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Role of Dissidents in 1986-1991 Georgia

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## Statement

I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis solely by myself and I agree with its eventual publication in print or electronic form. All sources and literature have been properly cited. This work has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague 2024

Nino Melkadze

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## **Abstract:**

The primary objective of this thesis is to address the central inquiry: "How did Georgian dissidents influence the political processes of Georgia during the years from 1986 to 1991?" The research encompasses a diverse array of primary sources, comprising archival documents, periodicals, newspapers, and transcripts of dissidents' speeches delivered at rallies and gatherings.

Dissidents resorted to different strategies and approaches. The strategies they used included, but were not limited to, the strengthening of national identity, the use of powerful rhetorical techniques, the use of alternative media, and inclusion in an international context. The thesis also mentions in many places such an important event as the tragedy of April 9, 1989. It is emphasized in the thesis as the decisive moment in Georgia's quest for independence.

The thesis deals with how Georgian dissidents influenced the political landscape and how their ideology was portrayed in the press during this period. The findings show that the dissident movement actively used historical, cultural and religious symbols to consolidate society, effectively countered Soviet propaganda, and used international events to strengthen its positions.

As conclusion, thesis revealed that Georgian dissidents and their movement played a decisive role in gaining independence. They managed to gain independence by demonstrating its ability to mobilize society against the Soviet regime.

In the end, can be mentioned that thesis will make a remarkable contribution to a better understanding of the recent history of Georgia. It will also be important for future research on issues of Georgian nationalism, democratization, and independence.

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## **Introduction:**

The Georgian nation (people) possesses a profound historical legacy which is marked by persistent endeavors aimed at attaining and keeping up national sovereignty. Situated within a unique geopolitical context, Georgia has confronted a multitude of adversaries and challenges to its autonomous statehood. Despite contending with formidable adversaries, the Georgian people have steadfastly defended their national interests, endeavoring to safeguard their cultural identity and sovereign independence. Historical accounts attest to recurring epochs marked by concerted social and political endeavors aimed at preserving Georgian identity and language.

The thesis examines the history of Georgian dissidents during the Soviet period from 1986 to 1991. The study will in-depth focus on the role of Georgian dissidents and their impact on political developments. The dissident movement of this period (era) revealed various kind of phases and employed diverse methodologies, with its leaders frequently enduring substantial personal sacrifices in pursuit of national ideals.

Although historiography deals with many aspects of this period, certain aspects remain inadequately studied and lack comprehensive scholarly validation. Previous assessments have frequently presented conflicting viewpoints, which emphasizes the necessity for an objective comparison of different points of view to understand the realities of the time.

This research aims (endeavours) to utilize both extant and recently discovered (unearthed) archival materials to provide a comprehensive portrayal of historical events. Employing content analysis methodology, the thesis aims to derive objective conclusions. Despite numerous studies, gaps persist in comprehending the influence and significance of dissidents on Georgian statehood, which this study seeks to solve the problem.

The thesis will analyze the strategies employed by the dissident movement during the Soviet period, including the reinforcement of national identity, rhetorical methodologies, the utilization of alternative media, and engagement with international contexts. Internal challenges and inherent contradictions within the movement will also be discussed. Particular emphasis will be placed (paid attention) on the events of April 9, 1989, recognized as a pivotal moment in Georgia's pursuit of independence. This study endeavours to provide a structured, equitable, and lucid analysis of the dissident



movement's role within the broader social, political, and historical framework of post-Soviet Georgia.

The primary objective of this thesis is to address the central inquiry: "How did Georgian dissidents influence the political processes of Georgia during the years from 1986 to 1991?" Additionally, the study will explore the subsidiary question: "How was the ideology of Georgian dissidents portrayed in the press from 1986 to 1991?"

The research encompasses a diverse array of primary sources, comprising archival documents, periodicals, newspapers, and transcripts of dissidents' speeches delivered at rallies and gatherings. The study aims to enrich the comprehension of Georgia's recent history and contribute to a comprehensive analysis of the dissident movement's role. Furthermore, this endeavour serves as a foundational resource for future investigations into topics(issues) such as Georgian nationalism, democratization, and the quest (seek)for independence.

## **Definition of terms and concepts:**

This chapter provides definitions of main terms, concepts, and events to ensure a clear understanding of the thesis research. With definitions of following terms, the thesis purpose is to define a relevant terminology and research framework. The chapter will bring to the reader's an awareness and the better clarity, and it will help research results with consistency of the analysis. Please be noted, that the definitions used in this paper are specific to the context of this study. Following definitions may not correspond to the typical or general understanding of these terms. They are reflected how thesis uses and sees it.

- Dissident - is a person who actively opposes the political, social, or economic system and goes against government using all kinds of tools. The leaders of the Georgian dissident movement, such as Merab Kostava, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Zurab Chavchavadze Irakli Tsereteli, Gia Chanturia and etc, played an important role in the development of the Georgian dissident movement.
- National Liberalization Movement - is a mass movement aimed at restoring national independence and identity. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s,

the Georgian National Movement was a leading force in the struggle against the Soviet regime and for the country's independence.

- April 9, 1989 - One of the difficult and tragic day for Georgia and its society. The violent crackdown on a peaceful demonstration demanding independence. It resulted in 21 deaths and 427 injuries. The events of April 9 played the role of a watershed in the national liberation movement of Georgia.
- Referendum - On March 31, 1991, a referendum was held in Georgia, the purpose of which was to express the will to restore the country's independence. 90.5% of voters participated in this referendum and 99.08% voted for independence. The results of the referendum became the basis of the Act of Independence of Georgia (Rekhviashvili, 2021).
- Perestroika - A series of political and economic reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev the General Secretary of the USSR of that time. Perestroika was conducted in the second half of the 1980s. The goal of it was to modernize the economy of the Soviet Union and develop more open and flexible forms of the country's political system.
- Glasnost - A term denoting "openness" and "transparency". Glasnost was a policy of the Soviet Union also initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. The goal of glasnost was to increase the transparency of the relations between government and society, to promote freedom of speech and to make media independent.
- Soviet Repressions - A series of mass repressions carried out by the authorities of the Soviet Union. The repressions actions included arrests, persecutions, exiles and executions. These repressions were mainly aimed at political opponents and critics of the Soviet regime, especially during Stalin's ruling period.
- Soviet psychiatry and politics - tool of Soviet Government for political repression to exclude and mentally destroy dissidents and the people who opposed their ideas. This practice caused international protest and became one of the main reasons for criticism of the Soviet Union.
- The Velvet Revolution - peaceful mass movement that overthrew a communist regime in Czechoslovakia, these events inspired the Georgian national movement and showed that peaceful political changes were possible.

## Literature review:

Regarding the processes developed in Soviet Georgia, an important source is the publication of the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - *"The Archival Bulletin"*. It is based on archived official documents that have been kept secret for decades. The 8th, 12<sup>th</sup>, 9th, 15th, and 16th publication of the magazine are interesting for us, which concern the Sovietization of Georgia, the policy of the USSR against the Georgian Orthodox Church and repressions. The 12th issue of the archive story is important, as it is preserved by the leaders of the Georgian SSR on the case of Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, and other dissidents. (Kipshidze, Nino, 2009, "The Archival Bulletin", Archive Moambe #12, Tbilisi: Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [საარქივო მთაბბე №12 :: period :: \(nplg.gov.ge\)](http://nplg.gov.ge) )

The book of Dimitri Shvelidze - *"Political confrontations and the overthrow of the national government in Georgia (1987-1992)"* is based on facts, comprehensive and interesting, where the author analysis political processes of 1980s and 1990s in Georgia. The author tries to objectively assess the contradictions in the national movement, and the confrontations between the government and the opposition (Shvelidze, 2008).

While working on the thesis study period and topic, it is difficult to ignore the books of Igor Kveselava, especially his general monograph, where the events of 1970-1990, the details of the national liberation and socio-political movement are consistently discussed and analyzed. Igor Kveselava's book *"The Chronicles of Georgian History 1970-1990 I, Socio-political movement"* is worth mentioning, where the history of the Georgian dissident movement, the goals of the national government and the controversy in the national movement are discussed (Kveselava, 2004). The author's second book - *"The Chronicles of Georgian History II; Zviad Gamsakhurdia: Dissident, President, Martyr"* deals with the processes developed in Georgia in the 1980s-90s: the activation of the national movement and the end of the communist government, confrontation with the national government. The thesis objectively evaluates the 70s-80s of the dissident movement in Georgia, the activities of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava and other dissidents. In addition, separate stages of the national liberation movement are discussed and evaluated, including the activities of the pro-Zviad Gamsakhurdia wing. The author analyzes in detail the nature of the dissident movement. Kveselava explores the goals and objectives of the national government, contradictions, confrontation with the opposition,

the attitude of the government to the Kremlin, the West, Moscow's influence on these processes and so on. What is remarkable is that the author impartially and correctly considers all issues, sees problems and mistakes. However, the author does not hide the mistakes made by the government, but generally evaluates it positively, based on the interests of national statehood [Kveselava, 2007].

Igor Kveselava's research is significant in the study of theme "*Transformation (Perestroika) and socio-political processes in Georgia.*" This text focuses on the socio-political events occurring in Georgia during the initial years of perestroika, which took place from 1985 to 1988. The government's efforts to address adverse occurrences are evident. The art depicts the initial stages of the national liberation movement. (Kveselava 1999).

Igor Kveselava's pamphlet "*Dissident Movement in Georgia*" is significant as it delves into the history, distinctive characteristics, and phases of development of the Georgian dissident movement. Author goes through each event and year by year. The researcher regards the dissident movement as an essential component of the national liberation effort, and sees their influence on political agenda (Kveselava 1999).

The book "*Soviet Dissent*" by former Russian dissident Lyudmila Mikhaylovna Alexeyeva is interesting in relation to the processes developed in Georgia during the Soviet period. The author reviews the history of national liberalization movements emerging in the former Soviet republics. Alexeyeva connects the origin of the Georgian national movement in the post-Stalinist period with the politics of the ruling regime. Falsification of Georgian history, deplorable state of cultural monuments, Russification, violation of human rights, etc. It represented an anti-Georgian policy, against which the Georgian intelligentsia, student movement, dissidents came out openly or secretly (Alexeyeva, 1987:106-117).

In Stephen Jones's book, "*Georgia: A Political History since Independence*" author mentions that before the perestroika period, the national movement of Georgia was more focused on cultural issues. He thinks, that only after Gorbachev's reforms Georgian dissidents started to think and work in more deep on political processes, motivated the protest movement, gave hope to them, but the events of April 9 totally ended the trust in the Communist Party, the opposition began to fight for independence (Jones, 2012: 35-49).

Also, it is worth mentioning S. Jones's article - *"Georgia: Nationalism from under the Rubble."* According to the author, at the head of the National Liberation Movement Z. Gamsakhurdia's arrival, his success in the parliamentary and presidential elections was determined by his populist nationalism. Jones also notes that Gamsakhurdia's radical nationalist policy has had negative consequences. In this period there was a nationalism defending sovereignty aimed at maintaining territorial integrity. However, the author of the politics of Grda Gamsakhurdia also discusses the Soviet legacy, the economic collapse of disintegration processes within the country, and the factors of Russia (Jones, 2006: 256-263).

The collection of letters *" God, keep homeland alive "* provides a comprehensive account of the life and contributions of Zurab Chavchavadze, a key figure in the national liberation movement and a renowned dissident. The book compiles the posthumously published letters of scientists, prominent cultural people, colleagues, and comrades-in-arms of Zurab. (Abzhandadze, 1993)

The collection titled *"History of the Round Table"* contains relevant historical material about the period of interest in Georgia. This collection includes chronologically arranged documentation that fully represents the period associated with the "Round Table" in the collective consciousness. The text includes decisions from the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR, resolutions from the Extraordinary Congress of the National Liberation Struggle of Georgia, as well as letters and other documents published in the press by dissidents and other personalities involved in the national struggle at various points in time.

Henry Kuprashvili's *"Epistemological Aspects of the National Liberation Movement"* is a significant resource for examining the historical aspects of the dissident movement in Soviet Georgia. The study explores the epistemological aspects of the national liberation struggle. Study also included its national liberalization movement origins and the challenges faced during the Soviet period. Book carefully examines the activities and strategies of the dissident's movement, in particular National Liberalization Movement within the larger effort to finally achieve national independence (Kuprashvili, 1999).

