

# *Time and Culture*

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# *Temps et culture*

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# *Soviet Time in Post-Soviet Memory: How the New Memory has been Constructed in Georgia*

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**Abstract.** The paper deals with the problem of rethinking the Soviet past and overcoming Soviet memory in the post-Soviet Georgia. Some steps towards the construction of 'new memory' are discussed as well. The concept of sites of memory by Pierre Nora and the idea of Time Maps by Eviatar Zerubavel comprise the theoretical framework for our study. To this end, textual materials as well as some other sites of memory are analysed. The two most controversial issues of the Soviet past of Georgia clearly demonstrate the transformation of memory in the post-Soviet period: Establishment of the Soviet rule in Georgia in 1921 and WW II (namely, Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945). Research demonstrated that the unified and monolithic Soviet narrative was deconstructed, which was expressed through all types of sites of memory and served as a basis for the "collective Soviet memory". Heroes and traitors changed their places; a suppressed memory, forgotten events and names became the spheres of particular interest. "Revenge on the past" was quite usual, especially during the first years of independence. The means of bridging the historical gap between the present and the past such as the "same time" and "discursive continuity" were actively used for reconsidering the memory of the Soviet past.

**Keywords:** identity, memory politics, sites of memory, history, past, Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

After the dissolution of the USSR, re-consideration of the past emerged as an integral part of the nation-building process in Georgia. Regime change was followed by changes in memory politics. As P. Nora notes, during the last decades, devotion towards the real or imagined past became closely linked to the collective consciousness, memory and identity.<sup>1</sup> Nora speaks about the *sites of memory* "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself."<sup>2</sup> These are the places "where a sense of historical continuity persists."<sup>3</sup> E. Zerubavel points out that there are different traditions of writing and representing past in different epochs and cultures; the way in which facts and events of the past are bounded and connected with each other and how they are transformed into the narrative about the past, are defined by these traditions. As past is perceived to be an inseparable part of a present identity, various means of bridging the historical gap between the present and the past and maintain historical continuity are used.<sup>4</sup>

Two focal points of the history of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic will be considered for the study of the transformation of memory in the post-Soviet period: first, the establishment of the Soviet rule in Georgia; and, secondly, WW II (Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945). These two events of the recent past became most controversial and discussible after the dissolution of the Soviet Union; therefore, they clearly demonstrate the steps of overcoming the Soviet memory and constructing of the new image of past. A problem of attitude towards the Soviet symbols, hotly

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Nora, "World Celebration of Memory", in *Memory of the War after 60 Years. Russia, Germany, Europe* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005), 391.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire". *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory. Spring (1989), 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps. Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

debated during last years, is tightly connected with the above-mentioned process.

In order to trace the process of memory construction in the post-Soviet period, we should uncover how the memory of the above-mentioned events was formed during the Soviet time.

## **Memory construction in the Soviet time**

### **Establishment of the Soviet rule – The most important event in the history of Georgia**

The Georgian historical master narrative, which was formed at the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, went through substantial changes during the Soviet time, mainly because of the clear ideological function connotations of history; although it maintained its main characteristics. If one uses the classification of E. Zerubavel, during the Soviet period the Georgian historical master narrative was shaped in the form of the “narrative of progress”<sup>5</sup>, the culminating point of which was the establishment of the Soviet rule in Georgia.

As it is generally acknowledged, school history textbooks are one of the most powerful tools for the formation of historical memory.<sup>6</sup> They reflect the master historical narrative in the form of „true, real story” which should be accepted by pupils without any doubt. We bring here two examples of interpretation of the establishment of the Soviet rule in Georgia as presented in the school history textbook for the age group of 13-16, which was the sole and mandatory book of the History of Georgia from 1960s until the 1990s:

“In February 1921, the working people of Georgia, under the leadership of the Communist Party and with the help of the Soviet Russia overthrew the government of landowners and bourgeoisie and imposed Soviet rule.”<sup>7</sup>

“The workers of Georgia, under the leadership of the Communist Party ... laid the ground for the building of the new, socialist society.”<sup>8</sup>

