

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIKO NIKOLADZE'S VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL ISSUE

ULUSAL SORUNLARA DAİR NİKO NİKOLADZE'NİN GÖRÜŞLERİNİN GELİŞİM SÜRECİ ÜZERİNE

РАЗВИТИЕ ВЗГЛЯДОВ НИКО НИКОЛАДЗЕ НА НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ

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ABSTRACT

Niko Nikoladze (1843-1928) was a prominent Georgian thinker, journalist, and public figure who played a significant role in shaping the national discourse and socio-economic reforms of 19th-century Georgia. Emerging as a leader during the 1860s, he emphasized the importance of national identity, economic development, and modern education. In his early views, he argued that Georgia was not yet ready for independence and needed to focus on strengthening its intellectual and moral foundation through education and institutional reforms. However, he was a vocal critic of the Russian Empire's assimilation policies and advocated for the protection of Georgian culture and self-governance. By the 1890s, Nikoladze supported the idea of a federal arrangement within the Russian Empire, proposing that Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan function as autonomous entities while cooperating for mutual progress. His vision of governance was inspired by the British constitutional monarchy, emphasizing democracy, self-governance, and legal reforms. Unlike other national movement leaders who prioritized full independence, Nikoladze promoted gradual and strategic reforms to ensure national progress. This study explores Nikoladze's ideas on national identity, education, economic development, and democratic governance. By analyzing his contributions, it sheds light on how his perspectives continue to influence the formation of modern Georgian civil society and statehood. His pragmatic approach and advocacy for intellectual and economic development remain relevant in contemporary discussions on nation-building and governance.

Key words: Georgia, Nikoladze, national movement, national question, civil society.

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The Development of Niko Nikoladze's Views on The National Issue

ÖZ

Niko Nikoladze (1843-1928), 19. yüzyıl Gürcistan'ında önemli bir düşünür ve halk figürü olarak, ulusal meseleler ve bağımsızlık hareketi üzerine önemli fikirler ortaya koymuştur. 1860'lı yıllardan itibaren, Gürcü toplumunun sosyo-ekonomik gelişimi ve siyasi bilincinin oluşumunda rol oynamış, ulusal kimliğin korunması ve modernleşme süreçlerine vurgu yapmıştır. Nikoladze, erken dönemde Gürcistan'ın bağımsızlığa hazır olmadığını savunarak, eğitim ve toplumsal reformların öncelikli olması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Rus Çarlığı'nın asimilasyon politikalarına karşı eleştirel bir duruş sergilemiş ve Gürcistan'ın kültürel ve ekonomik olarak güçlenmesi gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. 1890'lı yıllarda, Nikoladze ulusal bağımsızlık yerine federal bir yapı önererek Gürcistan, Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan'ın Rusya içinde özerk bölgeler olarak varlıklarını sürdürmesini savunmuştur. Onun ideal yönetim modeli, İngiliz tipi anayasal monarşiye dayalı, halkın katılımına açık bir yönetim sistemi idi. Nikoladze'nin görüşleri, dönemin diğer Gürcü düşünürleriyle karşılaştırıldığında, pragmatik ve aşamalı reformları öne çıkaran bir anlayışa dayanıyordu. Çalışma, Nikoladze'nin ulusal kimlik, eğitim, ekonomi ve demokratik yönetim konularındaki görüşlerini analiz ederek, modern Gürcistan'ın siyasi ve sosyal gelişimi için tarihi bir çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Gürcistan, Nikoladze, ulusal hareket, ulusal sorun, sivil toplum.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Нико Николадзе (1843-1928) был выдающимся грузинским мыслителем, публицистом и общественным деятелем, который сыграл важную роль в формировании национального дискурса и социально-экономических реформ в Грузии XIX века. В 1860-х годах он выступал за укрепление национального самосознания, развитие экономики и модернизацию образования. В своих ранних взглядах Николадзе считал, что Грузия еще не готова к независимости и должна сосредоточиться на образовании и институциональных реформах. Однако он был резким критиком политики ассимиляции Российской империи и настаивал на сохранении грузинской культуры и самоуправления. К 1890-м годам Николадзе поддерживал идею федеративного устройства в рамках Российской империи, предлагая, чтобы Грузия, Армения и Азербайджан функционировали как автономные образования, сотрудничая в интересах общего прогресса. Его видение государственного управления основывалось на принципах британской конституционной монархии, демократии и правовых реформ. В отличие от других лидеров национального движения, он выступал за постепенные и стратегические реформы для обеспечения национального прогресса. В данной работе рассматриваются идеи Николадзе о национальной идентичности, образовании, экономическом развитии и демократическом управлении. Анализ его наследия помогает понять, как его взгляды продолжают влиять на развитие современного грузинского общества и государственности. Его прагматический подход и стремление к интеллектуальному и экономическому развитию остаются актуальными в современных дискуссиях о построении нации и управлении государством.

