



ANTI-STATE POLICY OF OSSETIANS RESIDING IN GEORGIA IN 1918-1921

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Abstract: On May 26, 1918, adoption of the Act of Independence, which established the Democratic Republic of Georgia by the National Council, has been the most significant event in Georgia's history. The First World War crisis and 1917 revolution incited nations, occupied by empire, to restore sovereignty. Georgia was one among these few. Georgia was declared as independent republic, governed by the national council, and soon after, most of European countries recognized its independence. Despite its short run, the first democratic republic had a fundamental impact on the history of Georgia. It was the only country from South Caucasus, where the Red Army failed to seize the power without fierce opposition. Georgians' relentless resistance was fed by anti-Bolshevik attitude. Democratic, humanistic course, equality in development and striving to build democratic country, ethnic tolerance and acceptance of European values were reflected in the act of independence and later, in the constitution. Although Georgian government always tried to respectfully apply status of minor ethnic group - Ossetians within the legal and state framework, unfortunately state could not always manage it. Generally, Ossetians, migrated to Georgia, had never have ethno- political or ethnoterritorial entity before socialization. "South Ossetia" as a concept of Ossetian settlement in mountainous Shida Kartli was fabricated over period of time after Russian Empire had annexed Georgian Kingdom. The idea was unjustified and unacceptable but well-designed and profitable for the Russian Empire. Ossetian separatism had revealed its nature from the very first day of Georgian independence. Deep-rooted Russian threat towards the Caucasus has always endangered integration of Georgia within European family. Constant and unquenched desire to stir up conflicts in Georgia, among Caucasus countries, was generated in Russian Empire and later was successfully and methodologically inherited by Soviet Russia. This approach had been deliberately destroying Caucasus platform and becoming part of European family seemed as a disappearing dream. However, Georgia was determined to be among European countries and sometimes was winning battles. One of those wins was an election of Catholicos-patriarch in September 1917, an event, which paved the road toward independence. But in 1921, Georgia was occupied thus new era of dreadful existence had started for the country.

Keywords: Independence united Caucasus, Separatism, Territorial integrity, Georgian-Ossetian, Soviet Russia, Bolshevism

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1. Introduction

May 26, 1918, adoption of the Act of Independence, which established the Democratic Republic of Georgia by the National Council, has been the most significant event in Georgia's history. The First World War crisis and 1917 revolution incited nations, occupied by empire, to restore sovereignty. Georgia was one among few. Georgia was declared as independent republic, governed by the national council, and soon most of European countries recognized its independence. On May 26, newspaper "Sakartvelo" wrote "From this day on, independence of our country is restored, cheers to Georgia, long live to Georgians!". Government of independent Georgia immediately started creating peaceful environment with Ottomans, allies and neighbor countries. Georgia has never started a war, but Russian government keeps trying to interfere and has managed to forcefully annual Georgia as a state. Started a war against the wishes of Georgian Nation, the war has been taken over by Transcaucasia, from which Georgia tries to extricate. Our

nation wishes to have friendly and amicable relationship with Ottoman Empire as Ottoman government also wishes to have peaceful relations with us, centuries show us that peaceful coexistence of two countries is beneficial and safe..." (Sakartvelo, 1918a).

The bright minds of the country gradually cultivated the idea of independence in the nation. "Tergdaleulebi's" yearning for starting periodicals, founding the charity "the society for the spreading of literacy among Georgians", founding Georgian theatre, starting open fight for restoration the autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox Church etc. were examples of their deeds. Russia had its own demons to deal with after 300-year ruling of Romanov dynasty was over and loosened its grip on Caucasus. Georgian patriots took advantage and successfully executed their plan. Later, Zurab Avalishvili wrote in Paris on Georgia, facing the Rubicon of Independence.

How could you not hear in this single moment, the bubbling of historical elements, how could you not heed



the voice of everyone who has been gone for a long time, how not to think about those who will come? How many generations have created the Georgian nation and vainly sought for it the conditions of free development under the sun? So independence knocked on the door - how not to rush to meet it! If you miss this moment, how can the future answer to those who will be after us? Or is this people born only for slavery, for submission, and will finally turn into "ethnic material" from which, depending on the circumstances, Persians, Murki, or Russian are stamped? No, he remembers; he wants to rise and become himself again. Does he not want this? Will he sigh about his prison as Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon"? Empty it now and show up! The pages of history flip" (Avalishvili, 1981).

2. Method

The article uses not only empirical but clear theoretical methodologies such as: generalization, analyses, syntheses, abstraction, systemic approach, comparative-historical method and causality analyses.

