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Bloody Chronicles of April 9

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Abstract: Preamble: 1989 year turned out crucial and one of the most important for Georgian national –liberation movement. When mentioning 1989, in the consciousness of society the first thing which is turned up is April 9 tragedy which took place in Tbilisi. This tragedy, which finally ended with victim, greatly hastened the dissolution process of Soviet Union and the restoration of Georgian Sovereignty.

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Together with the raising of national-liberation movement in Georgia, separatist forces revived in the autonomous republics which were nourished with Russian reaction. They perfectly benefited from Moscow mass-media with anti-Georgian attitude created in certain circles of Russian intelligence and started open critics of Georgians and guilted Georgian nation in every sin and crime of Soviet government.

We start 1989 chronology of current important phenomenon in Georgia with the tense situation in the territory of the autonomous republic of Abkhazia. The most abusive separatist attitude turned up in the village of Likhn, region of Gudauta at the 18 March meeting of Abkhazian nationalists where 30000 Abkhazians gathered. Separatists tried to show the process of violence, restriction, bullying, attempts of cultural assimilation, the process of implementing repressive policy in Georgia and asked for the help of

union government and joining Russia, etc. The letter was sent to the highest governance of the Soviet Union and was printed in Abkhazian press.

Appeal received in Likhn is the following:

- a) Infringer of sovereign rights of Georgian nation-because Abkhazia is inseparable part of Georgia historically, territorially and politically.
- b) Anti-constitutional- because autonomous republic doesn't have the right of separation
- c) falsity- makes impudent falsification of historical facts

This appeal was the continuation of the imperial policy which was implemented by Moscow throughout decades for confronting Abkhazians and Georgians. This appeal caused great indignation in society and their manifestations started.

On March 25 in Tbilisi Vake Park great meeting of Tbilisi society was held. The meeting asked the Georgian government to have objective coverage and evaluation of current situation, receive decisive measures to prevent illegal actions of separatists. On March 26, Georgian capitalist bureau discussed ongoing situation in Abkhazia, but at the meeting they didn't dare to punish communist leaders who participated in Likhn action; they only verbally condemned illegal attempt of shifting Abkhazian status. Georgian government tried to solve the problem. For this aim, in Tbilisi, Jumber Patiashvili met informal leaders Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava and asked them not to aggravate political situation in the capital. But from April 4, series of meetings of Tbilisi youth and students started: at first they gathered in the yard of Tbilisi Medical Institute and later moved to the meeting hall of Tbilisi University. The same day spontaneous meeting was held which received resolution. Resolution asked for national disobedience, creation of temporary government of Georgia and cancellation of autonomous formations.

In order to influence the government, holding quite crowded meeting in front of government house was decided which was controlled by "Ilia Chavchavadze society". On April 6, initiative at the meeting moved to the hands of radicals-Irakli Tsereteli and Gia Chanturia. It's obvious that the issue of Abkhazia still stayed actual but ultra - radical slogans moved towards the first place. There were posters at the meeting which demanded "to disintegrate Russian empire", "to overthrow Georgian soviet government", "to bring UNO army in Georgia", etc.

On April 6, Otar Cherkezia made a speech on television and offered informals to defuse the situation, though in vain. Even Jumber Patiashvili's address next day was unsuccessful. The situation gradually became unmanaged. Meeting participants arranged blockades at the university and appealed students to stop learning process. Committee of national liberation movement was created and they started to gather money and built barricades.

On April 8, they tried to psychologically influence meeting participants via demonstrating military forces which should have caused to decrease the number of meeting participants, though, on the contrary, new participants were added to the meeting. That day Tbilisi center was especially crowded. The whole city joined the meeting.

Bloody Night

At fatal night, before the meeting dispersal, last hope of the government was Georgian patriarch Ilia II who came to the meeting and addressed the gathered people to move to Kashueti church in order to avoid bloodshed. In spite of Patriarch's appeal, meeting participants refused to leave the place.