Ключевые слова: Грузия, Николадзе, национальное движения, национальный вопрос, гражданское общество.

Introduction

The article brings to the forefront the issues of the ideological deadlock of the Georgian publicist and public figure, which were given less attention by Georgian Soviet historiography due to their incompatibility with the official ideology. The defining issues of

N. Nikoladze's national concept are freshly covered: his clearly negative attitude towards Russia's colonial policy, the exposure of the harmful consequences of this policy, and the fight against them to protect the national interests of the Georgian people. Discussion of social problems from a common national position, the struggle for local self-government as a prerequisite for future independence, a determining condition for national revival and all-round progress, and the consolidation of the entire nation around this goal, the Europeanization of the country, and cultural development.

Methods

When working on the article, we used the method of critical analysis of the existing journalistic, memoir, and scientific literature about Niko Nikoladze.

Results

1. In the 1860s, N. Nikoladze considered it premature to think about independence, as he considered Georgian society morally and mentally unprepared.
2. In his opinion, the Georgian people should have received an education as part of Russia and become familiar with the socio-political life of Russia or Europe.
3. On the national issue, N. Nikoladze preaches the unity of the country's different social strata, a joint struggle for a common goal.
4. It condemns the Russian Empire's policy of Russification and exploitation and preaches the social, economic, and political equality of the peoples within the empire.
5. Nikoladze prefers a constitutional monarchy among forms of government. He considers the study of European lifestyle, science and literature to be a prerequisite for the fight for independence.
6. In the 1890s, N. Nikoladze saw Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan as federated entities within the Russian Empire.

Discussion

N. Nikoladze held a prominent place among the new generation of the 1860s. He was interested in the same tasks as other representatives of the “Tergdaleuli” generation. His interests concerned the state of public life in Georgia, its development, and future success. N. Nikoladze's entry into the professional arena coincided with the period of the collapse of the feudal system in Georgia. The abolition of serfdom brought about great changes in public life. The foundation was laid for new social relations, which led to the advancement of economic life. The foundation was laid for new social relations, which led to the advancement of economic life.

N. Nikoladze, as a representative of this renewed era, clearly saw the end of the old serfdom of Georgia, the emergence of new social classes, and the necessity of establishing new social relations. All of this was reflected in the development of its work program and the formation of a national concept. N. Nikoladze pays significant attention to the issue of national freedom in his thinking. However, it should be noted that, unlike other representatives of the Tergdale movement, this issue is of secondary importance to Nikoladze. (Emphasis added – G.B.) During the Soviet period, for obvious reasons, less attention was paid to N. Nikoladze's national ideals. Therefore, we will try to consistently address the issue.

According to V. Zambakhidze, “N. Nikoladze was the one from the sixties who brought socio-economic issues of vital importance for our country to the forefront in the Georgian national liberation movement” (Zambakhidze, 1957, s. 42). In his famous letter “The Liberation of Peasants in Georgia,” N. Nikoladze also refers to the national upsurge in

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the country at that time, precisely in connection with the discussion of the social issue

He expresses regret over the national upsurge of the 1860s, believing that the development of this idea could cause irreparable harm to the physical existence of the Georgian people. A Georgian publicist points to the possible use of force by the Tsarist Russian government: "The excess of national aspirations can lead Georgia to the slaughterhouse where Poland was recently skinned (meaning the punishment of the Poles who rebelled against Russia in 1863 — G.B.) and where the Circassians were completely drained of blood" (meaning the suppression of the Circassian uprising in the first half of the 1860s — G.B.) (Nikoladze, 1962, s.265). According to N. Nikoladze, in order the national independence struggle to be successful, Georgia must gain the protection of England and France. In such a case, Georgia will lose hope for the development of a just and rational social order for a long time. The country may gain from a political point of view if it is elevated to the level of the internal provinces of European countries, which is unlikely. European states (in this case England or France — GB) will immediately begin to colonize Georgia (ibid.).