3. Results and Discussions

Although the first democratic republic existed only short period of time, it made huge impact on the history of Georgia. It was the only country in South Caucasus that resisted The Red Army and caused anti - Bolshevik predisposition in public. Democratic, humanistic course, equality in development and striving to build democratic country, ethnic tolerance and acceptance of European values were reflected on the act of independence and later, on constitution. People waited for changes in anticipation as new era had started for the country. Impressions were well-described in Vlasa Mgeladze's poem (Vlasa Mgeladze: Commissioner of the People's Guard of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918-1921, member of the National Council and the Constituent Assembly): "Georgian three - colored flag has revealed as Holly spirit in Tbilisi!, what a glorious day has started for us, long lost flag has been waiving on Krtsanisi field" (Mgeladze, V., (1934), May 26, (published by D. Kheladze), Paris, p: 67).

Keeping solid and friendly relationship with neighbor countries and the rest of the civilized world was vital for young Georgian democracy. Government took measures to strengthen diplomatic connections with developed countries and recognition of sovereignty. As you may know, it is unlikely that big and powerful countries show their interest in small countries or nation's problems at assemblies. However, approach changed in 1919. i.e. French conference (The Paris Peace Conference was a gathering organized by the victorious countries of World War I to conclude peace treaties between the Allies and the defeated powers. The conference opened at the Palace of Versailles in January 1919 and lasted for more than a year except for short intervals) of winner countries in the first world one1, aim of the conference

was creating new political map and new disposition. Georgian political spectrum made every effort to benefit from it. Conference Delegation members were Z. Avalishvili, I. Tsereteli (Irakli (Kaki) Tsereteli (1881-1959) - After the 1917 revolution, he held the post of Minister of Internal Affairs in the Provisional Government of Russia) and N. Chkheidze. On March 14, 1919 the delegation presented a map and a memorandum to other participants. Georgia was asking its allies to recognize independence and support the nation. Delegation members prolonged their visit in Paris and busied themselves with campaigning and propaganda. In 1920 (Earlier, in September 1919, the Argentine government recognized the state independence of Georgia) France, Italy, England and other countries recognized Democratic Republic of Georgia. Recognition had two sides: one, - the world wanted to localize Bolshevism in Russia and Georgia became trustworthy and well-known country after Soviet Russia had recognized its independence in May, 1920. The unfounded interest of Soviet Russia was an obstacle for developed countries and removing barrier meant that Georgia with its natural resources, strategic geo-political and important transit routes would be an interesting country to explore. Step by step even small victory would have been reflected on Georgian citizens "One more precious moments for Tiflis. News on Recognition of independence by peace conference spread like wildfire in Tiflis" (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1920). The same day, Noe Jordania, Gr. Lortkipanidze (Grigol Lortkipanidze (1881-1937) - political, state and public figure. 1918-1920 Minister of Defense of Georgia, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Education of Georgia), Al. Lomtadze (Alexander Lomtadze (1882-1924) - Georgian statesman and public figure, teacher, elected a member of the Parliament of Georgia along the lines of the Social-Democratic Party, served as Chairman of the Tbilisi City Council), Akaki Chkheneli (Akaki Chkheneli (1874-1959) - First Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Georgia) and others congratulated Georgians on this victory.

"It was a sight for a sore eye to see our spectacular army and guards, hero Val. Jugheli rides horse with dignity and honour, chief commissioner Wardrop (John Oliver Wardrop (1864-1948) - British diplomat, United Kingdom High Representative for the South Caucasus and Georgia (1919-1921)) says in Georgian" Cheers to Georgia!" (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1920).

Georgian's pathos and spirit, alas, was not always shared by some groups of minorities. Such as: some Ossetians, living in mountainous part of Shida Kartli. Although Georgian government always tried to respectfully apply status of minor ethnic group - Ossetians within the legal and state framework, unfortunately state could not always manage it. Generally, Ossetians, migrated to Georgia, had never have ethno- political or ethno-territorial entity before socialization. "South Ossetia" as a concept of Ossetian settlement in mountainous Shida