The chapters of the book describe the successful story of the building of socialism in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Besides the textbooks, the master narrative of Georgian Soviet historiography was reflected in all kind of texts – scientific works, reference books, educational materials, films, works of art, etc. The impressive photo album printed in 1986 with the introductory letter by the famous Georgian writer Guram Panjikidze opens with the sentence: „The history and civilization of Georgia is traceable through past millennia”. It is followed by a short description of the hard past of Georgia where cultural achievements are especially highlighted (2.5 pages). On the remaining 4.5 pages the short history of the Soviet Georgia is narrated:

„On February 25, 1921 Soviet power was established in Georgia, and the veritable renaissance of the Georgian nation began... It is our pride that the country's hitherto backward agriculture turned into a powerful agricultural system... Today, Georgia has every right to be proud of her heavy industry.”<sup>9</sup>

“The 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU and the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Georgian Communist Party set great concrete and

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> Dubravka Stojanović, “History Textbooks and Creation of National Identity”, in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. C. Koulouri (Thessaloniki : Petros Th. Ballidis & Co., 2001); Dan Porat, “Contemporary past: history textbooks as sites of national memory”, in *International Review of History Teaching. Vol. 3. Raising Standards in History Education*. Ed. by A. Dickinson, P. Gordon & P. Lee (Woburn Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Shota Meskhia and Viktor Guchua, *History of Georgia (for 7-10 grades)* (Tbilisi: Ganatleba, 1968), 254.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>9</sup> *The Song about Georgia*. Introduction by Guram Panjikidze (Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo Press, 1986), 8.

practicable tasks concerning the further development of industry and agriculture of the Georgian SSR.”<sup>10</sup>

“According to unofficial statistical data, [Georgia] occupies the first place in the world in the percentage of those who have a higher education.”<sup>11</sup>

All other sites of memory – museums, festivals, archives, libraries, monuments were in the service of the formation and strengthening of Soviet memory. The Soviet history of Georgia and the building of socialism occupied the greatest space in the museum exhibitions. Correlation of allocated space between the Soviet period and the remaining pre-Soviet era was the same as described in the above-mentioned photo album. Soviet festivals were celebrated several times a year (November 7, May 1, February 25), participation in these celebrations was mandatory for all manufacturing firms, governmental and educational institutions.

At libraries, scientific as well as literary texts of the authors, which were undesirable for the Soviet regime, if saved, were kept in so-called *special depositories*, and a special permission was needed for being allowed to work on them. A portion of archival materials reflecting the modern history and ongoing events was unconditionally closed; part of the sources of earlier history was concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), another part which remained in Georgia could be opened for researchers so long as they acquired special permission. Monuments of the Soviet leaders were erected at almost all central squares of cities and villages, in front of state buildings and other public places. Their size was proportional to the position of the person(s) in the Soviet hierarchical structure. Facades of buildings were decorated with the Soviet symbols and huge portraits of the Soviet leaders, quotations from the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. All these measures were aimed at the formation of a homogeneous, uniform narrative of the past, which left no place for questions regarding the alternative way of developments.

## The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union

Memory of the War was formed during the post-War decades. At different stages, it was aimed at: a) the first post-War decade – confirmation of the wise politics of the leader – Stalin; 2) Later on – demonstration of the heroism of the Soviet leaders – Khrushchov and Brezhnev – during the War; expression of the unity of people and Communist Party; presentation of the superiority of socialist order, strength of the Soviet Union.