Nikoladze finds it unacceptable to think about independence at this stage because he believes Georgian society is unprepared. He is concerned about the low level of moral and intellectual development of the people and society. Therefore, the fight for national freedom is premature. According to N. Nikoladze, the only form of state organization that can benefit Georgia is the communal distribution of land and all other property, as well as the communal organization of people's labor and state management. Such a system will benefit Georgia, since under its conditions, the full development of the well-being of the people will be possible. Nikoladze asks the question: "Under what conditions is it more convenient to realize our ideal — under the protection of Europe or under the protection of Russia?" He himself answers: "We think that since Georgia links its own fate with Russia... it will achieve the best arrangement of its situation sooner than if it had any European nation as an ally or protector" (ibid.).

N. Nikoladze explains the advantage of relations with Russia by the fact that the main principle of the best state and social order - community - is preserved only in Russia. In addition, the Georgian people have some experience of living together with Russia. Considering all of the above, he concludes: "This is why we think that it would not be a bad idea to put Georgia's national aspirations aside, and while waiting for the transformation of Russia itself, the Georgian people would become familiar with the basic principles of both Russian communal land ownership and the entire social order in general" (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 267). Such is N. Nikoladze's worldview on the issue of the struggle for national freedom. He believes that Georgia would be better off remaining under Russian protection, but at the same time, the Georgian people should demand from the government the implementation of communal land ownership and other social and political transformations. The Georgian people should become better acquainted with the social and political life of Russia or European countries, receive education, and so on.

N. Nikoladze's position on the issue of national freedom was different from the views of other representatives of the "Tergdaleuli" of the 1860s. According to M. Gaprindashvili, "only a bold thinker like Nikoladze could declare the national issue in Georgia to be a secondary issue" (Gaprindashvili, 1966, s.269). Among the sixties, Ilia Chavchavadze was a person who, unlike Nikoladze, was the first to bring the national issue to the forefront. Even in his "Traveler's Letters," he put forward the slogan of the struggle for national freedom — "Let us be our own people."

I. Chavchavadze called on Georgians to fight against Russian autocracy, But this struggle, in his opinion, must go through a series of stages that will at the same time prepare

the nation for an independent existence (Kikvidze, 1954, s. 319). Here, the positions of I. Chavchavadze and N. Nikoladze coincide, as both consider gaining independence to be a matter of the future (emphasis added — G.B.). I. Chavchavadze saw the abolition of serfdom as the preconditions for national self-awareness and revival. If the people were aware of their national identity, according to Ilia, they would be able to fight for political freedom. According to Chavchavadze, Russian rule brought the country the success that it was protected from invasions by external enemies, but the internal governance of the Georgian people was disrupted, its language was suppressed, and its national identity was undermined.

The leader of the "Tergdaleulians" preaches the unity of all strata of society in the struggle for national freedom. The struggle for independence would then be successful, if not just one rank, but all of them together — the entire Georgian people — were involved in this struggle. N. Nikoladze was of the same opinion, as we will clearly see below. Despite formally putting the national issue on the back burner, he actively fought against the oppression of the Georgian people. As a son and patriot of his country, he severely criticized the policy of Russification and exploitation of Georgia: "What should the government care about, developing or obscuring the nations united with Russia? The reproach that the name of Russia has become a concept of everything humiliated, insulted and bad among the local inhabitants, and therefore the demand to eradicate the local language, does not mean a terrible humiliation of Russia in the eyes of Europe?" (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 310).

Nikoladze accuses the Tsarist authorities of attempting to eradicate nationalities and compares their intentions to the "Mongol tendency": "You have exiled the Circassians from their native mountains (meaning the expulsion of the Circassians from their territories in 1864. G.B.) and now you are demanding the extermination of other nationalities... How does all this show the Mongol tendency, which thinks of building its glory on the destruction and ruins of others" (ibid.). For a Georgian publicist, as a defender of nationality, the position of the tsarist authorities that the Russians, who brought civilization to the Transcaucasus region, should be the masters, and the local inhabitants their slaves, is unacceptable.

