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**REASON OF ANTI-GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES OF
OSSETIAN BOLSHEVIKS IN GEORGIA**

Conflict of Tskhinvali region is worth studying not only political, but scientific point of view as well. Consequently, there are number of articles considering historical, political and military analysis related to the above-mentioned issue. However, the existing article about conflict of Tskhinvali region is chronologically focused on twentieth century's events concerning conflict analysis. Its explanation may be lay on the last phase of the conflict that began from that period.

Nevertheless, the chronological period of the beginning of the conflict is relatively extensive and takes from the first half of the early 20th century, from the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic and then from the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)¹. That is why, perhaps it would be appropriate if during the conflict analysis we draw parallels to the basis events of the conflict, because the difference between conflict origins and present day is only one century, which is not a long period for history.

This conflict emerged at the period of the First Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918-1921. During this time there were 3 facts of Anti-governmental activities from Ossetian Bolsheviks (in 1918, 1919 and 1920). Studying of this conflict is getting more popularity from 90-ies of 20th century when conflict renewed and Georgia gained independence from Soviet Union. After this time huge number of scientific articles and books were published concerning that conflicts.

While studying these three conflicts, there was an impression that the demands of Ossetian Bolsheviks were gradually growing and they had no desire to obtain autonomy at first time in 1918. That was dominated opinion in Georgian historiography.

¹ Bluashvili U., Georgian-Ossetian Conflict: Who and Why Started It?, Tbilisi, 2005, p. 40.

Now I pay attention to one significant document kept In Georgian National Centre of manuscripts. As document from Mikheil Machabeli's personal archive². In some words I will tell you briefly about Mikheil Machabeli. He was agronomist. In 1885-1918 he worked in ministry of agriculture. He studied peasant's condition and agriculture. Several documents are kept in this archive about this issue. Archive unit? 1523 is very significant for us.

This document is about the idea of creating independent administrative unit of South Ossetia. There is 10-page project describing how it should happen. Addressee of this project was National Council of Georgia.

According to this document, appears impression that the anti-governmental activities was growing gradually not due to events but there were planned actions after failing above mentioned project. Let's look through what happened regarding the Ossetian conflict.

The first Ossetian anti-governmental revolt was held in March, 1918, their demands were connected to land division and other economic or administrative issues. Their demand raised into military attack and ended with taking Tskhinvali. That conflict finally ended with Georgian military interfere³.

From 1919 it was time when started demand to establish separate administrative unit. They wanted to establish separate Yezd with the centre of Tskhinvali, but by that time ethnic Ossetians were inhebited in Java, Ossetians did not live in Tskhinvali. Ossetians wanted Tskhinvali becouse it was well developed economic centre. Their another demand was to establish independent court system that was far from Yezd rights. These demands did not have support from Georgian government.

The most significant revolt was in 1920 when Ossetian Bolsheviks took force from Russian communist party for declaring independence, separate from Georgia and unite with Soviet Union. Ossetian Bolsheviks took Tskhinvali again and started battle for taking near territories. This conflict was ended after Georgian military intervention.

² Kekelidze K., National Center for Manuscripts in Georgia, M. Machabeli's personal archive, Archive unit №1523.

³ From the history of Georgian and Ossetian peoples' relations, 1991, p. 144.

The chronology of the conflict makes us sense that demands of Ossetian Bolsheviks gradually increased. As in the starting point they did not want to declare independence. Above mentioned document changes this widely accepted idea absolutely.

According the document kept in Mikheil Machabeli's personal archive we read that even in December, 1917 Ossetian national council took the project about establishment of separated South Ossetian administrative unit.

It is obvious that that project was rejected by Georgian national council in January, 1918. Exactly from this period started Bolshevik Ossetians anti-governmental riots to achieve their goal, establish autonomous unit.

In conclusion of this part of article we can say that it is the first time when the document from Machabeli's personal archive circled in scientific sphere. The content of that document changes point view about widely accepted ideas about anti-governmental demands of Ossetian Bolsheviks. So, this document is very important to those historians who work Georgians and Ossetians relations. Such historical peculiarities sometimes change overview about hot moments in history.