In the above-mentioned school textbooks, the master narrative was presented in the following way:

“On 21 June 1941, Fascist Germany, unexpectedly, without declaration of war, attacked our country. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union started.”<sup>12</sup>

“Communist Party and the Soviet government have mobilized the working people, peasantry and intelligentsia for the complete destruction of the enemy ... Entire country was united under the slogans of the Communist Party: ‘Death to the German occupants!’ ‘Everything for the front, everything for victory!’”<sup>13</sup>

“The workers of Georgia, together with the Soviet people and under the leadership of the Communist Party ... took their reputable share to the defeat of the enemy.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Shota Meskhia and Viktor Guchua, *History of Georgia* (for 7-10 grades) (Tbilisi, Ganatleba, 1968), 285.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

"The Soviet social and state order was the source of victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War, which provided unity of the front and rear." The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the main driving force of this unity."<sup>15</sup>

The day of victory, the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, was exceptionally celebrated. Apart from this, the following sites represented the War memory: fraternal cemeteries (in Tbilisi, at the Kukia Cemetery, "relics of hundreds of Soviet warriors were buried, who died for the fatherland during the Great Patriotic War" <sup>16</sup>); the tomb of unknown soldier, which appeared in Tbilisi in 1975; from the 1970s, in every city and village of Georgia monuments were erected, memorial complexes were founded and walls of memories were opened (listing the names of the soldiers, who died in the Great Patriotic War).

Various activities were organized at these sites of memory: ceremonies of enrolment of new generation of pioneers and welcoming new cohort of individuals into the Young Communist League; adorning memorials or cemeteries of unknown soldiers with flowers by newly married couples.

Artistic works – poems, films, songs – were also in service of cementing the War memory; in spite of difference of their artistic and aesthetic nature, they did not leave the framework of the master narrative. Museum artefacts, libraries and archives had the same purpose – the formation of a unified historical memory.

## **Soviet Time in Post-Soviet Memory**

### **Establishment of Soviet rule in Georgia – Occupation and annexation of the Georgian Democratic Republic (1918-1921) by Soviet Russia**

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the establishment of Soviet rule in Georgia was re-considered and assessed as the occupation and annexation of Georgia by the Soviet Russia. From the 1990s, the titles of the chapters devoted to this event in the textbooks for secondary school as well as University students were formulated as follows: "Conquest of the Democratic Republic of Georgia by the Soviet Russia," "Establishment of the Soviet Regime",<sup>17</sup> "Establishment of the Occupational Regime of Russia",<sup>18</sup> "Struggle against the Occupational Regime in the First Years of the Soviet Rule",<sup>19</sup> "Again in the Pincers of Russia".<sup>20</sup> Here is a quotation from one of the textbooks; the narrative has been maintained in all other textbooks with slight changes in terms of form and accents:

"The Soviet Russia was preparing for the war against the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Fabricated information about the consolidation of different forces threatening Russia and other Soviet Republics, suppression of uprisings of peasants and workers of Georgia who addressed Soviet Russia for support was spread by the official state services of Russian Soviet Socialist Republic... In January 1920, the plan of war against Georgia was finally approved in Moscow. On 26th January 1920, under the initiative of Lenin, the political decision was taken to start the war against the Democratic Republic of Georgia... On 12th February 1921, military conflict between Georgia and Russia started... On 25th February, 1921, the XIth Red Army entered Tbilisi."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>16</sup> "Komunisti" newspaper, Tbilisi, 10 May 1965, # 109, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Nodar Asatiani et al., *History* (for 9<sup>th</sup> grade) (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauri, 2012), 375, 380.

<sup>18</sup> Vakhtang Guruli et al., *History of Georgia. XX century* (Tbilisi: Artanuji Tbilisi State University Press, 2003), 108.

<sup>19</sup> Otar Djanelidze et al., *History of Georgia* (for 9<sup>th</sup> grade) (Tbilisi: Klio, 2012), 336.

<sup>20</sup> David Muskhelishvili, Mikheil Samsonadze and Alexander Daushvili, *History of Georgia from Ancient Times to 2009* (Tbilisi: Gumbati, 2012), 456.

<sup>21</sup> Vakhtang Guruli et al. *History of Georgia. XX century* (Tbilisi: Artanuji Tbilisi State University Press, 2003), 82-84.

As for the other sites of memory, during the last years of the Soviet Union, on the wave of uprising of the national movement, the names of heroes who fought for the independence of Georgia emerged and quickly gained ground in public discourse. These were the names, which were nearly forgotten due to Soviet memory politics,

The leaders of the struggle for the establishment Soviet Rule in Georgia, as well as monuments which represented the symbols of the Soviet system were removed down from their pedestals. Some of these monuments were destroyed openly and with celebrations; others were quietly removed from the squares and parks of cities and villages. The process started with the destruction of Lenin's monument in the main square of Tbilisi (24 August 1990) and continued with removal of his statues in other cities and settlements as well. As early as the last years of the Soviet Union, the statues of Lenin almost disappeared from the public space, followed by the monuments of Georgian as well as international revolutionaries and communist leaders.

The monument of Sergo Orjonikidze – a famous revolutionary and functionary, one of the founders of the Soviet rule in Georgia, suffered the most severe fate out of all Soviet monuments. It became the object of 'revenge on the past' after the tragedy of 9<sup>th</sup> April 1989, when peaceful demonstrators protesting against the Soviet regime in front of the Government seat in Tbilisi were killed by soldiers of the Soviet Army. On the morning after the tragedy, the huge gray statue at the crossroad of two main avenues in the central part of the city was found with hands painted in a bloody colour and pasted with all sorts of household rubbish. At night, the city authorities circled the monument with a wooden fence and later removed it without much fuss.

The same context applies to the sculpture-composition in front of the Government seat on Rustaveli Avenue, named as "Labour, Science, Technique", which was publicly destroyed after the tragedy of 9<sup>th</sup> April.

The Mtsatsminda (Holly Mountain) Pantheon in Tbilisi – graveyard of famous writers and public figures and one of the most important sites of memory – represents another place, which experienced the process of the "revenge on the past" during the first stage of overcoming the Soviet legacy. In the autumn of 1987, when the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ilia Chavchavadze – famous Georgian writer and public figure of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century – was celebrated in Georgia, the grave of the communist leader of early Soviet Georgia Philippe Makharadze, whose name was connected with the murder of Ilia Chavchavadze in 1907, was blown up in the Pantheon. Although the grave was restored on the following days, it appeared to be the first symptom of further developments: at the end of 1989, the Communist government of Georgia re-buried the relics of famous Bolsheviks – Silibistro Tordia, Philippe Makharadze and Mikha Tskhakaia – from the Mtatsminda Pantheon to the common grave of revolutionaries located in the park of Khudadov; later on, they were re-buried in different cemeteries by their relatives.<sup>22</sup>

In 1989-1990, the titles were changed of most of the main cities and regional centers of Georgia which were named after the revolutionaries and the Communist Party officials. Names of streets, squares, parks and underground stations were also changed back to reflect Georgian historical figures, historical events, writers, poets, scientists and public figures. This process fully corresponds to the means of bridging the gap between the past and the present, which is named as 'discursive continuity' by Zerubavel.<sup>23</sup>

The role of Mtatsminda as a site of memory was strengthened through the re-burying of their heroes who fought against the Soviet rule and those who suffered from Soviet repressions. In 2005, the hero of the anti-Soviet rebellion of 1924, Khaikhosro Cholokashvili, was reburied from Leuville (France) to Mtsatsminda. In the same year, Ekvtime Tak'aishvili – the famous

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<sup>22</sup> <http://24saati.ge/index.php/category/news/2010-04-18/5555.html> (accessed on 10.02.2014).

<sup>23</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Collective Memory and Social Shape of the Past. Time Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 52.

Georgian scientist, one of the founders of Tbilisi State University, who emigrated from Georgia together with the government of the Democratic Republic in 1921 and fell under the all-seeing eye of the KGB after returning back to Georgia at the age of 82, was reburied from Didube Pantheon to Mtatsminda. In 2002, he was canonized by the Georgian Orthodox Church. In 2007, the first president of the Republic of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was reburied from Grozny (Chechnya) to the Mtatsminda pantheon.<sup>24</sup>

New monuments, museums, memorials were also created; they were aimed at constructing new collective memory. Akin to other countries,<sup>25</sup> the inauguration of new sites coincided with the anniversaries of important historical events.

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – the date of declaration of independence in 1918, the Museum of the Soviet occupation was established in Tbilisi. It brings together materials, which reflect the Soviet occupation and annexation of Georgia in 1921, and the process of struggle against the Soviet rule. Obviously, the day of inauguration was selected not by chance: this is an example of bridging “now” and “then” through synchronization of historical events with national days named as the “same time” by Zerubavel<sup>26</sup>.

The issue of Soviet monuments is connected to the problem of attitude towards Soviet symbols and the Soviet cultural legacy in general. In 2010, after the first parliamentary hearing of the Charter of Freedom, which directs to cleanse former KGB operatives, one of the members of Parliament came with a proposition to clear up Soviet symbols from the country. However, a group of historians think that this style of struggle against Soviet symbols will eradicate art-works rather than ideologically disassociate the country from the Soviet era<sup>27</sup>. The case of the building of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Tbilisi<sup>28</sup> (in 1992-1994 – the seat of the Parliament of Georgia, later on, till 2006 – the house of the Constitutional Court) is often cited by the supporters of the latter opinion. In 1990, alongside with Soviet monuments without any artistic or aesthetic value, the façade of the building decorated by the bas-reliefs by the renowned Georgian sculptors Jakob Nikoladze and Tamar Abakelia became the victims of the “revenge on the past”. They were destroyed by the activists of the national-liberation movement, as they depicted the moments of revolutionary movement and building of socialism in Georgia.<sup>29</sup> The process did not stop in the 1990s: later on, in the 2000s, the building itself was partly destroyed by the private investor to whom it was transferred by the state.

In 2011, the Charter of Freedom was approved by the Parliament, although the issue of Soviet symbols was left open. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013, after a three-year long discussion, the Parliament of Georgia adopted changes to the “Charter of Freedom” on its first hearing. The changes are aimed at the eradication of communist totalitarian symbols in the country. According to the recommendation of the Council of Europe, terminology was corrected in the Charter: “Soviet Symbols” were replaced with “Totalitarian Communist Symbols”.

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<sup>24</sup> Earlier, in 1989, Merab Kostava – companion-in-arms of Zviad Gamsakhurdia and one of the most prominent figure of the Georgian national liberation movement, who died in a road accident – was buried in the Mtatsminda Pantheon.

<sup>25</sup> Zolt K. Horvath, “The Redistribution of the Memory of Socialism. Identity Formation of the ‘Survivors’ in Hungary after 1989”, in *Past for the Eyes. East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*, eds Oksana Sarkisova and Peter Apor (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2008), 250.

<sup>26</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Collective Memory and Social Shape of the Past. Time Maps*, 46.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.liberali.de/node/3164> (accessed in October 2013).

<sup>28</sup> The building was constructed in 1934-1938 by the well-known Soviet architect, academician Alexei Shchusev who was awarded the First degree Stalin Prize for this project (in 1941).

<sup>29</sup> High relief by Nikoladze reflected the “History of Formation of the Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia” and “Peaceful Building of the Soviet Union” and were created in 1934-1936; Abakelia’s frieze with bas-reliefs consisted of five compositions: “Demonstration in Batumi”, “October in Georgia”, “Industry of Georgia”, “Agriculture of Georgia”, and “Happy Life” (1936-1937).

## **From the Great Patriotic War to the Second World War. Celebration of the 9<sup>th</sup> May in the post-Soviet Period**

Memory of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union caused some problems in the last years of Soviet rule. "Perestroika" and "Glasnost" made possible the discussion on previously hidden and suppressed topics. Certain number of works were published, dedicated to those Georgians who were fighting on the side of German army in the name of liberation of Georgia. The question was put in the following way: whether the war of 1941-1945 was a patriotic war for Georgia, as at that time, Georgia was not an independent state and it was forcibly included in the Soviet Union and was not liberated as a result of the War?

In the History textbooks, the chapters devoted to the War were renamed as follows:

- The textbook for University Students: the title of the chapter – "Georgia in 1941-1945", which includes the subtitles: "The Second World War", "Beginning of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union. Georgia at the first stage of the War", "Georgians on the fronts of the War of Germany and the Soviet Union, guerrilla movement and European resistance", "The Georgian political emigration. Georgians in the German army", "National movements in the years of the War", "Consequences of the War for Georgia".<sup>30</sup>
- The textbook for secondary education institutions: the title of the chapter – "The II World War in Europe", subtitles: "Reasons and beginning", "Beginning of the War between Germany and the Soviet Union", "War in the Far East", "The end of the II World War", "Results of the II World War".<sup>31</sup>

The Soviet model of celebration of the 9<sup>th</sup> May encountered some problems in Georgia even during the Soviet period, at the time of *Perestroika*. However, 9<sup>th</sup> May was still celebrated. After the coup d'état of the first president of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia, during the long period of the post-Soviet governance of Eduard Shevardnadze (1992-2003), the tradition of celebrating 9<sup>th</sup> May was maintained. After the Rose Revolution of 2003, no significant changes were introduced in this regard. Veterans of the II World War were respected and paid more or less adequate attention. Representatives of the central and local governments visited them on the anniversary of 9<sup>th</sup> May, provided symbolic gifts, and laid wreaths on the tomb of unknown soldier at the Park of Victory in Tbilisi.

The situation was radically changed after the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008. The government of Georgia was trying to detach from Russia. 9<sup>th</sup> May became one of the "dividing lines" in this process. Significant ideological loading with its public celebration was ascribed to the date by the government of Putin. It was portrayed as a symbol of the strength of Russia, which united different people. 9<sup>th</sup> May was a demonstration of superiority of the "unified country" for the government of Russia. The government of Georgia considered celebration of 9<sup>th</sup> May in a traditional way as participation in "Russian Game".

9<sup>th</sup> May was attacked from different fronts. The blowing up of the memorial in Kutaisi (sculptor Merab Berdzenishvili; erected in 1981, although was abandoned and deserted from the 1990s) in December 2009 became the most significant case. The place was vacated for the new building of the Parliament of Georgia. The government of Russia condemned the destruction of the memorial and initiated its re-creation at the "Poklonnaia Gora" in Moscow. Several representatives of the political spectrum of Georgia welcomed the initiative. According to the

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<sup>30</sup> Vakhtang Guruli et al. *History of Georgia. XX century* (Tbilisi: Artanuji Tbilisi State University Press, 2003), 150-157.

<sup>31</sup> Elene Medzmariashvili et al. *History* (for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade) (Tbilisi: Klio, 2012), 119-126.

opinion of the author of the monument, the government of Georgia was trying to re-write history. Berdzenishvili referred to the case of Italy where the square of Mussolini was maintained as the future generation should know their history.<sup>32</sup>

The second line of the “dismantlement” of 9<sup>th</sup> May was an attempt to declare 8<sup>th</sup> May as the day of victory over fascism. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia developed this initiative in 2011. On the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of victory, the minister appeared on 8<sup>th</sup> May at the memorial in Vake Park (which was labelled as the Park of Victory in 1970s and restored under its former title in the post-Soviet period) for commemoration of the victims of World War II. The government celebrated both dates – 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May, the latter remained a day-off.

Since October 2012, after the change of the government in Georgia, 9<sup>th</sup> May is celebrated as the day of victory again. Meanwhile, the concept of the “Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union” was gradually substituted with the concept of the “II World War”; and the memory of the War is comprised of different, sometimes controversial visions.

## **Conclusion**

Research demonstrated that attitude towards the Soviet past radically changed in the post-Soviet period. First, the unified and monolithic Soviet narrative was deconstructed, which was expressed through all types of texts and sites of memory and served as a basis for the “collective Soviet memory”. Secondly, in the post-Soviet period, heroes and traitors changed places; a suppressed memory, forgotten events and names became the spheres of particular interest. “Revenge on the past” was quite usual, especially during the first years of independence. Means of bridging the historical gap between the present and the past such as the “same time” and “discursive continuity” were actively used for reconstructing the memory of the Soviet past.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/content/article/1915890.html>