In Mr. Niko's opinion, a government that takes control of a new people first introduces itself to these people through the effectiveness of its military force, and secondly, through the manner in which justice is administered, that is, by conducting fair, speedy trials and convictions. The Russian government, however, took a different approach in this regard: "The governance of the people, who yearned for peace and justice, began... The government imposed on them an endless procedure for conducting its affairs" (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 311-312). Local residents who came to the court to receive a certificate heard the same answer: come tomorrow, ask tomorrow, which sometimes lasted for years. Even under the new administration, bribery was a real means of achieving justice. All this led to the population's disappointment in the moral superiority of the Russian government. The local population looked with hope at the Russian army, believing that their military intervention would bring peace to the country. However, when they got to know the life of the Russian soldier better, they were disappointed. As Nikoladze noted, "not a single poor local resident would want to be a soldier... and now it would be enough to announce a call for new recruits in the Caucasus to cause unrest there."

Thus, the situation in Georgia and Transcaucasia by 1865 was caused by the fact that tsarism failed to charm the local population with either justice or the attractiveness of its military glory. "The local inhabitants do not say that the Mongols and Persians are better than the Russians, but they do not hide that the Russians are not better than the local inhabitants and that therefore the Russians should not be given an advantage in Transcaucasia to the detriment of the local inhabitants," writes N. Nikoladze. (ibid.: 312). He points out to the government the mistakes that have led to people becoming disillusioned and distrustful of

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them. N. Nikoladze finds the policy of promoting the superiority of the Russian ethnic group in the state unacceptable. It is acceptable and desirable for him that each ethnic group within the empire be equal and have equal rights in social, economic, and political terms. That is why he advises the government: "Direct your mind not to oppress the people, but to contribute in every way to their well-being, and then, believe me, you will be able to gain the sympathy of public opinion... Less politics and more heart - this is the motto that it would be good for you to follow in governing the people. Especially the people of Transcaucasia" (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 314). This is how N. Nikoladze criticizes the policy of Russification and exploitation of Tsarist Russia in Georgia and Transcaucasia.

The Great Georgian also touches on the issue of different forms of governance. For him, the Tsar's Russia's absolute monarchical form of government is unacceptable. N. Nikoladze prefers a constitutional monarchy because he believes that under such a system of government... "The state does not govern the country, it is governed by the people themselves, i.e. by representatives of the people, who have the right to enact laws" (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 372). He considers the constitutional monarchy of England to be an example of such government, because "it is representative of a true constitution and self-government of the people" (ibid.).

Under such a system of government, legislative power is in the hands of parliament, executive power is in the hands of ministers, and judicial power is in the hands of judges. According to the constitution, the king is considered the ruler of the country, but in reality, the country is governed by a parliament, which is elected by the country's population. According to N. Nikoladze, "the basis of England's constitutional monarchy is the self-government of the people" (ibid.: 379). Here, each city and district is governed by its own residents, without any government intervention. The districts and cities manage their own internal affairs and do not ask anything of the central government.

N. Nikoladze likes the freedom of the press and speech and the concept of the rule of law in England: "In England there is complete freedom of the press and speech... The personal freedom of an Englishman is based on the law, by virtue of which no one can be arrested unless there is a warrant from a judge (i.e. a judge — G. B.)" (ibid.). The principles of governance of the constitutional monarchy existing in England coincide with Nikoladze's vision of the political and cultural development of the peoples of the Russian Empire. It is desirable for him that the peoples included in the Russian Empire be granted autonomous rights, and that local self-governments and communes be introduced in large cities and towns, which will resolve their own internal affairs. That is why N. Nikoladze gives preference to constitutional monarchical rule.

N. Nikoladze dedicated his famous letter "Love and Service to the Fatherland" in 1880 to the topic of patriotism and love for the homeland (Nikoladze, 1985, s. 302-339). The author positively evaluates the national movement that began in Georgia twenty years ago and happily notes that "the Georgian people have already developed a sense of community, a feeling that makes us realize that our country lacks many things, that we have many common needs" (ibid.).

