, Eduard Kokoiti, head of one inch of the land on the territory of Shida Kartli, Georgia – the region of self-proclaimed republic of “South Ossetia”, made a statement according to which he tries to join this territory to the Russian Federation. This self-proclaimed republic is now controlled by illegal armed formations, the so-called “army of South Ossetia” and they are supported by the Russian “peacekeepers”. As a basis for such an initiative Kokoiti cited “some

¹ V.Itonishvili. South Ossetia – in Central Georgia?! See the book: The Issue of Ossets, p 15.

historically mysterious document on a single Ossetia entering the Russian Empire in 1774”.

After this statement of the self-proclaimed republic leader, deputy Georgian state minister in conflict settlement issues Giorgi Volski reminded everyone that there existed no mythical “single Ossetia” or any other Ossetia on the territory of Georgia in 1774. This statement, made by Mr. Volski, seriously irritated Kokoiti’s supporters. Vice-premier of South Ossetia Boris Chochiev responded to it by an interesting answer, which was released by the information agency “Regnum” under the following title “liquidation of illiteracy in the native history”.

Liquidation of illiteracy (this term was introduced in the 20s of the XX century), certainly, is a very worthy and necessary measure. Unfortunately, in the contemporary world there considerably increased the number of historically illiterate people. This was caused by the tendency, outlined in a number of countries in the mid-last century. According to it teaching of history was limited and reduced in all the educational establishments. In some programs history was generally removed. Those, who made such a decision, explained that history was most separated from the reality and therefore neither time nor resources should be spent on studying history. This especially concerned the history of Georgia and of all other peoples, who were granted “privilege and happiness” to be within the Soviet Union: their history was taken out of any programs in the West, as it was considered these people could never get free of Russia and their people won’t ever have future as nations. So there is no need to study their past or even remember them. They considered in the Soviet Union that peoples’ knowledge of their histories could form jeopardy to firmness of their “inviolable union”. In result we got several generations of historically less educated, sometimes absolutely ignorant politicians and journalists and the society ordinary members. Within several past ten years there appeared in abundance such authors, who created completely new virtual past, making use of the situation when neither the society nor its leaders know practically anything about the real past.

In this concrete case we consider ungrounded the reproach expressed to Mr. Volski as if he was historically ignorant, because the statement made by him was based on the truth. On the map of 1774 there existed not only “single Ossetia”, so frequently used by Kokoiti and other mouthpieces of expansionist propaganda, but Ossetia proper in general. People speaking different dialects of the Ossetian language really lived on both sides of the Great Caucasus Ridge. On the territory of present North Ossetia-Alania republic a majority of Ossets was subject to Kabardinian feudals, so their lands, accordingly, were a part of Kabardinian territory, which was formally

subject to the Crimean khans – vassals of the Ottoman Empire. The territory of the present self-proclaimed “republic of South Ossetia” was a part of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom of East Georgia and was never separated from the Shida Kartli region. Therefore, they had never lived separately from East Georgia. All serious historians of the past prove this and no one doubts this except some “historians” of recent years, though they fail to prove their “revolutionary” views by substantiated evidences. Political adventurers do not need any evidences, do they?

Then what was it that joined the Russian Empire in 1774 and what documents was it based on? This question may be easily answered by the documents, preserved in archives, on the Russia-Turkey war of 1768-1774. The war ended in Kuchiuk-Kainarj armistice, which determined Russia’s borders in North-West Caucasus along the river Kuban. According to the armistice the Crimean khanate was separated from the Ottoman Empire and was declared independent; Russia conceded a part of coastline including Kerch, Enikale, Kinbun fortresses; Russia preserved Big and Small Kabardinian territory and the right for its merchant ships to enter the Black Sea and the Black Sea straits; Moldova and Valakhia autonomies were formed to be under the protection of Russia.

There is mentioned in the document neither single nor divided into two Ossetia, only Big and Small Kabardinian territory which involved a part of lands populated by Ossets. That’s why deputy state minister of Georgia needs no lessons to liquidate illiteracy. We can now put such a question: What was the lesson Mr.Chochiev gave his Georgian opponent? If we look through Boris Chochiev’s biography, placed on his official site, we may be surprised as where and when he so closely familiarized with the history of the Georgian and Ossetian peoples. He started his career as a worker, then worked at several Komsomol posts, in parallel studying natural science at South Ossetian State Pedagogical Institute, biology department; then was engaged in the party activities. Neither of the above-mentioned activities demanded deep knowledge of history, especially of Georgia. Being so busy with such activities Mr.Chochiev could hardly have found time for studying history. Let’s imagine he was so interested that himself started studying history and studied so thoroughly and in detail that now can teach others. I wonder what it is that he can educate us in.

Chochiev cites a quotation from the textbook of the Georgian geography by S.Robakidze published in 1917. According to it “Ossetia is not a real part of Georgia”. It is difficult to evaluate this quotation cited from the provincial school textbook written a century ago, as it is cut from the context. We can see no “South Ossetia” beyond the borders of Georgia in fundamental works on the history of Georgia (V.Alen, D.Lang, P.Ioseliani), neither on the administrative

maps of Georgia before 1801, when Georgia joined Russia and after it. Location of the state of Georgia and Tbilisi gubernia administrative borders by 1801 were just in the same place where the border of independent Georgia after 1918 and of Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1921 was. The border of contemporary officially recognized Georgia also passes here. A minor change is noticed only in Dvaleti-Tualia, a major part of which was first within the Tergi district and later within Gorski and the North Ossetian autonomous republic. Present-day Georgia has no claims for these territories. We are well aware that the scientific works and maps published in the past may interfere in the plans of those, who want to create a new past through re-writing the history. Still we want to declare that even in case these works and maps are destroyed all over Russia, they will be preserved in other parts of the world.

Then Mr Chochiev suggests us one hypothesis on the origin of Georgians, according to which their ancestors came from Mesopotamia. This hypothesis also has the right of existence as well as the supposition on Baltic peoples, Germans and Slavs coming from India. Even if it is true too much time has passed and it is no longer important. We consider interesting the phrase cited by Chochiev from some newspaper published in 1917: "Alans shared their culture and military experience to Georgians, who came from the Near East." It is interesting just because even in case the ancestors of Georgians were pre-historic migrants, we consider it non-professional to talk on "Alans". From the ancestors only Scythians and Sarmats and not Alans lived in North Caucasus in that period. These tribes then, except North Caucasus, exercised control over an essential part of South Russia and entire Ukraine... Scythians, though settled in South Caucasus together with the representatives of other peoples, never controlled any territory in the southern part of the Great Caucasus Ridge. And, generally, peoples' migration was ongoing in the world permanently, but being of representatives of any tribe on the territory did not mean that these tribes ruled over these lands. In any case, old Georgian states Colchis and Iveria existed in South Caucasus and this fact is proved by the Roman historians, who described in precise details their borders and pointed that there lived next to them other Georgian tribes, which were not within the Georgian states. None of the old chroniclers wrote that there existed any Scythians state formation on the territory of the present "South Ossetia" republic, which then was a part of Iveria. Then Chochiev again teaches us reminding about the role of Ossets in the history of Georgia from the Middle Ages to the XVIII century. Let's not penetrate deep into the biographies of those Georgian commanders and ordinary warriors cited by Chochiev, through the heroic deeds of whose Georgia had become a super-state in the eastern part of the Mediterranean from the first quarter of the XII century and whose

devotion saved Georgia later, in the tragic moments of its history, when the existence of Georgia's statehood and physical existence of the Georgian nation itself were on the verge of annihilation. One should not speculate with ethnic origin of any Georgian national hero; it's also nonsense to declare 300 Georgian Aragvian heroes as Ossets. There may have been many of Ossetian origin among the Georgian heroes. It's no wonder, because Ossets that migrated to southern slopes of Caucasus were becoming an organic part of the Georgian community.

I remember one of the speeches of Marshal Pilsudski, a reviver of Poland, delivered in 1920. The Marshal remembered the fights of the Polish people in which there participated the peoples of German, Jewish, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Tatar and other origin and stressed that they all belonged to Poland, the country that owed them its existence. We can use this phrase in regard to the representatives of different ethnic groups of Georgia, among them Ossets as well, for whom Georgia became a home country and for which they often sacrificed their lives, can't we? However, we should be tolerant to Mr.Chochiev: he is not to be blamed for this, because in the Soviet period the program used for training Komsomol and party functionaries did not involve the speeches by Pilsudski and other opponents of the Soviet power.

We would like to concentrate attention to one more fact: it seems from the history that the ancestors of present Ossets were sending their children to Georgia to devotedly work in the country, protect and strengthen it. Why is it so then that the present descendents of those heroes fight so furiously for disintegration of this country?

Mr Chochiev makes one more "historical" statement: "In the period very difficult for Georgia the country voluntarily joined Russia, to join the USSR was a wish of the ordinary people as well, but the present-day patriots call it annexation." We cannot agree with you, Mr.Chochiev, you should familiarize thoroughly with the fundamentals of the history of your country. If Chochiev had studied his history well, he would have known that the Russian Empire had grossly violated the Georgievski treatise terms, when did not assist East Georgia in its fight against Iran and then conquered the country weakened in this struggle. He would have also known about fierce resistance of small formations of West Georgia, revolts of people and exile of Georgians to Siberia. He would also know that the Soviet Russia attacked the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1921, despite the peace truce concluded between these countries; that the Georgian army and peoples' volunteer corps resisted hard the Red hordes attacking Georgia from all the sides and the Kemalistic Turkish army. Before knowing all this it will be most difficult for him to hold lessons for "liquidation of illiteracy in history".

After that Mr.Chochiev tackles the contemporary history of Georgia. Remembering the Georgian enlighteners of the past, he writes that they “could not have imagined even in the most terrible nightmares that their country would have conducted predatory wars on the alien lands and tried to suppress freedom of these peoples, to stir age-long animosity.” To read such statements causes surprise: what country is present Georgia conducting a predatory war against? Whose freedom does Georgia want to suppress? In any case, this, certainly, happens in parallel worlds, because starting from 1989 Georgia was involved in several wars, among them in the civic war, but all this antagonism took place only on the territory of Georgia and not out of its borders.

Mr.Chochiev writes that Georgia of the last ten years of the XX century has established a fascist motto – “Georgia for Georgians!” and revolted against historically faithful Ossets. This motto, so frequently used on the pages of newspapers and TV channels of some countries during the anti-Georgian hysteria, can be officially considered ungrounded and we cannot say that it was shared by a majority of the Georgia’s population. This motto was raised by a small-numbered group of some fanatics and provocateurs (which is more reliable), like the motto “Russia for Russians!” which is so often heard in the contemporary Russian Federation, which the leaders of “South Ossetia” want to join together with the part of strategically important territory of Georgia. At the same time, Chochiev forgets that just the leaders of the then South Ossetian autonomous district (in 1921 it was formed by Bolsheviks after the occupation of Georgia on the territory of Gori and Dusheti, Racha and Shorapani regions) betrayed historical faithfulness, illegally raised the “status of autonomy”, declaring later that they were leaving Georgia. Naturally, after this and many other provocations the blood clashes started, because Georgia tried to preserve its territorial integrity, the same that any country would do at any time”¹.

It is hard to add anything else to the analysis done by Prof.Andrew Andersen on “as if single Ossetia” joining Russia in 1774.This issue, before acquiring a political coloring, was not doubted. The works by famous Russian scholars and authoritative publications always pointed that there existed no single Ossetia in 1774, neither as independent state formation and that in 1774 Russia joined to itself only several tribes of Ossets living in North Ossetia. As for Ossets living in Georgia, in 1801 when Russia grossly violated the Georgievski treatise concluded between Russia and Georgia and made Georgia join it, they turned out to be naturally within Russia as well. Renowned Russian scholar S.Brook writes: “Ossets, persecuted in

¹ The newspaper “Sakartvelos Respublica”, April 7, 2006

result of the attacks of Tatar-Mongols in the XIII and of Tamerlane's hordes in the end of the XIV century, settled in the highlands and were divided into the Digori, Alagiri, Kurtati and Tagauri communities. North Ossetia voluntarily joined Russia in 1774, South Ossetia – in 1801¹. The same idea is also expressed in one serious publication: “In 1774 North Ossetia and in 1801 South Ossetia (within Georgia) voluntarily joined Russia”². The author of this consideration is Ossetian scholar B.Kaloev.

In other fundamental works by the Russian and Ossetian scholars, there is presented an analogous idea. In particular, B.Kabulov mentions: “The attacks of Mongol-Tatars (the end of the 30s of the XIII century) and Tamerlane (the end of the XIV century) forced Ossets to find shelter in the highlands of the Caucasus Ridge. They gradually occupied middle and front part highland zone, which surrounds the Kartli lowlands... South Ossetia was within the feudal Georgia and in 1801 together with Georgia voluntarily joined the Russian Empire”³. It is clear from the quotation cited by B.Kabulov that Ossets found shelter in the Caucasus Ridge highlands and then gradually resettled to the Kartli highlands, which “surrounds the Kartli lowlands”. That's why no talk is grounded on existence of South Ossetia in East Georgia and, in particular, Shida Kartli. Ossets had never lived separately and they always lived as migrants on the lands of Kartli feudals.

The issues mentioned above have never been doubted either by Ossetian or Russian scholars. To illustrate this fact we may cite here the consideration of Ossetian scholar G.Togoshvili: In 1801 Kartl-Kakheti joined Russia. This circumstance left a deep trace in all the sides of Ossets' life. North Ossetia, starting from 1774 established close relations with Russia and joined it, though the process did not end then and was finally finished only by the 30s of the XIX century. South Ossets joined the Russian Empire in 1801 as an organic part of Kartl-Kakheti Kingdom”⁴. After joining, Ossets settled in the valleys of North Caucasus, where the life conditions were better than in deep gorges of the Caucasus Ridge. It suited Russia as well, as through them it exercised control in the central part of the region. “Settlement of the Ossetian communities, loyal to the Russian Empire, expands within this space”⁵.

The term “South Ossetia” was deliberately inculcated by the Russian Tsarism from the second part of the XIX century. From that time on all the encyclopedias and dictionaries use the term “South Ossetia” to determine

¹ S.Brook. The World Population, M., 1986, p 170.

² Peoples of the World, M., 1988, p 350.

³ Demographic encyclopedic dictionary. M., 1985, p 545.

⁴ G.Togoshvili. The Georgian and Ossetian relations in 1801-1921. Tb., 1969 p 16.

⁵ A.Tsutsiev. Atlas of ethno-political history of Caucasus (1774-2004), M., 2006, p 17.

Ossetia. However, they are forced to point that Ossets migrated from North Caucasus and settled first in the Kartli highlands and then gradually moved to the Kartli lowlands and entire Georgia, as it is mentioned in the quotation cited by B.Kabulov. Only now, when the political goals of the Russian separatist forces overlap the historical reality, historical facts they try to introduce these fabricated considerations into the books. They point: “When Ossetia joined Russia in 1774, a quarter of a century after, in 1801, Georgia also joined Russia. There was no “Samachablo” and “Shida Kartli” then... When neighboring Georgian feudals expressed their right on this territory...when in 1918 Georgia declared independence, South Ossetia, which since 1774 has been within Russia, faced dangerous situation. Then, as later in 1989, Ossetia made its choice in favor of Russia, this explains their orientation to the Bolsheviks – only thus they could have achieved unification with North Ossetia within Russia... South Ossetia thus became for Russia a lever to influence the Georgian separatism”¹. In short, they do as they want. One thing is clear: “South Ossetia” has become for Russia an instrument to influence Georgia, just as it did in regard to other former republics using different levers, mostly violation of their territorial integrity. As for North Ossetia, Russia formed there several fortified points in the XVIII century. “Thus a part of North Ossetia got free from the rule of Kabardinian principals and was really under the protection of Russia. Ossets now had an opportunity to move to Mozdok

...By establishing in North Ossetia Russia separated Kabardinian principals and the Chechen

- Dagestanians, agents of Turkey acting there. This enabled Russia to be established in the Regions mentioned above”².

The Ossetian separatist scholars, instead of evaluating the historical events and processes on the basis of fundamental works (which are numerous in number) and the trustworthy data, apply to provincial textbooks and writings to find grounds for the idea desirable to them.

Vice-premier of self-proclaimed republic of “South Ossetia” Boris Chochiev teaches us with great pleasure that there is talk on single Ossetia in the textbook of Georgian geography published in 1917 in Kutaisi. S.Robakidze is a compiler and editor of the school textbook “Description of the Home Country”. He really said: “Ossetia is not an essential part of Georgia”³. This quotation is cited by B.Chochiev cut out of the context.

¹ I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Georgia. Ethnic cleansing in regard to Ossets., M., 2005, p 8.

² The Georgievski treatise.V.Macharadze research and documents, Tb., 1983, p 23.

³ Description of the Home Country. Compiled and published by teacher of Kutaisi Georgian high school S.Robakidze. Kutaisi, 1917, p 81.

S.Robakidze implied that Ossets migrated from the North. He wrote: "Migrant Ossets are in great quantity in the highlands of Georgia even now"¹.

It's natural that Ossets did not migrate into the highlands from the lowlands of Georgia. It's universally known that Ossets, which migrated from North Caucasus to the highlands of Georgia and where there were scarce land plots, did their best to resettle to the lowlands. S.Robakidze pointed: "They settled on the lands of Georgian landowners with definite term and thus became native inhabitants of Georgia. These definite terms were so very favorable for landless Ossets that they did it with pleasure"². Prof. Andrew Andersen was right when pointed to impossibility of judging on single Ossetia by the quotation from the provincial school textbook published a year ago and cut from the context. It should be also taken into consideration that S.Robakidze was a compiler and not an author, who used the encyclopedias, mostly meeting political aims of the Russian Empire. The representatives of the Russian power were well aware that the territory in Kartli populated by Ossets was Georgia's land, which was proved by the documents of that period. The documents often use the terms: "Ossetia of Georgia", "Ossetia of North Kartli", etc. They also knew well that along with the migrated Ossets there lived native Georgian population. However interests of the Georgian people meant nothing to the Russian power representatives, as they were guided only by the Russian imperial purposes. It meant nothing to them what would be the name of Kartli northern part. They, without any permit, conducted colonization of the Georgian lands. Even more, Georgia had long been Russia's faithful ally for centuries, but despite the protective treaty concluded in 1783 between the Russian Empire and Georgia Russia abolished Georgia's political independence, declared merciless fight against the Georgian language and changed the law. It's no wonder that the vast Empire of Russia did not take into consideration the historical reality of Ossets migration- they considered all these lands to be the property of the Russian Empire. That's why for them the area of Ossets settlement both in Georgia, in particular, in Shida Kartli, and North Caucasus, was one single Ossetia. This was an interpretation often given to Ossetia in encyclopedias and reference books. Therefore, on the one part, S.Robakidze mentioned Ossetia was not a real part of Georgia but, on the other, being well aware there was no South Ossetia beyond the borders of the Georgian territory, he pointed: Ossets moved from North Caucasus and settled as migrants on the lands owned by the Georgian landowners.

¹ Ibid. p 82.

² Ibid. p 81.

PSEUDO HISTORY

To justify the efforts of Ossets to misappropriate the Georgian land and the bloodshed unleashed by the Ossetian separatists for this, with assistance of the Russian reactionary forces, there appeared falsifiers of history, who kept publishing books in Russia to “prove” that Ossets had lived in the eastern part of Georgia before our era and domineered in the total amount of the population. Even more they called Shida Kartli - South Ossetia. Ossets in reality had never lived in East Georgia before the XVII century. Ossets came into Georgia in the XII century together with Mongols, as raiding groups and for some time even occupied Gori. However, after Georgia got rid of Mongols’ rule, Ossets were also ousted from Georgia.

A dominant theme of the books “Ossetia and Ossets” (published in St.Petersburg in 1994) and “South Ossetia” (published in Moscow in 2006) was a desirable idea of Ossets living in East Georgia from time immemorial. These books were more collections of curiosities than scientific works. For example, no one could consider a 500 page book “South Ossetia” by an Ossetian “scholar” Mark Bliev a serious work, in which the author cited quotations cut out of different sources, without pointing to them. One could see no references on the pages of the book. The author claimed for having deep scientific level of the book and considered his “creation” to be the only truth. He did this deliberately, as after citing quotations cut out of the Georgian sources, quite different idea followed, which M.Bliev hid from the readers. Then he distorted mercilessly the cited quotations. We don’t think necessary to respond to numerous dilettante considerations expressed in the book, but to show the feast of indecency to the readers, we’ll cite a few examples.

Ancient Georgian written sources witnessed the campaign of King of Kartli, Vakhtang Gorgasali (ca. the 40s of the V century – 502) to Ossetia. M.Bliev tried his best to prove this fight took place in Shida Kartli, in particular, in non-existed South Ossetia. There exist no literary sources proving this; neither a legend nor a myth had been preserved to prove this. All that the author wrote about this fact was imaginary, distortion of the only Georgian sources, confusion of the quotations from the works of the Georgian chroniclers, etc. M.Bliev cited a quotation from the work by the XI century Georgian historian Juansher, which represented the events of the V century, the reign of King Vakhtang Gorgasali and made absolutely wrong conclusions desirable for him only.

M.Bliev mentioned in regard to this campaign: The fight itself between Vakhtang Gorgasali and Osset – Baqatar ...took place in South

Ossetia – where there” was coming from one mountain a mouth of both Kartli Aragvi and Ossetian Aragvi”¹. M.Bliev consciously concealed from the readers the source, because it was written quite the other way; not a single word was mentioned about imagined South Ossetia or Ossets living in Shida Kartli. It should be said that the river Aragvi is located in East Georgia and the Aragvi system in general is formed from Mtiuleti (White) Aragvi, Gudamaqari (Black) Aragvi, Khevsureti Aragvi and Pshavi Aragvi. When M.Bliev talked on the fight between Georgians and Ossets taking place at the mouth of Kartli Aragvi and Ossetian Aragvi, flowing from one mountain, he wanted to form an impression as if “Ossetian Aragvi” flowed in Shida Kartli and the fight took place in the very centre of Kartli. Now let’s see what was written in the Georgian source: “The campaign to Ossetia was decided... Vakhtang called to the army of Georgia; all gathered and stood at Mukhnari and Kherk, on both sides of Aragvi”. Then “Vakhtang went and stood at Tianeti. All the kings of Caucasus came to him...he passed the Dariali gates. When he entered Ossetia he was 16. Kings of Ossetia gathered the army and strengthened it with Khazars; they met him at the river, which comes from Dariali and passes the field of Ossets and it is called the river Aragvi, as their mouths come from one mountain: Kartli Aragvi and Ossetian Aragvi”².

To clarify all this, it should be mentioned that the Dariali Gorge, which is a section of the river Tergi gorge in the extreme north of Georgia, namely, the Stepantsminda region, was mentioned in the old Georgian and foreign sources as Darialani, Dariela, Aragvi Gate, Iberia Gate, Sea Gate, Caucasus Gate, Sarmatia Gate, Ossets Gate, etc. The road connecting both sides of Caucasus passed the gorge from the olden times and protected the entire Transcaucasus from the attacks of nomad tribes living in North Caucasus. According to the legend the first fortress in the gorge was built by King of Iberia Mirian I in the first half of the II century. One explanation is also necessary. It seems from the quotation cited above that Ossets gathered army to meet Vakhtang Gorgasali and met him “at the river, which passes Dariali, then the field of Ossets. This river is also called Aragvi.” Thus, Kartli Aragvi “comes from the mountain”, where there was a mouth of another river, which passed Darialan and then the field of Ossets”. Naturally, this “Ossetian Aragvi” had nothing to do with the rivers, known as Aragvi, form Aragvi system and flowed in Shida Kartli. It is clear from the evidence of the Georgian chronicler that “Ossetian Aragvi” starts in Georgia and flows in Transcaucasus, the field of Ossets. It is easy to

¹ M.Bliev. South Ossetia in collisions of the Russian-Georgian relations, M., 2006, p 21.

² Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol.I, Tb.,1955, pp 150-151.

understand that “Ossetian Aragvi” was the same river Tergi. Iv.Javakhishvili mentioned, “This river is now called Tergi, but Georgians called it also Aragvi in old times...In the old Georgian literature Tergi was called Ossetian Aragvi”¹.

We may finally say that according to historian Juansher, King Vakhtang Gorgasali stationed his army first at Mukhnari and Kherk and then they stood in Tianeti, which was located in the northern part of Shida Kartli. There he was joined by “kings of Caucasus.” After that Vakhtang passed Dariali gate and moved to North Caucasus, “the field of Ossets”. On their part, Ossets also gathered army, brought Khazars to assist them and “met” Vakhtang at the river, which flowed by the Darali gorge to the Ossetia fields. According to Vakhushti Batonishvili, north of the Caucasus mountain” was the field of Ossets².

Consequently, Juansher mentioned nowhere that the fight took place in Shida Kartli. The historian wrote clearly that Vakhtang Gorgasali “passed the Dariali gate” and entered Ossetia.

We should also mention that only one Ossetia existed for the Georgian chroniclers, which was located in North Caucasus. This was vividly witnessed by the collection of historical works “Kartlis Tskhovreba”, which preserved numerous evidences on Ossets living only in North Caucasus, their historical home country – Ossetia. For example, the XI century historian Leonti Mroveli wrote: King Mirian “passed to Ossetia and reached Khazars and then he came back to Dvaleti, returned home”³. The Georgian word “gardamovlo” used for “came back to” meant he came back from North Caucasus, Ossetia and the Georgian word “gardavida to Ossetia” used for “passed to” meant he went to North Caucasus. In case Ossets lived in Shida Kartli the chronicler would not have to use these two Georgian words “gardavida” and “gardamovlo”. The same author mentioned: “Ossets started to seek for Armenians, came to Kartli and made friends with Georgians”⁴. That means they came to Kartli and made friends with Georgians to fight against Armenians. In case Ossets had lived in Kartli, even in small numbers, they would sooner have found common language with their tribesmen. There are many such places in Leonti Mroveli’s work⁵.

Analogous idea on the location of Ossetia and Ossets living place was developed by historian Juansher. Along with the quotation cited above,

¹ Iv.Javakhishvili. Collection of works in 12 volumes, vol.II, Tb., 1983, pp 25-26, 45

² Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol.4, Tb., 1973, p 632.

³ Op.cit., vol.I, p 68.

⁴ Ibid., p 47.

⁵ Ibid., p 55.

in some other places of his work he talked about it. For example, making use of King Vakhtang being of small age, Ossets crossed the Caucasus Ridge, raided Kartli and went back through Darubandi to Ossetia as winners. The historian said King Vakhtang was 10 then. The Georgian chronicler, describing the period of Queen Rusudan, in the first quarter of the XIII century, wrote that Rusudan opened the Dariali gate and brought Ossets and Durdzuks from there to fight against Khvarazmians. Vakhtang Batonishvili (the XVIII cent.) mentioned about one of the battles of Georgians against Tamerlane. He said that “King Giorgi first brought from Dariali many Ossets and Caucasians and met Timur with his army”¹. “Tamerlane army passed Darubandi, Leketi and came to Ossetia”². It should be mentioned that we come across numerous analogous facts not only in the works of old Georgian historians, but in Georgian literary and hagiographical works. For example, it was mentioned in the work of Iovane Sabanisdze “Martyrdom of Abo” written in the 80-90s of the VIII century:” Nerse Eristavi passed the court of Ossets, which is called Dariali”³.