Now we can continue to discuss the conflict in the first period. Research of the conflict is very sensitive issue but very actual in Georgian case. Shida Kartli is region of Georgia and part of this region is occupied by Russia since 2008. Separatists established so called South Ossetia with the center of Tskhinvali region. But the history of the conflict did not start some years ago. Let's start from the beginning.

This conflict emerged at the period of the First Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918-1921⁴. During this time there were 3 facts of Anti-governmental activities from Ossetian Bolsheviks (in 1918, 1919 and 1920⁵). Studying of this conflict is getting more popularity from 90-ies of 20th century when conflict renewed and Georgia gained independence from Soviet Union. After this time huge number of scientific articles and books were published concerning that conflicts.

The conflict in the modern Tskhinvali region dates back to 1918-1921. This is the period of time during which the scale of anti-government activities

⁴ Toidze L., How the Autonomous District of South Ossetia was created, Tbilisi, 1991, p. 10.

⁵ Джугели В., Тяжёлый крест (Записки народногвардейца), Тифлиси, „Типография Правительства“, 1920, с. 227.

is gradually increasing. In the first period, I combined anti-government activities in 1918-1919, and the events of 1920 were in the second period⁶. This will help me better follow the course of events with regard to periodization.

So, why I divided the conflict into two periods? At the First period Ossetians wanted to gain autonomous rights, but on the second stage they tried to separate Tskhinvali region from Georgia and join it to Russia.

Before discussing anti-government activities, we need to briefly review the process of settling Ossetians in Georgia, which dates back to the late 15th century. This is when the Ossetians settled in Dvaleti⁷, which was northern territory of Georgia. Two centuries later they assimilated the Georgians living there and in the second half of the 17th century, gradually settled in the different regions of Georgia.

Now I will move on to the beginning and development of anti-government activities by Ossetian Bolsheviks throughout Georgia's new history.

During the first democratic republic of Georgian that existed almost three years from 1918 to 1921 Ossetian separatists tried to separate Tskhinvali region from Georgia. Activation of the Ossetian Bolsheviks begins after the 1917 revolution. The People's Assembly of South Ossetia and the National Council have since been established, from which new initiatives or complaints have been put forward. They are trying to take over any so-called rule. In the territory of "South Ossetia" (it is artificial term of occupied territory today) in order to establish a separate unit or autonomy.

The anti-government activities of 1918 did not produce any results, which led to an unplanned strategy.

The rise of the demands of the Ossetian Bolsheviks did not cancel by the unsuccessful end of anti-government protests in 1918.

In January 1919, the National Council of South Ossetia decided to establish an independent court system, of course it was neglected by the Ministry of Justice of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Their demand

⁶ Guntsadze M., Ossetian uprising of 1920 in Shida Kartli according to the Georgian press materials, *Journal Georgian Source-Studies*, XV-XVI, 2013/2014, p. 40.

⁷ Topchishvili R., *Ethnography of the Caucasian People*, Tbilisi, 2007, p. 50.

was not reasonable because according to entire judicial system equal rights for all citizens of Georgia, regardless of their nationality were foreseen⁸.

The Georgian government has obtained documents suggesting that the National Council of South Ossetia was planning an uprising, after which they would launch their own demands.

In June 1919, the National Council of South Ossetia created the "Draft of Constitution of South Ossetia", which was presented to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia. Ossetians also demanded Tskhinvali as the center of the South Ossetian administration. According to the 1886 census, there were 1135 Georgians, 1953 Jews, 744 Armenians, and no Ossetians in Tskhinvali. According to the 1922 census⁹, the number of Ossetians living in Tskhinvali was relatively small when the South Ossetian Autonomous District was created. There were 1436 Georgians, 1651 Jews, 765 Armenians and 613 Ossetians in Tskhinvali during this period, which accounted for about 13.5% of the total population of Tskhinvali¹⁰.