N. Nikoladze considers the current situation of the Georgian people to be a phenomenon characteristic of all countries. In his opinion, it is not only in our country that forgetting one's own ethnicity and then strengthening public feeling, love for the homeland has occurred. There is no people on earth who have not gone through this situation, who have not lived under the influence of some other people and who have not finally remembered their ethnicity. N. Nikoladze tries to explain the reasons for the decline of our country. In his opinion, the country's technical backwardness and the underdevelopment of scientific thought have put the country on the path of decline. The innovations in armaments allowed

our enemies to use new cannons to destroy Georgian fortresses in Kartli and Imereti. The Tatars could get such cannons in Europe, while... "We did not even know if such a machine existed anywhere..." (ibid.: 324). Therefore, the minds of Georgians have been humbled by foreign craftsmanship, scientific knowledge, and development. The people lost faith in themselves, and the foreign world turned into some kind of supreme creation in their eyes. This is how Russia appeared to the Georgian people, and they found themselves under its rule.

He considers the study of European lifestyle, science, education, and writing to be essential for the development and advancement of Georgian society: "Is it really possible to be better than someone else if we don't get to know that other person?... If we don't study someone else's writing, if we don't acquire someone else's science, if we don't inherit someone else's experience..." (Nikoladze, 1962, s. 325). People are strong and happy when all their power is equipped with the weapons of modern science, used and acted in their favor. Niko finds unacceptable a society in which one part wastes its strength in inaction, while the other part tries to survive both for itself and for the firstborn of society through selfless work. In his opinion, in such a case, division and discord arise in society, unity is lost, and people are divided into two hostile camps. N. Nikoladze considers the elimination of such shortcomings in society to be the primary duty of patriotism: "The first duty of anyone who loves our homeland is to reduce this inequality, this division, so that later this unjust and senseless waste of people's strength and labor can be completely eradicated from us" (ibid.:329). In his opinion, people will become stronger, become brothers, and form one fraternal family when they will no longer have any different ranks, when they will all unite their labor and distribute it in such a way that the labor of each will facilitate the labor of the others, not complicate it.

Thus, N. Nikoladze preaches the unity of different social strata in society, the joining of forces and joint work. He considers any confrontation, except for the intellectual one, to be destructive for the development of the country. In such a case, there will be a clash of views between different parts of society. Each side will try to present the issue better with different arguments, to explain it in a way that is understandable to the people. Such a struggle will benefit the people first of all, because this or that issue will become clearer, the path that the people should take will become clear: "Let us fight among ourselves, let us oppose one opinion to another. Let us try to make the people participate in this struggle and the movement of reason, and then, if we truly love our homeland, if we consider its good to be greater than private self-interest, let us uphold all the decisions that the majority has made" (ibid.:332). Nikoladze considers discipline, the directing of people's labor and strength towards a single goal, to be a necessary element in public life. In such a case, labor becomes easier for everyone and the fruits of labor increase for everyone: "The unity of intelligent labor, the discipline of the ranks, consists in the fact that whatever strength and ability they have, they should all be directed to labor in one go, so that nothing of this strength or this ability is lost..."

Mr. Niko finds it unacceptable that so-called "blind discipline" exists in Georgia, when an entire region, village, or valley follows one man, a local elder or leader. In his opinion, this is not just a part of Georgian youth. They have realized the futility of blind obedience, but at the same time they only believe in themselves and no longer obey anyone. Therefore, the minds of the youth are scattered. They do not have the same outlook and unity. The power of new science has not yet captured their minds, has not explained to them what is useful, what is necessary to unite the mind or physical strength and direct it towards one goal: "If our young people had studied and become familiar with social science, they would have the same opinion and view on most of our social questions..." (ibid.:335). In the life of