The Georgian kings intensively used foreign forces to fight against occupants. That’s why they often brought Ossets, Lezghins and Khazars from North Caucasus through Dariali, which then returned back with rich booty. At the same time, the Georgian kings took care of protecting the northern border against the raids of tribes. With this aim in view they strengthened the Dariali Gorge for Ossets, Qipchaks and Khazars could not cross the border without their permit. Iv.Javakhishvili mentioned that Vakhushti Batonishvili wrote about King Mirvan (the II century B.C.), who made a gate and fortified the fortress not to allow Ossets and Khazars pass freely That means this gate was intended to block the way for Ossets and Khazars⁴. Later, when Vakhtang Gorgasali subjected Ossets and Khazars under his rule, Juansher mentioned he made the gate of Ossets, which was called Dariali and built high towers, where he put his faithful people to make a barrier for Ossets and Qipchaks not to pass without the permit of the Georgian king⁵. Thus, “the Gates of Ossets”, mentioned in the ancient Georgian written sources meant that Ossets had no way to enter Shida Kartli, as it was blocked for them.

Not a single evidence, neither any hints existed in the old Georgian sources on Ossets living in East Georgia before the XVII century, even in small numbers. There were numerous data on other ethnic groups. The only

¹ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. IV, p 269

² Ibid., p 272.

³ Georgian prose, book I, Tb., 1981, p 127.

⁴ Iv.Javakhishvili. Collection of works in 12 volumes, vol. XII, Tb., 1998, p 464.

⁵ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. I, p 156.

information about Ossets migration to Georgia was preserved in the work “Matiane Kartlisa” by the XI century Georgian anonym author, which presented the history of Georgia in the VIII-XI centuries. According to this book, the Arabian army headed by Bugha-Turk twice raided Georgia (853-854) to subject Tbilisi Emirate and to restore caliph’s power in South Caucasus. During his second raid to Georgia, in 854, Bugha-Turk brought 100 families of Ossets to settle them in Kvemo Kartli, in particular, Dmanisi¹. Nothing was in the old Georgian sources to give us the right to mention about Ossets living in East Georgia. It’s a sheer nonsense as well to talk about Ossetia divided into two parts, one part being located in Shida Kartli in the form of South Ossetia, which the Ossetian dilettante scholars try so hard to prove. When the South Ossetian region was artificially formed, there existed only one Ossetia, located in North Caucasus. That’s why we consider it senseless to argue with M.Bliev. He analysed the historical events that took place in Georgia separately for Georgia and separately for non-existent South Osseti, as if Georgia and South Ossetia were the equal subjects. For example M.Bliev wrote that in the 1830s Petersburg was ready to strengthen the administrative changes in Georgia and South Ossetia, commenced by Duke Paskevich²; the entire documentation on implementing peasants reform in Georgia and South Ossetia was completely done by the forces of Georgian noble³; in 1812 in Kakheti, a revolt took place in East and South Ossetia⁴; Georgian nobles – Eristavis - also had claims for the southern part of East Ossetia in the river Aragvi basin, etc. Mr. Bliev was so blinded with the hatred for the Georgian people that considered it a gross mistake of the Tsarist Russia to recognize Tbilisi as the centre of Caucasus⁵. In his opinion, in 1803 a considerable part of South Ossetia (about 40 villages) was transferred to the Georgian nobles – Eristavis – into ownership and a small part of lowlands of the South Ossetian territory to the Georgian feudal family of Machabelis⁶, who tried to occupy the territory through armed force⁷. However, it was just from the XVII century, that the Ossets started settling as migrants on the lands owned by the Georgian nobles – Machabelis and Eristavis. The book by M.Bliev and not only it is full of such fairy-tales.

¹ Ibid., pp 256-257.

² M.Bliev. South Ossetia in the collisions of the Georgian-Russian relations, M., 2006, p 160

³ Ibid., p 268

⁴ Ibid., p 57.

⁵ Ibid., p.39.

⁶ Ibid., p 43

⁷ Ibid., p 54.

We considered it necessary to familiarize the readers with the false considerations of the Ossetian authors on the second husband of Georgian Queen Tamar – David Soslan. In the book “Ossetia and Ossets” there was a chapter “Soslan David and the Knight in the Panther’s Skin”. In this chapter the author “proves” that “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” was written by David Soslan. In the opinion of M.Bliev through Ossetian David Soslan Queen Tamar of Georgia had become an owner of a great part of Transcaucasus and his victories in the battles brought her world fame and David Soslan formed the kingdom of Georgia, the most powerful state in Transcaucasus¹. M.Bliev’s consideration was so naïve that he said: Classic of the Ossetian literature Seka Gadiev “having described the life of David Soslan, who through the Ossetian army formed the most powerful state, regreted that David Soslan spent his talent and efforts on Georgia, assisted in its development making it more powerful than Ossetia, when he could have made Ossetia, his native country, if not higher, at least equal to Georgia”².

However awkward it seems to answer these fairy-tales, it is necessary to mention that before David Soslan became Queen Tamar’s husband, Georgia had already been the most powerful state in Asia Minor and the Near East. It was still King David Aghmashenebeli (the Builder), who in 1121 defeated numerous coalition army of Turk-Seljuks. In this battle Georgians celebrated a fine victory and acquired the name of the most powerful state. After that Georgia’s powerful state caused permanently great worry in the Near East. It was just in the period of King David Aghmashenebeli that Georgia expanded its borders considerably. In result of his active foreign policy Turk-Seljuks were ousted from South Ossetia, a considerable part of liberated Armenia and Shirvan was joined to it. The Georgian lands were united into one state.

The chronicler characterized David Soslan as a man with moral and chivalrous features, at the same time saying that his campaigns were on the advice and order of Tamar³.

According to the consideration spread in science now, David Soslan was a representative of the branch of the Georgian royal family of the Bagrationis, settled in Ossetia, which came from Demetre, the son of King Giorgi I and Queen Alde, a representative of Alans’ tribe. According to the Georgian chroniclers, David Soslan was their descendent, who was brought up by Queen Tamar’s aunt Rusudan. Vakhushti informed that Demetre “had a son in Anakopia, Abkhazia”, who “married an Ossetian king’s daughter

¹ Ibid., pp 23-24

² Ibid., p 24.

³ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol.II, p 55.

and his son being in Ossetia was called king of Ossets and son of Demetre.” Father of this David “married Rusudan, who took him with her and brought him up as her own child”¹. That meant Rusudan’s husband was a descendent of Demetre Bagrationi but, as “Rusudan was childless”², she brought up her husband’s son David, born from his other wife. David was considered a descendent of the Bagrationi family also by chronicler of King Lasha Giorgi period (“Tamar’s husband was David, King of Ossets, of the Bagrationi family”)³ and in the works by Basili Ezosmodzghvari (“David Soslan was Bagrationi”)⁴. What is important, as Vakhushti Batonishvili pointed David Soslan being Bagrationi was proved by a small church in Karsniskhevi, where the images of several Bagrationis were on the walls, among them David Soslan, husband to Queen Tamar⁵. It was just David’s being Bagrationi that Tamar agreed to marry him⁶.

The Ossetian separatists did everything to deform the national patriotism of Ossets. The Ossetian press was satiated with the feeling of national arrogance and superiority. Nearly all the Georgian surnames were considered by them to be Ossetian; the representatives of the Georgian feudal family of Eristavis were declared to be Ossetian⁷, the same with the Georgian family of Tsereteli, when this surname has the suffix “li” meaning the place of origin, the Tsereteli family was from the village Tsereti, Gori region. Many renowned Georgian scholars were declared by them as Ossetian. A political figure and military commander Giorgi Saakadze (1570-1629) and even Stalin were said to be of Ossetian origin. Shota Rustaveli, a great Georgian poet, the author of “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”, in their opinion, was an Osset⁸. When the reactionary separatist forces tried distorting the truth, they started to distort the Georgian culture as well with the aim of its appropriation.

In the book “Ossetia and Ossets”, published in 1994 in St.Petersburg there was written the following: “He inherited from his Alan ancestors the aspiration for learning...David Soslan, who turned to be in Georgia on God’s will, continued there the cultural traditions of his country... King David sent 40 young Georgians to Greece to get learning...David Soslan wrote a heroic poem “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” of an

¹ Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. IV, p 176.

² Op.cit., vol. II, pp 46, 121.

³ Op.cit., vol. I, p 369.

⁴ Op.cit., vol. II, p 121.

⁵ Op.cit., vol. IV, p 177.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ M.Bliev. Op.cit., p 27.

⁸ Ossetia and Ossets., St.Petersburg, 1994, p 104.

autobiographical character”¹. The fact that David Soslan sent 40 young Georgians to Greece did not at all point to his being of Ossetian origin. The main thing is that according to the information of an Armenian historian Vardan the Great (there exists no other evidence of this kind – A.T.) 40 youths were sent to Greece not by David Soslan, but by King David Aghmashenebeli for studying languages, making translations and bringing them to Georgia, which they did. Some of them later became renowned for their activities².

Such simple considerations had nothing in common with the scientific conclusions. Much space had been attached in the book for substantiating and proving these silly considerations, among them the one as if Georgians expressed no interest in the Iranian culture, which couldn't be said about Ossets, he said. All this bacchanalia ended in “the peace-loving Ossetian people reminding their aggressor neighbor that under the panther's skin a passionate heart of the Alan knight throbs, which with its light brightened once darkened Iberia”³ It's true that home country is sweet, but everything has its limit. This limit was dropped out. It was mentioned in the newspaper “Sovetskaya Osetia” (December 21, 1989): “the Ossetian people have the oldest history, older than many of its neighbors, the history that they are direct descendents of Scythians”. At the same time, the expert in these issues, A.Smirnov pointed that “Scythians left no direct descendents, but their culture influenced the cultures of many peoples. We, too, are one of their descendents. While evaluating the role of Scythians we should not forget that they were the first who put numerous peoples of our country into the bed of single development, assisted them in sharing progressive culture of that period”⁴. Narths, declared by Ossets to be an Ossetian epos, was a monumental Caucasian epic, a joint creation of the Caucasian people.

To clarify for the readers the fairy-tales invented by the Ossetian dilettante scholars, and the identity of the author of these fairy-tales, we cannot avoid one most important fact – exactly analogous claims were put to the Georgian people by the Armenian pseudo-scholars, who distorted the history of Georgia mercilessly. We have discussed this issue in our book (Anti-Georgian Hysteria of Armenian Pseudo-scholars, Tb., 2005) with pointing relevant sources, so here we'll satisfy with general considerations. The Armenian “scholars” (Acad. S.Aivazian and others) considered the acme of the world poetry, immortal poem “The Knight in the Panther's

¹ Ibid.

² Vardan the Great. World history of Vardan the Great, M., 1861, p 157.

³ Ossetia and Ossets, p 105.

⁴ A.Smirnov. The Scythians, M., 1966, p 184.

Skin” by Shota Rustaveli to be non-Georgian work (the newspaper “Metsamor”, Yerevan, 2004, #6). They said “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” was written by an Armenian author, then another Armenian, who was fond of Georgians, certain “Ashot of Rustavi”, took the only copy of the author and translated it into Georgian. Instead of thanking, Georgians burned the only Armenian copy. Fine logic, isn’t it? There existed no such evidence in the nature. In their opinion all Georgian nobles were of Armenian origin. Great Georgian commander Giorgi Saakadze was Armenian; Stalin’s parents were Armenian; great Georgian poet of the XIX century Akaki Tsereteli was Armenian. If Ossets mention that they lived in East Georgia from time immemorial and their “southern border passed directly next to Armenia (the newspaper “Ir”, #6, 1990), Armenians put forward claims to entire Georgia, saying they built everything for Georgians, both Georgia and Tbilisi and the Armenian border passed directly Tbilisi, they used to say. They appropriated our territory, our culture. It seems that “Georgians own only the river Mtkvari on the territory of Georgia” (T.Mibchuan). Maybe the authors of these fairy-tales could answer how was it that Georgia was a property of both Ossets and Armenians, or Saakadze, Stalin and Shota Rustaveli were both Ossets and Armenians at the same time, or the poem “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” was written by an Osset and an Armenian at the same time? Probably, they had better clear up their ambitions between themselves and stop putting their endless claims to Georgians. But now, they say they are both right, only the Georgian people lie. Such was the wish of the real authors of these fairy-tales – the Russian reactionary forces. That’s why their silly demands were as like as two peas. That’s why they kept publishing thick books satiated with the hatred to the Georgian people, at high printing level in Moscow one after another and then displayed their presentations on all the Russian TV channels. They used well these books “to put reins on obstinate Georgians” to domineer in Caucasus. To rule Caucasus was impossible without Georgia. To be in the most dangerous place of the globe (J.Gogebashvili) and to have such a geopolitical location is the destiny of the Georgian people. This was well known two hundred years ago as well. Still General Paskevich tried to assure Emperor of Russia Nikolai I that final conquering of Caucasus was possible only after the Black Sea coast was occupied and colonized. In the same period Consul of France in Tbilisi in the 1820s Jacques Françoise Gamba gave advice to the government of Russia: “Location of Gagra is most favorable, the Russian government should take care of it and get hold of it.” This he thought was the most urgent issue for Russia if it wanted to finally calm and subdue the Caucasian peoples. However, the Russian officials were well aware of this.

They turned their attention to this place even without Gamba's recommendation. The letter written in 1820 by A.Ermolov, "dictator of Caucasus", to the Foreign Minister of Russia, is of great interest. In that period, there was high death rate among the Russian soldiers in the garrison and due to diplomatic problems the issue was raised in the ministry of transferring Sokhumi and Abkhazia to Turks. A.Ermolov wrote to the minister that Sokhumi was a base for Russia in the eastern part of the Black Sea coastline. He threatened with resignation in case Sokhumi was given to Turks. A.Ermolov's demand was satisfied by the ministry. The European travelers unanimously point to a special role of Georgia for Russia's domination in South and entire Caucasus. For example, a resident of England in Circassia, O.Spenser, thought that before firmly strengthening its power in Georgia, "by now Russia fails to operate its autocratic power and to install its public and passport system in Georgia; they failed to attack the country with the army of its officials to force introduction of its laws and decisions. It's a usual way of Russia's behavior towards peoples under its rule"¹.

