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Political Events of the 80s-90s of the XX Century in Georgia and the Youth Literary Journalism

The process of De-Stalinization that started in the USSR in the second half of the 1950s smashed the myth of invincibility and innocence of the Soviet Communist Party – the leading force of the Soviet State. The political situation had an impact on the literary activities. The bloody event of April 9th of 1989 sped up the collapse of the Communist Regime in Georgia and the country restored the lost independence. In the period of the collapse of the Soviet power and the change of the government (1989-1990) the youth literary journalism easily managed to be liberated from the Communist heritage.

Key words: Journalism, youth, collapse, regime, independence.

Political processes in the former Soviet Georgia was in close connection with the processes going on in the Soviet Union that started after the World War II and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Empire at the 90s of the past century results of which is still having the long-term global influence. The problem touched in the article is not studied yet, it is complex and hence we decided to mark out general tendencies.

The political situation in the country had an impact on the literary activities– on the literary journalism as well, that is generally called upon to discuss current affairs of the social– political life. Hence the events of the 80s-90s of the XX century in Georgia must be analyzed in the context of the political changes that began in the USSR after the death of Stalin and was called the process of De-Stalinization. It smashed the myth of invincibility and innocence of the Soviet Communist Party– the leading force of the Soviet state. The process was accompanied with the relaxed policy towards political prisoners, intelligentsia.” De-Stalinization and the “Thaw” were a liberating force only in Russia and the Slavonic republics of the USSR “ (Rayfield 2000: 279). Unfortunately political “Thaw” reached the Georgia twenty years later after the alteration of the Georgian communist leadership.

The history of the Georgian media goes back to 1819, when the first Georgian political-literary newspaper “Sakartvelos Gazeti “ (later called “Kartuli Gazeti”) was published. Being under the strict Imperial censorship of the Governor of the Caucasus the general A. Iermolov the publishers managed to receive the permission of publication .The newspaper played an important role in education of the Georgian society and in formation of the progressive thinking. It ceased existence in 1821 because of the financial problems of the publishers. Later by the great effort of the Georgian poet, playwright and journalist Giorgi Eristavi (1813–1864) was published the first journal “Tsiskari” (“Dawn”). After two years existence it was closed and the publication was renewed in 1857 and continued existence up to 1875. The journal published the works of Georgian and foreign authors. There took place disputes between the old and young generations of the Georgian intelligentsia on the European view of the development of Georgia that prepared the basis of the XIX century’s National –Liberation movement leaders of which woke up the public spirit, national dignity and widespread social political ideas against the colonial governance of

Russia. Soon leading Georgian intellectuals of that time founded the Society for Spreading of Literacy among Georgians (1879) that played an important role in education of the nation, in particular, of young generation. Iakob Gogebashvili, Georgian educator, children's writer and journalist compiled children's primer "Mother Language" ("Deda Ena") published in 1878 that prepared the basis for publishing a literary journal for children and adolescents and in 1883-1885 was published monthly journal "Nobati" ("Present"). With the great effort of the Georgian writer, translator, publicist and public figure Anastasia Tumanishvili-Tsereteli (1849-1932) in 1890 was published the journal "Jejili" ("Green Corn") for children and adolescents. It offered young readers diverse themes: stories, tales, poems, fables, travelling, biography, topics on science and art, games, mathematical tasks, riddles, proverbs, songs, sheet music. Unfortunately "Jejili" was closed by Bolshevik Regime in 1923. In 1904-1920 was edited another journal "Nakaduli" ("Stream") in two volumes: one for minor age children and another for adolescents. Despite closing above mentioned journals by the Soviet Regime and founding the new ones "Octombrel", later called "Dila", and "Pioneri" being under government control their editors and staff continued old generation's journalistic tradition that was revealed by their civic position during the political changes – the collapse of the Soviet System at the beginning of the 90s of the past century. It must be noted that the result of the "Soviet Thaw" and liberalization of the minds was the edition of the innovative monthly youth journal named after the first progressive Georgian journal of the XIX century "Tsiskari". As we marked above, at that time had already existed journals for children-"Dila" ("Morning") and for adolescent "Pioneri" ("Pioneer") brought out after the Soviet Occupation, being under the subordination of Party, in particular of the Communist Youth Union ("Komsomol") of Georgia. The founders of "Tsiskari" were the Union of the Georgian Writers (being a part of the Union of the Writers of the Soviet Union) and the Georgian Komsomol. As a rule in the editorial board of the journal was presented the Secretary of the Central Committee of Georgian Komsomol leading ideology. As we see the process of De-Stalization had nothing in common with the change of the political system, actually it was the result of the struggle between the political groups inside the Party. Though on the example of Georgia it gave live to a new ideological unit – literary and socio-political journal