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youth, wise and necessary discipline, according to Nikoladze, will be established only when our leaders forget about blind obedience and, through the power of their minds and the purity of their purpose, win over the blind minds of youth. According to the author, the Georgian people deserve to have their leaders (meaning the leaders of the national movement of that period – G.B.) handle their affairs in the same way that the affairs of all good people in the world are handled. People deserve to be developed, to be trained to think, to be healed with their own hands, to be taught to walk on their own knees. And all this is possible only through obvious, visible work. Nikoladze gives Georgian youth and society his own explanation of love and service to the fatherland: "If we truly love our homeland and want to serve it, we must strengthen it, both materially — by establishing a just economic system, and morally — by improving its mind and knowledge. We must instill in it the hope that we ourselves have, we must turn our faces towards the future that we believe in, we must set it on the path that has strengthened and made all other peoples happy... Let us rely on our strength alone, let us work on our own strengthening and education. Then our people will have many friends and helpers" (Nikoladze, 1985, s. 338). Such is Nikoladze's vision of "love and service to the fatherland." European education, the unity of society, freedom from blind obedience, wise and necessary discipline in the life of youth, the full realization of one's own abilities and self-belief - these are the means that, in Nikoladze's opinion, will lead to the strengthening and progress of society and the country. Anyone who is a patriot of his country should be engaged in precisely these activities. N. Nikoladze also offers us an interesting prediction regarding the future of Georgia. In his opinion, in just twenty years, our country or its neighboring countries will become the arena of the global battle between East and West. This will make the Georgians' help necessary for Russia: "...then the help of our people will be necessary and appreciated for Russia... Happy will be the people who will meet the first shards of this battle ready, who will then have true unity and wise discipline" (ibid.:339).

In the 1890s, N. Nikoladze saw the creation of a federation as the only possible solution to the national issue. This is confirmed by Nikoladze's letter published in the newspaper "Moambe" in 1895 under the title "Domestic Review." - Batumi Elections." The author points out that people of many nationalities live in the Caucasus, but the most advanced of them are Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Since history has obliged them to live in one area, to be neighbors, the economic, cultural and political interests of these nations require that they live in brotherly love and help each other in every way. As he notes, historical experience has proven, through the example of Switzerland, that the elimination of constant strife and hostility between nations is possible only through the introduction of a federation. According to Nikoladze, the territory of Switzerland was mainly inhabited by French, Germans and Italians. There was constant hostility and struggle between them, but the introduction of the federation replaced the hostile situation with a kind and fraternal attitude. "Here is what the good attitude turned out to have," wrote N. Nikoladze, "the order and legislation of the country: Not only did it fraternize enemies and turn them into brothers, it even made them forget their own lineage and created one new nationality from three hostile, everywhere fighting each other peoples. What brought about this miracle, this strength, this goodness? That absolutely immutable principle, which in science is called the federal principle and which we translate as follows: "I too will be and you too will be" (Moambe, 1895, s. 166).

In Nikoladze's opinion, a federal arrangement does not eliminate national borders. He defines federation as follows: "Neighbors define and separate each other's property and rights with strong fences or conditions. Each is the complete master of his own house and yard; his neighbor is not subject to his orders... They build a high, impassable fence between them, so that each man is the complete lord of his own yard, completely protected from the

encroachment of others, but in every common matter and need, everyone is an equal participant... This simple principle has become such a cement that even the edifice built from it could not be completely destroyed by its opponents, such as Napoleon the Great, Garibaldi, and Bismarck... The situation in the Caucasus requires the use of this cement" (Moambe newspaper, 1895, s. 167). As we can see, N. Nikoladze demands granting the rights of autonomous self-government to the three Transcaucasian nations within the Russian Empire: Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis, and organizing them on federal principles. Each nation should have full self-government within its own territory, but at the same time, all nations should participate equally in resolving political issues important to the Russian Empire.

N. Nikoladze likes politicians and national leaders who will lead their nation and people to victory without shedding blood. In his letter "Kosztó and Deák", he clearly presents the ideal of a leader of the people that he himself dreamed of. This letter concerns the different methods of the struggle for freedom against the Austrian Empire by two political leaders of the Hungarian people, Lajos Kossuth and Franz Deák. Lajos Kossuth was a prominent statesman and public figure of the Hungarian people. He dedicated his entire life to the freedom of the Hungarians. But he wanted to achieve this freedom through arms, struggle, and bloodshed. He fought, but was defeated and the great sacrifices did not bring any positive results. The rebellious Hungary could not defeat Austria and escape from the Habsburg rule. Kossuth himself was forced to leave his homeland and seek refuge abroad.