We have only to ask: Has Georgia ever existed or where has it existed? Have the Georgian people ever created any cultural values? It's irony of fate that the descendents of the ancestors, which Georgia gave shelter to, are now rivaling for the territory of Georgia. It may seem funny at the first sight, but it is not so. Seized with pathological ideas the pseudo-scholars miss no chance to defame the Georgian people and present the issues of the history of Georgia in a biased and distorted form. Seized also with megalomania they discuss all the events only as they desire them to be. Through ungrounded statements they mislead unaware society. To cite great Russian critic B.Belinski, "credo should be valuable only because it is true and not because it is ours".

Though their considerations and the facts cited were ungrounded and it was not difficult to prove they were wrong, they had been expressed and pronounced before millions of readers and couldn't be cut out even by an ax. So, "the play was directed, the performance was on." These publications had already performed their role to harm the Georgian people.

In regard to this issue it is necessary to mention the fact that in the XVII-XVIII centuries many missionaries and European travelers arrived to Georgia. One could see no evidence in their works that Shida Kartli was the territory of South Ossetia. They described traits characteristic for Ossets, their living conditions, but said everywhere without any doubt that Shida

¹ Evidences of K.Koch and O.Spenser on Georgia and Caucasus. Tb., 1981, pp141-142.

Kartli was an integral part of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom. For example, the XVIII century German traveler Jacob Reinegs, who was a guest at the court of King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti in 1778-1781, mentioned: "Province of Kartli...extends northwards to the highest mountains of Caucasus"¹. German traveler I.Giuldenstedt, who traveled in Georgia in 1772, named the Caucasus Ridge as a northern border of Shida Kartli"².

Just due to the said above, the Russian authorities, dividing Georgia into administrative units, granted the Tskhinvali region to Tbilisi gubernia Gori mazra(district), where Tskhinvali was a police section. "South Ossetian" region was formed only after they tried to form real jeopardy to existence of independent Georgia, which they successfully fulfilled. On October 28, 1920 the Caucasian bureau of the Russian communist party central committee discussed the issue "on granting South Ossetia an autonomy", then on April 7, 1922 the oldest Georgian province – the

Tskhinvali region – was declared "South Ossetian autonomous district" on the basis of decree of the Georgian central committee and council of people's commissars through violating all the legal norms. A part of Shida Kartli northern territory with Ossets compact settlement was so small that there was no basis for forming an autonomous district there. So, to justify formation of the autonomous district, they joined to it the lands settled by Georgians, among them Tskhinvali, which became the autonomous district capital. Ossets, however, had never lived on this territory. That means, the South Ossetian autonomous district was an artificial formation, when Shida Kartli was historically a consolidation centre of the Kartvelian tribes.

The autonomous district was a gift to the Ossetian Bolsheviks for their services – they arranged three revolts against Georgia's independent republic in 1918-1920. By forming the South Ossetian autonomous district Russia could always press Georgia and this measure was justified 70 years after – when Georgia gained independence. Through support of the Russian reactionary forces the Ossetian separatists declared in Shida Kartli the South Ossetian independent, sovereign republic. Thinking, sensible part of Ossets felt immediately this senseless and groundless act of a small group of the Ossetian separatists. World renowned Ossetian scholar V.Abaev, who worked in Moscow, published an article "The Tragedy of South Ossetia". Based on the historical realities, he objectively evaluated the processes ongoing in "South Ossetia" in the beginning of the 1990s. He wrote: **"I would like to be unbiased and clear up whether there were some hasty,**

¹ J.Reinegs. Travel to Georgia, Tb., 2002, p.145.

² I.Giuldenstedt's travel to Georgia, vol.I, Tb., 1962, pp 185, 267.

senseless activities of Ossets, who intensified the contradictions through provocation. I would also like to say such events took place then. I mean declaration of sovereignty, which was fully orientated to Moscow with the prospect of uniting South and North Ossetia in the future. Aspirations of South Ossetians to join their Northern tribesmen can be understood from the human viewpoint. However, from the geopolitical viewpoint it is a mistake. The main Caucasus Ridge is a natural border between Georgia and Ossetia and any efforts of removing this border will cause permanent conflicting situation between Georgians and Ossets. To restore traditional friendly relations, first of all, the talk should stop on separation of Ossetia from Georgia. No authorities of Georgia will agree with this. And they will be right.” In his opinion, South Ossetia should free itself from showing “sovereignty”¹.

One important fact should also be mentioned here. An expert in law, scholar I.Putkaradze stressed it². After the South Ossetian autonomous district was formed and artificial passions calmed down, Ossets saw the opportunity for preserving their peculiarity, for protecting their national interests already only within Georgia. So, it was not by chance that the congresses of councils of North Ossetia in January 1925 and of South Ossetian autonomous district on March 25 of the same year adopted the decisions, expressing their wish to unite North Ossetia and South Ossetia – they were uniting into one autonomous soviet republic and were joining the Republic of Georgia. The central executive committee of Russia expressed preliminary consent on this. The session of the central executive committee of Georgia voted unanimously in favor of joining Georgia by united Ossetia and made a decision to put the issue for the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic) final resolution in the USSR central executive committee. The discussion of this issue revealed an important circumstance – traditionally unbreakable relations between Ossets and Georgians. The essential factor appeared in the foreground, as it was written in the documents, “The Ossetian people were traditionally related to Georgia”. Aspirations of Ossets living in Georgia became apparent. It was mentioned that South Ossetia “demands resolutely from North Ossetia ... to execute the process of joining within Georgia”. It was publicly declared that North Ossetia “expresses wish to leave the RSFSR and join the Georgian SSS (Soviet Socialist Republic).” Chairman of North Ossetian district Takoev substantiated this decision thus: “Ossetia existed and followed the Georgian Republic. The people of North and South Ossetia and also the officials

¹ V.Abaev. Tragedy of South Ossetia. The way to Reconciliation. “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”, January 22, 1992, No. 13., 1992.

² I.Putkaradze. Sound calling, the newspaper “Komunisti”, December 13, 1989.

responsible saw vividly that sound national policy was not being implemented so expediently anywhere as in the Republic of Georgia". This circumstance, said Takoev, assured everyone that for cultural and economic development of North and South Ossetia they should join the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. South Ossetia categorically raised the issue that "it would join North Ossetia only in case the latter would give its consent to join the Georgian SSR." Ossets living in Georgia had fine potentials for their cultural and economic development. They saw well that sound national policy was being implemented in Georgia. It will be good for Dimitri Medoev, a representative of self-declared South Ossetian republic in Moscow, to familiarize with these documents. It was Medoev, who defamed the Georgian people in their relations with Ossets.

At present the conflict ongoing in the so-called South Ossetia acquired its real name. The President of Georgia declared that now there was an opposition between Georgia and Russia in reality and not the internal conflict in Georgia. The other part in the conflict is Moscow and not Tskhinvali. It is the issue of the Georgian-Russian relations.

In regard to M.Bliev's book it may be finally said that "the work" completely distorted the historical events and facts and had no scientific value. The 500 page book, which gave no sources, could have no claim for being a scientific work. The Ossetian separatist and dilettante scholars were biased in reading the Georgian written and all other sources, taking a one-sided view of them. Their aim was clear: to prove existence of non-existent "South Ossetia" in East Georgia, namely, in Shida Kartli, from the time immemorial. Thus they tried to justify their ungrounded demands to separate from Georgia, to blame Georgia for the bloodshed that followed violation of the Georgian state territory by them.

Recently there appeared many scholars like Bliev, whose books were published in Moscow with pleasure. These books were directed against the Georgian people and the Georgian statehood. For example, the book by I.Kochieva and A.Margiev¹ described ten histories with comments about Georgians mercilessly murdering Ossets, persecuting them and ousting them from Georgia. But nothing was said in the book that bloodshed, victims and refugees of both sides were the results of the Ossetian separatism, which suited the third party. Nothing was said how brutally Georgians were shot, tortured and driven away from their dwellings, their land. The Ossetian scholars kept silence on the fact that it was the Georgians' blood which was first shed by Ossets. In the introduction of the book some A.Kasiev mentioned: "If we imagine there is no Internet in the

¹ I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Georgia. Ethnic cleansing of Ossets, M., 2005.

future, then our contemporaneity will be studied by our descendents from the books preserved in the libraries, as the case was in olden times. The present book shows dramatic events, connected with the modern history of Ossets – one of the oldest peoples in Europe and Asia. Like Armenians, having experienced genocide in the Ottoman Empire, Jews and Gypsies - in Germany, Cambodians - in Cambodia, the genocide of Ossets took place in Georgia, which Georgia did not condemn”¹. It seems from the book that protection of the territorial inviolability and historical territories is fascism. Thus not a single nation in the world can avoid this epithet, can it? Such conflicts and clashes took place in many regions in the period of the Soviet Union dissolution and were promoted by the Russian reactionary forces. It is interesting to know what epithet the Ossetian dilettante scholars would use in regard to merciless bloodshed ongoing in Chechnya. But it does not worry them at all. The main thing for them was to make an image of enemy from Georgians. A.Kasaev teaches us: “It’s interesting that in the Russian part of Ossetia, where thousands of ethnic Georgians live for centuries, no one ever express wish to declare Georgia their home country... the home country of anyone is the place where he lives, where he was born and where his ancestors lived”². If we take into consideration the separatist statement of the author on Ossetia consisting of two parts, one part of which is located in Russia and the other – in Georgia, then we have nothing to argue with him. Naturally, for an Osset, born in Georgia, home country is Georgia, the same as for a Georgian, born in Russia, home country is Russia. But if Georgians, born in Russia, will try with arms to join the territory, they were born in, to Georgia, then Georgians living there cannot avoid terrible bloodshed.

The book by I.Kochieva and A.Margiev is a rare example of forgery and distortion of facts. For example, it is mentioned on the front page of the book: “According to the USSR population census of 1989, there lived in Georgia 164 000 Ossets. By 2002 only 38 000 Ossets were left.” The authors hid from the readers that 164 000 Ossets lived in the entire territory of Georgia, the former South Ossetian district territory included, in 2002 in Georgia 38 000 Ossets lived without this district territory. The authors need to show that a great majority of Ossets left Georgia in result of the conflict and their amount in Georgia reduced by 126 000. In 2002 in Georgia there lived 82 000 Ossets, among them 40 000 – in the former South Ossetian district.

¹ I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Op.cit., pp 3-5.

² I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Op.cit., p 6.

I.Kochieva and A.Margiev cite the story told by Ossets living in Georgia about hard conditions, in which Ossets live in North Caucasus after they migrated there in result of ethnic conflict. The hostels, they live in, are dirty, narrow, and noisy and poor¹. But the same authors say nothing about Georgians from the former South Ossetian district, which is their historical dwelling place and where their ancestors lived for thousands of years, being mercilessly ousted by Ossets. Why do these authors think that Georgians, refugees on their home territory, are well accommodated to the living conditions in hostels and that there is no noise, no poverty in the places they live? They say nothing about how well Ossets lived not only in the former South Ossetia, but in all the regions of Georgia. The tenth story, cited by the authors in their book involuntarily proved this. I.Kumaritov of Ossetian origin living in the village of Mitarbi, Borjomi region, tells his story in the period of the conflict: “My large family – I, my wife, my mother, two sons, a daughter-in-law and a grandchild – lived together in the village Mitarbi. We all worked, had a big wooden house, big vegetable garden. We have bought timber to build a new bigger house. We also possessed 11 heads of cattle, 25 – small cattle, numerous poultry and pigs, a car “GAZ-69”. So we lived well, sold cheese, wool and poultry at the market. When life with Georgians became unbearable... we went (to North Ossetia – A.T.) leaving everything, without any documents as I have lost them.

On arriving I understood that I could not live long. We lived in the tourist base. I was ill with asthma and the best place in the world for me is my native village Mitarbi, where I felt fine. I agreed to return to breathe my native air once more. I thought to get back my house and form it in my daughter’s name and then to go back and finish my life there.

Zenta Bestaeva brought us to Mitarbi, where President M.Saakashvili was waiting for us with the journalists. He delivered a speech. A Georgian family lived in my house; they were immediately made to live the house, which was fully repaired. I was given a passport and as an exception was also given citizenship of Georgia... I was promised 5 000 dollars, but got only 4 000 lari (about 2 000 dollars) in a month, I received some urgent furniture, a cow and a calf. There was electricity in the village then ... I tried to sell the house and stayed there till December. There was no longer electricity in the village, there was no road in winter and it was hard to live there now. I left my relative in the house, spent winter in North Ossetia, but when hot days started I wished to go to Mitarbi to have some relief from my disease and to see the house. But I have lost my passport in

¹ I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Op.cit., p 139.

1991. Last year I crossed the border with a refugee's certificate, which they took from me. I couldn't cross the border with the Georgian passport"¹.

It is clear from this letter that I.Kumaritov lived quite well in the village of Mitarbi, Borjomi region, Georgia and **felt he was a human**. It should be said by all means that in the communist period the family having 11 cattle, 25 small cattle, numerous poultry and pigs was considered to be the richest.

I.Kumaritov had quite a big wooden house (wooden houses are traditional in the villages of the Borjomi region), but planned to build a bigger one and bought timber for this. It was not a single case. Ossets in Georgia did live well, they were wealthy and we can prove this by citing below the objective official data. There is no logic in the complaints of D.Medoev and others that the social condition of Ossets in Georgia was hard. It was just in Georgia that I Kumaritov "felt he was a human". The fact should also be mentioned that Kumaritov's letter, cited by the authors against Georgians, served the opposite and revealed the truth. When in result of Georgia's territorial integrity violation by the Ossetian separatists the relations between Georgians and Ossets were spoiled, Ossets moved freely in the regions of Georgia, but for Georgians it was impossible to arrive to the self-proclaimed republic of South Ossetia. It could cost a Georgian his life to go there. Attention should also be turned to the condition, that the Georgian presidential program foresees return of Ossets to Georgia and formation of relevant living conditions and not making money from it by selling houses prepared for them by the state. I.Kumaritov said everything was done for him to live in the village Mitarbi. When the country becomes economically strong, Georgians and Ossets, who were incurred losses in result of the conflict, will be compensated. However, now in the period of transition, lack of electricity, good roads and hard life worries entire Georgia and not only Mitarbi settled with Ossets.

I.Kochieva and A.Margiev were biased in highlighting the events and processes. They kept silence about the reasons causing the antagonism and conflict between Georgians and Ossets: the efforts of the Russian imperial forces, shooting of four innocent Georgians, abolition of the South Ossetian autonomous district dictated by Russia, declaration of South Ossetian republic in the middle of Georgia that actually meant dissolution of the Georgian statehood. The Russian reactionary forces, seized with imperial desire and the Ossetian separatists try to conceal numerous brutal crimes committed, to hide truth, to disguise their perfidious plans. Still there exist numerous documents proving the facts of robberies, hostage-taking,

¹ I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Op.cit., pp 137-138.

humiliation and defame, murders, tortures through medieval inhuman methods. Even before formation of the South Ossetian autonomous district the population of the Georgian villages was forced to appeal with joint request (April 25, 1921) to the authorities: "... Our condition is very hard. We are in condition of refugees cut from our own houses after Ossets appeared here. It has been already three months that we ran away from our houses. 70-80 houses were burned down in Tskhinvali and what was saved from furniture supplies and cattle they took to the Java region...When we asked them to give them back; they beat us, and threaten. 32 inhabitants were killed, some of them were burnt and some died from beating, women, grown ups, children were raped"¹. The Georgian population was categorically against transfer of Tskhinvali and the Georgian villages to the South Ossetian autonomous district. The Georgian villages arranged more than once their meetings with this aim. The minutes of one such meeting, signed by 230 persons, said: "The meeting unanimously and categorically expressed the protest against transfer of city of Tskhinvali and its region to South Ossetia... Tskhinvali was and is a middle part of Kartli both with its geographic location and the villages populated by Georgians surrounding it. We once more express great hope that the government of workers and peasants will take into consideration just demand of people and to avoid expected conflict and national animosity between us and Ossets will keep Tskhinvali and its region within the soviet socialist republic"². Due to raids of Ossets the population of the Georgian villages said (December 25, 1921): "How long should we be within Ossetia... Let the government give us dwellings to live and migrate us somewhere far away from here not to listen and hear to cries and woes of our places"³. We can cite such archives documents in abundance on the events of past and present periods, but it's better instead of writing books like the one by I.Kochieva and A.Marguiev, which tense the situation between Georgians and Ossets, to think about the ways and methods of their peaceful co-existence.

¹ N.Khutsishvili. Shida Kartli – history and contemporaneity. Archives documents inform. The newspaper "Akhalgazrda Komunisti", January 20, 1990.

² N.Khutsishvili. Op.cit.

³ Cited: L.Toidze. Formation of Ossetian autonomy in Georgia. See the book: "The Issue of Ossets", p 329

BIASED VIEW OF THE EVENTS AND “OPPRESSED” OSSETS

Widescale conflict and bloodshed, which took place in the Tskhinvali region, won't have been possible without operating the relevant ideological-propagandistic measures. Cheat and demagoguery are used to influence people in such cases. The Ossetian separatists spare nothing for this. First of all, they play on the national feelings, which is historically a well-known method. They try to convince the Ossetian people that they are special, to deceive them about Georgians suppressing their language and literature, as if historically only Ossets used to live on the territory of Shida Kartli and thus it is their native land.

The Russian media was especially active and instead of releasing objective information, gave biased analysis of the events – blaming only Georgians for all this. The informational war, unleashed by Russia, deepened the conflict, the bloodshed. Their press, mostly during the armed clashes, stressed the national belonging of the deceased, turned attention to the losses of the Ossetian side as if they were not the citizens of Georgia, as if not a single Georgian died in that fratricidal war. Instead of defending the moral principles, justice, human dignity, they violated these values. The Russian media mercilessly distorted every fact, every event to intensify the passions, though was well aware of the real state of affairs. In short, the informational war conducted by it called for bloodshed and, finally, served fulfillment of the imperial goals. This was the position, from which all the problems were highlighted in regard to “bad Georgians” and “good Ossets”, which in reality did not worry them at all.

An article was published in the union journal “Dialogue” (#13) under the title “The Eve” by some A.Tausova, written on a special order. From apparently slanderous position she blamed Georgians in their relations with Abkhazs, Ossets, Armenians and Azeri. The article promoted worsening of the tense situation, forming wrong impression among the union readers and the world community about the real situation in Georgia in that period. A.Tausova mentioned in the article: “Ossetia is divided into two parts and these parts form autonomous formations in the allied republics – Georgia and Russia.” The readers, knowing nothing about the essence of this had the impression as if someone deliberately divided the single Ossetian land, just as the case was in regard to Germany and Korea. The truth and the main essence were concealed from the readers, in particular the truth that Ossets had migrated from their home country to Georgia not long ago and had lived in it since then together with Georgians. This is the same case as Armenians living in the Rostov district to demand autonomy, as they live there for a long time and in a great amount. According to the population

census conducted in 2002 in Russia the amount of Armenians living in Russia was large. At present there live seven different nations in Russia, Armenians among them, the amount of which separately exceeds one million. Namely, if in 1989 the amount of Armenians in Russia was 532 000, in 2002 they were 1 130 000. In the same years there lived in Russia: 131 000 and 198 000 Georgians, Azeri – 336 000 and 621 000¹. So, within 13 years the amount of Armenians increased by 598 000, of Azeri – by 285 000 and of Georgians – only by 67 000. Despite this, high-ranking politicians and MPs only point to 1 million Georgians living in Russia who send 1, 5 billion dollars to their families in Georgia. It's a lie. Even according to the Russian source itself, which is based on the evaluations of World Bank, United Nations Organization, World Labor Organization and experts, the sum sent by labor migrants from the Russian Federation to Georgia within a year makes up 210 million dollars, to Armenia – 320 million dollars and to Azerbaijan – 1 780 million dollars. These sums in correlation with the GDP of a relevant country equal to 3, 6%; 6, 7 % and 14,2 %².

The amount of Armenians in Russia keeps growing daily. In some regions of Russia they occupy a second place after Russians in amount. For example, in Kuban Armenians comprise 10% of the entire population. They mainly settle compactly in the Black Sea coastline towns: Sochi – 14, 6% of the population, Tuapse – 12%, Adler – 38%, Anapa – 7, 3%; also in Apsheron region – 8%, Armavir – 7%. Earlier in Kuban Ukrainians were on the second place after Russians in the amount. Rapid growth in the amount of Armenians formed very tense condition between Russians and Armenians. S.Markedonov, head of the department at Moscow political and military analysis institute, candidate of historical science, mentioned about attacks against Armenians in 1992 in Anapa, Krasnodar, Armavir, Timashevsk. In summer 1993 an incident was fixed between Russians and Armenians in Anapa, in March 1994 – in the Kuban region of Krasnodar. In 1997 in Korenovsk a meeting was organized with the demand to deport Armenians. The same year a Russian-Armenian incident took place in Slaviansk. In 1999-2001 the raids against Armenians were motivated by illegal activities of the representatives of the Armenian community³. It's

¹ Major results of the general population census of 2002. M., 2003, p 13.

² V.Aglamishchian, M.Khelev. Russia gains money on migrants, "Financial News", April 10, 2006.

³ S.Markedonov. Ethnopolitical processes in Rostov district of Krasnodar and Stavropol regions. The problems, contradictions, prospects. Jnl. "Central Asia and Caucasus", #2, 2005.

interesting to note that Russia expressed surprise with the legal demands of Georgians.

An example of biased attitude and distortion of facts was the letter "House with the Window to War", published in the newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (January 31, 1991) by the newspaper correspondent P.Sizi. He was in Tskhinvali and lived in the international family. Through the window of this house he only saw how Georgians killed Ossets, how Georgians persecuted Ossets, how Georgians robbed the shops owned by Ossets, how Georgians destroyed public buildings, etc. He didn't want to give real names to the events. He said nothing about the deceased Georgian population and Georgian policemen, hid deliberately from the readers the fate of numerous Georgian refugees, who were forced to abandon their native land to save their lives. We would like to cite one more article, published by journalist S.Cheriomin in the newspaper "Trud" (May 16 and 17, 1991). It was an ordered article and it had the heading "Opposition". We cited here some examples of how the Russian press deliberately defamed the Georgian people. Lots of such articles were published and keep being published now as well. Even more, the amount considerably increased of the slanderous publications against Georgia. Within 2006 in Moscow several thick books were published, in which the history of Georgia was completely distorted and forged and the history of non-existent South Ossetia from the olden times was invented. Every day there appeared in the Internet the publications, in which the Georgian people were humiliated and the events were absolutely misinterpreted. A fine example of this was the article "South Ossetia: the right for freedom" by D.Medoev. All the statistical data in this article were false, invented by the author. He had no idea of the statistical collections of economic and social development and thinks it was impossible to check the data invented by him. He concluded: "South Ossetia, being as an autonomous district within the Georgian SSR for 70 years, experienced colonial oppression, due to which the indicators of its social development and the level of Ossets life were too low." D.Medoev was so impudent that considered the events of 1937-1939, which concerned both Georgians and Ossets, to be a local phenomenon. We'll see below that, according to the data of the statistical collections published in Moscow, by major and basic indicators the former South Ossetian district was on the first place among all the republics and autonomous formations of the Soviet Union. Within this period there was not a single article, published in the Russian mass media, with objective analysis of the relations among the various ethnic groups in Georgia. Cheriomin was so obsessed with the fixed ideas that the readers saw well the disguised intentions, artificially invented versions and facts.

He was captured with senselessness and illogic. But the efforts of S.Chერიომინ and the editorial staff were in vain. The author resembled one Dagestanian, who wrapped his beloved in a felt coat and kidnapped, but when he unwrapped it, instead of his beloved he saw her toothless grandmother. S.Chერიომინ cynically mentioned that the Georgian scholars worked hard in the archives to determine the identity of their ancestors. They were not moved by the scientific interests, but by the wish to prove that the peoples living in Georgia since time immemorial were “guests”, “foreigners” here, he observed. S.Chერიომინ continues giggling: To talk and argue about the “qualification of lodging” is itself a scholastic jugglery. He considered it a great sin that the Georgian scholars tried to determine the identity of their ancestors, but when he himself and the others kept publishing absurd articles about their ancestors and their identity, none of them had scientific conscience for telling the truth. This is the journal “Technika Molodiezhi” (#8, 1977) wrote some thirty years ago: In the end of the II millennium and the beginning of the I millennium B.C. Kimmerian-Slavonic tribes entered Asia Minor through Trakia and Bosphor and passing the Dariali Gorge from South Russia passed to Transcaucasus... Soon King Rusa I (the VIII century B.C.) ruled Urartu. Southwards of the Caucasus Ridge, near the warm springs, a stronghold was formed Teplitse (the Russian word “tepli” – warm), later Tiplis (present Tbilisi). Then Slavs erected a citadel in Samegrelo, which was called Gorda (from the word “gorod”, “grad” – the Russian “city”). It seems from these suppositions that Slavs formed Tbilisi and Gorda. But Tbilisi in Georgian means warm. A short, hiltless sword in Georgian is “gorda”. By their considerations the name of old capital of Kakheti Kingdom “Gremi” may be said to originate from the Russian word “gremet” (“to clatter, to thunder”). Let’s get familiarized with senseless data, cited by S.Chერიომინ, which in his opinion, showed how hard the living conditions of Ossets in Georgia were and how oppressed they were in Georgia. No one is so naïve to think S.Chერიომინ worried about Ossets; he was moved only by imperial intentions; he tried to blind the peoples’ minds with such publications, to poison their lives, to make them embark on the road of aggression and to make them oppose the Georgian people. For example, S.Chერიომინ compared average monthly wages of workers and compensation for peasants’ work and made wrong conclusion - the interests of Ossets in the South Ossetian district were violated, because average monthly wage was 29, 2 rubles less and peasants’ compensation for work was 13 rubles less than average republican indicator. However, how can S.Chერიომინ explain then the fact that in 1989 average monthly wage of workers in the Republic of Georgia made up 197, 7 rubles, in the former USSR – 240,4 rubles (42, 7

rubles more), in Estonia – 270, 1 rubles, or why did compensation for peasants' work equal respectively 169, 9; 200, 8 and 317, 6 rubles? All this may be explained by the simple reason that the level of average monthly wage was considerably conditioned by peculiarities of sectoral structures of national economy of the republic. Namely, more than 60% of the industrial produce general volume came to light and food industry in Georgia, when in the former Soviet Union the analogous indicator was a bit more than 30%. In this sphere tariff rates and, correspondingly, average monthly wage was less than in other spheres. This, naturally, caused a low level of average monthly wage of those engaged in entire national economy of the republic. Analogous condition was in the former South Ossetia, to which there added poor indicators of work quality, which impeded increase of average monthly wage. Exactly the analogous claims were presented by D.Medoev. In his opinion, in the end of the 1980s average monthly wage of workers of national economy in South Ossetia reached 180 rubles, when in the former Soviet Union and Georgian SSR it exceeded 250 rubles. There exist no such data and it all is a result of D.Medoev's fantasy. We have already mentioned about the data of 1989. Now let's see the data of 1988. Average monthly wage of workers that year in the former South Ossetia equaled not 180 rubles, but far less – 148, 1 rubles, in Georgia – 186, 9 rubles, in the former Soviet Union – 219, 8 rubles¹. The difference between the wages was caused by the reasons mentioned above. The main thing is that D.Medoev invents the data according to his wishes.

The incomes of the population do not depend only on wages. Average monthly wage in the former South Ossetian autonomous district was comparatively low, but an average amount of an account per capita was far higher than in the former Soviet Union and its republics. For example, this indicator in the Soviet Union was 1 035 rubles, in Russia – 1 147 rubles, in Georgia – 1 160 rubles, North Ossetian autonomous republic – 1 289 rubles and in the South Ossetian autonomous district – 1 534 rubles².

As S.Chერიomin was seized with the fixed ideas he blamed Georgia for goods turnover and money spent on buying goods per capita in South Ossetia being lower than the relevant republican indicator. This is regular phenomenon. It should be mentioned that a specific share of rural population in the former South Ossetia was higher than the relevant republican indicator. The purchase ability of the rural population was lower, because the level of natural consumption in the villages was high, which was caused by a great specific share of private peasant farms in output

¹ Statistical materials on economic and social development of union and autonomous republics, autonomous districts and regions. M., 1989, pp 31-32.

² Statistical materials ... pp 43-44

production. In cities and, especially, in Tbilisi, where each fourth of the population of the republic lived, the population satisfied its demand on food and non-food produce mostly through trade. We should also take into consideration that resort sector in other regions of Georgia was more developed than in the former South Ossetia, the resources spent on buying commodity by rest-makers were expressed in the republic indicator of goods turnover. One more important circumstance: after the Rocki pass was built, the population of South Ossetia bought food and non-food products in great amount in its historical home country – the North Ossetian autonomous republic. Naturally, the money they spent on this was expressed in the goods turnover of North Ossetia. S. Cheriomin kept citing ungrounded data, trying to mislead the readers. He was unable to define the events and processes. For example, he pointed that in 1987 death rate in children till one year per each thousand born in the Republic of Georgia was 24, 3, in the former South Ossetia – 27. If he wanted to say that children death rate in South Ossetia was high and no attention was made on it, he should not base his statement on the data of one year only. The data of the previous years indicated the opposite. Namely, in 1981 in the former South Ossetia 24, 7 children died per each newborn up to one year, in Abkhazia – 29, 9; in Adjara – 58, 6; in the republic – 29, 7. Within the same years in Tbilisi the death rate among children was far higher than in the former South Ossetia. For example, in 1989 in the former South Ossetian autonomous district among children up to one year there died 22, 5 children per each thousand newborn, in Tbilisi – 24, 4. We would like to know S. Cheriomin's comments on these data. Such and even tenser situations, which promoted intensification of passions and bloodshed, were published one after another in the Russian press. For example, V. Shanaev, "Itar-Tass" correspondent, wrote that Tskhinvali was in ruins, as the Georgian armed formations destroyed and burned down 80% of the dwelling and administrative buildings¹. Nothing of this kind happened. Unfortunately, such slanderous considerations and opinions continue even today, the only difference being the larger scales of falsehood. The data, brought by them, did not exist in reality and they tried to prove a catastrophic condition in death rates and birth rates in the former South Ossetia was the result of economic policy conducted by the Georgian authorities. D. Medoev mentioned: "It's not surprising that the highest death rate indicator (10 per each 1 000 persons) in Georgia was in South Ossetia, when per each 1 000 there were born 8 children (data of 1988-1989)." We can see such data in not a single collection of statistical data. The author could not name the

¹ The Russian newspaper, June 23, 1992.

source to prove that death rate per 1 000 was 10 and birth rate per 1 000 as 8 children in 1988-1989 in the former South Ossetia. The situation in the former South Ossetia was the same as in entire Georgia and in some years - even better. To prove the consideration, desirable to him, he cited the data invented by him, which was an unprecedented fact. In Georgia the birth rate was far lower in Georgians

than in other ethnic groups leaving in the country, among them Ossets as well. For example, still in 1959 a general coefficient of birth rate in Georgians was 21, 8 promile; in Armenians – 28, 8; in Azeri – 43, 9; in Abkhazia – 22, 3; Ossets – 25, 5. In next years the birth rate reduced in all nationalities, but correlation between the birth rate levels remained the same¹.

Birth Rate, Death Rate and Natural Growth of Population in Georgia (per each 1 000)

	1970	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Georgia						
Birth rate	19, 2	18, 7	18, 7	17, 9	17, 3	16, 7
Death rate	7, 3	8, 8	8, 8	8, 8	9, 0	8, 6
Natural growth	11, 9	9, 9	9, 9	9, 1	8, 3	8, 1
Tbilisi						
Birth rate	18, 0	16, 0	16, 1	15, 1	14, 7	14, 4
Death rate	8, 0	8, 2	8, 2	8, 0	8, 2	8, 2
Natural growth	10, 0	7, 8	7, 9	7, 1	6, 5	6, 2
Former South Ossetian AD						
Birth rate	19, 0	19, 2	18, 3	19, 0	18, 1	16, 7
Death rate	6, 9	9, 0	9, 9	9, 8	9, 1	8, 7
Natural growth	12, 1	10, 2	8, 4	9, 2	9, 0	8, 0

Source: Demographic annual of the USSR 1990, M., 1990, p 152.
Population of the USSR 1998. Statistical collection. M., 1989.
pp 96-97.

Population of the USSR 1987. Statistical collection. M., 1988, pp 164-167.

The major indicators of health care development in the former South Ossetian autonomous district were far better than in the autonomous

¹ M.Tukhashvili. Socio-demographic problems of third age population in the Georgian SSR. In the book: "The Third Age Population", M., 1986, p 226.

republics of Adjara and Abkhazia and entire Republic of Georgia. For example there were 134, 3 hospital beds, 67, 4 physicians of all specialities and 143, 4 middle medical staff per 10 000 population in the former South Ossetian autonomous district. The indicators of Georgia were considerably lower and made up 110, 6, 58, 0 and 124, 9 respectively. In 1988 the autonomous district had far better indicators (except in hospital beds) as compared with all other republics of the former Soviet Union.

Population Maintenance with Physicians, Middle Medical Staff and Hospital Beds in 1988 in the Soviet Union and Georgia per Each 10 000 of the Population

	Physicians	middle medical staff	hospital beds
Soviet Union	43, 8	116, 9	131, 3
North Ossetian Autonomous Republic included	68, 7	120, 4	129, 6
Georgia	58, 0	124, 9	110, 6
included: Abkhazian Autonomous Republic	47, 3	127, 1	119, 0
Adjarian Autonomous Republic	45, 4	116, 6	109, 8
South Ossetian Autonomous District	67, 4	143, 4	134, 3

Source: Statistical materials on economic and social development of union and autonomous republics, autonomous districts and regions. The USSR state statistics committee. M., 1989, pp 127-131.

The level of maintenance with pre-school institutions was better in the autonomous district than in the Republic of Georgia in average. In 1988 in the former autonomous district 53% of children of relevant age were

provided with pre-school institutions, in Georgia – 46%, among them: in Abkhazia – 39%, in Adjara – 28%.

Some Indicators of Social Development in the Soviet Union and Georgia in 1988

	Population maintenance with dwellings per capita (total area, m ²)	Deposit average volume per capita (in rubles)	Mass libraries amount per each 10 000 of the population	Club establishments amount per each 10 000 of the population	Museums visitors amount per each 1 000 of the population	Theatre performances visitors amount per each 1000 of the population
Soviet Union	15,7	1035	5	5	704	393
North Ossetian Autonomous Republic Included	15,9	1289	3	3	557	410
Georgia	188	1160	8	5	1217	715
Included: Abkhazian Autonomous Republic	17,3	1126	6	5	1561	373
Adjarian Autonomous Republic	17,3	907	10	5	556	458
South Ossetian Autonomous District	21,3	1534	16	11	1522	788

Source: Statistical materials on economic and social development of union and autonomous republics, autonomous districts and regions. The USSR state statistics committee. M., 1989, pp 43-45; 76-78; 109-116.

The population of the former South Ossetian autonomous district was far better provided with general dwelling area than the population of the former Soviet Union republics or any autonomous formation. Therefore, with this indicator the district was also on the first place in the former Soviet Union. The region population owned a great amount of cars as well. For example, 59 of each 1 000 of the district population owned a car, when in the former Soviet Union this amount was 53¹.

In the Soviet Union the former South Ossetian district occupied the first place also by the amount of libraries per each 10 000 of the population. The indicator of the population maintenance with the club establishments 2 times and more exceeded the relevant indicator of the aother republics. In addition to all said above, the situation in the former district in regard to the amount of students and pupils per each 10 000 citizens was far better than average in Georgia and its autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Ajara. The amount of guests visiting the museums was also high in the former district and the amount of theatre performance visitors per each 1000 was the highest in the former Soviet Union republics and autonomous formations.

By the amount of of libraries per 10 000 of the population the former South Ossetian autonomous district was on the first place in the former Soviet Union. However, M.Bliev, D.Medoev, I.Kochieva and A.Margiev, probably, have never visited the libraries, otherwise they should have avoided lying.

The official data cited give us full right to mention that Ossets living in the former South Ossetian Autonomous District and generally in Georgia had far better terms within some ten years for their economic and cultural development than the population in the former Soviet Union republics and autonomous formations. This was witnessed by the official statistical data published more than once by the former Soviet Union state statistical committee. As for quality indicators of work, here the situation was quite different. For example, grain harvest in 1988 in South Ossetian Autonomous District was average 17, 1 centner per one hectare, in Georgia – 26, 2 centner, its autonomous formations, namely, in Abkhazia – 28, 9 and Adjara – 29, 6 centner. Potato harvest in South Ossetia was the lowest in the Soviet Union and made up in the same year average 37 centner per one hectare, in the Soviet Union – 103; in North Ossetuian autonomous republic – 111; in Georgia – 109; in Abkhazia – 72 and in Adjara – 108 centners. The lowest was harvest of vegetables and grapes in South Ossetia (by this indicator it was on the last place in the Soviet Union). In the South Ossetian

¹ Statistical materials ..., p 57.

autonomous district average yearly milking of one cow was 1 109 kg of milk and this indicator was the lowest in the Soviet Union. Naturally, in such conditions the results of farming activities in South Ossetian collective and soviet farms, namely, profit and the level of profitability (correlation of profit with self-cost of sold produce), were the lowest as compared with the analogous indicators in the former Soviet Union republics and autonomous formations. It should also be mentioned here that all this did not concern only 1988 data, but the 70s and 80s and even earlier periods of last century¹.

Indicators of Some Agricultural Produce in 1988

	Soviet Union	Russia	North Ossetian autonomous republic	Georgia	South Ossetian autonomous district
Grain harvest in farms of all categories (in centner per 1 hectare)	17,0	15,6	32,4	26,2	17,1
Potato harvest in farms of all categories (in centner per 1 hectare)	103	102	111	109	37
Average yearly milking of one cow in collective and soviet farms (kg)	2798	2703	2868	1935	1109
Self-cost of one centner grains in collective farms (in rubles)	9,7	10,6	8,3	9,9	26,9
Self-cost of one centner potatoes in collective farms (in rubles)	15,8	17,8	10,1	29,2	53,1
Self-cost of one centner grains in soviet farms (in rubles)	12,0	12,3	10,4	16,4	26,7
Self-cost of one centner potatoes in soviet farms (in rubles)	20,3	21,3	16,4	30,3	99,3
Profitability level in soviet farms (correlation of profit with self-cost of sold produce, %)	30,0	36,4	29,9	9,1	-7,4

Source: Statistical materials... pp 218, 268, 293, 295, 303, 309.

¹ Statistical materials ..., pp 218, 228, 232, 248, 268, 293, 295

In such condition we consider to be full anachronism, nonsense the “considerations” of the Ossetian separatist scholars, the Ossetian and Russian journalists – M.Bliev D.Medoev, I.Kochieva, A.Margiev, S.Cheriomin,A.Tausova, V.Sizi and others on South Ossetia experiencing social and colonial oppression, when for 70 years it was within the Georgian SSR as an autonomous district. These absurd considerations are a joint “work” of the Ossetian separatists and their promoter and financier Russian reactionary forces. Solution of the self-proclaimed South Ossetian republic problem, in their opinion, should be based on the fundamental historical realities in the region, i.e. that South Ossetia had existed from the time immemorial and in 1774 it joined the Russian Federation together with North Ossetia. If everything is so as they wish, we should proceed from the fundamental principles of the international law, which are the guarantee for peoples’ self-determination. Through this way, they want to violate Georgia’s state sovereignty, its territorial inviolability and appropriate a historical part of Georgia – Shida Kartli. The Georgian people will never agree with this, with split of its statehood. Georgia has no more land plots to distribute. The Ossetian separatists should be well aware of this. Renowned Ossetian scholar V.Abaev warned his compatriots in the beginning of the 1990s to think and suspend such unsubstantiated intentions, as they would cause the senseless bloodshed.

Prof.Abaev’s prophesy came true. The Russian press prepared rich ground for the bloodshed on our land. At present, the Russian reactionary forces do not stop and stimulate new conflicts between our peoples. This is vividly witnessed by the material published in the newspaper “Literaturnaya Gazeta” under the common title “Fate and Ill-fate of South Ossetia”, which was published in a shortened form in the newspaper “Sakartvelos Respublika” (August 11, 2004).

The most slanderous speeches of Natalia Narochinskaya, deputy chairman of the Russian state дума foreign affairs committee and Alexei Mitrofanov, deputy chairman of the Russian state дума constitutional legislation and state structure committee were published on the pages of the “Literaturnaya Gazeta”. They blamed Georgia and distorted historical facts in the most indecent way.