“Tsiskari” “more innovative monthly“ (Rayfield 2000: 280) and progressive at that political situation. Later, the Party’s old obsolete nomenclature was replaced by the young one that in the 80s of the past century prepared the Georgian society for the process of “Perestroika” and later passed the power to the National Independent Movement.

Georgia that lost its independence in 1921 and became a part of the Soviet Union had no sovereign institutions, no integrated national market, no national army and police force, no national educational system. The first eruption of the national awakening after the War II took place at the beginning of March 1956 when crowds of students and ordinary people started protesting pulling down Stalin’s statue in the centre of Tbilisi perceiving that it was the act of the Russian chauvinism and not so much the dethronement of a tyrant. On 9 March the KGB unit opened fire and many demonstrators were killed. Second national awakening was connected to the new Soviet Constitution. In April 14th 1978, students, professors and ordinary people besieged the Government House protesting the draft of the Constitution in which was removed the clause 75 that made Georgian the Republic’s official language, implying that minorities in Georgia should use Russian, not Georgian, doctorate theses would need to be in Russian. The army and KGB forces were prepared to repeat the atrocities of March 1956. E. Shevardnadze, the head of the Georgian Communist Party telephoned Moscow insisting on reinstating clause 75, guaranteeing Georgian as the official language. The Kremlin gave up. This event gave an impulse to anti-Soviet, National Independence Movement in the 80’s of the past century. The protests of the pro-independent movement reached their peak on April 4, 1989 organized by Independence Committee (Z. Gamsakhurdia, M. Kostava, G.Chanturia, I. Tsereteli and others) demanding from the native government punishment of the Abkhazian political leaders of Aidghlara (Abkhazian political movement) claiming for secession from Georgia. At the same time South Ossetian human rights’ organization Ademon Nykhas insisted on full autonomy or union with North Ossetia in the Russian Federation. The Kremlin used national minorities to oppose the pro-independence movement of Georgians. The government lost control over the situation in the capital and USSR leadership send Soviet detachment armed with military batons, spades, CN and CS gas to restore order in Georgia. Armed forces advanced on demonstra-

tors, 19 people were killed 16 of them women, 427 injured– Gorbachev’s “Perestroika” was steeped in blood, USSR remained a police state. “ Brutal repressions of Georgian demonstrators destroyed the Communist party’s credentials and strengthened calls for independence” (Jones 2013:28). Intense negotiations between the opposition party leaders (the leaders were under thirties except Zviad Gamsakhurdia who was 51 and the most experienced political figure) led to the new Supreme Soviet elections in October 1990 that brought to power Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the Round Table – Free Georgian Block.

Z. Gamsakhurdia was a son of the famous Georgian writer K. Gamsakhurdia, a teacher of philology of Tbilisi State University, translator of Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde, well – known Human Rights activist, editor and co-editor of the Samizdat journals where he underlined the threat of Russification, discussed the problems of demographic decline in Georgia, of corruption in the Georgian church and the condition of the Georgian communities abroad. He came to power (1990-1992) in the extreme time when the Imperial State was dying, Georgia was ethnically and politically fragmented, newly emerged political opposition had not learned the rules of peaceful political competition. The country was still in ruble zone. The sudden disappearance of the centrally funded budget from Moscow caused economic collapse, no foreign aid , no domestic or foreign experts to instruct the government how to proceed. Charisma was Gamsakhurdia’s only source of power. He renamed streets and squares, restored all the state attributes of the Georgian Democratic Republic (1918-1921) and declared independence of the country. He was patriot but had authoritarian habits as a product of the Soviet system. His ambitious radicalism led to the political crisis and disorder. In the fall of 1991 political crisis led to barricades on Rustaveli Prospect, government forces and opposition were firing at each other, parliament temporarily suspended, president Gamsakhurdia with his supporters holed up in the basement of Government House. Political parties being enemies of each other realized the dramatic situation of the country and united around a call for the resignation of the President. Newly formed Military Council took power in its hands and let Gamsakhurdia to leave the country in January 6 1992. The situation was critical and uncontrollable, for this reason Military Council decided to