Avtandil Songhulashvili authored the book *"Bloody Tragedies of April 9"* during the time of the National Liberation Movement's history. In the late 1980s, while big changes, transformation were happening, non-stop protests and rallies, society were becoming

more aware, Soviet Union started to break apart. The challenges faced by the national struggle and the consistent reestablishment of Georgia's independence are evident, following the significant crime of the 20th century - the violent events of April 9, 1989. (Songhulashvili,1999)

Songulashvili's *"Historical Essays"* is significant as it examines the recent period of Georgian history, focusing on contemporary issues and analyzing the liberation movement of dissidents. The author utilizes archival records and extensive scientific literature. (Songhulashvili, 2010).

The periodical press in Georgia during 1988-1991, as analyzed by Ucha Bluashvili in his work *"Political Parties and The National Liberation Movement in Georgia 1988-1991,"* provides valuable insights into the intricate political processes of that time. It is important to carefully examine this documentary and analytical material. Given that the author directly witnessed and took part in the intense events depicted in the book, it is evident that he cannot be completely unaffected by his interpretation. (Bluashvili.1994)

Furthermore, Professor Giorgi Mchedlidze's notable publication *"History without distance"* specifically focuses on the phase of the national liberation movement in Georgia. (Mchedlidze, 1999)

Thesis utilized journals and newspapers during the research process. The media significantly contributed to enhancing the nation's sense of self-awareness and rallying the public to combat authoritarianism. The newspaper *"Public Education,"* published by the People's Front of Georgia in the 1980s and 1990s, contained numerous articles about different aspects of the national liberation movement, coverage and analysis of historical events, and a strong sense of patriotism. Various magazines and newspapers produced in Georgia have featured significant and notable articles at different times. That can be found and downloaded from the Website of National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. These include *"Communist"*, *"Iveria"*, *"Horoli"*, *"Teatraluri Moambe"*, *"Literaturuli Saqartvelo"*, *"Droeba"*, *"Danakhvisi"*, *"Duruji"*, *"Georgian Chronicle"*, *"Golden Fleece"*, *"Gza Khsnisa"*, *"Mkhatvari"*.

Memoirs play a crucial role in documenting the history of the national liberation movement in Georgia during the latter half of the 20th century. They provide valuable insights not only into the author's personal experiences but also into the societal and political events that the author encountered. As a result, memoirs frequently include

significant details about a wide-ranging social movement. Simultaneously, memories necessitate a discerning mindset, as they are not devoid of bias.

Vakhtang Dzabiradze's memoirs, titled "*Lights and Shadows of the National Liberation Movement*," provide a detailed account of important aspects of the national struggle. The author, who played a central role in the national liberation movement, personally witnessed and experienced the triumphs and hardships of the events that unfolded during those years. The publication presents compelling content regarding the dissident movement in Georgia, including its notable individuals and significant events. The author presents their perspectives, evaluations, and final judgments on the subject matter. (Dzabiradze, 2007)

## **Methodology:**

This chapter offers an explanation of the methodology used in research to explore the role of Georgian dissidents from 1986 to 1991.

Content analysis is a research method used to systematically analyze and quantify various forms of communication such as written texts, interviews, speeches, or visual media. One of the first scholar to introduce this technique was Harold Lasswell, a political scientist and communication theorist. According to him content analysis as "a systematic and quantitative description of the expressed content of communication." (Lasswell, 1948)

In the book "The Analysis of Political Behavior", Lasswell describes content analysis as "the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the expressed content of communication". (Lasswell, 1948)

Lasswell, in his work "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," elaborated on the specifics of his concept and focused on studying the content, context, and results of communication. Lasswell held the belief that content analysis could uncover the meaning, motivations, and intentions underlying communication. Accordingly, he proposed a method of analyzing communication based on five basic questions: "Who says what, to whom, through what channel, and with what result?" (Lasswell, 1948)

Content analysis, however, has to address prior questions concerning why available texts came into being, what they mean and to whom, how they mediate between antecedent and consequent conditions, and, ultimately, whether they enable the analysts to select valid answers to questions concerning their contexts. Hence the logic of content analysis designs is justifiable not only according to accepted standards of scientific data processing (efficiency and evenhandedness), but also by reference to the context in relation to which texts must be analyzed. (Krippendorff, 2004: 82)

Walizer and Wienir discuss the qualitative content analysis research method in their book *Research Methods and Analysis: Searching for Relationships*. They describe qualitative content analysis as a systematic method for analyzing textual information by categorizing and interpreting the meaning of the content. This approach allows researchers to identify themes, patterns, and relationships within qualitative data, providing deeper insights into the studied material. (Walizer, M. H., & Wienir, P. L. 1978)

Primary data for this study was collected in newspapers (published between 1986-1991), academic articles, archives, media materials, political publications (published between 1986-1991) such as Archival Bulletin, Digital collection of Georgian periodicals and newspapers Gza Khsnisa, Droeba, Iveria, Communist, Georgian Chronicle, Kabadoni and more, that is provided on the web page of National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. Speeches of the dissident was collected via media materials uploaded on YouTube channel.

Research question is of my Master thesis is - How did Georgian dissidents affect the political processes of Georgia in 1986-1991?

Sub question - How was the ideology of Georgian dissidents portrayed in press from 1986 to 1991?

Data analysis was performed using thematic content analysis. This involved identifying key themes and trends in the data related to the research topic. Interpreting these findings within the historical and political context of the time.

The data was analyzed through following coding category:

- Nationalist ideas and rhetoric
- Criticism of Soviet policy



- The role of religion and tradition
- Calls for independence.

This thesis explores the period between 1986-1991. The selection of this period is due to the fact that it includes the era of Gorbachev's "Perestroika", which had a significant impact on dissidents, as well as dramatic events such as the tragedy of 9 April 1989 (April 9, 1989, still in the capital of Soviet Georgia, tens of thousands of people gathered on Rustaveli Avenue demanding independence. At 4 o'clock in the morning, the heavy equipment of the Soviet army, and then the special forces of the internal army, attacked those who gathered demanding freedom. As a result of the crackdown on the April 9 rally, 21 people were killed. 17 of them were women and 4 were men. Minors were also among the and the road to the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Shiolashvili, 2023:2)

## **Historical Overview of 1986-1991.**

In this chapter, the thesis will study the history of the dissident's and national liberation movement in Georgia within research period. The purpose and reason for using the mentioned chapter in the thesis is to provide the reader with information about the general political processes of the research period 1986-1991. After reading this chapter, the reader will have the opportunity to have information about the main events, influential figures, and important changes along with the general political processes.

In order to assess the difficulty of the national struggle experienced by the dissidents and their motivation, it is crucial to understand the historical events leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent struggle for Georgia's independence. This historical overview lays the foundation for the following analysis and discussion of this thesis.

A dissident is an individual who rejects and does not adhere to the dominant ideology within a particular state. The dissidents understood that the most effective approach to oppose the state was by gathering and sending abroad incriminating materials against the Soviet leadership, which were eagerly sought after by Western intelligence agencies (Mchedluri 1995:22).

The recognition of human rights and freedoms encompassed more than just the fight for speech, press, meetings, acquiring, and disseminating information. From a more pragmatic perspective, the acknowledgment of universal ideals inherently implied the adoption of the Western way of life. Consequently, he held a contrary stance towards the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, dissidents were a perfect ally for the Western countries. However, the broad public in the Western world, who were deeply disturbed even by a basic depiction of the Soviet Satusagho<sup>1</sup>, perceived those who battled against this monstrous regime as heroic and romantic figures (Dzabiradze 2007:28).

In the conditions of the Soviet regime, where any form of political nationalism was strictly limited, the manifestation of national sentiments occurred precisely in literature, art, sports, and other fields. The Soviet regime tried to develop a Soviet identity, but despite ideological pressure, achievements were viewed as national successes (Chkhaidze, 2016:35).

Throughout the history of the USSR, the Georgian intelligentsia cared about protecting and developing the nation's cultural values. In the post-Stalinist period, the Communist government did not implement repressive policies. To strengthen political legitimacy, it tried to make the intelligentsia loyal to the regime and involve it in the process of building the Soviet state empire. In this regard, it's worth mentioning the so-called nomenclature intelligentsia, who were representatives of the Communist government in the fields of science and art (Nodia, 2000, p. 48). Furthermore, since the Soviet regime, while forming a 'Soviet identity', did not hinder cultural processes in allied political units, the intellectual elite detached from the regime, who, unlike dissidents, were not carriers of anti-communist ideology, enjoyed relative freedom thanks to and with the help of the nomenclature intelligentsia (Zurabishvili, 2002: 48-49).

By the early 1980s, a crisis began in the USSR's centralized economy and bureaucratic management system. In Georgia, as in other republics of the USSR, the pace of economic development slowed, and the government proved unable to solve the country's existing economic and social problems. (Jones, 2013: 38, 57-58).

In order to halt the crisis and preserve the USSR, in 1987 at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev announced the

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<sup>1</sup> "Satusagho" (სატუსაგო) literally translates to "a place for prisoners," hence its meaning as "prison" or "jail."

course of 'Restructuring' ('Perestroika') and 'Openness' ('Glasnost'). On his initiative, reforms began in the country's economic system. The principle of 'Openness' contributed to the freedom of public opinion and the formation of political organizations. As a result of the 'Perestroika' processes, the Communist government's censorship of the press weakened (Maisashvili, 2010:178). However, as a result of Gorbachev's reforms, the empire weakened, the socio-economic and political crisis became irreversible, and the liberalization of the Soviet regime was followed by the rise of the national movement in almost all allied republics. The situation was changing in favor of the nationalists (Beissinger, 2004:8).

Since May 1987, the situation in Georgia has been mixed up. Secretly operating dissident groups came out into the open and thousands of rallies, strikes, hunger strikes, demonstrations began, both in Tbilisi and in different cities and regions of Georgia. The main demand of the actions was the liberation and restoration of independence of Georgia. In 1988-1989, the national liberation movement was strong and united, no one allowed himself to put his personal self above the interests of the country (Mikiashvili 2016:25).

Since the "perestroika" period, informal organizations and political parties have been formed in Georgia. By the second half of 1989, their number reached fifty. Almost all of them supported the independence of Georgia, the market economy, the role of Georgians as the dominant group in the country (Jones, 2012:53).

Furthermore, the leftist camp comprised pro-communist organizations such as the I. B. Stalin Society and the Political Organization of Georgian Workers, as well as social-reformist organizations like the Social-Democratic Party, Party of National Unity and Social Equality, Union of Social Justice of Georgia, and "Revival of Manor." The latter rejected the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and supported European social reformism (Shvelidze, 2008: 18-32, 43, 91).

It is also worth noting that the communist government helped to create a counterweight organization of the national movement - "Rustaveli Society" in 1989, in order to prevent the rise of the national movement and its confrontation with the government. Prominent writers, scientists and public figures were united in the mentioned organization. However, according to the Soviet regime, the position of the mentioned organization was not included in the plans and interests of the communist government. Participating in national-social activities was one of the program requirements drawn up by Akaki

Bakradze, the chairman of "Rustaveli Society". He supported the unification of the national movement, the introduction of a democratic system of governance, the restoration of private property, and the creation of a mercenary army. "Rustaveli Society" considered it necessary to make a political-legal assessment of the annexation of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921 (Davitashvili, 2003:391; Kveselava, 2004:168-169). Thus, the leading positions were held by the radicals and the "Rustaveli Society" was at the service of the national movement, the communists did not achieve their goal (Chkhaidze, 2016:43- 44).

In terms of spreading nationalist ideas, it was important to hold protest demonstrations. Intellectual elite participated less in protest movements (Davitashvili, 2011:394). The intelligentsia became the leader of the country's spiritual and intellectual life (Maisashvili, 2016:93).