Natalia Narochinskaya mentioned: “The Bolsheviks used to make borders accommodated to their political considerations. Therefore, not only the Russian people, but other peoples turned out to be separated with these borders. “Classical example” of this – Ossets. A part of them entered the RSFSR, the other part was transferred to the Georgian SSR.” However, she is partially true in saying this. The Bolsheviks often did so, but Ossets were

not separated with such borders. Ossets could not have autonomy wherever they come to live, be it the historical territory of Georgia, where they settled as migrants or any countries they went to live. Such territories cannot be joined to Russia either. As for formation of the South Ossetian autonomous district in Georgia, it really was within the borders made according to the political considerations and was formed through violation of all the legislative norms.

It resembled the situation: if Russians, that live outside of the Russian Federation, in the post-Soviet space in thousands, demand with the aim of separation, to review the borders and to join the territories settled with Russians to Russia. Through disguised methods Russia tries to do this. They give Russian passports to the citizens of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region and then say loudly: our citizens in Georgia should be protected and the territories settled by them should be joined to Russia.

Fine logic, isn't it?

Alexei Mitrofanov's consideration was more absurd than the one said above: "200 years ago the war in Caucasus started, in fact, because of Georgia, to save co-religious people the amount of which before the Georgievski Treatise (before 1783) was 75 000 in all. At present Georgians are in millions. For this our ancestors fought with the highlanders for 40 years in the century before last." His discussion is superficial, because the population of Georgia has never been so small in number – 75 000. There exist no such data in the nature and it is only a result of Mitrofanov's fantasy.

Now we would like to ask Alexei Mitrofanov, what was the war unleashed by Russia 200 years ago in Caucasus for Georgia? Just on the contrary. In the second half of the XVIII century the Tsarist Russia violated the obligations shouldered by the agreements and the Treatise due to its imperial intentions and more than once abandoned Georgia, which was facing numerous enemies. It was because King Erekle II refused to fulfil the demands of the Iranian authorities to break relations with Russia and to leave Russia's protection, that in 1795 Tbilisi was mercilessly destroyed by the enemy and earlier with the same reason Kvemo Kartli was raided by the Ottoman army. Let's ask Mitrofanov what has changed in the relations with Georgia since then, 200 years later. Russia thought and thinks even now that its rule over Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region was the best method for pressing Georgia and entire Caucasus and for fulfilling its imperial intentions there.

I. Kanadpev, who lived in Caucasus for 20 years, wrote in his book published in 1902 in St Petersburg: "Bourgeoisie, as the history shows,

always gains victory over nobility. That's right, but we should add that the economic evolution nowhere ended so fatally for nobility as here...

Should the government permit destruction of the Georgian nobility, which so devotedly served Russia after Georgia was joined to it? We should not forget the fact that the Georgian nobility was a bearer of the idea on unification of two co-religious nations and the main reason of voluntary joining of one kingdom to the other... Georgia's joining ...was most profitable for Russia as its borders came into direct relation with Turkey and Persia. This gave the Russian government an opportunity to exercise its influence on both states. By joining Georgia, Russia surrounded the Caucasian highlanders from all the sides and accelerated their subjection to Russia's rule and, correspondingly, abolished the obstacles hindering peaceful cultural development of North Caucasus. Finally, we should stress that through Georgia Russia has obtained the country, unusually rich in natural resources, which can serve to enrichment of the Russian people"¹.

Alexei Mitrofanov continued: "For the sake of Georgia, of its certain "territorial integrity", entire Caucasus may be enwrapped in fire. Georgia has never been a single state; it was always divided into principalities, disintegrated. We, Russians, do not need a united Georgia." You are right, you do not want a united Georgia, but we, Georgians, do want and maybe 200 year long period is enough for you to leave us alone. If you think "territorial integrity" is not important, then give the Kuril Islands back to Japan. But the fate of a state does not depend on Mitrofanov-like people. Alexei Mitrofanov is so aggressive towards Georgia due to his imperial plans. He knows well that not only Georgia, but many other small and big states, Russia among them, were divided into principalities in the certain period of their history.

It is well known that the process of dividing into principalities and feudal disintegration deepened in the XII-XIII centuries in Russia as well. After the dissolution of the Russian state, from the first third of the XII century Vladimir-Suzdal, Galich-Volin and other principalities separated from Russia, then in the old principalities (Rostov, Tver, Nizhni-Novgorod, Riazan and others) there were formed new, the so-called princes' principalities. Mr Mitrofanov may come across many such evidences if he reads "Course of Russian History" by a great Russian historian V.Kliuchevski. What does he want from Georgia then? But he is seized with imperial disease. He pretends to worry about the issue of Ossets – writes about their fate and ill-fate when in North Ossetia they have not opened even one school in the native language. Russia opposed just aspirations of

¹ I.K.Kanadpev. Essays on Transcaucasian life, Baku, 1990, pp 80-81

Chechens for independence with tanks. Here, in the middle of Georgia, they support independent statehood of Ossets, which are migrants. They say nothing about assimilation of Komis, Khants, Mansis and other ethnic groups. This is proved by the fact that in 1926 there lived in Komi autonomous republic 14 000 Russians, in 1989 – 722 000. After that the amount of native inhabitants in Komi reduced from 92, 3% to 23, 3% in the general amount of the population. In Khanti-Mansi autonomous district the amount of Russians in 1959-1989 increased from 90 000 to 848 000, and the amount of native population, Khants and Mansis, in the same 30 year period reduced from 13, 6% to 1, 4%. In such situation in Russia, the Russian reactionary forces keep worrying about the fate of South Ossetia. In regard to arrest of Russian military technique in Georgia, which was aimed at supporting a small group of the Ossetian separatists and the Russian reactionary forces against Georgia, the officials like Mitrofanov, Zhirinovski and Narohnitskaya impudently declared: we should have destroyed all the cities of Georgia and not a single Georgian should have remained alive.

In short, even the fascists' propaganda seems too weak as compared with their fantasy. Such ideas were not spread even in the period of Tsarism colonial policy. If now the Russian friends spared not a single kind word to protect Georgia, in 1887 Russian writer Evgeni Markov wrote in his book "Essays on Caucasus", published in St Petersburg: "We, Russians, should never forget that we have not occupied Georgia by sword, that we are equal brothers and not powerful rulers; we should not forget that Georgians entered our family to remain Georgians. That's why we should respect everything that is Georgian, Georgian history, every Georgian, every holy place of Georgians, every trait of Georgians; we should support and promote them as we do with our own. The union between brothers means that one should take care of and assist and not devour the other"¹.

The Georgian people always used to respect Ossets living in Georgia, to express care for them, to promote development of their spiritual culture.

In 1988 in South Ossetia, the population of which was 6, 4 times less than in the North Ossetian autonomous republic, there were published per 10 000 inhabitants the books of 3, 5 times more designations in twice more copies than in North Ossetia².

In the former South Ossetia young people had every opportunity to be educated in their native language. To compare: there was not a single

¹ E. Markov. Essays on Caucasus, St Petersburg. Moscow, 1887, pp 214-215.

² Press in the USSR in 1988. M., 1989, pp129-131.

national school in North Caucasus, namely, in “Kabardino-Balkarsk, Kalmyk, North Ossetia, Checheno-Ingush autonomous republics, Adighei and Karachaev-Circassian autonomous regions, where children studied in Russian”¹ In Georgia there functioned 98 Ossetian schools along with the schools of mixed type: 90 schools – in the former South Ossetian autonomous district and 8 – in the places of Ossets compact settlements – Tbilisi, Lagodekhi, Borjomi, Kareli and Kvareli. Before 1921 there was not a single Ossetian school in Georgia, while by 1926 there were already 19 Ossetian schools in five provinces of Georgia, in 1928-1929 the amount of Ossetian schools increased to 26².

In North Caucasus the Russian language dominated and it ousted the native languages from factories, mills, houses, institutes, schools. Everything started “talking” in Russian at home and outside, at work and in the street. Such was the situation all over North Caucasus. Desirable result was achieved. According to the data of sociological research, conducted in Karachaev-Circassian autonomous region the parents did not use much the native language in their relations with children. This idea was shared by 37, 5% of the respondents. 50, 0% considered they used both Russian and the native language. 90, 0% of the respondents in cities used the Russian language in the non-official correspondence, 10, 0% - both languages. 45, 0% read fiction only in Russian, 67, 0% read press in Russian. 100, 0% of the respondents delivered speeches before the audience only in Russian³.

All this was caused by the efforts directed against the native languages and in favor of introducing only the Russian language. For example, when the USSR leader N.Khrushchev said at the stairs of the Belorussian University his sacramental phrase: “The sooner we all start speaking Russian, the sooner we build Communism”, not only Belarus, but Ukraine as well started implementation of this harmful idea into life⁴. Communism was not built, but there was no school in the native language in Belorussia left at all. 79, 0% of pupils were educated in Russian. School in Belorussian remained only in the villages. The Belorussian language teachers had three times less lessons than those of Russian. This discrimination was apparent in the teachers’ wages, teachers of the Russian language and literature got higher wages than those teaching Belorussian.

The situation in North Caucasus was far worse. Renowned Dagestanian poet Rassul Gamzatov wrote: “Literature in my native

¹ Ethnic processes in the USSR. M., 1977, p 273.

² E.Jioeva. Fight to liquidate cultural backwardness among South Ossetian people in 1921-1932, Tb., 1971, p 11.

³ The Russian nation in the USSR union of peoples. Kuibishev, 1990, p 125.

⁴ “Literaturnaya Gazeta”, September 13, 1989.

Dagestan is created in nine languages. They say none of them will perish... Two new literary journals were published recently. But we worry about the issue: who can read these journals 10, 20 years after? There is no kindergarten, no school, not a single class, where the native language is taught"¹. In Georgia in that period, as we have said above, there functioned 98 Ossetian schools – 90 in the former South Ossetian region and 8 – in the places of Ossets compact settlement. The Ossetian authors gave false information even on the school issue and said: “The Ossetian schools are closed in Akhmeta and Lagodekhi regions of Georgia, where Ossets live compactly, and the principal in the only Poni Ossetian School is a Georgian. There are very few children because the population in Poni and surrounding villages is being reduced”². However, from 8 Ossetian schools there function 5 and why cannot a Georgian be an Ossetian school principal? There are three Ossetian schools in Lagodekhi region – Bolkvi basic and Poni and Areshperan secondary schools. As for small amount of pupils, it is easy to explain. Ossets did not leave Georgia only due to the conflict situation; some hundred thousands of Georgians left Georgia due to economic problems. The demographic situation in Georgia much worsened, the birth rate reduced in half. Namely, if in 1980-1989 there were born 935 776 children in Georgia in ten years, in 1995-2004, i.e. again in ten years, only 504 302 were born. That’s why the amount of schoolchildren reduced in the country and some schools even were closed. It’s no wonder the amount of pupils in the village Poni also reduced.

Progressive Georgian society always took care of cultural development of Ossets; it’s a historical fact that still in the XVIII century, in the period of King Erekle II, a special commission formed the written language for Ossets for the first time, later the Georgian language graphs became a basis for the Ossetian written language. Starting from the XIX century up today the Georgian people always took care of developing the Ossetian language and literature, of getting education in schools in the native language. The historical truth requires more respect. Our great educator Jacob Gogebashvili said, Ossets used the Georgian “Deda-ena” (ABC textbook) and created their Ossetian “Deda-ena”. As the photos required big expenses, they appealed to Georgians with the request to give them cliché, which was given to them free of charge.

Still in the XVIII century the Georgian missionaries conducted their activities to educate the Ossetian population. In 1764 the first school in the history of the Ossetian people was opened in newly founded Mozdok

¹ The newspaper “Izvestia”, March 29, 1988.

² I.Kochieva, A.Margiev. Op.cit. p 107.

fortress. It was the only school not only in Ossetia, but in the entire North Caucasus. The Ossetian historian G.Togoshvili mentions that “progressive authors of the school opening idea were Georgian scholars... This idea was objectively of progressive significance for the Ossetian people’s cultural life. Ossets, educated at this school ... played a positive role in cultural development of the Ossetian people”¹.

In the XIX century many students from North Ossetia studied in Tbilisi and Gori theological schools and seminaries. Later they became renowned representatives of the Ossetian people and left outstanding traces in the school education and cultural life of their historical home country. For example, on the order of King Erekle II, Ioanne Ialghuzidze was educated in Georgia and later became the most renowned public figure of Ossetia in the first half of the XIX century. He performed the first Ossetian manuscript (1802) in the Georgian graphs. In 1812 on the basis of the Georgian graphs there was formed the first Ossetian alphabet. Famous Georgian writer Daniel Chonkadze largely contributed to collecting the Ossetian folklore samples. He knew the Ossetian language well and taught it at Tbilisi Theological Seminary from 1855. A part of these Ossetian folklore samples, written down by him, was published in St Petersburg in 1868². He had also translated several books from Georgian into Ossetian. A.Gachechiladze mentions that D.Chonkadze was charged by the Russian Academy of Science with compiling the Russian-Ossetian dictionary. He started work on it, but failed to finish due to his illness. The part of this dictionary is preserved now in the fund of the Institute of Manuscripts³.

Acad. Giorgi Akhvlediani contributed much to the development and study of the Ossetian language. A majority of the Ossetian scholars were trained in Tbilisi scientific establishments. In 1906 there was founded in Tbilisi “Ossetian Publishing Society”, which in 1907 published in Tbilisi the Ossetian newspaper “Nog Tsard” (New Life). The society opened a school for the Ossetian youth living in Tbilisi, where the teaching process was in their native language. The same society founded a dramatic circle, which presented its first performance in 1906. The first Ossetian state drama theatre was founded in 1931 through the promotion of the Georgian people. There was opened the Pedagogical Institute in Tskhinvali in 1932.

We would like to turn attention to the fact that though there was in Orjonikidze the North Ossetian scientific-research institute of history, economy, language and literature. The South Ossetian scientific-research

¹ G.Togoshvili. Georgia-Ossetia relations in the XV-XVIII cc. Tb., 1969, p 241.

² Ossetian texts collected by D.Chonkadze and V.Tsoroev, notes of Acad. of Sci., vol. XIV, 1868.