Kartli was fabricated over period of time after Russian Empire had annexed Georgian Kingdom. The idea was unjustified and unacceptable but well - designed and profitable for the Russian Empire (Historical and political-legal aspects of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and the main ways of resolving it, (1992), Tbilisi, p: 3). Ossetian separatism had revealed its nature from very first day of Georgian independence. According to the decree of the 5th South Ossetian convention, which took place in Java in 1918, we read: "South Ossetia is part of The Democratic Republic of Georgia based on the broad territorial self - government" (Sakartvelo, 1918b) there was another malicious entry in the decree: resolution on disarmament in particular:" we take into consideration the fact, that Ossetians are loyal to Georgian government, getting more powerful after joining The republic of Georgia and as Ossetians whole-heartedly guard achievement of Revolution, thus are against anarchy, convention believes that Georgian government doesn't wish to disarm Ossetians, therefore it gains our people's trust. The convention also believes that Ossetians do not give any reasons to Georgian government to start disarming process. The convention entrusted the negotiation to the national council" (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1918a.) despite the above mentioned facts and Ossetians' loyalty range, soon newspaper "Ertoba" had to inform its readers on tension in Tskhinvali region. It goes without saying that, majority of the population are not at fault and the author of the article is Ossetian, however, it's not challenging to find individuals who intentionally muddy the waters. To be exact, it's about failed elections in Java. "Unfortunately, we do not have democratic forces there, therefore, the poor have disadvantages and need our help, and otherwise they will be in worse situation than they are now. We call for Ossetian working class to join Georgian democracy and benefit from this union. If not, we will be in dire situation. People should do their own work and reject chauvinistic approaches of individuals, disguised themselves as fond of internationalism and in fact only generate animosity and malice" (Bibilov, 1918). Constant agitation-propaganda from the enemy side had its damaging outcome for the young democratic republic. Newspapers often appealed to the government to be extremely careful. There are two distinct callings: to be more attentive and proactive in foreign affairs, especially where enemies of our state live and the second, - to be more attentive toward the areas, where rebellions might stir up something" The government hastily used the army in Tskhinvali, the second dangerous region, where Ossetians tend to become weary. About one and half month ago, they seemed anxious and seemed to get ready for an uprising. Governments were proactive and send the army to the region. Rebels lost the appetite and enthusiasm but Ossetians eagerly carry on working and stirring up discontent in people. Denikin supporters help Ossetians of Tskhinvali thus; we have to expect joint armed activities against Georgia. This is the situation in

Tskhinvali" (Sakartvelo, 1918c) as we see soon enough, worrying was not unfounded. With Claims of caution there are news on trespassing and starting war activities, the year is 1919, July. Near the border of Ratcha, from Tergi district (The district of Tergi was established in 1860 by order of Emperor Alexander II. The formation in the eastern part of the North Caucasus included the territories of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Ichkeria and the mountainous regions. After the sovietization of the region, the Tergi district was abolished in 1920 and replaced by the independent territorial units of Chechnya and Ingushetia), so-called "Ossetian military road", around Mamisoni pass, the attack had started. Before describing the incident, we'd like to pinpoint some significant details for the reader: newspaper "republic of Georgia" had informed in August 1918 an agreement, based on the ultimatum, given by Georgia, was signed between Republic of Georgia and public council of Tergi district. Georgian representatives: Gerasime Makharadze (Gerasime Makharadze (1881-1937) - During 1918 he was a member of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, and from the following year a member of the Constituent Assembly along the lines of the Georgian Social-Democratic Workers' Party. From 1919 he was Deputy Minister of the Interior) and Vladimir Jugheli and the other side: Fritz Bulle, Jacob Arsanov and Gapur Arkhiev. An agreement comprises number of points:

1. Council of People's commissars freed Georgian citizens, imprisoned during uprising. Thus, issues concerning the prisoners are resolved.
2. Council of People commissars will try everything in its power to restrain every hostile force and restrict them to approach Georgian borders. Georgian government will promise to enforce Georgian army to move back to dislocation place in Lars.
3. A committee is to be formed on equal quota to document and evaluate damages. Council of People's commissars will try to return looted and stolen goods to Georgian part.
4. Both sides are obliged to maintain piece on their part of the military road etc. (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1918b).

Despite the agreement, on 24-26 July, next year, a group of 500 armed men of the other side attacked 25 Georgian border-guards, led by captain Chikovani. "Attackers of the other side were led by Denikin colonel Gutsunaev. Spies to show the roads were conspirator Ossetians" (Gordeziani, 1919) as it seems, spies were native Ossetians, who knew Georgian quite well and knew the roads and passes like the back of their hand" Georgian border-guards, with the position of their favor, repel the attack, enemies retreated with grave loss." Georgian solders fought with great self-sacrifice and devotion to their leader Chikovani, especially an officer Giorgobiani and Kopaleishvili, who fought fiercely and avoided ravaging of Georgian villages (Ibid)." help from Georgian side was led by colonel Intskirveli.

Tskhinvali region had become a ticking bomb. They started rebellion exactly when Georgia had harsh times and various issues to deal with. First attack on Tskhinvali was in 1918, during Georgian-Ottoman armed conflict, the aim of the next political conflict was to create separate district entity and make Tskhinvali the center of the district (1919). The next Ossetian rebellion, better organized and large scaled took place in 1920.