In Dimitri Shvelidze's 2008 work, the author emphasizes the conflict between Zviad Gamsakhurdia and part of the Georgian intelligentsia since the period of dissidence. The author points out that Gamsakhurdia sharply criticized a part of the intelligentsia, which was manifested in heavy accusations and insulting assessments against them. The text recalls the lexical arsenal used by Gamsakhurdia against members of the intelligentsia, such as: "provocateur", "thrower of water on the enemy's mill", "agency", "Kremlin agent", "Moscow spies", "collaborationist", "anti-national", "traitor of the nation". etc. The author suggests that Gamsakhurdia's goal might have been to awaken the intelligentsia and get involved in the national movement, however, he notes that his uncompromisingness had the opposite result, a part of the intelligentsia became even more alienated from him and his supporters. The text shows that there was a sharp conflict between Gamsakhurdia and part of the intelligentsia, which was manifested in insulting accusations and insulting remarks. This conflict further intensified the polarization in the society and made it difficult to unite the intelligentsia in the national movement. (Shvelidze, 2008:18-91)

In the initial stage of Gorbachev's political course, the Georgian national movement did not come out with political demands and was limited to cultural-ecological problems. In 1987, the first protest rally was held on the initiative of the Society for the Protection of Historical, Cultural, and Natural Monuments, and the Ecological Association of the Rustaveli Society. It was directed against the construction of the Trans-Caucasian railway line. The railway was supposed to directly connect the North Caucasus with Tbilisi via

Pshav-Khevsureti. According to the opposition, this project would cause an ecological catastrophe and depopulation of the mountain-dwelling population. They achieved their goal and forced the Communist government to halt this construction. A mass rally was held on November 12, 1988, in the territory of the hippodrome. Demands were put forward such as the abolition of the military training ground near David Gareja, stopping the construction of the Khudoni hydroelectric power station, halting the gas pipeline in the Aragvi valley, and others. Environmental campaigns were somewhat linked to economic and political sovereignty (Davitashvili 2003; Mikiashvili 2016).

National-patriotic sentiments were increasingly strengthening in the national movement. The demonstrations from December 1988 to April 1989 already had an almost entirely political character (Davitashvili, 2003:303-305). There was a confrontation with communist ideology, conflicts of interests.

On April 4, 1989, a rally started in the courtyard of the Medical Institute, protesting the artificial tension of the situation in Abkhazia. The multi-thousand-strong action, which started near the Medical University, moved to Rustaveli Avenue. From April 5, the demands related to Abkhazia were replaced by the demand to restore Georgia's independence. A hunger strike began on the steps of the Government Palace. The number of rally participants was increasing day by day. (Mikiashvili, 2016: 25).

In her book „Merab Kostava“ published in 2016 Nino Mikiashvili describes: On April 8, late at night, shortly before the raid, Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II came to the participants of the rally. He addressed the participants of the rally and asked them to move to the temples of Kashueti and Sion, because the danger was real. The participants of the rally refused to move from their seats, "we will not disband, we have sworn an oath". Soon after such shouts, the participants of the rally, including the hunger strikers, were mercilessly dispersed by the units of the Soviet Union army and internal troops brought from Russia to Georgia. Two-bladed shovels and chemical substances were used against the participants of the rally. On April 9, 1989, 16 people, mostly women, died fighting for freedom on Rustaveli Avenue. Thousands of people (including the author) were poisoned by the chemical. Famous Georgian dissidents who were leaders of the national liberation movement: Merab Kostava, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Irakli Tsereteli and Gia Chanturia were arrested. A curfew was announced in Tbilisi. Instead of punishing the criminals, the arrest of the leaders of the national liberation movement was followed by protests from various sectors of the society. The arrested were released after 40 days. In

order to gain independence, actions and demonstrations were renewed. On the initiative of Merab Kostava, this year's sit-in strike began in different cities of Georgia - the strikers refused to undergo mandatory military service in the Soviet army.

The events of April 9, 1989, finally put an end to trust in the Communist Party. It can be said that even within the circles of the Communist government, manifestations of nationality began to appear. Against the backdrop of the weakening of the Soviet regime and the rise of the national movement, the control and management of Georgia's political processes from the center was weakening. Despite the attempts of the Union government to hinder national processes, political nationalism was developing as a result of the efforts of the Georgian nationalist movement. The national force stood against those processes that were assessed as anti-national (Davitashvili, 2003: 303-305).

The article of Jimsher Rekhviashvili titled Thirty years since the independence referendum published in Radio Liberty (2021) states the following:

“On March 31, 1991, a referendum on restoration of state independence was held throughout the territory of Georgia. Its purpose was to give the population of Georgia the opportunity to express their will on the issue of independence. The referendum was a legal and legitimate way to declare independence and was based on the Act of Independence of 26 May 1918.

The referendum was held against the wishes of the then Soviet Union to keep the republics under the new alliance treaty. Georgia refused to participate in the union referendum.

A total of 3.3 million voters took part in the referendum, which was 90.5% of voters. 3.3 million people (99.08%) answered "yes" to the referendum question.

In Abkhazia, 61.27% of voters took part in the referendum, 61.23% in voting. "Yes" was answered by 59.84% of the total number of voters. Referendum was held in some regions of South Ossetia, 64.5% of voters took part in the voting.

In areas where ethnic minorities were in excess, the majority of them voted in the affirmative. For example, 96% answered "yes" in Marneuli.

Based on the results of the referendum, on April 9, the Supreme Council of Georgia adopted the Act of Independence. The referendum was of great importance in terms of the legitimacy of Georgia's declaration of independence and for presenting the case in the international arena.

The referendum is of fundamental importance for the constitutional protection of Georgia's sovereignty and can only be changed by a new referendum or only by international agreements on territorial changes.”  
(Rekhviashvili 2021)

In this chapter thesis discovered historical developments of the Georgian dissidents and national liberation movement. Thesis reviewed key events, fundamental changes and important leaders that formed the movement, that took part in collapse of Soviet Union. Within this overview reader could receive necessary context to understand the dynamics and motivations of the dissidents and the movement. This chapter provided valuable insights into the challenges and achievements of the dissidents and the movement, that they had on the way to Georgias independence.

## **Analysis of Articles published in 1986-1991.**

The aim of the chapter is to review and analyze newspapers and periodicals, that together illustrated political and social landscape of Georgia during the research period from 1986 to 1991. Methodologically, the research chapter relies on a content analysis of historical sources and a comparative approach to reveal the main trends and discourses of this period. Special attention is paid to the coverage of the complex relationship that existed between the national movement and the Soviet government, as well as the role that the media and public opinion played in these processes.

The 57th publication of the periodical "Georgian Chronicles" also includes information about other ethnicities. For example, information regarding the Tatar revolt.

### **Article title: December 13, Crimea, Zaprudnoe village**

“Approximately 25 Crimean Tatar camps were assaulted the group consisting of 300 special forces personnel. The Tatars requested to be settled in their ancestral motherland, Crimea. They doused the camp

with gasoline as a means of self-defense. Ismail Balji, a Tatar individual, doused his body with gasoline and proceeded to approach the soldiers while holding a lit torch. The soldiers deployed a water cannon, causing Balji to ignite and then be sent to the hospital in a severely critical state.

An additional three hundred men were incorporated into the special forces' formations. To ensure security, the individuals used children and women as a shield. They then forcefully entered and subjected the campers to serious physical assault. Therefore, a 59-year-old individual named Ridwan Charukh was admitted to the hospital, and seven individuals were apprehended by the authorities. Ultimately, the special forces doused the camp with gasoline and incinerated it whole.” (Meluava, 1987:4)

**Article title: December 17, Naberezhnye Chelny**

“A commemorative gathering of the Tatarstan Community Center (TOU) was convened to mark the first anniversary of its establishment. The gathering deliberated on and consolidated the outcomes of the organization's efforts over the course of one year and formulated strategies for the future. The thorough implementation of the Kremlin's Russification strategy in the Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan was highlighted and criticized.

A discussion took place regarding the disregard for the native language, the absence of Tatar schools, the shortage of kindergartens, and other pressing issues. The gathering extended invitations to Giorgi Akhalaia and Guram Chakhvadze, who are committee representatives of the National Democratic Party of Georgia. Giorgi Akhalaia delivered an introductory address”. (Meluava, 1987:4)

The First article describes a violent attack by Russian special forces on a camp of Crimean Tatars who were peacefully trying to return to their homeland. The details of the attack and the incident of Ismail Balji, who poured the Kerosene on him, show the brutality used against this ethnic minority.



The article mentions that the Russian military used Tatar women and children as shields and made a serious physical violation against the campers. It describes the complete destruction of the Tatar camp by the Russian military, who poured the camp with kerosene and burned it to the ground.

The second article refers to a meeting of the Tatarstan Community Center, which criticized Moscow's active "Russification" policies, such as the suppression of the Tatar language and the lack of Tatar schools and kindergartens.

Georgian representatives from the National Democratic Party also attended above meeting, that indicated the solidarity between the Georgian and Tatar national movements.

By publishing these articles, the Georgian newspaper "Georgian Chronicles" appeared to: emphasize the ethnic minorities, such as the Crimean Tatars, and their resistance to Russian violence and forced assimilation policies; exposed the brutal tactics used by the Russian military against civilians and dissidents; drew parallels with the battle of the Tatars of Crimea and Tatarstan and the situation of Georgians under Soviet Russian domination; spread awareness and potential support for national/separatist movements of ethnic minorities in the Union; developing a sense of solidarity and common struggle between the Georgian and Tatar events against Moscow's strict policy; The use of graphic details of the Ismail Balzhi incident was probably aimed at shocking and infuriating Georgian readers by portraying the brutality of the Russian military; The inclusion of a Tatar congregation that criticized the policy of "Russification" presented this as a parallel struggle against the cultural oppression that Georgians were also experiencing. In general, these articles portrayed the Soviet Russian government as a violent, repressive force that stifled minority rights and national aspirations, which could be echoed by Georgian readers' own experiences and fueled anti-Moscow national sentiment.

This thesis will review the 57th edition of the newspaper "Georgian Chronicle", that was published in December 1987.

### **Article title: Soviet psychiatry in the service of "health"**

In 1989, an article was written in the newspaper "Georgian Chronicle" under the title Soviet psychiatry in the service of "health". The article begins with a reminder of how Soviet psychiatrists treated their patients, which resulted in their expulsion from the

World Psychiatric Association. Following that, the article discusses the speeches given by Markozov and Viktor Davydov, comparison the psychiatrists from Kazan and Georgia and the decision made by the World Association of Psychiatrists.

„The "achievement" of Soviet psychiatry in the matter of "healing" differently minded, politically unreliable individuals is widely known today. Their diligent work caused outrage among Western psychiatrists, which was followed by a demand to expel Soviet psychiatry from the World Association of Psychiatrists. In 1983, the Soviet Union refused to be a member country of the World Psychiatric Association and thus tried to avoid the shameful expulsion from the association.

Today, Kremlin officials shamelessly declare that the abuse of psychiatry against people is a thing of the past; Therefore, Soviet psychiatry deserves to become a member of the World Association of Psychiatrists again. In connection with this issue, the consul of the Soviet Embassy in Washington G. Markozov stated that an independent commission was created in the USSR, which is obliged to reveal cases of misuse of psychiatry.

Markozov avoided the question of why the persons who misused it against dissidents still hold leading positions in psychiatry. Peter Redway, the author of several books on the evils of Soviet psychiatry, said that the restoration of Soviet psychiatrists in the mentioned association will strengthen the positions of the old guard, who so diligently "treated" people obsessed with anti-Soviet sentiment.

After Markozov's speech, the former Soviet prisoner of war Viktor Davydov, who was "treated" for publishing an anti-Stalin article in Kazan psychiatric hospital for two and a half years, spoke out. According to him, the two psychiatrists of the Serbian Institute, who were responsible for placing him in a psychiatric hospital, continue their work today, while the doctor whose orders "treated" Davidov with sedating drugs in the Kazan psychiatric hospital in 1980 is still in the same hospital today. He even became a chief physician.

In this regard, the situation is not better in Georgia. The psychiatrist-murderers of the young law enforcement officer, teacher and journalist Nazi Shamanauri continue their work.

Another congress of the World Association of Psychiatrists was held in Athens, where Soviet psychiatry was reinstated as a member of the World Association by one vote.

It seems that glasnost and perestroika are not the only ones that mislead honest people. "(Sarishvili 1987:4).

An article in the Georgian newspaper "Georgian Chronicles" critically discusses the terrible use of psychiatry by the Soviet government to suppress political dissidents and suppress free thought. The author exposes the "achievement" of Soviet psychiatry in the forced placement and "treatment" of people with ideological opponents and anti-Soviet views in psychiatric institutions.

The article invokes outrage among Western psychiatrists over this practice, which led to calls for the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). It highlights the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the WPA in 1983 to avoid an ignominious expulsion from the association.