It was obvious for the government representatives, that people wouldn't leave the place. The noise of upcoming tanks intensified in Rustaveli Avenue. Meeting organizers warned demonstrators how to behave in case they were attacked. When it became known that tanks were approaching, the people were

told to leave the place for them in order to avoid bloodshed. Group of young people tried to ease the situation via dancing and singing. Dispersal started without warning. Armoured personnel carrier in position of 4 rows started moving towards the street. By this time, pedestrian was full of meeting participants. Heavy equipment colony passed quite a long way and stopped at Rustaveli Avenue, between the Painter's House and The House of Government. Protestors hoped the situation wouldn't become tense, though at Pioneer Palace signaling torch was thrown that was followed by soldiers armed with cudgels. Soldiers covered with shields, sharpened spades and cudgels started to disintegrate the meeting. Those who resisted were crushed with spades. Poisonous gas was used against protestors which damaged a lot of people. Majority among injured people were women and children.

During April 9 dispersal, officers of Georgian police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs showed great courage and bravery. They performed buffer role between the soldiers and meeting participants. When police officers found out that soldiers pitilessly attacked meeting participants, they made a circle, helped injured people to stand up and opened the road. Devastated people quickly started to leave the place. In an hour, soldiers completely freed up the avenue with demonstrators

From 4 a.m. wounded and poisoned people were taken to Tbilisi №1 hospital. Doctors immediately evaluated the situation of patients in the ambulance and distributed them in various departments. Doctors who worked there remember that patients were hardly poisoned and it was difficult or already quite late to save them. Some patients were wounded in the area of head, they had numerous bruises and they were attacked with spades and cudgels. Some of them were even shot.

After several days the leader of April 9 punitive night general Rodionov tried to falsify the facts and declared that people died from asphyxia and crushing. He also lied about the number of dead people and decreased their number up to 16.

Conclusion: April 9 is one of the distinguished dates in the History of Georgia. It has got two natures. On the one hand – bloody tragedy is celebrated and on the other the restoration of Georgian independence. That's why it won't be exaggerated if we say that if not April 9, 1989, there wouldn't be April 9, 1991. Exactly April 9 tragedy was a preliminary fact before declaration of Georgian independence, this tragedy made Georgians more united in the struggle of national sovereignty. Rustaveli Avenue became one of the symbolic places of the Latest History Georgia. After 9 April, 1989, Rustaveli Avenue and the surrounding area of the house of government make a new place in the memory of Georgians. It is connected to the idea of independence, victory and tragedy at the same time. April 9 tragedy left indelible trace in the heart and mind of each person. This caused uncommon but wide range response worldwide. Because of this tragedy Mother Teresa arrived in Georgia and this news became very famous. It should be mentioned that Mother Teresa had incorrect information about this case, because of false information she thought that people severely killed each other. After April 9 tragedy the television and all the people were silent. While the dispersal of peaceful demonstration by the Soviet army on 9 April, 1989 21 persons died, hundreds of people were wounded, poisoned and injured. Those who died were granted the names of national hero. They were: Aza Adamia, Natia Bashaleishvili, Eka Bejanishvili, Nato Giorgadze, Tamuna Dolidze, Tina Enukidze, Nino Toidze, Zaira Kikvidze, Manana Loladze, Tamar Mamulishvili, Venera Metreveli, Mamuka Nozadze, Nana Samarguliani, Shalva Kvasoliashvili, Marina Chkonia – Samarguliani, Eliso Chipashvili, Tamar Chovelidze, Nodar Jangirashvili, Mzia Jincharadze, Manana Melkadze, Gia Karseladze.

After tragic event several radical organizations were united. In order to investigate April 9, special committees of the highest councils of Georgia and Soviet Union were created and journalistic inquests were held, etc. In December, 1989, the second congress of the Soviet Union public deputy listened to the report of union committee head A. Sobchak about April 9. Reactionary camp tried to justify soldiers and shift the blame on demonstrators, but it was unsuccessful. The congress condemned the use of force

against peaceful manifestation in Tbilisi with the help of specially stated resolution, though nobody was punished because of this fact. The tragedy which happened in Tbilisi caused final bankruptcy of communist regime in Georgia. The change couldn't correct the situation in the party government of republic. Members gave the cold shoulders to com. Party and demon rationally left the party.

In the minds of Georgians April 9 gained quite a different sonority after the tragedy, as if it became the marker of gaining national identity again. After tragedy people freely started to talk about the independence. It became inevitable to destroy the empire. In every corner patriotic appeals were heard as echo that was followed by poems as mourning. Young or experienced authors horrified with the April 9 bloody chronicles wrote texts with the same effort and sadness as if it was their main mission. The streets in the capital were full of such poems, according to the authors it seemed as if everything was protected in the country except of homeland love.

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