"Here, Russia's interest is obvious: they supported rebels politically, financially and logistically. The uprising started in 1920 and the purpose was to separate Shida Kartli, a historically Georgian territory, from Georgia and unite it with Russia. Georgia managed to suppress the revolt. However, the outcome was not all positive. Traces of ugly conflict stayed buried in both nations' minds, Russia made effort to disguise its role in this uprising, although the order for strike was from Russia, Georgia had to take strict penal measures against rebels as it was the third one and needed to be eradicated. The never-ending conflict effected Georgian democracy and peaceful residents of the region (Ossetians among them) to live without fear and destruction" (Guntsadze, 2014).

Above mentioned Ossetian uprising was well-responded by Georgian press in 1918-1920. Newspaper "Georgia", based on the source - the deputy chief of Gori district, writes: "Ossetians say: we must deport Georgians from this land and our people should settle in their places instead. A lot of Ossetians had resettled in Tskhinvali. These days Ossetian regiment consists of 300 men, they say, more people started to rejoin the regiment as a reinforcement" (Sakartvelo, 1918d) it's interesting to review arguments of Georgian public figure, - Shalva Amirejibi on the matter: "whole tragedy of Georgian democracy is that, when it stands on the ground of social reforms and democracy, the rest of the nations strive to work up Caucasus national policy of grabbing and snatching... this is today's moto and Ossetians declared rather unabashedly- Tskhinvali is ours, Georgian mountainous area is Ossetia...".

Reviewing Ossetian issues, newspaper "Georgia" often quoted authors such as: Sh. Amirejibi-(N69), G. Kikodze-(N124) and others. Policy of Democratic republic toward minorities had always been undifferentiated. Despite this moral and tolerance approaches, the government made great effort to strengthen ties with modern European society because of their democratic values (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1918c).

Moreover, to show tolerance toward ethnic diversity is imbedded in Georgian psyche, tradition, nature, thus made it natural and real for The Republic to strive for finding its rightful place within the family of other European democratic nations. "Republic of Georgia writes: "Georgians knew how to show respect to other nations and they know it know, however our country demands the same respect and acknowledgment of our democratic order as it is towards others. Republic of Georgia is a home for all nations, living in our soil" yearning for independence and strengthening democratic

governance, constant and indefatigable fight for internal and foreign affairs, gained Georgia sympathetic (we mean the Norwegian Dr. F. Nansens, The representative of South Africa, Lord R. Cecil and others) allies and enemies alike. Newspaper "Republic of Georgia" permanently tells its readers about situation Georgia is in, decisions the government had made on fighting for democracy. Chronology of success in international scope, every small or big success of establishing its place among democratic countries becomes front-page news on daily bases, which, itself makes enemies of state furious and wary. They tend to pull the country down in the abyss. However, pathos of the newspaper is optimistic all in all. The enemy is defeated." Georgia has managed to liquidate pernicious-distracting Bolshevism and repel the attack from slogan-happy counter-revolutionary enemy. This fight has ended with great victory of our country" (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1918d). Despite telling stories of battle, here is one important sentence which tells us that, Republic of Georgia, despite difficulties and enemies' attempt of sabotaging the state or belittles our values in the path of building democracy, it never deviated from its determined dissection to be honorable and uphold the law, never behaved inappropriately. Other media also shares the same beliefs and tactics. There are materials, full of patriotic spirit and excitement, for the first meeting of founder council (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1919).

After 1917 revolution, nations, living in Caucasus, gained independence. As you may well know, most of Caucasus was occupied by Russian Empire from the XIX century and to free from the clutches of the Empire was a great relief and the most important fact in their history. 4 states were established in Caucasus region: Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus. Naturally, these countries' political orientation and foreign policies were not aligned all the time. However, they all had common enemy that made every effort to deprive them of the liberty, independence and integration with European countries. For Soviet Union, none of the fighting methods were acceptable. Let us discuss Georgia, for example: immediately after declaring independence, Russia instigated local separatists to start commotion in all places. Among those places were Shida Kartli, Tskhinvali and surrounding area of the city. The government had to take drastic measures to give aid to distressed population. We would like to present some materials for our readers, which demonstrate the situation after declaring independence. How the plot was laid and later executed. (How they gained the independence of South Ossetia, how they betrayed Republic of Georgia couple of times etc. let's review the media chronicles at that time.

The first significant text appeared as early as December 1917. The report on the Ossetian National Convention was made by A. Tibilov, whose main idea was to establish Ossetia as a joint administrative unit. The Ossetian-populated areas of Gori, Dusheti and Racha were

considered as included parts of the South Ossetia. During the convention, several main theses were identified:

1. To introduce the South Ossetian as a nationhood
2. The mountain lines of Racha, Gori and Dusheti regions, inhabited by Ossetians, should be divided as a separate territorial unit.
3. The nationhood must be elected with general, direct, secret and proportional rights.
4. The nationalhood should have the right of tax disposing.
5. To instruct the National Council to elaborate the nationalhood program in more detail and to start its implementation.

According to the report on the National Army made at the same congress, the need to compile the Ossetian National Army as a separate infantry unit was required. This unit should be part of the Ossetian army in the North Caucasus and its location was determined in Gori or Dusheti (Sakartvelo, 1917).

The Ossetian convention considered it necessary to establish the Ossetian National Council, and in just a few days the Council's provision was submitted. Since this body has a highly questionable reputation and will appear as a co-author of many anti-state actions in the First Democratic Republic, we need to look through the articles of the provision, by which it was intending to enter public arena and carry out its activities. The provision includes 26 articles, namely:

1. The supreme power, before the Constituent Assembly establishes state order, belongs to the Ossetian National Convention and the National Council on the territory of Ossetia.
2. The Ossetian National Council is a) a legislative convention, b) the highest state power, supervisory and governing body.
3. They National Council has the right to supplement the resolutions of the National Assembly, to establish laws that do not contradict the resolutions of the National Assembly;
4. The Ossetian National Council is given the right to initiate legislation.
5. All legislative proposals must be considered by the National Council before submitting them to the National Assembly.
6. The Ossetian National Council establishes the governorship, the national army, controls all the existing agricultural institutions on the territory of Ossetia and directs their activities.
7. The region commissioner, the head of the public Militia or the head of the state bodies are appointed by the National Assembly.
8. The Assistant of the Commissioner and the Heads of State Bodies are elected by the Convention.
9. The Ossetian National Council is elected by the Ossetian people.
10. The National Council has a representative in Tbilisi to protect national interests ... (Sakartvelo, 1918e).

It seems that from the very beginning special attention was paid on the formation of the so-called Ossetian army. Opinion was divided into two parts (Sakartvelo, 1918f). Some supported the idea of creating a militia unit of at least a hundred horse cavalry, while others argued that a regular army was needed.

Official Tbilisi at the first stage considered the existence of the Ossetian National Council legal. However, due to the inadequate and reactionary nature revealed from the first days of its existence, a few days after its establishment, the so - called Ossetian Council receives the first warning. Tbilisi headquarter is ready to fulfill the Ossetian demand for an armed force, moreover, it is ready to provide them with clothes and weapons if the Ossetian National Council obeys the revolutionary bodies in Georgia.

It must be said that Georgian authorities attempted to neutralize the aggressive charge inflicted on the people caused by the thousands of provocative machinations planned by the Ossetian National Council. Representatives from the capital were often visiting Gori district, specifically Tskhinvali and its surroundings. Information meetings were being held. The speakers were addressing people in Georgian and Ossetian languages. They're explaining the legislative news, the country situation details in a language the people could understand. They called for order and peace.

There have always been many such meetings, especially after the tragic events of 1918 in Tskhinvali. For example, shortly after the March events, the first information rallies against various communities in Tskhinvali region were held on April 8. Representatives sent from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Peasants' Center: A. Parniev (Aleksandre (Sandro) Parniev – member of the General Staff in the National Army. During 1918 he was a member of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. And since March 12, 1919 a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Georgia), I. Bolkvadze and G. Margiev, the member of Gori Soc. Democrats, are trying to provide people with comprehensive information about the new land law passed by the Transcaucasian Seim. Receiving this information had caused great satisfaction among the people. Such informational meetings were held on April 8 and 9 for the communities living in Tamarasheni, Vanati, Ortevi and Tsunari.

Bolkvadze was addressing the people in Georgian language, and Parniev in Ossetian. There was a relative lack of attendees at the meetings, which was explained by fear caused by the events in Tskhinvali. The speakers were explaining to the people that similar military operations were aimed to protect civilians, neutralize the criminal elements and not to push people on ethnic grounds. It was enough to mention that during the same period, military operations of the Georgian Armed Forces were carried out against criminal groups: in Telavi, Kutaisi, Gori, Sadakhlo and other places where Ossetians were not living.

The gathered people on the one hand expressed their grief over the murder of G. Machabeli and S. Ketskhoveli, and on the other hand demanded release of the prisoners detained in Tskhinvali during the March events (Ertoba, 1918a).

On May 24, 1918, newspaper "Ertoba" reports that the Ossetian National Council has scheduled the third general national convention in Java for May 28. The North Ossetian National Council's representatives and one representative for every thousand inhabitants from Ossetians living on the territory of Georgia were invited to take part in the work of the convention. Among the issues to be considered are several major ones. In particular, the interdependence of the Transcaucasians and the Ossetians on the common political background, Tskhinvali tragedy of March 19 - 20, the causes and consequences, the possible reorganization of the National Council (Ertoba, 1918b) and so on.

According to the existing plan, the third meeting of the Transcaucasian Ossetian representatives was held on May 28 in the village - Java. Besides the Ossetian intelligentsia, about seventy people were attending the meeting, as well as delegates from the North Ossetian National Council, I. Ramishvili from the Social-Democratic Committee of the Transcaucasian Workers' Organizations, representatives of the Bolsheviks: F. Makharadze, G. Chkheidze, Akopiani and Sikharulidze.

I. Ramishvili opened the meeting with a welcome speech. M. Zorayev, the representative of the North Caucasus Ossetian National Council addressed the gathered public. On May 30, Ruten Gagloev made a report (on building a road from Tskhinvali to Zaramaga), also G. Gagloev (on the operation of the National Council), Al. Zasokhov (on the disintegration of the Ossetian regiment), Al. Tibilov (On Ossetian Schools). The Bolsheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries left the congress without a report.

Among the questions raised after I. Ramishvili's speech, the prevailing opinion was that Ossetians are independent from today and may not enter the Republic of Georgia. The authors of the questions could not get a positive respond from the speaker, in order to finally resolve the issue the meeting was scheduled on June 15 in the village Tsunari.

According to A. Parniev, the congregation did not look like the one invited to work. It was given the character of a political rally by some and prevented both the chairman and the delegates from doing their job (Parniev, 1918).

"Some people spread a thousand kinds of information among the Ossetians, saying: the Ossetians, Armenians and Russians are made to leave their places. Ossetians, Russians and Armenians united against the Georgians and who knows what else you will hear. That the enemies of democracy not to use all this and not to hand over Georgian democracy as a real fact, for that, I consider it is necessary to declare that Ossetian democracy will not follow the enemies of the people, will not believe what they say and will not go against its brotherly Georgian

democracy. Those who know the economic situation of the Ossetians, those who know the geographical conditions of the Ossetians and Georgians, those who know the political view of the Ossetians, all assure me that the Ossetians are not interested in weakening Georgian democracy. And if some people try to stir up water between these two nations, it should not be attributed to the Ossetians as a nation. The nation is not responsible for this or that irresponsible persons".

The newspaper "Sakartvelo" also responded to the third congress of the Ossetians (Sakartvelo, 1918g). The editorial once again underlined the statement made by I. Ramishvili on the restoration of statehood and independence of Georgia. The reporter hoped that the Ossetian people would not follow the counter-revolutionaries and would support Georgia's young democratic republic.

The date of the next meeting was June 15. The following main issues were indicated on this meeting:

1. Is the independence of Ossetians possible within the territory of Georgia and who should request for it?
2. The Ossetian intelligentsia's job in the past and today;
3. About the Ossetian Regiment;
4. The issue of railway construction from Tskhinvali to Zaramaga;
5. About Tskhinvali news;
6. What should the Ossetian National Council do?
7. On the Union of the North Ossetians and Transcaucasians.

During the third convention of the Ossetians in Java, an aggressive, one might say hostile attitude towards Georgia was evident. I. Ramishvili's speech seemed to change the mood of the convention's participants, people seemed to realize that they were mistaken, deceived and misguided, but the main issues, including the internal political arrangement of the Ossetian-populated areas, remained open. As soon as this decision was made, new propagandas were launched by separatist agitated groups and their instigators to create an appropriate reactionary atmosphere for the next convention (Ertoba, 1918c).

In such an atmosphere, the fourth Ossetian convention was opened in the village Tsunari on June 15th. The convention opened at five o'clock in the evening. A. Parniev petitioned the congress, to schedule the main discussion issues for the next day. Representatives from Tbilisi had not yet arrived in Tsunari, and Parniev considered it fairer to discuss these issues in their presence. The convention rejected the motion.

On the next day at 11 o'clock Ir. Tsereteli, Vl. Mgeladze and Vl. Voitinsky joined the convention from Tskhinvali.

Although most of the convention participants knew Georgian well, they even wanted to speak Georgian, but the chairman of the convention reminded them that the working language was Russian, which would later be translated into Ossetian. An abbreviated version of the speech was then translated into Ossetian and thus

delivered to the audience. Later, the chairman of the Socialist-Revolutionaries regional committee addressed the convention members. He declared the Mensheviks traitors and called on "revolutionary Ossetia" to move north. A short speech was given by journalist Voitinsky. The meeting ended with Ir. Tsereteli's report.

Three resolutions were adopted at the Fourth Ossetian Convention on June 15-16, with the following content:

1. Recognizing that, due to the current situation, declaring Georgia as an independent republic was the only way to save the democracy within the borders of Georgia, The Convention recognizes any speech against the Government of the Georgian Republic as ruinous, and elects a commission, which is responsible for developing a self-government project for the region of the Republic of Georgia where Ossetians live.
2. The Fourth Convention of South Ossetian Delegates, after hearing Tsereteli's report on the current situation, decided: The issue of self-determination of the South Ossetian people should be postponed for the next convention, which will be held in six weeks with more members. Request the Government of the Republic of Georgia to leave the issue open during the drafting of the Constitution.
3. The third resolution called for the entry of Ossetia into the Republic of Georgia as an autonomous entity.