Kossuth was opposed by another prominent state and public figure in Hungary, Franz Deák. He took a completely opposite path and did not share Kossuth's views in principle. N. Nikoladze describes Deák's path and aspirations as follows: "... Deák and his party firmly defended the unity of Hungary with the Habsburgs and preached that we must always be faithful to our old union. Sooner or later our truth will be revealed, the Habsburgs will come to their senses and give us ours. Our truth lies in the fact that we should have law and government in our own language, have our own army and finances, our own elected legislation, parliament and ministry. Our king should be crowned in our capital city, Pest — with the crown of St. Stephen. We will certainly deserve all this sooner or later if we do not abandon our truth and seek to restore our rights in a legal way, only through laws." (Georgian Writing, 1997, s. 198-199). N. Nikoladze likes Deaki's work because his peaceful, patient, and reasonable policy has achieved its goal. In 1867, Hungary received everything that Deák and his party demanded and that Kossuth could not achieve through struggle and bloodshed. Thus, through his wise and deliberate policy, Franz Deák gained for Hungary a wide autonomy, which fully satisfied Nikoladze's vision of a federal structure for Georgia.

N. Nikoladze defended the principles of a federal arrangement of Georgia within the Russian state with broad autonomous rights at the beginning of the 20th century. This time too, he emphasized the need and necessity of union with Russia. N. Nikoladze was a realist and saw clearly Russia's military strength, vast territory, natural resources, the fearless and loyal attitude of Georgians towards Russia, and thought that first the Georgian nation should be strengthened from within, organized, and multiplied, economically revived with Russian resources, and receive real self-government and autonomy. If something were to happen peacefully in the direction of Georgia's freedom, thanks to historical shifts, then the Georgian people could benefit from this gift. Nikoladze believed that Georgia could never free itself from the clutches of Russia on its own, so full independence was seen as a distant prospect. He realistically looked at the attitude of Europeans towards Georgia, who considered us a second-class people. Therefore, he concluded that "Georgia's fate would be better off if it were aligned with present-day Russia than if it were under the protection of any other European nation. The Ottoman Empire or Persia are not even worth mentioning

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here. Not a single intelligent person in Georgia thinks about them" (Georgian Writing, 1997, s. 304).

N. Nikoladze has thoroughly analyzed the foreign policy of Georgian kings in the Middle Ages, their relations with Europe and Russia. He considers the orientation towards Russia to be a forced but only right step. In 1913, Nikoladze wrote: "The country's politics, as the real forces of its nature, are shaped not by the will of man, the people, but by the geographical position of this country. Politics is not a new fashionable hat, the change of which hangs on our shoulders, it is as traditional, unchanging, ancestral treasure as language, nationality, and religion. As long as the strait leading from the Black Sea is in the hands of the Ottomans, as long as Ottomans and Persia bind us to the south, Lek and Tatars to the east, and Russia to the north, no matter how much we wander, we cannot deviate from the policy chosen by the greatest heroes of Georgia, after many trials, searches, and sacrifices. If it were possible in a better way, would they have hidden themselves? Were they less eager than we, as it were, for independence, did they love their own crown less than we do? Their path to seek was not as closed as ours, and they had the full right to hold in their hands whomever they wished to deal with, to form an alliance. Their ambassadors, as ordered, traveled the entire country, leaving no kingdom with which they did not negotiate, with whom they did not try to approach with the request of saving Georgia. Before they took the final step, ... they tried every means, used every measure; they even promised to change their faith to the Pope and Frederick the Great. One cannot read the description of these three centuries in the chronicles without tears... Until the place of the Ottomans or the Persians is taken by some other race or kingdom, there will be no other policy for Georgia than that which was forcibly guided by the most senseless masters of Georgia: Alexander of Kakheti, Alexander of Imereti, Vakhtang the Lawgiver, King Teimuraz, Solomon the Great, and Erekle the Great. The force and necessity that broke these Pompous personalities still exists today; we cannot interfere with it either" (Georgian Writing, 1997, s. 305).

We have deliberately included this extensive excerpt from Nikoladze's pamphlet, published in 1913, entitled "On My Politics." It clearly conveys the author's political credo and worldview of that period. N. Nikoladze was always faithful to his principles, but when it came to Georgia, he could abandon his principles. This is exactly what he did on May 26, 1918, when he forgot the necessity of union with Russia and played an active role in the declaration of independence of the Republic of Georgia and later in its political and economic construction.

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