The suggestion developed by the Georgian side was to create a *Java uyezd* where the cases and local administration were to be implemented in their mother tongue language. This was the maximum that an independent state could give to the Ossetian Bolsheviks at that time. Ossetians disapproved this offer.

In 1919, for the two-year anniversary of the Revolution, the Bolshevik Party was planning a new wave of anti-government protests in Georgia, supported by the Caucasian Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).¹¹ The Georgian government heard about it and began arrests of the participants two days earlier.

By that time the rebellion was easily oppressed by Georgians but it became the basis of big events in 1920.

The suppression of anti-government activities of 1918-1919 only delayed the process, not its final resolution. As it turned out later, the

⁸ Constitution of Georgia, Constitution of Georgia (Adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Georgia on February 21, 1921), Tbilisi, "Homeland", 1992, Electronic version, <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/dlibrary/coll/0001/000299/>

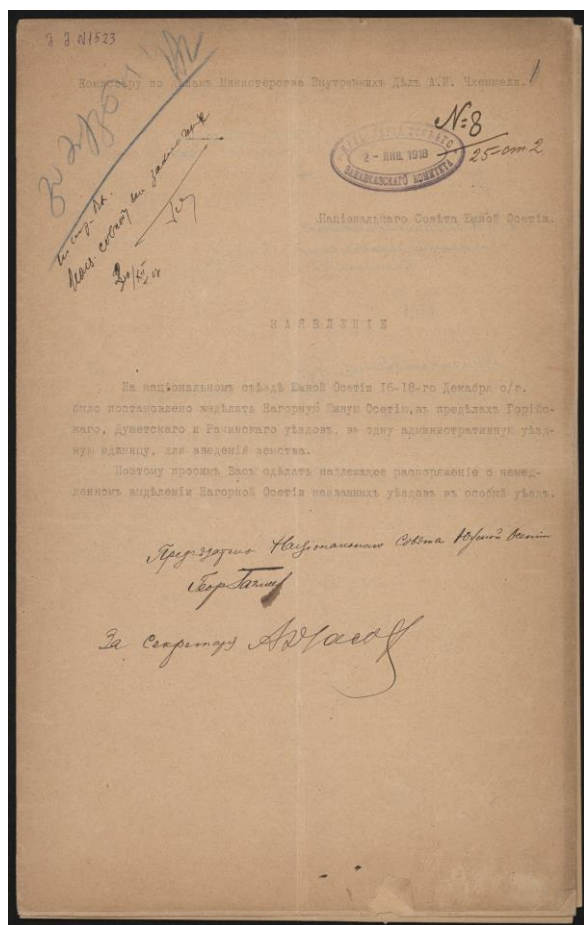
⁹ Census of November 30, 1922 (1923), p. 45.

¹⁰ Totadze L., Demographic portrait of Georgia, Tbilisi, 1993, p. 55.

¹¹ Борьба за победу Советской власти Грузии: Документы и материалы (1917-1921гг.), Тбилиси, „Сабчота Сакартвело“, 1958, с. 788.

National Council of South Ossetia, or more precisely the Caucasian Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), had plans to move forward, so they thought this failure was temporary. One fact is that these anti-government activities did not have a good impact on Georgian-Ossetian relations, though, this did not escalate into the ethnoconflict that Ossetian Bolsheviks tried to portray. Unfortunately, this question is alive nowadays.

The first three pages of the document (M. Machabeli's personal archive, K. Kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts):



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3.2 N1523
ЮЖНО-ОСЕТИНСКИЙ
НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ
СОВЕТЪ

1100
11-02-23
Въ Грузинскій Национальный Советъ.

№ 163
11. Января 1918 г.
г. Тифлисъ.

Бельгийская, 104.



Препровождается копія проекта введенія Земства въ Южной Осетіи и выдѣленія ея въ особую административную единицу, поданнаго въ Закавказскій Комиссаріатъ на утвержденіе въ спѣшномъ порядкѣ, для свѣденія. *обходимо согласенію Советъ*
ПРИЛОЖЕНІЕ: копія проекта.