The plans and attitudes of some Ossetians towards the host country is clear in the cited text. The proclamation of the newspaper "Ertoba" was exactly due this fact: "It is necessary today to take appropriate measures against those who undermine the young republic lead by a revolutionary democracy; those who silently, secretly attack and try to deliver a death blow to it. There can be no delay no hesitation!".

The results of the work the fourth congress, made the newspaper "Sakartvelo" pessimistic. According to it, the situation in South Ossetia is very troubling. The editorial board does not eliminate that for the next meeting scheduled for six weeks later, the government will send V. Jugheli instead of eloquence orators. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Ossetia has not yet handed over weapons, while part of the Georgian population has completed this process a long time ago. This circumstance makes it entirely legitimate to assume that events will occur in an even more tragic scenario than it has already happened (Sakartvelo, 1918h).

In general, the newspaper "Sakartvelo" systematically provides readers with the information of the national threats that Georgia faces. Very often these threats are related to the national minorities living in the territory of Georgia. This is about Borchalo district, the region of Abkhazia and, of course, Shida Kartli, where the North Ossetians join the part of Ossetians suffering from Bolshevism.

"The whole Georgia has become a battlefield and a flame of anarchy has spread to our country from edge to edge.

Newly reestablished Georgia is in terrible danger and we will become participants of the greatest national calamity if we fail to mobilize manpower and avoid the national ordeal" (Erovnuli Saprtkhe, 1918a).

Concerning the Fifth Ossetian Convention scheduled for six weeks later, it was held in the village Java on August 5 (Ertoba, 1918d). According to the correspondent of the newspaper "Ertoba" (under the pseudonym "Gogia") (There were two people working under the pseudonym "Gogia": A) Giorgi Chkheidze / Giorgi Kuchishvili (1886-1947) - writer, poet. B) Grigol Nutsbidze (1882-1961) - Honored (1932) and Public (1955) Artist of Georgia). It was widely known that during this six-week period the Ossetian National Council tried to organize uprising, hoping for help from the North Caucasus. And so it happened. It was time then uprising spread to Sachkhere region and Dusheti district. The position of newspaper "Ertoba" towards the Ossetian people is unchanged: the Ossetian uprising is not a popular uprising, but it is a New Bolshevism aimed to join with Russia (Ertoba, 1918e).

An interesting report on the North Caucasus was made by P. Tedeev (Ertoba, 1918f). He was elected as a delegate to North Ossetia at Tsunari Convention. He was instructed to get acquainted with the situation there and with the locals' views on South Ossetia.

P. Tedeev presented a proposal according to which Ossetians enter the Democratic Republic of Georgia and demand broad territorial self-government for Ossetians living together, and cultural autonomy for the Ossetians who are scattered on the territory of Georgia. The Ossetian National Council was tasked with drafting a statute for self-government and presenting it to the government and the Sixth National Convention of Ossetians. The proposal was passed by a vote of 55 to 2.

The issue of disarmament still was left open.

A. Tibilov reported on the council's activities and on the need to elect a new council (Ertoba, 1918g).

The discussion focused on the participation of I. Kharebov's armed detachment in Ossetians uprisings of Sachkhere. According to the facts provided by the speaker, only Ossetians living in Racha - Shorapani were involved in the uprisings, and neither the Ossetians living in Java nor any other region had taken part in it. According to the council, the situation was getting more complicated by the fact that most of the insurgents were armed robbers who did not trust anyone. They were burning and robbing civilians. The situation was similar in Dusheti district. There is not any ideological character in these revolts.

After the fifth convention, G. Gagloev made a report on the meeting of the Social Democrat faction, in the capital, where he once again summarized the results of the convention work and assessed the current situation in Tskhinvali region (Ertoba, 1918h).

In another publication, the newspaper Ertoba once again emphasizes that despite the great desire of the Ossetian nationalists to involve the whole Ossetian people in

armed demonstrations and carry out the repressive policy throughout the nation, ended in failure. The Georgian government was fighting not with the Ossetian people, but with anti-state-minded insurgents, armed individuals, as well as insurgents of other nationalities. The implementation of the land law, removing weapons from the population, the establishment of a fair court remained the most important problems.

Georgia was protecting and was ready again to protect interests of the Ossetian democracy. The Ossetian Nationalists were defeated: their provocation network failed, but this does not mean that the Ossetian issue was finally resolved.

