

THE STRUGGLE AND PIONEERS OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA CLASS IN GEORGIA

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Annotation. In this article, the struggle of İlia Çavçavadze, one of the most prominent figures in the political life and literature of the 19th century in Georgia, and the intelligentsia class in which she was a member were examined.

Keywords: Georgia, the intelligentsia, İlia Chavchavadze, Tergdaleuli, russian empire

1. What is the intelligentsia?

When we say smart, enlightened or intellectual, we are not talking about those who are considered enlightened these days just because they have a higher education certificate. We are talking about intellectuals who are truly devoted to enlightenment. Let's talk about the concepts of ulema and intellectual as used in the Ottoman Empire, intellectual as used in the West, intelligentsia as used in Russian, and perhaps intellectual in a broader sense [1, p.1]. In fact, we mean almost the same people in body, although they are different in name. At least when we search for it as a word, we will come across similar meanings: scholar, enlightened, cultured, intelligent and s. With the opening of madrasas in the Ottoman period, religious scholars appeared and they developed over time and formed the ulema class. Thus, they start to provide education in religion and many different fields. Subsequently, they came to the fore in the form of a reactionary class because they could not keep up with the innovative understanding and adopted an hostile attitude. During the Republican period, intellectuals were divided into two groups. The group that forms the background of the newly established regime and the group that opposes it. During this period, they call themselves munevver to distinguish themselves from the ulama, and later aydin is preferred. The concept of intellectual is thought to have entered cultural life in the 19th century. This word was used by Leon Bloy in 1886 as close to the meaning used today. At that time, this word did not attract attention because it was not an event that gave him life. Later, it became widespread in the 1890s and after the Dreyfus incident, it definitely settled into the language of culture. When a group following in the footsteps of Emile Zola published a manifesto, Maurice Barres, who opposed Zola in the Dreyfus case, described them as "intellectual" in the sense of insulting the signatories of this manifesto. By the manifestos, this word was adopted and began to be used [1, p.9-10]. The two most famous 20th-century definitions of intellectuals are in diametrically opposite positions. According to Antonio Gramsci, "all people are intellectuals, but not everyone functions as an intellectual in society" [2, p.19]. Gramsci divides those who perform intellectual functions into two: traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals. On the other hand, Louise Julien Benda has a famous definition that shows intellectuals to be made up of a handful of super talented philosopher-kings [3, p.22]. According to Jean-Paul Sartre's definition, it is "a person who pokes his nose into things that do not concern him" [4, p.15]. As we have seen, although all of these concepts are related to knowledge and thought, it is quite difficult for us to give a definition that is generally accepted by all segments. As for our main topic, if we talk about the popularization of the concept of "intelligentsia", this term was first used in Russian culture by the writer Pyotr Boborykin in the 1860s [5]. The concept of intelligentsia is a name given to a group of educated people who oppose the despotism of tsarism and the Orthodox church [1, p.10]. Boborykin has stated that he borrowed this term from German culture. This word has also passed from Russian culture to Georgian racially.

2. Enlightenment in Georgia

If we look at the beginning and development of the intelligentsia in Georgia, we see that the idea began to spread at the beginning of the XVIII century and then started and developed in the middle. The Georgian Enlightenment was influenced by the ideas of both Western European and Russian Intellectuals. The revolutionary democratic intellectuals of Georgia were receiving their education in Russian higher education institutions and were therefore exposed to the influence of the intellectuals of that region. However, İlia Chavchavadze did not bring the ideas of neither Russian nor Western European intellectuals directly to Georgia, because he was striving for the Georgian

intelligentsia to be according to national traditions. At the same time, he thought that the ideas of the Russian revolutionary democrats could not be adopted because the problem of Georgia was different. The occupying Tsarist Russia had only one problem and that was the social problem, but Georgia, a Russian colony, had both national and social problems. Chavchavadze prioritized the national issue because it was related to the existence of the Georgian people and he said first let me live and then make me happy [6].