invite E. Shevardnadze, experienced political figure (former Party leader in Georgia in 1972-1985 and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of USSR in 1985-1991) to guide the country with his leadership. By that time „his voice was respected internationally truly on a global scale” (Brzezinski 1999: 2).

After Shevardnadze’s return the Military Council dissolved itself and Georgian State Council was formed. It was a civilian organization, highest representative organ consisting mostly of Tbilisi intellectual elite. Shevardnadze was elected as a chairman. For the legal recognition of the government it was necessary a new parliamentary elections. Overthrown president’s supporters were hostile and dangerous, their armed groups caused destabilization in Tbilisi and in the regions. Hence the second important step made was publishing a Manifest of Reconciliation in August 1992, political prisoners were amnestied.

Shevardnadze restored former nomenklatura and moderate intellectuals , he tried to rely on young pro-European modernizers, some of them being educated abroad. Until the mid 1990s economic stability and legal recognition did not exist. In August 1992 the war was provoked in Abkhazia that lasted 13 months, with atrocities and 250 000 Georgian refugees. But between 1992– 1995 some positive results were achieved: the new parliament and the president were elected, a new constitution was adopted that strengthened presidential powers under chaotic domestic and foreign conditions. Georgia received aid from Europe and USA , strategic projects of reconstruction of the Port Poti and of Baku– Tbilisi Ceyhan oil line started. The government thought on the revival of the Ancient Silk Road with Georgia as a major transit country for goods and energy from China to Europe.” The cultures, cities and peoples who lived along the silk roads developed and advanced , as they traded and exchanged ideas, they learnt and borrowed from each other, stimulating further advances in philosophy, the sciences, language and religion” (Frankopan 2019: XVII). Hence Georgia had a chance to return its historical position in the global world. The country made diplomatic moves toward Turkey. But Georgia still lived in poverty, there was no mechanism for collecting taxes, corruption and crime was high, two car bomb explosions against Shevardnadze , bureaucratic obstacles to business and modern public services, democracy did not work well, parliament was dominated by “Presidential Party”, loy-

al and passive. By the end of the 90s started the political conflict between young radicals supported by NGO's and President and his supporters that ended with bloodless "Rose Revolution " in the fall of 2003.

he 80s and 90s of the past century was a hard time for literary periodicals, too. In the 80s being still under the Communist censorship they felt responsibility for the country's future, not losing the national spirit. The literary world was encouraged by the election of non-communist patriot poet Mukhran Machavariani as a head of the Georgian Writers' Union, who accelerated separation of the Union off the Soviet Writers Union. His appearance on the side of Gamsakhurdia in the parliamentary electoral list inspired the voters . Machavariani's like-minded fellow writers occupied editorial boards of the youth journal "Tsikari", adolescents' journal "Pioneri" and children's journal "Dila". He worked as an editor-in-chief of "Pioneri" in 1963-1964 and of "Dila" in 1967-1982. In the last one was published widely known poem of the poet Ioram Kemertelidze "Dialogue with Six-Year Old Son" ("Dila" 1979: №8) causing a row in the Central committee of the Georgian Communist Party and the Georgian Komsomol. The father answering the questions of the son explains the laws of life of the two worlds : of the wild world and of the fenced round special land with its lordly life implying ruling Party elite.

At the beginning of the 80 thematically the journal "Tsiskari" was divided into the following sections:1. Poetry; 2. Prose; 3 .Literary Criticism; 4. Reader's Point of View; 5. Satire and humor criticizing negative sides of the life. The poetry and the prose was often presented by the sentiments on the Georgian past, history. In the 80s the journal supported Gorbachev's "Perestroika" and at the same time started publication of the sharp topics on the Government's policy of teaching the Georgian language at schools, problems of Russification ("Tsiskari" 1988: №2). The Journal published the work of Archil Jorjadze (1872-1913 Georgian political leader and civic activist, philosopher) on the life of Dimitri Kipiani (1814-1887) patriot statesman, publicist and writer, a leader of Georgia's liberal nobility murdered by Russian Imperial authorities ("Tsiskari" 1988: № 4-8). The article of the scientist and publicist Levan Bregadze "You Ruined Yourself and Ruined Me Too" based on the historical facts from the life of Georgians warned the readers not to be jealous and envious at each other in the struggle for independence ("Tsiskari" 1988: №8). Poet Ioram

Kemertelidze in his poem "Silence" tried to explain that keeping silence was equal to obedience ("Tsiskari" 1988: № 8). At the end of the 80s and at the beginning of the 90s new rubrics were introduced: 1. National Point of view; 2. White Pages of History. 3. Foreign view. The Journal started dialogues with the national parties' leaders Z. Gamsakhurdia and G. Chanturia about their point of view on the future of Georgia ("Tsiskari" 1990: № 2; 1990: №4) The reader for the first time got acquainted with the life and works of Grigol Robakidze, the writer forbidden by the Soviet regime ("Tsiskari" 1989: №3,7; 1990, №1), with the anti-Stalinist poet Gabriel Jabushanuri (1914-1968) ("Tsiskari" 1990: №). Poet Vakhtang kharchilava published the poem "Swordless Army" dedicated to the 9th April's victims (1990: № 4). In 1991 American investor and Philanthropist George Soros gave an interview to the journal on : "Soviet System : Towards the Open Society" ("Tsiskari" 1991: № 8-9). Later, in 1994 his Foundation was established in Georgia. The Journal for the first time made contacts with the foreign colleagues, with the American periodical "Saint Andrew's Literary Journal from the North Caroline ("Tsiskari" 1991: № 8). It must be noted that From March 1990 the journal was free of political burden ,of Party control, subordinated only to the Georgian Writers' Union. It started publishing the history of the anti-Soviet guerilla movement "Shepitsuleby" ("Oath Fealty") and of their leader Kakutsa Cholokashviliby by Alexandre Sulkhaniashvili ("Tsiskari"1990: №5-12). Editorial letter "Lessons of Independence" was the first open and sincere talk on the history of the first Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) ("Tsiskari" 1990: №1). There must be noted the role of the editor-in-chief, anti-Soviet poet Ioram Kemertelidze, holding this post in 1990-1991. The periodical started publishing the famous work of Lev Trotski "Stalin" ("Tsiskari" 1991: №1-12). The periodical without being biased , not taking any sides did not touch the topic of the political crisis of the 1991-1992. From our point of view the position of the Journal was right, it started learning the first law of democratic journalism –impartiality. Famous writer and translator Bachana Bregvadze translated the work of Spanish philosopher and essayist Jose Ortega and Gasset "Dehumanization of the Art" ("Tsiskari" 1992: №6) The journal in September 1992 introduced the Georgian Patriarch's Ilya II blessing of the souls killed from the both side in Abkhazian War and a critical article "Betrayal" of Nodar Kharshiladze on the