The first meeting series of 1918 is crowned by a report on Ossetian National Council meetings, published in the newspaper "Sakartvelos Respublika" in November. M. Klimiashvili, Member of the Parliament of Georgia, was attending these meetings in Tskhinvali as a representative from the capital, who after finishing the work presented a report to the Minister of Internal Affairs. The issues discussed during the meeting are similar to above mentioned meeting agendas. Fight against robbery, removing weapons from the population, issue of separating Ossetia, the existence of armed forces, construction of a road to the North Caucasus in Java, the need to establish schools and etc. are still highlighted (Sakartvelos Respublika, 1918d).

The Russian threat to the Caucasus has always been a significant obstacle for the development of Georgia and for its integration into the European family. The constant inspiration for territorial conflicts in the Caucasus, including Georgia, was an integral part of the methodology of relations between Tsarist Russia and later Soviet Russia with other nations. Such an approach was destroying the unified Caucasian platform and was making it more and more distant to become a member of Western civilization. Georgia was stubbornly pursuing the cherished goal. Many successful steps had been taken on the road full of difficulties. The greatest success on the road to Georgia's independence was the election of the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia in September 1917 and the approval of Kirion II (Sadzaglishvili) on the patriarch's throne. After that, as never before, there were all conditions for the country to gain independence.

In such a situation, at the Rubicon of Georgia's independence, Kote Abkhazi (Kote Abkhazi (1867-1923) - Major-General of the National Army Artillery of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Commander of the Nobles of Kartli-Kakheti (Marshal). Was elected as a Member of the National Council of Georgia), a national figure devoted to our country, wrote: "Maybe this war or revolution will give us complete freedom and let us breathe freely" (Saitidze, 1997).

Unfortunately, free breathing was too short. Spiridon Kedia (Spiridon Kedia (1884-1948) - In February 1919 he was elected in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia from the National-Democratic Party), who emigrated after the Sovietization of Georgia, wrote to Grigol

Veshapeli from Istanbul on May 1, 1923: "Dear brother Grigol, one or two hours before I received your letter, yesterday, May 31, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, one Georgian passing through Istanbul handed me the newspaper "Communist" (The newspaper "Communist" (1921) - a daily periodical of the Communist Party Central Committee and the body of the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia. It was published in Tbilisi. Published by the Editorial Board) from the ship, Where is told a black story of our best friend shooting.

They overthrew and beheaded Kote Abkhazi!.. They shot General Andronikashvili, a rare person, a heroic rider, a very educated and wise general. They shot General Varden Tsulukidze. Knight. Fearless warrior. Patriot. They shot Rostom Muskhelishvili. Colonel, Patriot, Wise, Great Worker, worked with us.

They were shot ... " (Materials from the personal archive of Spiridon Kedia (edited by Al. Noneshvili), (2007), (Letter of Spiridon Kedia to Grigol Veshapeli, 1.VI.23), Tbilisi) (Materials from Spiridon Kedia's personal archive, 2007, 1.VI.23); In 1921, after the occupation of Georgia by Soviet Russia, another completely different era had begun in the country.

4. Conclusion

In the current paper, we analyze the details related to the event of May 26, 1918, adoption of the Act of Independence, which established the Democratic Republic of Georgia by the National Council, has been the most significant event in Georgia's history. The First World War crisis and 1917 revolution incited nations, occupied by empire, to restore sovereignty. Georgia was one among these few. Georgia was declared as independent republic, governed by the national council, and soon after, most of European countries recognized its independence.

Despite its short run, the first democratic republic had a fundamental impact on the history of Georgia. It was the only country from South Caucasus, where the red army failed to seize the power without fierce opposition. Georgians' relentless resistance was fed by anti-Bolshevik attitude. Democratic, humanistic course, equality in development and striving to build democratic country, ethnic tolerance and acceptance of European values were reflected in the act of independence and late, in the constitution.

Although Georgian government always tried to respectfully apply status of minor ethnic group - Ossetians within the legal and state framework, unfortunately state could not always manage it. Generally, Ossetians, migrated to Georgia, had never have ethno- political or ethno-territorial entity before socialization. "South Ossetia" as a concept of Ossetian settlement in mountainous Shida Kartli was fabricated over period of time after Russian Empire had annexed Georgian Kingdom. The idea was unjustified and unacceptable but well - designed and profitable for the Russian Empire. Ossetian separatism had revealed its

nature from the very first day of Georgian independence. Deep-rooted Russian threat towards the Caucasus has always endangered integration of Georgia within European family. Constant and unquenched desire to stir up conflicts in Georgia, among Caucasus countries, was generated in Russian Empire and later was successfully and methodologically inherited by Soviet Russia.

Author Contributions

All tasks were done by the single author who reviewed and approved the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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