გელა ჩარკვიანის მოგონებები 1992-2003 წლებში საქართველო-უკრაინის ურთიერთობების შესახებ

სტატიაში შესწავლილია საქართველო-უკრაინის ურთიერთობები 1992-2003 წლებში, ცნობილი ქართველი საზოგადო მოღვაწისა და დიპლომატის, ბატონ გელა ჩარკვიანის მემუარების მიხედვით. ნაშრომი უაღრესად საინტერესოა აღნიშნულ საკითხთან დაკავშირებით როგორც ფაქტოლოგიური მონაცემებით, ასევე პიროვნული შეფასებების თვალსაზრისით. ნაჩვენებია, რომ 1992-2003 წლებში დამოუკიდებელი საქართველოსა და უკრაინის ურთიერთობები პოზიტიურად ვითარდებოდა, რაზეც, გარკვეულ გავლენას, ისტორიულ წარსულთან ერთად, სახელმწიფოთა მეთაურებს შორის მეგობრული კავშირებიც განაპირობებდა.



კახა კვაშილავა
ისტორიის დოქტორი,
ასოცირებული პროფესორი,
სოხუმის სახელმწიფო
უნივერსიტეტი

THE MEMOIRS OF GELA CHARKVIANI ABOUT GEORGIA-UKRAINE RELATIONS DURING 1992-2003

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Ukraine is going through difficult times. It became the object of military aggression by the Russian Federation. People are dying, the most beautiful Ukrainian cities, villages, towns are collapsing. The inhuman acts of the aggressor shocked whole civilized world. We, in Georgia, know perfectly well what is happening now in the brotherly country. Since 1989, our country has been the target of aggression by the official Kremlin. From the historical Georgian lands – Abkhazia and the mountainous part of Shida (Inner) Kartli – more than half a million Georgians were expelled, who became objects of ethnocide and genocide. These territories are currently occupied by Russia.

Ukrainian-Georgian relations dates back almost a millennium and it started from the time of Kievan Rus. This is evidenced by the hoards of coins of the Tiflis Emirates and the Tao Kingdom found in Vladimir, Pskov and Minsk regions (3, 51-52). As noted in historiography, official Kyiv tried to have close ties with the influential Orthodox Georgian monarchy (4, 113).

It is interesting that the Georgians took an active part in the construction of the Kiev-Pechersky Monastery, whom the sources call “obez” (7, 8). It must also be emphasized here that “historiography clearly and reasonably shows all the inconsistency and absurdity of the attempts of some Abkhaz scholars to interpret “Obezi”, “Obezhanin” of ancient Russian sources as “Abkhazia” and “Abkhazians” in their modern understanding. It has been unequivocally proven that literally in all the reports of ancient Russian written monuments known to science that mention “Obezi”, it is about “Abkhazia” in a broad sense, i.e. about a single Georgian state and its population” (5, 63). In the late Middle Ages, the Zaporozhye Cossacks had quite reliable and accurate information about the events taking place in western Georgia. We learn about this from the letters of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (6, 576). Speaking of Ukrainian-Georgian relations, one cannot fail to mention the names of two great poets of our fraternal peoples – David Guramishvili (1705-1792) and Lesia Ukrainka (Larysa Petrovna Kosach-Kvitka, 1871-1913), who had made more close our countries.

A new period of Ukrainian-Georgian relations begins with the acquisition of independence in the early 90s of the 20th century. On July 22, 1992, diplomatic relations between the Republic of Georgia and Ukraine were established. The first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia was Valery Chechelashvili (1994-1998), while Ukraine first sent Chargé d’Affaires Yuriy Chugaenko (1994), then its first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Anatoly Kasyanenko (1994-1996). After them, this post was and is held by: from the Georgian side – Malkhaz Chachava (1998-2000), Grigol Katamadze (2000-2007, 2008-2013), Merab Antadze (2007-2008), Mikheil Ukleba (2013 -2017), Gela Dumbadze (2017-2019), Teimuraz Sharashenidze (2019-

2021) and Giorgi Zakarashvili (2021 up to present); from the Ukrainian side – Yuriy Chugayenko (1996-1998), Stepan Volkovetsky (1998-2003), Mykola Spis (2003-2009), Vasyl Tsybenko (2009-2015), Chargé d'Affaires Georgy Nazarov (2015-2017), Igor Dolgov (2017-2022).

