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FROM THE HISTORY OF THE GEORGIAN SOCIAL THOUGHT ('FOR UNIFIED GEORGIA')

Some foreign or Georgian authors discuss Svaneti extracted from Georgia and the Svan vernacular as the language of people at the brink of extinction. In fact, we, the Svans, have always been the essential part of the Georgian ethnos and labeling us as separate ethnos can be qualified as an effort aimed at the disintegration of the Georgian ethnos.

At present we see the revival of the attack against the Georgian national consciousness. The assault began in the 19th century with the three strategic directions of the Russification politics:

1. Presenting different Georgian territorial communities (Kartlians, Kakhetians, Svanetians, Megrelians, ...) as separate ethnic groups and encouraging their further separation;

2. "Liberation" of Svanetians, Megrelians etc from the Georgian oppression and declaring local Georgian dialects as "national languages";

3. Adjusting Svan and Megrelian dialects to the Russian alphabet and its establishment in schools and churches.

The Georgian society of that period opposed the Russian plans. The late half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century press media are replete with the articles reflecting the tireless struggle of the Svans for gaining the rights of learning in the Georgian language. At the vanguard of the strife are the nobilities of the Lechkhumi Mazra assembly, namely, D.Kipiani, K.Gelovani, L.Dadeshkeliani...and the clergy of Svaneti (B.Nizharadze, I.Margiani, G.Pirveli, E.Gabliani, I.Gujejani, G.Gujejani...).

What had not been realized by the Tsarist Russia was accomplished by the Soviet government under the conditions of occupation and political pressure and making into operation of the strong repressive machine. As a result of which Megrelian (Laz) and Svan dialects were declared as separate "languages". Unfortunately, this tendency is still alive seeks for its prolongation.

I think it is time to say no to the Soviet ideology legacy ("Divide and rule!") and reject "the scientific theory" of the existence of so-called 4/3 Kartvelian languages established by the alien political pressure and replace it with the one based on the authentic scientific ideas and regain the historic reality when Megrelian (Laz) and Svan dialects had been regarded as parts of the Georgian language i.e. dialects.

As is known Svans are one of the creators of the ancient written Georgian culture. Svans and Megrelians together with other Georgians worked for the development of the Georgian Christian culture. Ancient written records have survived more than 60 names of the famous people from the different Svanetian communities: public men, bibliophiles, scribes, ktitors, and compilers of religious annals. Svanetian (Georgian) arts and goldsmith schools enjoyed universal acclaim. The history has survived the names of nobilities and religious people of Svaneti who worked for the Georgian Church not only within Georgia but also in the Georgian overseas monastery centers.