events of the War (“Tsiskari”: №9,12). In 1993-94 economical situation of the country touched the Journal , it was not published regularly. In 1993 started publication of the memoirs of Svetlana Alilueva (1926-2011) Stalin’s only daughter”Twenty Letters to a Friend “ (“Tsiskari” 1993: №6-8; 1994: №1). The periodical for the first time opened the pages to the neighbouring Turkish Literature, to the poetess of Georgian origin Inji Asena (1993, №3). Well known political expert Giorgi (Gia) Nodia started analytical talks on the political events of the 80s and 90s in the USSR and in Georgia “Subordinate Consensus and Democratic Society,” “Peculiarities of the National Movements on the Background of the Collapse of the Soviet System” (1993: №1; 1995: №5-6). These articles were starting lessons on democracy which we are learning up to day. For the first time the Journal opened pages of the political life of Tbilisi State University, told the story of Ivane Javakhishvili and his Programme of Independence by Gogi Tsitsishvili in the article “Vanished Pages of the History” (1995: №1-2). Abkhazian and Ossetian problems were under open discussion in the articles : “Abkhazian Ping-Pong” by David Sartania (1999: № 4) and “The Mine Put in the Foundations of Georgia “by Mamuka Tsotniashvili” (1998: №5). By 1999 the founders of the Journal became The Union of the Georgian Writers and the editorial board of “Tsiskari”. Since then there were many changes in the country that influenced on the cultural-economical processes. On the stage of media new players appeared being financially independent and strong. Today “Tsiskari” stays still dependent on the state budget that is scanty, hence does not attract authors, its size is reduced and periodicity of publication is broken. Despite this it played an important role in the political processes of the country in the second half of the past century giving the readers objective information and the European orientation. The same fate shared the adolescents’ and children’s journals.

Children’s magazine “Dila” (“Morning”) was founded in 1928 and called “Oktombreli” (member of young children’s association called after October Revolution). It was renamed in 1947. The publication of the magazine ceased during the World War II. In different periods many famous writers collaborated with it. It was under the subordination of the Georgian Komsomol and Pioneer organization and accordingly their representative was a member of the editorial board, the definite themes

were demanded to be touched: Lenin, Party, Komsomol, Pioneers. Despite this the journal's literary life was on a high level based on the exemplary tradition of the Georgian youth journalism of the XIX century. From the second half of the 80s and in the 90s dominating topic was the history of Georgia and historical personalities playing important role in saving the kingdom, the language and faith: king Parnavaz, king Bagrat IV, David the builder, Queen Tamar, Saint Nino, martyr Queen Ketevan, national heroes of Georgia. In May 1989 on the cover of the magazine instead of the flag of the Soviet Georgia the flag of the First Democratic Republic of Georgia was depicted. After regaining the independence in 1991 the magazine became free from the Party and Komsomol influence. It is still alive but financially again supported by the government – the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and by LEPL “House of Writers”. Adolescents' magazine “Pioneri” was founded in 1926, ceased during the World War II. In the end of the 80s and at the start of the 90s on its pages started frank talks of the older generation on the future of the Pioneers' organization led by academicians Vakhtang Beridze and Roin Metreveli (1989: №9; 1990: №2). In their opinion Komsomol repeated the mistakes of the Party and it ought to be abolished, too. It must be noted that Roin Metreveli in the 60s of the past century was a leader of Georgian Komsomol. Thus it was his sincere confession. In 1990 in March it was renamed and called “Nakaduli” (“Stream”) thematically followed the way of Iakob Gogebashvili Georgian educator, children's writer founder of scientific pedagogy in Georgia. It was out of the political influence reviving the attributes of the first Democratic Republic of Georgia. The journal started the articles on the Georgian language, the Georgian alphabet, historical monuments, famous Georgian historical personalities, on forbidden rock music. From the second half of the 90s of the past century the government stopped the financial support of the journal. It existed up to the 2014 by the private miserable financial support. The national spirit and European vision of life being the fundament of the first Georgian youth literary journalism of the XIX century encouraged and helped the generation of the journalists of the Communist System of the XXth century to keep a right political orientation during the change of the Soviet Regime.

Hence the youth literary journalism with dignity took on the burden of responsibility in the historical process of transition of the government and leading the country to the European family.

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Non-literal Conflict (T. Tabidze VS. O. Mandelstam)

The paper is marked by the attempt to re-read and thoroughly analyze Osip Mandelstam's essay „Two words about Georgian Art“.

Mandelstam visited Georgia three (1920,1921, 1930) times and dedicated to it several essays, five of which were published in communist