Georgia and Ukraine are linked by relations based on traditional partnership and close cooperation. Ukraine is one of the largest and most important trading partners of Georgia. An important area of cooperation is the exchange of experience in the issues of successful reforms. Direct scientific and educational ties have been established between the leading universities of the two states

But it all started 30 years ago. The well-known Georgian public and statesman, TV presenter, teacher and diplomat Gela Charkviani (1939–2021) recalls the start of our contacts in new realities in his memoirs.

Unfortunately, it so happened that Georgia needed the first serious help from Ukraine during the Russian-Georgian war in Abkhazia. Unfortunately, to belittle the negative role of the Kremlin, these phenomena have long been called the "Georgian-Abkhazian conflict." Although, elements of ethnic confrontation are present there, but it was part of Russian aggression against Georgia. Back in July 1993, official Kyiv sent ships of the Black Sea Fleet to evacuate civilians from the city of Sukhumi, the Sukhumi and Gulripsh regions. The process continued until the end of hostilities at the end of September 1993.

Up to 100 Ukrainian volunteers from the Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian People's Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO) took part in the fighting. Unfortunately, 8 fighters (Sergey Obukh, Roman Galazika, Vladimir Prutik, Leonid Tkachuk, Roman Muzyka, Oleksa Dovg, Vladimir Bil) died in battle and their names are immortalized at the Heroes Memorial in Tbilisi.

For the first time about this, according to G. Charkviani, on July 30, 1994, the Head of State E. Shevardnadze told the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Anatoly Zlenko (07.27.1990-08.25.1994), who was in Tbilisi at that time: "I will not hide from you, that your guys fought on our side in Abkhazia. It was not at the state level. Some of them died. Now we cannot publicly present this, but the time will come and we will worthily honor their memory" (1, 156).

At this meeting, the presidential election battles in Ukraine and Georgian-Ukrainian relations were discussed. The dialogue ended with the characteristic humor of E. Shevardnadze: "We love you so much that we agree to your complete occupation of us" (1, 156).

On February 13, 1997, President of Georgia E. Shevardnadze arrived in Kyiv on an official visit. Remembering the capital of Ukraine in 1997, the author of the memoir notes: "I had the opportunity to walk along the streets of the city. The landscape here seemed more Soviet to us, perhaps because of the Cyrillic alphabet. I got the impression that we are ahead of Ukraine in terms of the development of market relations. …. It seemed to me that the choice in stores here is even more limited, say, mayonnaise and butter are the same everywhere. I think even such details always point to something more and perhaps reflect the lag in the pace of reforms... In many ways, Georgia did not have an important partner in the neighborhood than Ukraine, and our natural desire was that it be strong and prosperous" (1, 324).

From the second half of the 1990s, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine gradually began to move away from the political influence of Moscow. The Kremlin noticed this drift of the former colonies. Articles began to appear in the Russian press, the authors of which warned the authorities to be vigilant towards these states. As G. Charkviani writes, "the authors warned the Russian leadership that Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine were secretly creating a new "axis" to oust Russia from the southern periphery of the former USSR – and that the creation of the Caucasian transport corridor served the same purpose. The expression "bypassing Russia" became more and more widespread, with the aim of conveying to everyone that whoever does not let the pipeline pass through Russian territory is the enemy... The culmination of these sentiments should be considered the publication in "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", which was not signed by anyone, although many in Tbilisi believed that it was written by Andranik Migranyan and Konstantin Zatulin. In this opus, the authors directly called on the Russian leadership to destabilize the situation in Georgia and Azerbaijan" (1, 343-344). The Georgian president was already becoming tougher on Moscow. Russian Ambassador to Tbilisi Felix Stanevsky tried to influence E. Shevardnadze's circle. Let's listen to the author of the memoirs: "He advised us not to look for examples of democracy only in the West. When I was surprised, he told me that such examples can be found in the history of Russia, even in Novgorod. I spoke frankly, pointing out the mistakes in our relations that the Russian side made. I think after this conversation he decided that I was pro-Western, and as a result, for the first time in many years, they stopped inviting me to the ambassador's residence on June 12, when Russia celebrates a national holiday. Russian diplomats were also irritated by Shevardnadze's speech in Baku, in which, with his permission and confirmation, we included the same idea that he voiced in Kyiv... "We have learned to exist independently (to swim) and integration is desirable, but no longer an existential necessity" (1, 344).