3. Ilia Chavchavadze

Let's talk about Ilia Chavchavadze, one of the leading intellectuals in Georgia. Chavchavadze is a Georgian writer, poet, journalist and political thinker. He is one of the most prominent figures of the 19th century, and as the architect of Georgian national thought, he became the leader of the country's liberation movement from the Russian yoke. It was later declared holy by the Georgian church [7]. He received his higher education in Petersburg, which was the most prestigious university of the Russian Empire at that time. However, the government, worried about revolutionary tendencies, put pressure on the university in 1861, and the students went to a boycott to protest this and organized demonstrations against the government. Due to these turmoils at the university, Chavchavadze had to leave his education and return to Georgia. He returns with great hopes to make important changes in Georgia and dedicates his whole life to the liberation of his country. In 1877, he published the journal "Iveria", one of the main centers of the national, spiritual and intellectual life of Georgia [8]. Later, he was the founder of two modern newspapers, "Sakartvelos Moambe" and "Iveria". Despite the harsh conditions of censorship, the magazine "Sakartvelos Moambe" has become the true flag of the national liberation movement [7]. Throughout his life, his aim has been the unification, national resistance and development of the Georgian nation. He never left himself to despair and believed with all his heart that the future will be the people and that Georgia will come to life again. Even in his writings, he invites his contemporaries to join forces and fight together for national independence and social justice. Often the main subject of his writings is the fate of Georgia. He dedicates his works, in which he expresses his enthusiastic love for his homeland, to the rebirth of the country and the arrival of spring. He was often detained by the police, as he fiercely opposed the tsarist regime and was one of the foremost representatives of the Georgian national liberation movement. Even his books were banned at that time, as the government saw him as a very serious obstacle to the policy of Czarist colonization. The cause of literary and political social activities was declared persona non grata by the Tsarist Russia. He died as a result of an assassination on September 12, 1907. His death is a matter of debate even today. Social democrat Bolsheviks were suspected due to historical facts, mainly because of his death, it is said that he was assassinated because he showed their inner face to the public. During World War II, an old man confessed that he was hired by the Russian gendarme to kill Ilia. As a result of the research, it was understood that this was the hand of the Russian tsar. The Georgian people, on the other hand, accepted his death as a tragedy [9].

In 1861, an article by Ilia Chavchavadze was published in the magazine "Tsiskar" (Dawn), and this article caused a heated debate in the Georgian society and divided the society into two. Young people are in favor of an invitation to independence, while those who are traditional are worried about the possibility of starting a new war. Historically, this conflict is called the "Battle of the Fathers and Sons" [10].

4. 'Tergdaleuli'

After this article, these young people who have sworn to fight for independence leave an indelible mark on Georgian history. The young people of this generation, known as "Tergdaleuli" (a socio-political and literary movement in Georgia), are the generation who are educated and come before the public with a well-thought-out liberation plan for their country that has been colonized for millennia. A new and higher phase of the Georgian Enlightenment also began with their entry into the political arena. The concept of "Tergdaleuli" made itself known in the newspapers of the period such as "Süre", "Moambe" and "Collection" written by Çavçavadze and its ideas were organized in these newspapers as a social movement [8]. "Tergdaleuli" is a Georgian term that literally means "one who drinks the waters of the Terek", meaning someone who has been on Russian soil. "Tergdaleuli" were called conservative opponents of young Georgians educated in Tsarist Russia; some of them were Georgian educators until the 60s, who took a semi-secret opposition to the old and demanded the inclusion of the new in public life [11]. The program of the "Tergdaleuli"

envisioned both the national and social liberation of the Georgian people. They were well acquainted with the thoughts of Russian and European political and public figures; They were aware of the ongoing political processes in the world, and according to their program, their first task was to gain autonomy within the Russian Empire under their occupation and then create an independent nation-state. They aimed to change and liberate Georgian society. They saw science and technology as the most important way out for liberation. The basis of education as salvation must be applied not only theoretically, but also practically. For example, the spread of social education and reading should be ensured. In order for science to reach everywhere, schools should be opened everywhere and education should be made open to everyone. Assistance should be sought from art and a wall should not be erected in front of it, on the contrary, science and art should not use a language that is difficult to perceive. The biggest contribution of this generation to Georgian literature is that it has presented understandable products to people in artistic and scientific language. They perceive art and literature as a social worker. The author, who insists on the importance of language, expresses this as follows: If there is no mother tongue, school is not a tool to develop the mind, on the contrary, it turns into a place that tries to suppress, obscure, trample and destroy the consciousness. The mother tongue is the first subject that the child has to learn in order for the school to function. The school should serve the public [8]. Because Georgia is a colonial country for centuries and is living in a feudal system next to the economically poor, advancing world. According to them, this bondage must end now. The Georgian culture of millennia is compressed into two cities, Tbilisi and Kutaisi, and according to them, no Georgian could and should not have put up with this situation. The new world could have been created together. Even if bridges were broken between people, this destruction could be repaired with the help of art. The struggle for freedom, which is the right of every human being, had to be based on fundamental and just reasons. The activities of the “Tergdaleuli” coincided with the strengthening of the Russification policy. They even wanted to ban the term “Georgia” and the Georgian press could only work in the provinces of Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Even in this difficult period, Ilia Chavchavadze and his supporters managed to maintain the national cause. Under their leadership, national banks were established in the provinces of Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Most of the money the bank raises is spent on financing Georgian schools and theatre. They become partners in a social awakening [1].

The “Tergdaleuli”, including I. Cavcavadze, A. Tsereteli, G. Tsereteli and N.Nikoladze, called for the social and national liberation of the Georgian people by attacking the feudal-serf system, taking into account the interests of the Georgian peasants and small-town bourgeoisie. In the 1860s and 1870s, the “Tergdaleuli” argued that freedom could be achieved through the re-establishment of an independent Georgian state, by organizing an approach to the general population [12].

Later, considering the positive impact of the progressive social life of Tsarist Russia on Georgian society, the “Tergdaleuli” demanded more political rights for the Georgian people within the framework of the Russian Empire. They defended the principles of materialist philosophy and realistic aesthetics and encouraged the establishment of a new Georgian literary language. The views of the “Tergdaleuli” developed under the influence of the ideologists of Russian revolutionary democracy, V.G.Belinskii, N.G.Chernyshevskii and N.A.Dobroliubov, as well as European Utopian socialists.

5. Associations and institutions

In May 1879, the “Association for the Promotion of Education and Training of the Georgian People” was established (the first president was Dimitri Kipiani), also translated as “Literacy Association” among Georgians [13]. It is a charitable organization founded by a group of prominent Georgian intellectuals to promote a cultural renaissance among Georgian peasants, which was then part of the Russian Empire, and it operated until 1926/7, surviving until the early Soviet period. Organized by local educators such as nobles Ilia Chavchavadze, Dmitry Kipiani, Iakob Gogebasvili and Mariam Jambakur-Orbeliani, the Community ran a nationwide network of schools, bookstores and libraries; trained teachers and sponsored Georgian newspapers and magazines. During this period, public schools were opened, the whole country was invited to read and hundreds of books were published. At the same time, ancient manuscripts and folklore materials are collected and the maintenance of historical monuments begins. Georgians become interested in their own history. A well-known writer, Chavchavadze continued to play the leading role in the Society until his

assassination in 1907, replacing the first president Kipiani in 1885. The association made an invaluable contribution to the establishment and development of Georgian national pedagogical thought and the national education system, as well as to the awakening of the national spirit in Georgian society. Georgian halls of Georgian language education were established by this society in Tbilisi and Kutaisi in the 1980s. Ilia Çavçavadze, together with Akaki Tsereteli, is the creator of the new Georgian literature and literary language. Chavchavadze and his associates carried out one of the most important reforms in the history of Georgian writing to improve the modern Georgian literary language, removing 5 old Georgian archaic letters that are no longer used in the language. In 1879, when the possibility of the Georgian national theater to be reactivated arose, he was elected president of the Georgian Theater Art Association and assumed the management of the theater, providing resources for its development. Chavchavadze attaches special importance to theater, because according to him, theater is very important for the formation of national identity, as it is a place where we can express our sorrows and troubles in our mother tongue. Today, the strongest roots of Georgian freedom should be sought in the initiatives of this period [8].

When we look at the Soviet Union period, it is possible to say that the Georgian patriots who were shot and deported at that time were innocent victims. From 1921 to 1941, about 100-200 thousand patriots were shot in Georgia. Even a few days after the 1924 uprising, up to 3,000 people were shot in just one night. Political repression started in Georgia in 1921. These pressures intensified and reached a large scale, especially in the mid-1930s. The sole purpose of repression in the Soviet Union was always to preserve political power [14].

The enormity and brutality of the 1930s repression was due to several reasons: first, the majority of the population who truly believed in ideology and creating a socialist structure were disappointed. Instead of a socialist system, they had a system based on violence that trampled on human rights and blinded people to the political system. Second, opponents of Jozef Stalin (1878-1953) emerged in the Communist Party. The third reason was the old intellectuals who never compromised with the Soviet system. For all these reasons, a strong opposition view has emerged in the country, which poses a great threat to the Communist Party [14].

Stalin and his associates decided to launch large-scale political repression to maintain the political system. The repressions of the 1930s affected all social classes, especially the intelligentsia. Victims of repressiya were especially prominent writer Miheil Javakhishvili, conductor Evgeni Mikeladze, literary critic Vakhtang Kotetisvili, famous poets Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze and others. Many Georgian cultural figures spent years in exile and prison. These were the words of the Georgian writer Miheil Cavahishvili on behalf of himself and other victims of repression: "I am innocent! I do not commit a crime against the Georgian people and my own conscience, however, I am ready to sacrifice my life for Georgia if needed. You can destroy me, but you can never erase what I left behind. I planted an oak tree in the soil-water of Georgia, whose roots you can never destroy". Political repressions also severely affected the Georgian Bolsheviks: Mikheil Kakhiani, Mamia Orakhelashvili, Levan Gogoberidze, Polikarpe (Budu) Mdivani, Mikheil Okujava, Samson Mamulia and others were sentenced to death [14].

The only battlefield where the Georgian people could express their protest against the Soviet regime was the fields of writing, painting, theater and other arts. This is why these areas became the target of the Soviet Government. The main aim of the Soviet Government was to fight against and destroy the Georgian intelligentsia. The majority of Georgian intellectuals could not get used to Soviet politics and therefore they were struggling to protect their national values and spirit. During this 37-year period of repressing, Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Miheil Cavahishvili, Sandro Ahmeteli, Nikolo Mcisvil and other important Georgian personalities cost their lives. Their "confession" testimonies are summarized in a document kept at the Archives Office of the Interior. These Soviet documents talk about the activities of Georgian intellectuals. The document also discusses the "harmful" actions of Soviet enemies in various fields [14].

Today, it is already clear to everyone how cruelly tortured it was that the intellectual section was compelled to make this confession, which did not even include the nature of the truth. According to these articles, the Georgian intellectuals had started their work as espionage, spying and counter-revolution. In addition, the confession letter stated that literary groups and associations served rather fascist and counter-revolutionary organizations rather than the development of Georgian literature.

“This organization consists of fascist elements and is in sharp contrast to the Soviet government. It is fighting against the Soviet authorities, but waiting for the right time to act. The platform of the organization is to overthrow the Soviet Government and establish an independent Georgia under the protection of Germany”. According to the report, the Rustaveli theater was also the home and shelter of this organization. This fascist terrorist organization mainly consisted of the actors of the theater and the writers Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Miheil Javakhishvili, Davit Tsereteli were agents, provocateurs, traitors and bad people of Germany, France, Italy and Poland. In the Soviet era, nationalism and patriotism were considered the greatest and unforgivable crimes, and the state was waging a great war against them. After receiving a statement from Miheil Javakhishvili, the “Cheka”, the first intelligence and security agency of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, they shot him. However, before that one of the first victims of the repression was Paolo Iashvili. Baptized as a spy, agent, and terrorist, the poet committed suicide in protest. This fact shook Georgian intellectuals deeply. “He was a real man, superior to anyone!” – These words belong to Miheil Javakhishvili. Nikolo McIschvili, like the others, was not pardoned and was shot in 1937, being branded as an agent and a spy. During this period, the theater director Sandro Ahmeteli tried to stage plays full of national ideas at the Rustaveli theater. Shalva Dadiani’s play “Tetnaldi”, based on the idea of fighting for a free Georgia, was staged in the theater in 1931. At the same time, with the help of Sandro Ahmeteli, Konstantine Gamsakhurdiya tried to stage her play based on nationalism and patriotism. Ahmeteli’s brave steps were not forgiven, and he was arrested on fabricated spy charges and executed in 1937 [14].

Conclusion. Most of the intellectuals whose names we have mentioned fought for what they believed in, and this cost some of their lives. When necessary, they even opposed their own states for the right. They defended their beliefs, which they thought were right, without being attached to anyone and without hesitation. Sartre sets an example in this regard. Because, despite being French, he opposed the French war against Algeria. Another example is Emile Zola, who, in the Dreyfus case, was prosecuted for insulting the military with the caption “I do not accuse” him as a party. When we look at Georgia, we witness the struggles and lives given in the name of national identity. In addition to a valuable figure such as İlia Çavçavadze, we talked about many important intellectuals who struggled for independence. In short, no matter how different the concepts used are in terms of time and geography, the struggles are completely different.

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