³ History of the Georgian Literature, vol. III, Tb., 1969, p 376.

institute of Georgian Academy of Science prepared 4 volumes of the Ossetian language explanatory dictionary. The Ossetian scholars were assisted in their work by the Institute of Linguistics of the Georgian Academy of Science. Here was also prepared “History of the Ossetian Literature” in many volumes, the first volume of which was published 25 years ago. Many volumes of “History of Ossetia” were also published. Several volumes of the Ossetian folk fairy-tales were published in Ossetia both in the Ossetian and Georgian and Russian languages as well, etc.

After all said above, a question arises naturally, as to what caused the present situation in the former South Ossetian autonomous district. First of all, it is the result of lacking the care over the painful problems accumulated in the sphere of national and inter-national relations over tens of years, of ignoring historical facts. And what is more important, after dissolution of the USSR, the Russian reactionary forces did their best to press the former Soviet republics and to prepare grounds for fulfilling their imperial intentions in the near future. It was required for this to use in Georgia the separatist forces of Abkhazia and Ossetia, to expand and support them, to kindle anti-Georgian feelings. They widely used the mass media in this case. Everything was done ideologically for further causing bloodshed and troubles in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

The Russian reactionary forces supplied the Ossetian separatists with arms and military technique, as they never had neither tanks nor machine-guns. At present they have 87 tanks, 95 mortars and guns (among them 72 howitzers), 23 jet systems, 80-100 combat vehicles, 3 helicopters, etc¹. They, certainly, could not have dared to violate the territorial integrity of Georgia, unless being backed by the Russian reactionary forces.

Territorial changes of a state should not be made at the expense of neglecting the interests of nation. Formation of new small states is impossible without conflict armed clashes. Such conflicts, as practice showed, keep expanding and often leave the borders of one country. With few exceptions, the United Nations Organization opposes formation of new states and strictly supports the territorial integrity of each state.

The number of the present-day world peoples languages totals 4-5 000, the amount of peoples – about 3 000. It’s easy to imagine what will the world be like, what its future will be, what bloodshedding clashes it will face, in case these peoples demand independence and individual statehood and start fulfilling these intentions. For example, in India according to recent data there existed 845 languages and dialects, 29 ethnoses, each comprising separately more than million men and 13 ethnoses – more than

¹ “Nezavisimaya Gazetta”, July 26, 2006

10 million. The Chinese state is also multinational and many other small and big countries. Naturally, neither India nor China permits violation of its territorial integrity. That's why the authorities of India keep resisting intensively the separatist movement. As far as we know, in the USA any demand or action aiming at redistribution or separation, expressed by any state, is punished with longterm sentence.

A wellknown epos of Narths ends in all Narts digging graves for themselves. Such was a tragic end of Narths. What is taking place in "South Ossetia" now through the Ossetian separatists, is just the digging of graves, but with difference that they do spare neither Georgians nor Ossets. They do not want to see the historical truth, try to blind the mind of their nation, to poison the nation's consciousness, to embark the nation on the path of aggression. Kokoiti and his like resemble cunning Syrdon from the Narths' epos, who ruined Narths.

Falsely interpreted patriotism resulted in the Ossetian separatist forces and Ossetian extremists doing their best for violating Georgia's territorial integrity, trying to cause life-death antagonism between the Georgian and Ossetian peoples. This is also the result of our indifferent attitude to solution of the national problem at the scientific level, our hesitation to tell the truth on the objective reasons of other peoples' settlement on our territories, wish to discuss everything only from the positions of internationalism. A vivid example of this is wrong consideration of Kosta Khetagurov, classic of the Ossetian literature, on the location of Ossetia. He mentioned that in North Caucasus the Ossetian tribes lived in deep gorges and had no close relations with one another. At the same time he considered the territory "starting from Akhalkalaki, Gori and Kutaisi ending in Mozdok" to be Ossetia¹. We think this consideration, which has nothing in common with the reality and which even the Ossetian separatists do not believe in, was known to everyone. But no one has ever said anything about it, due to discussion of everything from the positions of internationalism. Common sense should not remain a mere onlooker of the events.

Proceeding from all mentioned above, the Ossetian extremists should be blocked first of all by just the Ossetian people, which over the entire period of co-living shared the joys and sorrows of the Georgian people as well as the Georgian people – the troubles of the Ossetian people. It is legal and moral duty of Ossets, living and working in Georgia, to protect the interests of our country, to fight together with the Georgian people for strengthening of its independence and its flourishing.

¹ K.Khetagurov. Op.cit. p 235.

EPILOGUE

All said above causes no doubt that Ossets migrated to Georgia in the XVII-XIX centuries.

It causes no doubt not because some obstinacy of the author of this present book. The old Georgian literary and historical sources, the books of Italian missionaries and European travelers, the works of Georgian, Russian and Ossetian scholars, linguistic material, Georgian and Ossetian folklore, Shida Kartli highlands architecture, epigraphy, toponyms prove this giving no right to say otherwise. The history cannot be rewritten anew only to calm down political passions of the Ossetian separatists and their supporter Russian reactionary forces.

It won't be difficult for unbiased readers of the present book to be assured that Ossets have never lived densely in Georgia before the XVII century. Only in the XVII century Ossets in small numbers come to live in Georgia and settle on the southern slopes of the Caucasus Ridge, in extreme northern part of Shida Kartli. The Ossetian dilettante scholars try to attach different burden to the life of Ossets in Georgia. They first considered Ossets started migration to Georgia in the second half of the XIII century, but then changed this date and based on wrong interpretation of the written sources they concluded – Ossets not only lived in Iberia, East Georgia in the era B.C., but even were in the ruling position; still in the period of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, in the V century Shida Kartli was populated with Ossets. None of these considerations is true. There is no trace of Ossets living in Georgia proved by the richest Georgian historical sources and literary works of that period. The Georgian church and secular literature broadly highlights lives of Jews, Persians, Arabs, Armenians and Greeks in Georgia, even separate episodes of their lives. In case Ossets did really live in Georgia then, even in small numbers, this would have been reflected in the old Georgian written sources in any form. Neither foreign sources say anything about Ossets living in Georgia.

Ossets did not live in Georgia in the XIII century either. In the second half of this century the Ossetian raiding groups followed Mongols, which was in the interests of Mongols. Ossets occupied Gori and its surrounding part. Beka Jaqeli, powerful feudal of Samtskhe, blocked their advance. The Georgian chroniclers knew well that Ossets came to Georgia for marauding and would be sooner or later driven away from Georgia. And, though Ossets occupied Gori, the chroniclers used special expressions on their being and not living there¹. Soon, King Giorgi Brtskinvale (the

¹ Kartlis Tskhovreab, vol. II, pp 296, 306, 318, 445.

Splendid) drove Ossets out of Georgia and within next two centuries the chroniclers say nothing about Ossets.

One more important fact should be taken into consideration. The Georgian kings often hired Ossets to fight against enemies. They brought them from North Caucasus. Queen Rusudan gathered army to fight against Jelal-ed-Din. She brought Ossets through Dariali. King Giorgi III brought Ossets to fight against the sultan¹. Thus, if Ossets had lived in Shida Kartli, the chroniclers would have mentioned about participation of Ossets living on the territory of Georgia in the battles and would have been satisfied only with mentioning about the “brought” Ossets.

The unbiased readers cannot neglect the fact that Ossets, living in “South Ossetia”, lived the best of all in the former Soviet Union. No other conclusion can be made according to the official statistical data cited in the book.

No one can doubt either that Ossets living in Georgia had all the terms formed for protecting and developing their science, language, history, culture, teaching in their native language and, consequently, their peculiarity, traditions, customs and habits. If we repeat the said above, there was not a single school in the Ossetian language in North Ossetia, when in Georgia 98 Ossetian schools were functioning. In 1988 in “South Ossetia”, the population of which was 4 times less than in North Ossetia, there were published 3, 5 times more books per each 10 000 persons in twice more copies than in North Ossetia. These two vivid examples are quite sufficient for clarifying the issue.

Last ten year long period has once more assured us that animosity, bloodshed and neglect of one another’s interests can never bring any good to anyone. Antagonism, surely, can yield no good either to Georgians or Ossets, as we are closely related by common traditions, habits and customs, material and spiritual culture and, what is most important, blood relationship. It is universally known that in Tbilisi most frequent were Georgian-Ossetian marriages². Such marriages were also frequent all over Georgia. The families formed in result of these marriages were equally based on the Georgian and Ossetian cultures. It is evident that antagonism is not in the political, economic or cultural interests of two allied peoples. As entire Georgia is a single, indivisible organism, the Tskhinvali region is also indivisible from Georgia, its economy – from the economy of Georgia; without unification wellbeing of the Tskhinvali region is impossible.

¹ Ibid., p 183

² A.Susokolov. Inter-national marriages in the USSR. M., 1987, p 47.

Opponents to this truth are enemies to the Georgian and Ossetian peoples, which try to turn the political conflicts into the ethnic opposition. It is apparent to everyone, however, that this conflict is inspired by the external, Russian reactionary forces and a small group of the local separatists. It needs no substantiation that the Tskhinvali region, which with the amount of its population, economic potential cannot be compared even with an average-sized region of Georgia – Kareli, won't be able to keep the army, to equip it with modern, expensive military technique and to blackmail Georgia. There do not live even 50 000 people in the Tskhinvali region. At the same time, president E.Kokoiti of the self-proclaimed “republic of South Ossetia” and his supporters should think that joining of the Tskhinvali region to Ossetai, first of all, means break of the relations for ever with a great amount of Ossets living in Georgia and thus splitting of the Ossetian people living in Georgia. The citizens of Ossetian nationality, living in Georgia, appeal to their compatriots, living in the Tskhinvali region: “You all know quite well, that the bloody conflict, started 15 years ago between two peoples, was not an antagonism between Georgians and Ossets, but a civil war, unleashed by the enemies of Georgia, our home country. It, finally, embraced the entire Georgia and many innocent lives were sacrificed to it, both of Georgians and Ossets and also the representatives of other ethnic groups.

We, the citizens of Ossetian nationality living in Georgia, are a part of the Georgian nation and whoever wants to artificially split us, is sworn enemy to our common home country... Don't trust those dull and cunning “historians”, which advocate the idea of uniting “two Ossetias”. This idea, first of all, is invented for full destruction of the Ossetian people. Outside of the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) there live more than hundred thousand citizens of Georgia of the Ossetian origin. Both you and we want good and happiness for our descendents. So, friends, relatives, brothers and sisters, let's build together a single, powerful, independent Georgia – the future of our beloved home country”¹.

Russia can play an essential role in establishing peace in Caucasus and it should by all means perform this important role. Political motives should not block the way to the truth. It is of great importance that the Russian-Georgian relations comprise several centuries. Georgians and Russians follow the same religious belief – Orthodoxy and, obviously, closeness of the mode of life, traditions and customs and habits connects us. Living within one state space, we experienced many joys and sorrow, we fought side by side against common enemies and, generally, within 70 year

¹ The newspaper “24 Saati”, July 20, 2004.

period we were closely followed by fate and ill-fate either. We witnessed failure of the model of constructing a new society – Socialist order. Great experiment of the epoch was a complete failure and took with it acute pains and feelings of our generations. It turned out not to be so easy to bid farewell to the old and return to the past in some extent, as it seemed at the first glance. In many cases we failed to avoid ethnoconflicts, which ended in bloodshed. Dissolution of the Soviet Union with the lightning speed, sudden break of political, legal, economic and other no less important relations and contacts within one functioning space, search for other export spaces, which was connected with great problems, brought extremely serious economic problems to people. Settlement of the conflicts will promote in overcoming these problems.

Though our generations have to live in the most complicated and contradictory epoch, friendship between the Russian and Georgian peoples, intellectuals, scholars, writers, representatives of art and culture will remain a fine example for the future generations. Even today, in this most tense situation the Georgian people cannot be blamed by anyone for disrespect towards the Russian people. The Russian people have the same attitude to Georgians. That's why the Georgian people hope much for Russia. In case Russia suspends political, economic and military support to the separatists, the conflict will be immediately settled and everything will be peacefully solved. This is in the interests of Russia as well: both Georgians and Russians need peaceful Caucasus.

Unfortunately, these good wishes of the author failed to be fulfilled. It seems Russia has planned the war with Georgia and dictated by them, the Ossetian separatists provoked Georgians. In summer 2008 and especially in the beginning of August Ossets kept permanently bombing and shooting against the Georgian villages. When there was no way out left the Georgian armed formations entered the Tskhinvali region to keep order and to finally restore Georgia's jurisdiction on their own territory. Russia was just waiting for this.

It is known that Russia supplied the population of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region with the Russian passports and now, on the pretext of protecting its population, Russia introduced into the Tskhinvali region numerous soldiers and military technique and unleashed a real war there. At the same time Russia started armed hostilities in other regions of Georgia simultaneously. Nearly all the regions of Georgia were bombed. The Russian soldiers and military techniques raided entire Shida Kartli territory. In fact, the Russian army completely ruined Gori, bombed a considerable part of the country's infrastructure in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, in Poti, Marneuli, Senaki ... Innocent people were killed and wounded. The soldiers

marauded and took out of the population's houses everything, even domestic appliances; they robbed shops and banks, offices and were most merciless against the peaceful people. Some tens of thousands of people were IDPs. What Russians did in Georgia has nothing to do with protection of its citizens. Neither the international community is now so naïve to believe legal protection of the Russian citizens due to deliberately delivered Russian passports. Thus, Russia can attack any country of the worlds with this reason. The following may be said: when Russia started delivering the Russian passports, it was clear it wanted to impede the conflict settlement.

Within its centuries-old history Georgia has never been destroyed so mercilessly and completely. Russia is well aware what it has done and why. So now, it tries with weak arguments to justify its action. Renowned Russian critic said: Credo should be valuable only because it is true and not because it is ours". The world community has already evaluated that Russia's credo is too far from being true and it is only its imperial credo.

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