Soon, on October 10, 1997, within the framework of the Council of Europe summit in Strasbourg, the union of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova was created – GUAM, which Uzbekistan also joined (therefore, the union became known as GUUAM). This was met with backlash in Russia, where the unification of the former Soviet republics was irritating from the start (1, 448). During a visit to Tbilisi by a delegation of the State Duma of the Russian Federation in 2003, Russian Parliamentarians "advised" E. Shevardnadze to forget about GUUAM and think about the Eurasian Union, to which they received the answer: "first you figure out what kind of union it is, and then let's talk" (1, 636).

In November 1998, President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma arrived in Tbilisi on an official visit (1, 404).



In January 1999, Henry Kissinger visited Tbilisi. At a meeting with him, E. Shevardnadze said that forces in Russia are strengthening that seek to restore the USSR: "Many people there believe that not only Belarus, but also Ukraine will be annexed and the Soviet Union will be restored in general" (1, 410). It is very remarkable that 23 years ago the President of Georgia spoke about the danger that, years later, faced the international community with all its reality.

In 1999, the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline was opened. At the opening ceremony, the presidents of Georgia and Azerbaijan also invited their Ukrainian counterpart L. Kuchma (2, 409).

The Georgian government actively assisted the scientific and pedagogical circles of Georgia in establishing contacts with Ukrainian colleagues and universities (1, 449).

E. Shevardnadze believed that the development of Ukrainian-Georgian relations, the fate of GUUM, in that period depended very much on who was at the head of Ukraine. Therefore, at the end of September 1999, he went to Kyiv and officially came out with the support of L. Kuchma, who was opposed by the leader of the local communists, Petro Symonenko, in the election campaign. In the second round of elections, which took place on November 14, Kuchma received 56.3% of the vote (1, 457-458). The following year, the Ukrainian president flew to Tbilisi to support his Georgian colleague and friend in the presidential elections (1,497).

Already on November 17, L. Kuchma and E. Shevardnadze officially met in Istanbul, where one of the most important OSCE summits was held (1, 476). The presidents of the two countries actively cooperated and acted together in the most important international forums. A new face-to-face meeting took place in Jerusalem at the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the Nativity of Christ (January 7, 2000) (1, 484).

In 2002, E. Shevardnadze was the only leader who supported L. Kuchma as chairman of the CIS. Although this candidacy was put forward by the President of Russia V.V. Putin, he was not supported by his colleagues from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, who supported the idea of rotation (1, 606).

The last official visit of E. Shevardnadze to Kyiv in rank took place on April 22-23. The meeting ceremony here always took place in the courtyard of the Mariinsky Palace. The President of Georgia paid tribute to the Ukrainian flag and greeted the soldiers: «Вітаю воїнів!» (vytayu voynyv). The next day he met with students and teachers of the Taras Shevchenko Institute of International Relations. His speech was dedicated to the historical ties of our peoples (1, 622).

Thus, the establishment of Ukrainian-Georgian relations in the difficult post-Soviet period went in a positive direction. The two countries actively supported each other in many international forums, which allowed them to achieve the best possible positive results. In improving these relations, in addition to centuries-old contacts between Georgia and Ukraine, friendly relations between Presidents E. Shevardnadze and L. Kuchma also played a special role.

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