The author is skeptical of Soviet claims that such abuses are a thing of the past, and questions why those who used psychiatry against dissidents retain leadership positions. A clear example of this is the case of Viktor Davydov, a former Soviet prisoner who was subjected to forced psychiatric "treatment" for publishing an anti-Stalinist article.

It is important that the article draws parallels with similar violations in Georgia and mentions the case of Nazi Shamanauri - a young law enforcement officer, teacher and journalist, whose "psychiatrist-murderers" continue to work.

The tone of the article is one of guilt and outrage, portraying Soviet psychiatry as a tool of political repression rather than a legitimate medical practice. The reference to the WPA's majoritarian restoration of Soviet psychiatry after the heated debate further heightens the author's concern about the lack of accountability and the continuation of such abuses.

The possible reasons for publishing the article in the Georgian newspaper could be: to inform the public about the systematic violation of human rights and the suppression of

dissent in the Soviet Union through the misuse of psychiatry, drawing parallels with similar events in Georgia; criticism of the lack of real reforms and accountability in the Soviet psychiatric system; expressing solidarity with the victims of such violations, both in the Soviet Union and in Georgia, and demanding recognition of their rights and the injustice they experienced; revealing the fact that the persons responsible for the violations are still in leadership positions, which indicates a lack of real progress or readiness for change; An appeal to international organizations such as the WPA to maintain pressure on the Soviet psychiatric system to prevent its further abuse.

### **Newspaper Droebea, N9 published in 1989, 31 of December.**

The article describes the rapid fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in November 1989, named the "Velvet Revolution." The author describes in detail the chronology of events that began with the brutal crackdown on a student demonstration in Prague on November 17.

The article highlights a wave of protests, strikes and rallies with anti-communist slogans. It was illustrated by the quote: "At the rallies, people raised slogans: 'Down with the Communist Party!', 'We demand the truth about 1968', 'Down with the one-party system', 'Government resignation'." (Quntelia, 1989:2-3)

The author describes the following rapid political changes, such as the abolition of the ruling role of the Communist Party, the introduction of a multiparty system, and the reduction of military service. The rapid disintegration of these communist institutions is reflected in passages such as: "Students will no longer learn scientific communism in schools. Instead, a new subject - political science - has appeared in the curriculum..."

The article condemns the 1968 Soviet intervention that crushed the Prague Spring reforms and describes the situation at the time as "soldiers beat women and children with concrete blocks, while tanks chased civilians through the streets."

Importantly, the article describes the establishment of a new leadership, such as resignation of Gustav Husak as head of state, and the candidacy in the upcoming elections of Vaclav Havel, the dissident writer and leader of the Velvet Revolution. This was illustrated by the following quote:

"Two candidates remain: the leader of Charter 77, writer and former dissident Václav Havel, who was nominated by the "People's Forum" and a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Czechoslovakia until 1968, and now non-party Čestmír Císař, who was nominated by the Young Socialists Union". (Quntelia, 1989:3)

Overall, the article describes a remarkably clear picture of the rapid and relatively peaceful overthrow of the communist regime, which was the decisive event in the breakup of the Eastern Bloc.

If research will discuss the possible reasons for publishing the article in the Georgian newspaper, there might be several: to inform Georgian readers about these important events in Czechoslovakia and the fall of its communist government, taking into account the common experience of Soviet domination; to provide positive effect to Georgians by showing that a peaceful mass movement was able to overthrow a long-standing dictatorship; and providing hope and inspiration for possible democratic reforms or independence movements in Georgia by demonstrating the possibility of rapid political change; and detailed coverage and a generally positive attitude towards the Velvet Revolution is the goal of distinguishing and analyzing what was mentioned in the Georgian newspaper.

The 57th publication of the periodical "Georgian Chronicles"; **Article title: 11 December Rally**

On December 11, the National-Democratic Party, the Democratic Party, the Constitutional-Monarchist Party, and the Youth Christian-Democratic Association organized a gathering at the monument of Ilia and Akaki in Tbilisi to commemorate the 41st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Vazha Mtvashvili, the chairman of the Democratic Party, commenced the meeting. Regarding the lack of protection for human rights in the Soviet Union, he observed that at the rally commemorating Declaration Day in Moscow, the State Security Committee (SSC) and militia (law enforcement in Soviet Union) authorities apprehended 20 individuals who were participating in the event.

Democratic Party member Vakhtang Talakhadze pleaded with the demonstrators to pay tribute to the people who were tortured to death in the SSC dungeon by holding a moment

of silence. Vakhtang Talakhadze stated: "The USSR's signing of the declaration was a derisive act towards human rights. The Supreme Council of the Soviet Union is dedicated mainly to violating on this declaration, rather than defending it." Hence, the existence of this committee is unnecessary as it serves to execute the empire's objectives and acts as the intelligence apparatus for the so-called allied republics. The responsibility for this vast army lies solely on the laboring individual. We are enslaved and subsequently liberated by God's mercy. To encourage the elimination of the primary departments of SSC in higher education, we must first eliminate them. (Meluava, 1987:3-4)

The Chairman of the National Democratic Party, Giorgi Chanturia, delivered a speech in which he addressed the challenges faced by the party and the nation. He recounted plans to organize a rally on December 10 of the previous year, which were thwarted by the active measures taken by SSC. The organizations behind the action had intended to blockade the committee building for an extended period. During their meeting, it was decided to first hold a warning picket. Chanturia warned that if ethnic conflicts, supported by SSC, reoccurred in Georgia, they would besiege the building for an extended period as a protest.

Chanturia revealed that reliable sources indicated the Kremlin was planning another ethnic conflict between Armenians and Georgians in Meskhetia in the spring. He asserted that Moscow's continuous interference in Georgia's political and economic life demonstrated that Georgia did not belong to Georgians at present. He emphasized that there could be no ethnic conflicts in an independent Georgia, suggesting that such conflicts were products of the existing political and social system.

Chanturia stressed that their struggle aimed to restore Georgia's independence, believing this was the only way to solve the country's most significant political and economic problems. He criticized the current government for trying to convince people that "perestroika" and "glasnost" were top-down initiatives, crediting the true knights of the liberation movement like Bukowski and Kostava for these changes. He noted that the national movement had become fashionable and popular in Georgia and emphasized that it should evolve into a political movement and become the primary focus of their lives.

He said that Georgia's current state could not be considered true life, as many people, blinded by "perestroika", were unaware that "transformation from above" would eventually end, leading to a return to the old ways. Chanturia concluded by affirming that

the committee was, is, and would remain a cornerstone of the national movement. He called for its eradication, expressing confidence that they would ultimately achieve victory.

Irakli Kakabadze, president of the Youth Christian-Democratic Association, gave a speech. He touched on the need to raise political morality and culture in Georgia. He noted: the liberation of Georgia depends on the protection of universal human rights, the struggle for the protection of these rights is one of the constituent parts of the struggle for Georgia's independence.

“- Today there are several concentration camps in Georgia, - he noted, among them is the so-called health-rehabilitation prophylactic of Sagarejo, whose annual income is 4.5 million manats. To abolish this tyrannical camp, where many people are suffering, today 143 people are on hunger strike. During our visit there, the official did not allow us to bring video and sound recording devices, cameras. This Sagarejo colony is a secret military facility, not a medical prophylactic. On December 13, the Committee for the Protection of Prisoners visited Sagarejo again”. (Meluava 1989:4)

The rally received a resolution read by Rostislav Makushenko, a member of the Democratic Union from St. Petersburg, addressed to the US Senate to protect Sergey Kuznetsov.

Then the participants of the rally moved to the SSC building, blocked its entrance and held a protest meeting. G. Chanturia, V. Talakhadze, T. Sharmanashvili, G. Zumbadze, G. Tskvedadze, G. Kalandadze, S. Begadze, B. Gugushvili; The speech of Polio Gogelia, a member of the NDP since 1923, who in 1940 had to sit right here, in the sixtieth cell of the basement of this building, was especially exciting.

Finally, the demonstrators marched towards the Lenin monument and a short rally was held there, where Lenin and Leninism were denounced, and it was noted: "Soon the time will come when the Georgian nation tears down the Lenin monument and erect a statue of freedom in its place." (Meluava 1989:3-4)

The Following newspaper to review is “**Gza Khsnisa**” issued in 1987, publication N1.

First section introduces the Davit Garejeli Society, emphasizing its mission to bring the teachings of Christ to rural areas of Georgia. It suggests that urban centers are already engaged in similar efforts and sets the stage for the society's focus on rural communities.

“Dear compatriots!

Davit Garejeli Society is called to practically implement the moral essence of Christ's teachings - in the regions and villages of Georgia. The main audience of Davit Garejeli's society is the regions and villages of Georgia, because in big cities such as: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, and others, it is already underway and probably at a fairly high level. - National-political and Christian movement.” (Goderdzishvili,1987: 1)

Next two paragraph details the specific activities undertaken by the society, with a particular focus on organizing educational evenings oriented on Christianity, followed by dialogue part. The primary aim is to promote spiritual and moral cohesion between rural and urban areas, thereby enhancing national unity.

“One of the action directions of Davit Garejeli's society - among the other directions - is the spiritual and moral rapprochement of villages and districts with the city's national-political, Christian movement and, of course, with each other.

Our society will hold an evening in all regions of Georgia and, as far as possible, in all villages, on the topic: "In short - about God, Christ and Christianity", and after the end of the evening, a question-and-answer session will be held and answers will be given to almost all questions, thus we will make a small contribution to the spiritual bonding and unification of the nation.” (Goderdzishvili,1987: 1)

In following paragraph author describes the reason why a new society was formed instead of joining an existing party or other society. The rationale is to avoid the potential misunderstandings and mistakes, that could occur if they acted under another group's name. This sovereignty allows them to maintain their integrity and focus on their mission without external interference.

“A question arises by itself: if we are only called to provide information, then why don't we unite in some national-political party - society and



act on their behalf? Why is it necessary to create a new society? - The matter is as follows: we, the Board of the Davit Garejeli Society, do not have a guarantee that we will not make any mistake - even a mechanical mistake - while acting on behalf of any party or society. Nor are we safe from the fact that doing our positive work will always be seen positively from afar. Therefore, to avoid the inconveniences that may arise when acting on behalf of others, we will act again on behalf of our society, Davit Garejeli. In a word, some society had to be created and we should act in its name. That's how the idea of creating a community of Davit Garejeli was born.” (Goderdzishvili,1987: 1)

At the same time, the author notes that they are ready to cooperate with other groups if it will be beneficial for them. He also emphasizes the long-term obligation to restore and revive Georgia as an ideal state, which includes cultural and spiritual revival.

“We will, of course, enter organizational relations with all those parties and societies, where we consider more cooperation necessary for the common cause.

In general, the main directions and action plans of our society - the coming days, months, and years will show only one thing:

We will fight furiously, without sparing our lives, - so that in Georgia - all thoughts, all feelings, all objects, all words, and actions, all people return to their original, real, and dream place, from which they were forced out for a dozen years.” (Goderdzishvili,1987: 1)

This part addresses the difficulties in strategizing and executing plans because of the general sense of disappointment and loss of faith. It recommends against pessimism and highlights the significance of maintaining optimism. Furthermore, it implies potential clashes with the government, acknowledging that while some might see their actions as opposition to authority, the society intends to deliberately choose its fights. It also explores the strategic method of involving government officials who may silently support their objective because of their patriotism. It underscores the importance of avoiding unnecessary conflicts and focusing on constructive actions that benefit the nation.

“It is difficult to talk about plans, because - at a time when everything is upside down, it is difficult to convince people who have been deceived a thousand times / in simple truths.

...we touched, and I think that when we say that nothing will help this country and everything will be the same again, we kill our hope and sow doubt and hopelessness around us. "Patriotic movement of some people", they consider it a struggle with the government of Georgia, and in some cases, I don't think they were wrong/... But I believe that we will be able to fight with them if they certainly deserve it, but first we have to think, and watch /this is my opinion/. Today, who does not know that in some matters they do not belong to themselves? Maybe they will side with us as much as they can, and if that doesn't happen, then we will be able to express complaints and issue uncompromising ultimatums to them, and if you want, even more. A representative of the ruling apparatus may not be able to take part in any action, but with his Georgianness and patriotism, he will help us as much as possible in the national-political movement, and if this happens, then our suffering motherland will also be helped, and we will not start "stupidity" with each other. It is easy to wipe everything out with one stroke of the hand, but it is not Christian... Not a single person has ever been born on earth who has not been undeservedly rebuked. A Christian man is gentle. Must be loving and respectful of people. ... Inadvertently, I have already mentioned one of the directions of Davit Garejeli's society.  
“(Goderdzishvili,1987: 2)

Then the text continues where the author uses an analogy to emphasize the importance of unity and wisdom. He encourages those with more knowledge to lead by example and emphasizes that unity is crucial to strength, using historical references to emphasize the importance of solidarity.

“I would like to give you a small example to justify my orientation: when two brothers fight, one goes to kindergarten, and the other goes to school and is much older than the little one, the parents will say to the older one: "You have to give in, you are older, you understand more..." So, the one among us who is great and who understands more

should give in, and if we are all great, then what is better. It is said that strength is in unity, King Davit Agmashenebeli's Georgia was strong with unity and unanimity. And today, more than ever, we, all of us, one by one, need unity and unanimity. May God protect us, but if we do not act with wisdom towards each other and the common cause, we may soon become the laughingstock of others.” (Goderdzishvili,1987: 2)

Between the provided articles thesis will offer the short part from Songulashvili’s book, where the author provides discussion about same timeframe and discusses mentioned article. The development of the national idea in Georgia in the 80s of the 20th century is moving into a new phase. The dissident movement created certain conditions for the rise of the national movement. All this highlighted the weakness and weakness of the Soviet regime. Since the 80s, and especially from the second half, the national liberation movement has been active, which was facilitated not only by the events taking place in Georgia or the Soviet system but also in the whole world. The West increasingly expressed its anti-communist view and tried its best to promote the development of the democratic idea. The real face of Soviet Russia and the fact that it was slowly coming to an end became known to everyone. However, deliberate, and thought-out action was needed so that Soviet Russia would not drag other states on the path to the end. (Songulashvili, 2018:237-257)

"A violently united empire is teetering on the brink, but it still has real and dangerous power. It is always ready to turn the national movement into a conflict between nations and a real war. It is ready to use every ill-considered and unforeseen action of ours, to organize a provocation, which will later be called a "conflict between national minorities" and "nations" and will be given an excellent excuse to settle accounts with the national movement. We must do everything we can to prevent the Kremlin from using the formula of "disconnect and conquer." (Lobzhanidze, 1990: 1.)

Thesis can discuss that, objectives of the Soviet system, particularly Russia, were visible to Georgian national figures and others. The Soviet administration, under the cover of unity, urged member nations to stay away from disintegration. Russia repeatedly demonstrated its dominance, a fact that was not surprising to anyone. However, their military capabilities surpassed those of the Russian Empire.

In 1990, an article in the newspaper "Shemokmedi" stated:

“The Soviet style of thinking is demagogic in nature, in order to create an illusion and cover up its true intention, which is expressed in the preservation of the imperial origin, it arbitrarily changed its name only to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics instead of Russia. We should also know that this name is useful only for domestic use, otherwise it remains Russia for the world states, and all the republics included in it are part of the whole. That the sovereignty of the republics is a fiction has been well demonstrated by the so-called "perestroika" policy, the aim of which is to finally kill the aspirations of the peoples of the last empire for independence. The entire Soviet history was nothing but an attempt to distort and deform the most cherished dreams of the people. Instead of independent national cultures, the so-called Soviet culture was created, which led to the destruction of national self-awareness and national character. The concept of a unified Soviet state cut them off from their roots and put them on the brink of disaster. The sense of motherland was lost, which really turned the man living in the empire into a weapon-making animal, and the political, domestic system further contributed to this, entire generations were captured by pseudo-Marxist-Leninist ideas”. (Dadiani, 1990:3)

In the text author revealed criticism of the Soviet system. Dadiani claims that the Soviet system used demagoguery to conceal its real goals. Author believes that changing the name to "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" was only a facade. The author claims that the sovereignty of the republics was just an illusion, that in the international arena it was still considered as Russia.

Author emphasizes the process of destruction of national self-consciousness and character, that was caused by the fact that Soviet culture was presented as a substitute for national cultures.

The author uses strong metaphors such as "weapon-making animal" and oppressive statements to characterize the Soviet system. This reflects the anti-Soviet sentiments of that period and the rhetoric of the national movement in Georgia.

In January 1990, the society of Ilia Chavchavadze wrote in the "Iveria" newspaper:

“For Georgians, the 20th century, full of trials and tribulations, has also shown us the last decade. What did he promise us: for the Georgian nation, as it was at the beginning of this century, the most important task is to gain independence. The bloody era of Bolshevik rule created an obvious threat of physical extinction and complete degradation to our nation, it wiped out the best Georgian gene pool. The world's technological leap and Russia's great backwardness recently forced the Soviet Empire to catch up with the advanced countries, but it is impossible to approach progress without democratization of society. The processes of democratization, on the other hand, led to the longing for freedom of the nations captured in the empire. The Georgian nation also began to wake up. In a short period of time, many political societies and parties have been formed in our country, which have put themselves in the service of the parent nation and set the only holy goal for the freedom of Georgia. Another question is how they are going to achieve it “. (Board of Ilia Chavchavadze Society, 1990: 1)

In the text, the author discusses the importance of achieving independence and the harmful consequences of the Bolshevik regime, that is an indication of the national liberation ideology of that time. The impact of democratization on nations' striving for freedom and their future progress is also important for the author.

In the article author clearly describes the Soviet Georgian political climate of 1990 and the characteristics of the national liberation movement.

Zurab Chavchavadze wrote in the twelfth publication of "Iveria" newspaper in 1989:

"The Georgian nation is facing the toughest test. At the instigation of Georgia's sleepless enemy, the tension in relations between Abkhazia and Kvemo Kartli reached its climax. And just when the emergency regime was introduced in Abkhazia and Kvemo Kartli, when we needed special wisdom and calmness, the sultan's empire tried to stabilize the situation in other regions of Georgia by spreading rumors and

misinformation and aligning Georgians with Ossetians and Leks. There are cases when some provocateurs even use rallies held by informal unions for this purpose." (Chavchavadze, 1989: 1).

The thesis might discuss, that in such a background, it was naturally difficult to develop the correct political direction. The empire was in the process of collapse and tried to use the results of the collapse to its advantage, but no one could prevent Georgians from striving for independence. All this gave the Georgian dissidents a push and gave them hope on the path of struggle. The Georgian cultural and political elite considered it their duty to engage all Georgians in resisting the government to get the homeland's freedom.

Ilia Chavchavadze's society begins its article in "Iveria" newspaper with the following paragraph:

"Thanks to God, good events in the empire of evil and in the countries of the so-called socialist camp are developing much faster than we expected." Enchanted in godless political structures, nations are trying to liberate themselves with less speed and energy, walls are being torn down, ruling communist groups are being arrested, lists of secret police agents are being published, and so on... (Board of Ilia Chavchavadze Society, 1990: 1).

In the same article are mentioned National Liberation Movement and other national-political organizations.

"Ilia Chavchavadze Society has profound respect for every Georgian actively involved in the National Liberation Movement and all accurate national-political organizations. Achieving great goals requires joint efforts and coordinated action. Only a solely authentic, wise, and Iliasian policy based on comprehensive analysis will save the Georgian nation. For this, it is necessary to actively involve in the movement the part of Georgians who have been standing aside until now. Let's not threaten them with reckless actions and behavior. We should include all decent Georgians who can participate in active political life and raise professionalism in this field." (Board of Ilia Chavchavadze Society, 1990:1).

The text shows an optimistic attitude towards the changes taking place in the "Evil Empire", which reflects the hopeful mood of the time about the process of disintegration of the Soviet system. The importance and respect of the national liberation movement is appreciated. This respect allows the reader to consider the national liberation movement as the main driving axis of the struggle for independence. The authors emphasize the need for joint efforts and coordination, which can be considered a political strategy of the time.

The next article to discuss is **Grace of April 9** written by Badri Gugushvili in the April 1990 edition of the independent literary periodical *Kabadoni*, Volume N2.

The author presents a strong position on the essential nature of national identity and the prerequisite for considering all social groups as a real nation. The main idea of the fundamental foundations of national identity is the desire for freedom and independence.

According to the author, a conquered nation that does not fight for independence loses its status as a nation. In his bold statement, reconciliation with slavery is the essence of weak opposition. The author considers the struggle for "voice" and freedom as a defining feature. This characteristic distinguishes a nation from a mere group of people.

This perspective is consistent with the view that national identity is deeply rooted in a sense of self-determination and a collective pursuit of sovereignty. The author seems to reject the idea of passive acceptance of conquest or domination. In his article Gugushvili suggests, that true nationhood requires an active pursuit of independence and defiance.

In the phrase, "A nation that cannot make sacrifices can hardly be called a nation" (Gugushvili, 1990: 1) author focuses on the importance of collective commitment and the willingness of a nation to make sacrifice for their national identity and motherland. The author presents concept of sacrifice as an essential part in defining the nation.

Gugushvili elevates the love of the motherland to eternal values, which meant that true patriotism and loyalty to the motherland is a necessary condition for the nation. This feeling emphasizes the deep emotional and spiritual connection that the author believes should exist between the nation and its people.

The author presents a strong and uncompromising view of nationality. As the defining characteristics of a true nation, Gugushvili emphasizes the need for independence, the desire to fight for freedom, the possibility of self-sacrifice, and a deep love of country.

This perspective opposes the passive acceptance of subjugation and calls society for an active pursuit of self-determination as the essence of national identity.

„A nation must either be independent or fight for independence. If a conquered nation does not fight for freedom, such a nation is not a nation, this is the truth. The first grace of April 9 is that we raised our voice and became a nation. A nation that cannot make sacrifices can hardly be called a nation. There are high, eternal values, the first of which is love of the motherland.“ (Gugushvili, 1990: 1)

The specific remembrance of April 9 refers to a key event or moment in a nation's history when the people collectively "raised their voices" and asserted their national identity. The author describes this act as the "first grace," indicating that it marked a significant turning point for the nation's independence and self-determination.

“The motherland, unlike parental figures, does not nurture its citizens; rather, it demands care and devotion from them. Failure to tend to the motherland will make it weak, similar to a neglected child, ultimately leading to its death. There exists no singular approach to caring for one's homeland; some contribute through physical effort, others through literary endeavors, some by standing at the easel, some by following the footsteps, and some must stand on guard of the motherland, care for its safety, just as a parent care for the well-being of the child. On April 9, for the first time under the bloody dictatorship, we stood together at the guard of Georgia. For the first time in 70 years, it became evident that our allegiance is not the Taiga forests, the steppes of Kyrgyzstan, the icy waters of the Eskimos or the Kremlin of the Muscovites, but the long-suffering, ill-fated and heroic Georgia.” (Gugushvili, Badri, 1990:1)

In second paragraph, the author aims to equate the country or homeland with a child who needs to be cared for individually. The central thing is that the homeland, unlike parents, is not the attention and protection of its people; And he has similar loyalty and sacrifice from them.

The author emphasizes to them that the motherland is above all capable of enduring it and other extinctions, as well as the fate of a vulnerable child. This metaphor is a powerful



call to citizens to do what can be done for prosperity and development in the country so as not to befall the fate of the vulnerable child.

Furthermore, the author admits that there is no set way to serve one's country. Just as parents show responsibility for their children in different ways, citizens can also contribute to the welfare of the country in different ways: physical work, intellectual work, manual labor, raising children, and keeping them safe, parents protect their children.

The event of April 9 is often described as the end of a "bloody dictatorship". For Gugushvili April 9 represented potentially a revolution or uprising, a turning point in history, where Georgian citizens reclaimed their homeland. The author emphasizes the meaningfulness of this event and notes the shift in loyalties from foreign ideologies to the support of one's own long-oppressed and resilient nation.

Ultimately, the author's goal is to instill a sense of patriotism and national pride in the readers, to encourage them to perceive the motherland as a treasure that requires constant care and dedication, just as a parent care for his child. The metaphor of the motherland as a vulnerable child is a compelling appeal to citizens to care for its well-being and future.

“I wonder why the term motherland should be called to one's own country? the reason is evident! Your motherland is complete and whole, it is unique and deeply valued, is the country that is birthplace for you and your ancestors. However, I repeat once again, no one should give the motherland the meaning that this word outwardly carries. In one case, the motherland is not a nurturing mother, and if I continue to use her mother's name, then she is a mother. In another case, she is gentle, that she begs for care and a master, she will not protect you with her flawless hands, thinking and focus on you is not her most glorious face, she will not let her noblest face shrivel at the thought of you, and will not let her able body shrivel at the thought of you. She is an ageless mother forever if a mother can be one. Perhaps it is possible because the motherland is such a mother. April 9 taught us that we should take possession of our motherland, not in a Soviet, barbaric way, but with true Iberian delicacy.” (Gugushvili, 1990: 1)

In the mentioned paragraph, the author presents a provocative and unconventional perspective on the concept of "motherland". By challenging the concept of calling one's own country a "motherland".

The author questions the traditional nurturing and caring meanings associated with the word "mother" and disagrees with its use in reference to the motherland. Argues that contrary to maternal notions, the motherland does not inherently protect or care for its citizens in the same way a mother does for her children. Instead, the author suggests that the homeland requires care and nurturing from its people.

This reduction of the "homeland" metaphor is further strengthened by the author's assertion that the word "homeland" should not be interpreted only in its literal sense.

The author presents two opposing perspectives: in one case, the motherland is portrayed as a careless, demanding entity that expects sacrifice from its people; On the other hand, the author recognizes the constant connection between the motherland and its citizens, comparing it to a delicate, gentle mother that requires care.

The author seems to support a more detailed and complex understanding of the relationship with the homeland, which goes beyond the simplistic metaphor of the caring mother. It suggests that the bond between a nation and its people is multifaceted and includes both a sense of respect and a responsibility to nurture and protect.

The mention of April 9 seems to be an important event that changed the author's perception of the motherland. He claims that this event taught them that the true ownership and guardianship of the homeland should not be rooted in the "Soviet, barbaric way", but in a delicate, truly Iberian way. This implies rejecting a forceful or domineering attitude towards the homeland and calling for a more respectful, nurturing approach.

Overall, the author seems to support a more complex and nuanced understanding of the relationship with the homeland, offering a perspective that recognizes mutual responsibilities and respect between the nation and its people.

“We saw each other on April 9. We saw ourselves, not only together, but also separately. You may not respect your fellow man when you see how bravely he stands up to an enemy armed to the teeth, how he strikes the iron monster with his stick, and how he terrifies him with his perseverance.

How can you not respect your fellow countryman, when he, weakened, even disabled, encourages brave men in battle with a song? April 9 gave us not only the motherland but also ourselves. We saw how beautiful, proud, transparent, and relentless we are. The one who saw the Ferkhuli (Georgian dance ფერხული) of Georgian brave men who threatened the tanks cannot be spared for the evil deed. April 9 taught us to hate evil and love each other.

A person does not exist without sadness and pain. The sadness of April 9 gave us insight and thought. April 9 mourners, April 9 flowers opened the way to eternity both for those who fell then, as well as for all of Georgia. Immaculate blood made us think about innocence. The Immaculate Blood looked to God.

Immaculate blood and our tears have united us with one thought, one love, one fire. On April 9, another brilliant page was written in the heroic chronicles of the Georgian nation. April 9 paved the way to the future, and even today, with that painful, thought-provoking, fiery day, we are moving towards a brilliant future.” (Gugushvili, 1990: 4)

The author presents April 9 as a transformative and revealing event. This even allowed the citizens of Georgia to see reality and understand themselves and the nation on a deeper level. This decisive day became a mirror that reflected the collective strength and individual courage of the Georgian society.

With vivid images, the author depicts the bravery and endurance of the compatriots who faced a strong and heavily armed enemy. The author expresses admiration and respect for those who resisted and used all the means at hand, including "even beating the iron monster with a stick." This depiction of ordinary citizens facing off against a powerful adversary instills a sense of national pride and respect for the indomitable spirit of the Georgian people.

The author also emphasizes the power of unity and mutual support that he saw that day when people with disabilities found strength and encouraged heroes through songs. April 9 was a national struggle, self-discovery, and appreciation for the citizens of Georgia.

The author suggests that April 9, in addition to instilling a sense of national pride, taught society valuable lessons about human nature itself. He revealed the ability of good and evil in people, which forced Georgians to "hate evil and love each other".

The author presents this day as a catalyst for introspection, which obliges one to understand how important it is to appreciate one's fellowmen and refrain from evil.

The author expresses the deep sorrow and loss he experienced on April 9. Gugushvili describes the mourners and the "immaculate blood" shed. However, this grief is shown as a path to eternity for all of Georgia.

Author also calls April 9 an important turning point in the history of Georgia, as a decisive event that paved the way for the nation to a bright future, even though it was full of lessons learned, sacrifices made, common pain, and unrelenting unity.

It seems that the author's goal is to make April 9 a symbol of the true strength and endurance of the Georgian people.

Soviet government newspaper "Communist", namely the newspaper of Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR and the Council of Ministers on the 16th of April published the article named "Let's return the peace to Georgia". In the article was written:

"Others advised, "At least don't involve the children," but the leaders of the informal associations paid no heed to this and achieved their goal of organizing endless marches in the streets of fifth and sixth graders who, in a state of ecstasy, chanted slogans and shouted words they didn't understand. The young ones didn't even properly know what kind of Georgia the older generation was calling for.

The result? On that fateful night, among the innocent victims were mothers who died simply because they were searching for their children in the middle of the night among the rally participants, or the young ones who still did not fully understand what they were striving for.

Even more ominous was the statement from some leaders of the informal organizations—"blood must be shed." However, the methods and means used to maintain order were foreign and unacceptable to our socialist society.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia adopted decisions based on party, civic, and moral duties aimed at normalizing the situation in the republic, restoring public order and discipline. At the same time, measures are being implemented to investigate violations of the law, punish the guilty, and give the harshest assessments to unlawful actions and behavior carefully and accurately.

Everything will be carried out with complete objectivity and impartiality. Only, now it is necessary to timely appeal to common sense, not succumb to empty emotions, and do everything for the benefit of the republic.” (Communist, 1989/04/16:1)

The article is a clear example of Soviet propaganda used after the tragic events of April 9, 1989. The text aims to change the reality and shift the responsibility from the Soviet government to the leaders of the national liberation movement.

The motive for "exploitation" of children: The article tries to portray the leaders of informal associations as irresponsible and cynical individuals who use children for their purposes. The phrase "in a state of ecstasy" indicates that the children are being manipulated and are not aware of their actions. From my point of view, this message is intended to undermine the legitimacy of the movement and portray it as exploitative.

The “Bloodshed”: The article mentions a statement about the necessity of bloodshed. It portrays leaders who wanted violence. The motive must be designed to create the impression that the peaceful demonstrators were calling for violence, thereby justifying the Soviet authorities' reasons for using force.

"Foreign and Unacceptable Methods": In the article, it was stated that "the methods of maintaining order were foreign and unacceptable to our socialist society." This message tries to portray the demonstrators as anti-Soviet elements who oppose socialist norms.

Motive of "Sacrifice Mothers": The article highlights the tragic deaths of mothers searching for their children. This rhetoric is intended to blame the leaders of the movement indirectly once again for the deaths of innocent people.

The motive of party integrity: The text presents the Communist Party as a responsible and just force acting based on "party, civic and moral duty". This message should aim to restore trust in the party and present it as a defender of order.

The motive for "calling for common sense": The call for "common sense" and "not giving in to empty emotions" at the end of the article is an attempt to scare the population and stop the wave of protests. This message is intended to portray the demonstrators as emotionally unstable and urge them to return to a "normal" life.

The main goal of the article is to shift the responsibility for the tragic events to the leaders of the national liberation movement, portraying them as manipulators and perpetrators of violence, while at the same time portraying the Communist Party as the defender of order and justice. This is a classic example of Soviet propaganda trying to distort events and maintain power.

In the newspaper "Communist" published on 18th of April the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia issues a statement:

„Dear residents of Tbilisi,

The tragedy that occurred on April 9 will forever leave its bitter mark on the memory of the people. But memory, as they say, checks emotions with reason. This memory calls us to responsibility.

Our responsibility for the future is immeasurably great. We are confident that the people of Tbilisi understand this. The situation in the city is becoming normal, and public and working life is gradually returning to its usual course. This is facilitated by the universal desire to restore order as quickly as possible. Workers, youth, and the entire society have supported the call of labor collectives to all citizens to normalize the functioning of all spheres of life, to not succumb to provocations, and to give an appropriate response to instigators. This is the will of the majority of the citizens of the republic's capital.

The society is united in the desire to lift the curfew as soon as possible.....

.....The fate of tomorrow now depends solely on us, on our unity, discipline, and responsibility.

So, let us show wisdom and prudence, and prove that we have the right and, moreover, the duty to ensure order in our own home with our own strength. “

This article is another example of Soviet propaganda aimed at manipulating public opinion after the April 9, 1989, tragedy. The main part of the text is covered by metaphors and rhetorical questions that convey the same message:

Motive of "Bitter Remembrance": The article begins by citing distorted facts, where the events of April are mentioned as a "tragedy" and not as a crime committed by the Soviet regime. The term "bitter memory" aims to create an emotional impression and distort the facts.

Motive of 'responsibility': The text often invokes the concept of 'responsibility', giving the impression that the demonstrators are the irresponsible ones who caused the riots. In fact, this message was intended to intimidate the population and suppress them from active action.

The motive of "restoring order": special attention is paid to the fact that "society is unanimous in its desire to restore order". This motive once again tries to show that the demonstrators are the creators of disorder, while the Soviet government is presented as the defender of order.

The motive for the "call to labor collectives": The article claims that "workers, youth and the whole society" support "the call of labor collectives to all citizens to end the unrest". This message tries to create the impression that the protesters are a small minority opposed by a large part of society. Motive for "removal of governance": It is said that society is "unanimous in its desire to abolish governance". This saying was intended to create the illusion that society is against restricting their freedoms, although in reality the establishment of governorship was the decision of the Soviet regime.

"Fate of the future" motive: the article concludes with the message that "the fate of the future depends only on us." This rhetoric tries to create a sense of danger and persuade the population to act in favor of the Soviet regime.

"Show wisdom and understanding" motive: The final sentence calls on the population to "show wisdom and understanding". This rhetoric tries to create the impression that the demonstrators are devoid of wisdom and reason, and that only the Soviet government is the one who maintains order.

The article is full of propaganda messages aimed at blaming the demonstrators, justifying the Soviet regime and frighten the population. They tried to distort the facts, through

manipulation to present the demonstrators as a minority and a threat, and the Soviet government as a force defending rules and wishes of majorities. This is a classic example of Soviet propaganda, the goal of which was to change the will of the people in favor of an unjust regime.

The Chapter reviewed newspapers and periodicals, that together illustrated political and social landscape of Georgia during the research period. Various publications and organizations, such as the Davit Garejeli Society and the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, were actively involved in the Georgian national identity and cultural revival. Many articles openly criticized the policy of "Russification", the suppression of national languages and cultures, and the abuse of power by the Soviet authorities. Official Soviet publications tried to discredit the national movement by portraying them as those who wanted disorder, while presenting the Communist Party as the defender of order and stability. This chapter clearly shows how conflicting narratives can be encountered in different sources. The chapter highlights the role played by newspapers and publishing houses in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support for the independence movement.

In this chapter discussed sources provided a valuable insight into the hopes, fears, and aspirations of Georgian people before the Soviet collapse.

## **Content Analysis of Speeches by Georgian Dissidents**

### **Introduction:**

This chapter examines the rhetorical and content analysis of the words spoken by Georgian dissidents, focusing on the themes of unity, national identity and resistance. Thesis discusses several famous and key speeches of dissident leaders, including the speeches given by Merab Kostava, Zurab Chavchavadze and Zviad Gamsakhurdia at the rallies held in the spring and autumn of 1989.

In addition, to the speeches of dissidents, the chapter presents the analysis of the session of the Investigative Commission of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR regarding



the events of April 9, 1989. This analysis shows how the government used military force to intimidate the public and control the situation. The discussion of Nugzar Pofkhadze's testimony helps thesis better understand the government's action strategy.

The analysis of the chapter shows how leaders used rhetorical techniques, historical allusions, and emotional appeals on audience. Within this chapter thesis explores that dissident paid attention on the challenges facing Georgia, the confrontation with the Soviet government and the preservation of national identity.

This chapter of the thesis offers detailed analysis of how Georgian dissidents shaped public opinion and how they tried to mobilize people in the struggle for national independence. Studying their rhetoric helps research to better understand the ideas and ideals that laid dissidents in the political processes of 1986-1991.

### **Merab Kostava's Speech at the April 9, 1989, Rally in Tbilisi**

The following analysis is offered about Merab Kostava's speech at the April 9, 1989, rally in Tbilisi:

„There have been great moments in the history of Georgia, and this moment is one of the greatest. When during these 70 years, in this suffering and woes, in this bloodshed, for the first time, the Georgian nation appeared so united, so whole in front of God.

Be strong and strengthened spiritually, if God is with us!  
“(Khimshiashvili, 2017)

The text is an excerpt from a speech of Georgian dissident leader, whose purpose was to inspire and unite the Georgian people at a historically important moment. Kostava presented the moment of that time as one of the greatest in the history of Georgia and equated it with other complex events. Before this, he attached great importance to the situation of that time and fell to instilling a sense of pride and responsibility in his listeners. The speech emphasized the unity of the Georgian nation despite 70 years of suffering, misfortune, and bloodshed. This unity presented as an exceptional and unparalleled accomplishment. It was signifying that people came together in a way they never had before.

Kostava called for spiritual fortitude, indicated that the struggle was not only physical or political, but also moral and spiritual.

The phrase "if God is with us" emphasized the idea that their struggle is carried out with divine support. This religious appeal was intended to reassure the people that they are not alone in their struggle.

By referring to the great moments of Georgian history, Kostava created a sense of heredity and heritage. This helped him to see the current struggle as part of a larger historical narrative, giving it great significance.

The lyrics touched on the emotions of the listeners, acknowledging their long suffering, and emphasizing their unity and strength. This emotional connection is meant to inspire and motivate. Phrases such as "be strong and spiritually strong" provide positive reinforcement, encourage endurance and patience. This reinforcement was aimed at strengthening the morale of the people. By emphasizing unity and aligning the moment with a historically significant one, the appeal is likely to boost morale and strengthen a sense of shared identity and purpose.

From this we can conclude that the speech of the Georgian dissident Merab Kostava is a strong and emotionally charged call for unity at an important moment in Georgia. Emphasizing historical significance, he sought to inspire and empower the Georgian people to remain strong and united in their struggle. The use of historical, emotional, and spiritual speeches is strategically designed to touch morale, strengthen resolve, and increase motivation in listeners.

### **Zurab Chavchavadze's Speech on November 28, 1989**

The following analysis is offered about Zurab Chavchavadze's speech on rally in Tbilisi (1989):

„Considering the created situation, the society of Ilia Chavchavadze urges you, on November 28 of this year, the Georgian people, its progressive conscious part, to announce a warning strike. I call you students of higher education institutions, I call you representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia, I call you workers, everyone, and not only

the residents of Tbilisi, but the entire population of Georgia!“ ( Gvakharia, 2015)

The text represents the appeal of the famous Georgian dissident Zurab Chavchavadze, who calls for a strike on November 28 on behalf of Ilia Chavchavadze's community. The appeal refers to different segments of the Georgian society and calls for their joint action in response to the situation.

The speech was addressed to a wide audience. It included students of higher education institutions, representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia, workers, and not only the population of Tbilisi, but also the whole of Georgia. The objective of this inclusive strategy was to create a feeling of shared responsibility and unity.

The phrase "warning strike" indicated that the situation is critical. It required an immediate and decisive action.

By using the name of Ilia Chavchavadze, the leader connected the current struggle with historical heritage, which is connected with national identity and civic responsibility. This association is probably intended to instill a sense of pride and duty in the listeners.

By repeating "I invite you" there is a direct and personal connection with the audience. This repetitive structure reinforced the urgency and importance of the message.

The phrases "all" and "the entire population of Georgia" were used so that no one feels excluded from this call. Referring to different groups of society (students, intellectuals, workers), the leader emphasized that the movement needs a collective effort from all sectors. This approach aimed to create a broad coalition. The speech is about emotions, especially a sense of national pride and solidarity. It aims to instill a sense of common purpose and urgency so that people are motivated to participate in the strike.

By addressing to different social groups and their unity, the speech could strengthen solidarity between different segments of the population, which enhanced the effectiveness of collective action.

Georgian dissident Zurab Chavchavadze's speech is a strategic and emotionally charged call to action aimed at mobilizing broad segments of society for a strike. It used historical references, inclusive language, and direct appeals to evoke patriotism and civic duty to inspire collective action to respond to the situation at hand.

## **Zviad Gamsakhurdia's Speech on May 26, 1989**

Following text will discuss the speech (1989 May 26) of the Georgian dissident leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who aimed to inspire, unite and increase the motivation of the Georgian people in a difficult moment.

„Sons and daughters of Georgia, brothers and sisters, Georgians, Christ has risen! God is with us! Our existence, from the very beginning, proves that God is with us, that God will be with us forever. And with this faith, with this consciousness, we overcame countless enemies, forces of darkness, empires of darkness. Because we have Saint George, we have the holy blood of the martyrs who were shed for Georgia. As it was spilled on April 9, yes, the blood of the martyrs, which joined the many other blood shed for Georgia. This is our path. The nation has no other way, our path is the way of martyrdom, the way of Christ and the inevitable resurrection.

Brothers, although the empire is not giving up yet, it wants to suppress our just struggle, our just voice, but I remind you of the past, when unarmed, seemingly weak, but righteous Christians faced the Roman Empire, armed to the teeth. And that empire was shattered and torn to pieces like an idol made of clay. True is our way, true is what our hearts say, our aspiration, and this empire will undoubtedly be defeated in this battle.

Long live independent, free, Christian and invincible Georgia“.  
(Mikava, 2013, 0:33-3:55)

The leader emphasized the support of God and the resurrection of Christ to prove that the existence of the Georgian people is due to divine support. Remembrance of God and strengthening of faith helps people to feel that their struggle is just and protected by divine power.

The dissident leader recalled many enemies and dark forces that Georgians defeated. He emphasized that with the holy blood of St. George and the martyrs, the Georgian people always resisted and won against the dark forces. These historical examples help people find strength and motivation in the ongoing struggle.

The text emphasized that the path of the Georgian people is the path of martyrdom and Christian values, which leads to an inevitable resurrection. This idea aims to boost morale and unity so that people feel that their suffering and struggle will have a meaningful result.

The leader compared their battle with the past, where righteous Christians faced and defeated the armed Roman Empire. This analogy helps people believe that they can defeat the enemy who tries to suppress their righteous struggle and voice.

For religious and historical references, the mention of God, Christ, St. George and martyrs in the text provides moral and spiritual strength. These religious and historical references help people to feel that their struggle is of divine and historical significance.

Patriotic and emotional appeal - The text appeals to the patriotic and emotional feelings of the people to encourage and strengthen them. The phrases such as "brothers and sisters" and "long live independent, free, Christian and invincible Georgia" create a sense of unity and strength.

Gamsakhurdia used positive reinforcement to motivate and empower people. Phrases such as "Truth is our way," "Truth is what our hearts say," and "This empire will surely lose this battle" build the faith and morale of the people.

Patriotic and emotional appeals help unite and mobilize people, increasing a sense of shared identity and purpose. Belief in the defeat of the enemy and the empire helps people believe that their struggle will end successfully and that they will be able to defeat the enemy.

### **Session of the Investigative Commission of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia on the Events of April 9**

„To the question: At 12 o'clock in the day, tanks passed through Rustaveli, didn't this event tell you anything?

Nugzar Pofkhadze answered:

At the meeting, when I had already finished my speech, my assistant sent me a letter. According to the rules, a letter had to be sent about the situation outside.

In the letter it was written: Mr. Nugzar, tanks passed through Rustaveli Avenue, people are very alarmed!

Let's assume that the demonstration of tanks was specially arranged, it does not cause any doubt in me, as well as the flight of helicopters over Tbilisi on the morning of the 9th, it is the same. Everything was done for prevention.

Now, I may lose points for saying this, but the army commanders, I don't know with what dose of sincerity, but high-ranking army officers, generals, told me that this could play a preventive role. "(Gvakharia, 2015, 31:21-32:22)

According to the historical context, the text reflects the events of April 9, 1989, in Tbilisi, which was a critical moment in the recent history of Georgia.

Demonstrations of military force, such as the appearance of tanks on Rustaveli Avenue and the flight of helicopters over Tbilisi - these actions are perceived as a deliberately planned demonstration of force.

The text mentions that the appearance of military force was intended to have a preventive effect. This indicates the government's strategy to threaten the population and prevent possible riots.

The text shows that the information about the tanks was given to Pofkhadze in written form after his speech. This indicates certain communication procedures of that time.

Pofkhadze expresses some doubts about the intentions of the military, but at the same time he accepts their arguments about preventive measures.

This analysis shows that the text portrays a difficult political situation where the government used military force to intimidate the public and control the situation, which caused the population to be anxious and alarmed.

### **Merab Kostava's Reflections on National Unity and Division**

Speech of Merab Kostava from podcast episode of Red Zone: Zurab Chavchavadze and the "Court of Honor".

„Unfortunately, we Georgians, only at the decisive moment, when we are on the verge of death, stand with each other and are united. And as for the next stage, when we are no longer talking about the salvation of the nation, but about revival, then our Promethean arrogance appears again, this has been our tradition since time immemorial, and we separate from each other again “. (Gvakharia, 2015, 38:41-39:21)

This thesis will discuss this speech of dissident leader in more details. Kostava refers to the dynamics of unity and division of the Georgian nation. With the mentioned text, the speaker shows that the dynamics of unity and division of the Georgian nation is a complex topic that includes many interrelated aspects. This issue is not only historical or political but involves all areas of society and requires a multidisciplinary approach to understand and solve it.

According to the speaker the following key findings were revealed:

Georgians unite only in crisis situations;

after the crisis, the nation is still falling apart;

Nation pride ("Promethean arrogance") prevents long-term unity.

From the text and the style of his speech, speaker is critical, but constructive; Calls for self-awareness and change. Kostava uses historical and cultural allusions such as "Prometheus" and also gives an emotional charge such as "unfortunately", "on the verge of death".

As a summary of text analysis, thesis explored, that for the speaker, the dynamics of unity and division of the Georgian nation is a complex and multifaceted issue that reflects the peculiarities of Georgian history, culture and national character. With this phenomenon, it shows that the strength of a nation lies not only in its ability to unite in moments of crisis, but also in the resilience required to maintain long-term unity. From Kostava's speech, the challenge is for the Georgian society to learn from this cyclical process and to create a public and political culture that will support sustainable national consolidation in both peaceful and crisis periods.

## **Zurab Chavchavadze's Speech in Sokhumi on March 25, 1989**

Speech of Zurab Chavchavadze in Sokhumi on 1989, March 25th from podcast episode of Red Zone: Zurab Chavchavadze and the "Court of Honor".

“Our people have never hated each other. Moreover, for centuries between Georgians and Abkhazians was only brotherhood, kinship, and closeness!

And this is the attitude between Georgians and Abkhazians! - Gentlemen, it was created because of the intervention of a foreign power, a third power, Russia.

Before Russia entered Transcaucasia, Georgians, and Abkhazians, I repeat, had nothing but love in common.

And then, after the conqueror came in, they started practicing the tried-and-true policy preached by Alexander the Great. Policy of “divide and rule”.

And began the confrontation between Georgians and Abkhazians of the indigenous population.” (Gvakharia, 2015, 24:13-24:59)

The text focuses on Georgian-Abkhazian relations in a historical context. This topic is important for understanding the political and social dynamics of the Caucasus region. The author tries to present a historical perspective that contrasts with the contemporary conflicting reality.

Chavchavadze in his text idealizes the past when he emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of two groups, which may not reflect the complete historical picture, but serves to strengthen the narrative.

The speaker tries to blame an external force, for example highlighting the role of Russia serves to shift responsibility and blame the conflict on an "external enemy".

With the "disconnect and dominate" argument, he tries to show the artificial nature of the conflict and strengthen the opinion that the confrontation between Georgians and Abkhazians is not natural.



This text is an emotional and politically charged narrative about Georgian-Abkhazian relations. The main argument is that historically these two groups have coexisted peacefully, and the current conflict between them is the result of the intervention of an outside power (specifically Russia).

The author uses emotional language and historical parallels to strengthen his position. The text idealizes the past and sharply contrasts it with the existing situation. The main message is that the conflict is artificial and the result of a policy of "divide and rule".

Narrative is intended to shape public opinion, shape historical memory, and gain political support. It reflects the complex geopolitical reality in the Caucasus region and tries to present an alternative vision of the conflict, where the responsibility is shifted to an external power.

According to the content, the following messages can be read from the speaker's speech:

- The idea of reducing the influence of external forces indicates the importance of sovereignty and self-determination.
- The call to restore historical ties implies that past experiences can be the basis for future peace.
- Emphasizing the common past aims to strengthen the common identity.

The text is an important example of how historical narrative can be used for contemporary political purposes and to shape public opinion.

### **Zviad Gamsakhurdia's Speech in Sokhumi on March 25, 1989**

Speech of Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Sokhumi on 1989, March 25th from podcast episode of Red Zone: Zurab Chavchavadze and the "Court of Honor".

„Everything that is happening today in Abkhazia is a provocation towards and against the Georgian nation. This course of actions by Moscow is not new, it is old. It aims to control the national patriotic movement in Georgia.

In this way, through such provocations, they want to limit and reduce our national movement and stifle all its bold initiatives at the very beginning.

This is the so-called trump card of Abkhazia in the hands of Moscow, in the hands of the Kremlin, which they want to play against us. But they must remember that this trump card cannot be used, because this will be opposed by the united power and effort of the Georgian people!

We act according to the principle of the well-known Georgian proverb, wisdom fights stupidity, without guns and cannons! “(Gvakharia, 2015, 17:40-19:08)

The speech content discussion will start with the thematic analysis:

The text does not specifically specify what events are taking place in Abkhazia. This indicates that the author assumes the audience's knowledge regarding these events. Most likely, text illustrates the events that happened in the recent past, which are perceived as a provocation.

The text refers to Moscow's (Kremlin's) policy towards Georgia and portrays it as an aggressor who manipulates the issue of Abkhazia. The long history of this policy is highlighted ("it is old"), which indicates its systemic nature.

Gamsakhurdia also refers to the Georgian national movement, which is presented as the main target of the Kremlin's policy. The text focuses on the importance of the movement and its "bold initiatives", indicating its active and progressive nature.

The speaker also emphasizes the unity of the Georgian people, which is presented as the main weapon against the Kremlin's policies. This theme reflects the author's belief in the strength of the nation and the need for its unity.

The dissident leader tries to convey several main messages to the audience through his speech.

Text where Gamsakhurdia stated that events in Abkhazia were a provocation against the Georgian nation, establishes the idea that the conflict in Abkhazia is not a local problem, but an action against the entire Georgian nation. This highlights the importance of the issue at the national level.

The statement, that Moscow is trying to weaken the Georgian national movement, shows Moscow's tactic - to use the Abkhazia issue as a tool against the Georgian national movement. This indicates Kremlin's attempt to weaken the internal unity of Georgia.

The issue of Abkhazia in the hands of Moscow is a "trump card" against Georgia, the metaphor ("trump card") emphasizes that Kremlin uses the issue of Abkhazia strategically. This message shows that the author perceives the situation as a political game on the part of Moscow.

In his speech, Gamsakhurdia, where he says that the unity of the Georgian people will defeat these attempts, expresses optimism and faith in the strength of the nation. It also contains a call for unity, which is presented as a crucial factor for success.

This speech also allows for a deep rhetorical analysis of its text.

The text uses such phrases as "against the Georgian nation", "national patriotic movement", "united power of the Georgian people", which aims to arouse patriotic feelings and have an emotional impact on the audience.

"Trump card" and "stifle all its bold initiatives" are powerful metaphors that emphasize the seriousness of the situation and the degree of danger. These metaphors also help convey complex political concepts in simple way.

The phrase "This course of actions by Moscow is not new, it is old" supports the argument with historical precedents. This rhetorical technique increases the weight of the message, presenting the problem as a long-term and systemic issue.

The use of the Georgian proverb "Wisdom fights stupidity, without guns and cannons" serves several functions: it strengthens national identity, presents the struggle in an intellectual light, and creates a contrast with violent methods.

As for Zviad Gamsakhurdia's tone and manner of speech, it can be said that it is intense. The lyrics use strong emotional vocabulary and sharp wording. This style aims to emotionally engage and motivate the audience.

Speaker also uses such phrases as "the united power of the Georgian people will be opposed", which is an indirect call to action and unity.

Although the text describes serious dangers, it ends on a positive note, which is expressed through the use of a Georgian proverb. This strategy aims to encourage the audience and strengthen their belief in the ultimate victory.

To summarize, it can be said that the text is a well-structured rhetorical work, which aims to arouse national feelings and mobilize society for a common goal.

## **Conclusion and Key Findings**

Based on the analysis of this chapter, we can highlight the following main findings and conclusions:

Georgian dissidents actively used powerful rhetorical techniques, including historical allusions, emotional appeals, and metaphors, to reinforce their messages and mobilize the public.

The speeches were often aimed to reinforce national identity, unity, and common historical heritage, which played an important role in strengthening the national movement.

The discourse often featured the role of external forces (especially Russia/Soviet Union) as the source of Georgia's problems and a factor acting against national unity.

Speakers often used religious and cultural symbols to reinforce their messages and connect the national struggle to a broader spiritual and cultural context.

A tendency was revealed that the Georgian people were especially united during the crisis, although this unity often weakened after the crisis passed.

The government's repressive tactics are also noted. An analysis of the events of April 9 shows that the government used a demonstration of military force and intimidation tactics to suppress public protests.

Leaders actively used the historical narrative for contemporary political purposes, which helped strengthen national identity and gain political support.

Ethnic conflicts (for example, Georgian-Abkhazian) were often interpreted as artificially created by external forces, which aimed to weaken Georgia.

In conclusion, analysis revealed that dissidents' messages combined historical, cultural and political elements and was addressed to national identity, unity, resistance and independence. At the same time, this analysis shows the complex political and social context in which the Georgian independence movement was developing in 1986-1991.

## **Limitations and delimitations for research:**

### **Limitations:**

Time limitation - In the thesis as a time frame was used only the period of 1986-1991, which limits the overall picture of the Georgian dissident movement. The movement started from an earlier period and continued even after 1991.

Geographic limitation - the study focuses only on Georgia and does not cover dissident movements in other Soviet republics and their interrelationships.

Limitation of sources - mainly scientific literature, press and memoir materials are used for research. The lack of archival materials and personal records may have affected the depth of the research.

Limitation of objectivity - although the research tries to maintain objectivity, there is a possibility that the author's personal attitude and worldview will be reflected to some extent in the analysis of the material.

One of the main limitations of the thesis concerns language issues and barriers. In the process of research, it became necessary to translate materials in different languages, including newspapers and speeches. This process involved two main problems: difficulties in interpretation and maintaining the accuracy of the translation.

First, linguistic interpretation difficulties such as texts written in different languages based on historical and cultural contexts may be perceived differently. In the process of translation, some important nuances may be lost, which will affect the accuracy and integrity of the research results.

On the other hand, maintaining translation accuracy is a significant challenge. In order to avoid the loss or distortion of information, a double translation method was used, where

the text was translated from the original to the target language and then back, in order to compare with the original. However, it is necessary to admit that achieving a completely reliable and accurate translation is always associated with great challenges and is practically impossible.

The existence of the main part of documentation and literature in Georgian also caused language barriers. Translated texts can significantly limit the possibility of in-depth analysis of the topic.

Various methods have been used in attempts to overcome language problems. Double translation and terminology verification were used. Despite all this, language barriers are still one of the important limitations of the research, which affects the accuracy and integrity of the research.

### **Delimitations:**

The research is limited to the study of the role of the dissident movement in 1986-1991 on political processes. It does not include other aspects such as the influence of economic and social factors.

The research does not deal with the biographical details of specific individuals unless it is directly related to their activities in the dissident movement and establishment of national ideas.

The study does not cover the period after 1991 and does not discuss the challenges facing independent Georgia. Its focus is only on the period of restoration of independence.

The study does not provide an in-depth comparative analysis of dissident movements in other countries and focuses only on the case of Georgia.

Thesis didn't discuss in detail the policy and ideology of the Soviet regime, unless it is directly related to the activities of the Georgian dissident movement.

The mentioned limitations and delimitations are due to research objectives, methodology and resources. It was necessary to take them into account in order to realistically see the scale, scope and possibilities of the research.

## **Conclusion:**

This study explores the role of dissidents in the struggle against the Soviet regime and in achieving Georgia's independence. Dissidents who rejected Marxist-Leninist ideology strategically forged ties with Western powers, using compromises against the Soviet leadership. This collaboration reflected the global dimension of their struggle, where they represented a broader ideal of human rights that exceeded freedom of speech and press.

The attempts of the Soviet regime to limit political nationalism were overcome by the Georgian intelligentsia, whose national sentiments were expressed through cultural, artistic and sports achievements. Despite the regime's attempts to create a Soviet identity, the cultural contribution of the intelligentsia was seen as a national success. The communist government efforts to collectivize the intelligentsia with a system of nomenclature were resisted, allowing them to retain a degree of independence.

In the 1980s, economic and political crises, exacerbated by Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost policies, became a catalyst for the Georgian national movement. The activities of the dissidents turned into mass protests. They were demanding independence and resistance to the Soviet government. The escalation of these movements, especially on April 9, 1989, highlighted the deep divide between the Soviet regime and the citizens of Georgia.

During this period, the formation of many political parties and organizations, each of which advocated Georgia's independence and transition to a market economy, further disrupted the political landscape. The emergence of the Rustaveli Society as a counterweight to the national movement, and its eventual approach to nationalist goals, demonstrated the dynamic interplay between cultural and political forces.

The key moment of these efforts was the referendum of March 31, 1991, which confirmed the restoration of Georgia's state independence. This landmark event, based on historical legitimacy and broad public support, led to the official declaration of independence on April 9, 1991. The results of the referendum were decisive for the confirmation of Georgia's sovereignty on the international stage, which ultimately meant liberation from Soviet rule.

The present study revealed that in 1986-1991, the Georgian dissident movement was the most important factor in the process of striving for Georgia's independence. Research

period analysis shows that the dissidents were able to provoke the national idea and mobilize society against the Soviet regime.

As a result of the research, the following key findings were revealed:

- **Strengthening the national identity:** the dissident movement actively used historical, cultural and religious symbols to strengthen the Georgian national identity. This strategy helped consolidate the community around a common goal.
- **Rhetorical Strategies:** To reinforce their messages and mobilize the public, dissident leaders such as Merab Kostava, Zurab Chavchavadze, and Zviad Gamsakhurdia used powerful rhetorical techniques, including emotional appeals, historical analogies, and religious symbolism.
- **The role of the media:** alternative and unofficial publications, such as "Georgian Chronicles", "Iveria" and "Kabadon", played an important role in spreading dissident ideas and invalidating the Soviet narrative.
- **Significance of the events of April 9:** The tragedy of April 9, 1989 became a catalyst for the independence movement, which united society and drew international attention to Georgia's aspirations.
- **Confronting Soviet Propaganda:** The thesis shows that the dissident movement needed a lot of effort to fight against Soviet propaganda. It is clearly seen when comparing official Soviet newspapers, such as "Communist", and dissident publications.
- **Internal Challenges -** Despite the common goal, the study revealed ideological and tactical differences within the movement that affected its dynamics.
- **International context:** By identifying Georgia's struggle with other countries, the dissidents used international events to strengthen its positions.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Georgian dissidents played a decisive role in Georgia's independence. It was based on use of national sentiments, cultural identity and international processes. However, the study also revealed the internal contradictions and challenges that later affected the development of independent Georgia.

The results of the research hopefully will make a significant contribution to a better understanding of the recent history of Georgia and a complete analysis of the role of the



dissident movement. It will also be important for future research on issues of Georgian nationalism, democratization, and independence.

It will be interesting to study the following issues for future research:

- The role of the dissident movement in other post-Soviet countries and their comparison with the Georgian experience.
- Dissidents' participation in political and public processes after independence.
- The social and economic influence of the dissident movement in the history of Georgia.
- Biographical studies of dissidents and their personal experiences.

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