ПРЕДСѢДАТЕЛЬ *Тамар*

СЕКРЕТАРЬ *А. Тамар*

Диплопроизводитель

В. Захаръ

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Копия.

ПРОЕКТЪ

ВВЕДЕНІЯ ЗЕМСТВА ВЪ ЮЖНОЙ ОСЕТИИ И ВЪВЕДЕНІЯ ЕЯ ВЪ ОСОБУЮ
АДМИНИСТРАТИВНУЮ ЕДИНИЦУ.

Вмѣстѣ съ общими раскрытіями страны великая русская революція должна создать благоприятныя условія и для культурно-экономическаго развитія народовъ, населяющихъ нашу окраину.

Нѣтъ сомнѣнія, что введеніе земскаго самоуправленія, ставшее неотложной задачей передъ закавказской демократіей, дастъ могущественный толчекъ быстрому росту мѣстныхъ силъ.

Параллельно съ этимъ необходимо уничтожить административную опеку государства и сосредоточить функціи административнаго управленія въ земскихъ учрежденіяхъ.

Разумѣется, наше молодое земство должно быть построено на самыхъ широкихъ демократическихъ началахъ, съ полной гарантіей правъ національнаго меньшинства. Но такая гарантія возможна лишь въ томъ случаѣ, если населенію будетъ предоставлено право свободно группироваться въ административныя и земскія единицы на основѣ трезваго учета реальныхъ интересовъ. Этотъ принципъ былъ выставленъ заинтересованными сторонами и въ совѣщаніяхъ по введенію земства въ Закавказье. Къ сожалѣнію онъ не былъ развитъ послѣдовательно, и этотъ моментъ вызоветъ некоторыя затрудненія при практическомъ проведеніи земскаго самоуправленія даже въ тѣхъ губерніяхъ и уѣздахъ, которые по декрету закавказскаго комиссаріата признаются безспорными. Реальная дѣятельность выдвигаетъ вопросы о настоящей необходимости и такихъ группировокъ, которыя декретомъ не предусматриваются.

Опираясь на ясно и опредѣленно выраженную волю южно-осетинскаго народа, мы находимъ, что справедливое осуществленіе земскаго дѣла въ закавказьѣ немислимо безъ образованія особаго уѣзднаго административно-земскаго дѣленія изъ нагорныхъ частей Рачинскаго, Горійскаго и дунетскаго уѣздовъ, состоящъ изъ южно-осетинскихъ населеній. Эта полоса начинается на западѣ съ верхняго теченія рѣкъ Гаруж и Кварли въ Рачинскомъ уѣздѣ и кончается въ Горійскомъ уѣздѣ и тянется до Военно-Грузинской дороги на востокъ. Занимая южный склонъ Средняго Кавказа по бассейнамъ рѣкъ Проны, Большой и Малой Лиахвы, Медисуръ, Дехуръ и Ксанки, нагорный районъ этотъ заселенъ исключе-

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**ՄԱՆՈՒՉԱՐ ԳՈՒՆՑԱԶԵ
(ՎՁԱԿ)**

**ՕՍ ԲՈՒՇԵՎԻԿՆԵՐԻ ՀԱԿԱԿԱՌԱՎԱՐԱԿԱՆ
ԳՈՐԾՈՆԵՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՃԱՌԸ ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆՈՒՄ**

Յիսինվալի շրջանի հիմնախնդիրը վատ ուսումնասիրված է ոչ միայն քաղաքական, այլ նաև գիտական տեսանկյունից: Կան բազմաթիվ հոդվածներ, որոնցում ներկայացվում են պատմական, քաղաքական և ռազմական վերլուծություններ կապված վերոնշյալ խնդրի հետ: Այնուամենայնիվ, Յիսինվալի շրջանի հիմնախնդրի վերաբերյալ ներկայացվող հոդվածը ժամանակագրորեն կենտրոնացված է 20-րդ դարի իրադարձությունների վերլուծության վրա: Սրա հիմնավորումը կապված է հիմնախնդրի վերջին շրջանի հետ, որը սկսվել է 20-րդ դարում: