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Ivane Javakhishvili and Georgian political parties **

Abstract

The article studies Ivane Javakhishvili's attitude towards Georgian political parties—including the Social Democratic, Socialist-Federalist, and National Democratic parties—based on his works, archival documents, and press data of those times. Additionally, it characterizes the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens and details Javakhishvili's participation in the Constituent Assembly elections as a candidate by his voting list.

Due to his ideological and political beliefs, Ivane Javakhishvili empathized with and supported the political parties of Georgia in implementing any national affairs, protecting Georgia's state independence, and promoting democratic development.

Keywords: Georgia, Ivane Javakhishvili, Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921), Georgian political parties, Constituent Assembly, Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens.

Introduction

The attitude of Ivane Javakhishvili towards Georgian Political parties can be analyzed from two perspectives:

On the one hand, Ivane Javakhishvili, as a historian, was interested in the political processes taking place in the country and discussed the issues of the formation and development of political parties in Georgia, evaluating their ideology and role in the political process taking place in the country.

On the other hand, Ivane Javakhishvili was personally involved in the political life of Georgia. His goal was to protect Georgia's national interests, preserve and strengthen national identity, prepare for the restoration of Georgia's independence, and then defend its independence.

Due to his ideological and political beliefs, Ivane Javakhishvili empathized with and supported the political parties of Georgia in implementing any national affairs.

Before the restoration of Georgia's independence, Ivane Javakhishvili was close to the Socialist-Federalist Party and collaborated with its prominent representatives (Archil Jorjadze, Samson Pirtskhalava, Kita Abashidze). After the restoration of independence, Ivane

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Javakhishvili, as an expert, was involved in solving different state issues by the Social-Democratic government of Georgia.

Despite his collaboration with various parties, Ivane Javakhishvili was not a member of any party, except for his participation in the 1919 Constituent Assembly elections on the list of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens. The Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens itself, which was created in July 1918, was an interesting idea and was intended to facilitate the democratic development of Georgia, and an important way to do this was to study and analyze the "The Issues of the Day of the State."

The "Union of Non-Party Citizens" was, on the one hand, focused on analytical work to support the construction of a democratic state in Georgia; on the other hand, this union was ready to cooperate with all parties and aimed to reduce the confrontation between the parties. Given this, Ivane Javakhishvili's participation in this union is quite understandable.

1. Ivane Javakhishvili's description of Georgian political parties

Ivane Javakhishvili's scientific work was primarily devoted to the study of the ancient period of Georgian history, and only a few of his works provided the history of our country in the 19th century. One such is the essay "A Brief Overview of the History of Georgia" written for the Russian Encyclopedia in 1912¹. In this essay, Ivane Javakhishvili briefly refers to the ancient period and devotes more attention to the history of Georgia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and a discussion of current processes. Ivane Javakhishvili describes the two political parties that existed in Georgia at that time - the Social Democrats and the Socialist-Federalists. The political sympathies of Ivane Javakhishvili can also be seen in the characteristic features of these parties and the political life that was taking place in Georgia.

1.1. Social Democratic Party

Ivane Javakhishvili noted that the Social Democratic Workers' Party (meaning the "Third Party" created that year), founded in 1893, was the first to succeed in rallying the masses, which, since 1902, has represented only the local organization of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. This party first began propaganda and organizational activities among the workers, and then in the countryside, among the peasants. According to Ivane Javakhishvili, the party's mission was to organize the joint power of the working masses in order to improve their legal and economic situation.

Ivane Javakhishvili noted that in the current situation, the Social Democratic Workers' Party in Georgia worked not so much among factory workers, whose number was not large at that time, as among the peasants and small landowners. According to the evaluation of Ivane Javakhishvili, the difficult agrarian conditions in Georgia created favourable conditions for

¹ Ivane Javakhishvili. A Brief Overview of the History of Georgia for an Encyclopedia - ed. vol. 12, Tbilisi, 1998, pp. 347-369

preaching to the Georgian peasantry that it was necessary to work together to improve their situation.²

The Georgian Social Democrats took a hostile stance towards their predecessors, the intelligentsia of the 1860s-1880s, accusing them of completely ignoring the interests of the people. A heated polemic and struggle started between the Social Democrats and the intelligentsia of the 1860s-80s regarding the extent to which the capitalist system was widespread in Georgia and the extent to which the Georgian population was proletarianized. There was also a dispute over the basic concepts of social democracy - historical materialism and the national question.

Ivane Javakhishvili's attitude towards the Social Democrats was determined by the position of the Social Democrats themselves on the national issue. According to Ivane Javakhishvili, for a long time the Georgian Social Democrats were extremely hostile to the national issue, and nationalism was declared one of the characteristic features of bourgeois ideology. As long as the Social Democrats were nihilistic about the national issue and did not think about restoring Georgian statehood, cooperation with this party was out of the question for Ivane Javakhishvili. The Social Democrats also had a hostile attitude towards Ivane Javakhishvili. In their opinion, Ivane Javakhishvili was a historian of "bourgeois sociology" and a "nationalist" position. In 1907, the famous Georgian social democrat Pilipe Makharadze (1868-1941) criticized Ivane Javakhishvili's work "The Economic History of Georgia" and saw nothing valuable in it. He also condemned Javakhishvili's "False love of the homeland, which is expressed in the desire to glorify the past, rather than in its scientific examination and appreciation."³

The turn of one wing of the Social Democrats (the so-called "Mensheviks" part) towards national problems and their transition to a position of defending Georgia's interests also changed Ivane Javakhishvili's attitude towards this party. The possibility and desire for cooperation emerged on both sides, which was realized during the period of the Georgian Democratic Republic (1918-1921). The Social Democratic government primarily turned to Ivane Javakhishvili as an expert when justifying the country's historical-strategic borders.

1.2. Socialist-Federalist Party

At the beginning of the 20th century, a new political force emerged in Georgia, which eventually formed in 1904 as the Georgian Socialist-Federalist Party. According to Ivane Javakhishvili, this party was the first to raise the issue of the national-political rights of the Georgian people. In contrast to social democracy, which advocated centralism in the state structure, the socialist-federalists shared the principles of decentralization, autonomy, and federalism. In addition, Georgian federalists pointed out that Georgia had the right to

² Ivane Javakhishvili. A Brief Overview of the History of Georgia for an Encyclopedia - ed. vol. 12, Tbilisi, 1998, pp. 365

³ P. Makharadze. Bibliographic note - "Tsiskari" (Kutaisi), 1907. N 5, 6.

autonomy based on the 1783 Treaty of Georgievsk, which was signed between King Erekle II and Catherine II the Great of Russia.⁴

Ivane Javakhishvili's attitude towards the Socialist Federalist Party was positive. Ivane Javakhishvili was friends with prominent representatives of this party - Samson Pirtskhalava (1872-1952) and Kita Abashidze (1870-1917) for many years, and Kita Abashidze was also his brother-in law.

Ivane Javakhishvili's close relationships with the leaders of the Federalist Party apparently led police agents to believe that Ivane Javakhishvili was also a member of this party. According to an archival document of the police service, dating back to 1910, Ivane Javakhishvili is named a permanent honorary member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Federalist Party, along with Akaki Tsereteli, Niko Marr, and Bishop Leonides.⁵ This information, of course, did not correspond to reality.

The Federalist Party's national program was acceptable to Ivane Javakhishvili, but he did not share their socialist aspirations.

1.3. National Democratic Party

The formation of the National Democratic Party was completed in March 1917, and the first party meeting was held in early June 1917. The party supported the construction of a democratic state, considering the "equality of rights" of citizens as a necessary condition for "strengthening state life." National Democrats were opposed to socialist parties and considered the existence of private property a necessary condition for the progress of society.⁶ Most importantly, the party emphasized that it was a national party, not a class party. "It does not defend or demand anything that would be advantageous to anyone rank or class and could be harmful and disastrous for the nation."

If we briefly describe Ivane Javakhishvili's worldview, he was national and democratic. Accordingly, from a worldview point of view, the most acceptable to him was the National Democratic Party. However, as already mentioned, Ivane Javakhishvili did not grant decisive importance to this and was ready to cooperate with any party if it did good work for Georgia. The National Democratic Party was formed late. By this time, Ivane Javakhishvili had close contacts with the Socialist Federalists. It is noteworthy that Ivane Javakhishvili's closest teammates from the Georgian University - Akaki Shanidze (1887-1987) and Ioseb Kipshidze (1882-1919) stood as candidates in the Constituent Assembly elections on the Socialist Federalist party list.⁷

⁴ Ivane Javakhishvili. A Brief Overview of the History of Georgia for the Encyclopedia - ed. vol. 12, Tbilisi, 1998, p. 365

⁵ Otar Janelidze. Ivane Javakhishvili. Tbilisi, 1996, p.22

⁶ Programs of Georgian Political Parties (1906-1921). Collection 1, Tbilisi, "Akhali Azri", 2008, p.24

⁷ CHA, P.1834, list 2, case.68, p. 43, 44.

1.4. Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens

There is very little information available today about the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens. On August 1, 1918, the newspaper "Republic of Georgia" reported on the creation of the "Political Union of Independents." Thus, the union is considered to have been created in July 1918.

As stated in the newspaper notice, "The Union aims to protect the independence of Georgia and strengthen its statehood." The Union did not have a developed party program and had only a political platform. The newspaper notice only included the three main articles of the political platform:

- Protecting and strengthening the existence of an independent democratic state in Georgia;
- Georgia's political, social and economic development on a democratic basis,
- Creative theoretical and practical work.

To achieve its goals, the union organized meetings and wrote abstracts on "Critical state issues."

The affairs of the Union were managed by a council consisting of 12 people, which included: Professor Ivane Javakhishvili, Konstantine Abkhazi, Dutu Megreli, Ivane Abkhazi, Konstantine Amirejibi, Estate Machabeli, Giorgi Japaridze, Irakli Guntsadze (Chairman), Grigol Gabashvili, Vakhtang Gambashidze, Konstantine Makashvili, David Karichashvili.

As we can see, Ivane Javakhishvili not only collaborated with the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens, but was also a member of its board.

2. Ivane Javakhishvili's participation in the elections to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia

2.1. Elections of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia

According to the views of the Democratic Republic of Georgia at the time, a special representative body - a Constituent Assembly - was to be elected, which would develop the Constitution of Georgia and determine the structure of the newly created state. Initially, the elections were supposed to be held in the late spring of 1919, however, because the conference of the victorious countries of World War I was beginning in Paris, it was considered necessary to accelerate the elections. The Georgian delegation arriving in Paris would speak on behalf of the elected body created in Georgia.

On February 14-16, 1919, elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in Georgia. The Assembly was to consist of 130 members, elected through a proportional representation system. The election law did not set a percentage threshold. It was enough to gather votes across the country to be elected even one MP. In addition to the well-known parties - Social Democratic, National Democratic, Socialist Federalist, Socialist Revolutionary - in the

elections to the Constituent Assembly, several organizations were created to participate in the elections, and the number of electoral subjects reached 15.

2.2. Ivane Javakhishvili on the electoral lists of the National Democratic Party and the Union of Non-Party Citizens

Ivane Javakhishvili participated in the Constituent Assembly elections on behalf of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens. However, the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens initially intended to run on the list together with the National Democratic Party. This is evidenced by the fact that the initial electoral list of the National Democratic Party, which was submitted for participation in the Constituent Assembly elections, included 7 individuals, who were then included in the 10-person list submitted by the Union of Independents. Among them was Ivane Javakhishvili. He was 18th on the initial list of the National Democratic Party.

The decision to participate in the Constituent Assembly elections by the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens, apparently came at the last moment during the registration of the voter lists. Therefore, the National Democrats had to correct their list in the document they had already submitted.

It seems that prominent representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia of that time, among whom was Ivane Javakhishvili, nevertheless decided not to run on the National Democratic Party list and to present a separate list under the name of the “Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens” created in the summer of 1918.

The Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens submitted a 10-person electoral list, which included Ivane Javakhishvili and was registered as number 2.

If we look at the main provisions of the political platform of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens, no political party operating in Georgia could have anything against it, regardless of their ideological position. Perhaps this is why they decided to participate in the elections with a separate list and focus their activities on the possibility of reaching an agreement between the opposing parties, cooperating with all political parties for the benefit of Georgia.

2.3. The participation of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens in the elections to the Constituent Assembly

The Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens presented only a list of 10 people in the Constituent Assembly elections. They understood well that, given their limited resources, they should not have hoped for winning of many representatives to the Constituent Assembly. As it turned out later, none of the deputies of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens were elected.

The 10-member list of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens was as follows:

1. Zurab Avalishvili, Son of Davit - Professor of State Right (Number 7 on the initial list of the National Democratic Party);
2. Javakhishvili Ivane, Son of Aleksandre (Number 18 on the NDP list);
3. Abkhazi Konstantine, Son of Nikoloz- Member of the Parliament (Number 19 on the NDP list);
4. Makashvili Konstantine, Son of Zakaria - Member of the Parliament (Number 27 on the NDP list);
5. Mghvdlishvili Mikheil, Son of Mose – The Senior Chairman of Court Chamber (Number 35 on the NDP list);
6. Amirejibi Konstantine, Son of Mikheil - Agronomist Chemist (Number 28 on the NDP list);
7. Ghambashidze Vakhtang, Son of Davit – Doctor (Number 50 on the NDP list);
8. Gedevanishvili Aleksandre, Son of Konstantine - Commander of the Georgian Army;
9. Darakhvelidze-Krinitcki Aleksandre, Son of Mikheil - Chief Accountant of the Black Stone Industrial Council in Chiatura;
10. Zedgenidze Ivane, Son of Besarion – Sworn advocate.

In the Constituent Assembly elections, the list of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens was presented as N11. The newly formed union, which was not known to the general public and had no experience in political activity, was unable to organize an election campaign and gain support. The Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens managed to collect 883 votes. In Tbilisi, it received 480 votes, in Kutaisi - 24, in Poti - 41, in Chiatura - 10. The electoral meter was 4643 votes. Accordingly, the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens failed to advance even a single deputy.

Maro Makashvili, whose father, Konstantine Makashvili, was running on the list of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens, made an interesting entry in her diary regarding the Constituent Assembly elections and the failure of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens:

„20 February, 1919 year;

... We are experiencing a great historical moment. On the 15th of this month, there were elections for the Constituent Assembly. The Social Democrats came out in large numbers. Then the N2 National Democratic Party and others. There was great excitement in the streets. Ballots were flying in the air, and cars were sliding and throwing numbers. Everyone was in a hurry to vote for the party they liked. We were very worried too. N11 was for non-partisans and none of them passed. They received 480 votes. It is a new party and many people do not know it. Social Democrats are winning everywhere. Oh, that party is leading us on the wrong road. They are not socialists, but bourgeois, they only have the name of socialists and speak their language. I think the whole nation is divided into 15 parties. Well, what will happen here, what will come out of it?“⁸

⁸ Maro Makashvili. Diary. Tbilisi, 2014, P.54

2.4. Ivane Javakhishvili in the delegation sent to the Paris Peace Conference

Despite being on the electoral list, Ivane Javakhishvili was not in Georgia during the Constituent Assembly elections and did not participate in the election campaign. By the decision of the Georgian government, he was included in the Georgian delegation who was supposed to defend Georgia's interests at the peace conference held in Paris. The Georgian delegation sent to Paris had to overcome significant difficulties on the way. On January 9, 1919, a 12-member Georgian delegation left Tbilisi for Batumi, from where they were to arrive in Paris. The delegation, at the request of the Georgian government, also included Ivane Javakhishvili. However, he thought it best to remain at the university. Ivane Javakhishvili's temporary separation from the university was also a bad experience for the university's employees and students.

The Georgian delegation reached Istanbul, but in the end, only two members of the Georgian delegation - Karlo Chkheidze and Irakli Tsereteli - were allowed to enter Paris. The majority of the remaining members of the delegation, including Ivane Javakhishvili, returned and arrived in Tbilisi on April 2. Prof. I. Javakhishvili arrived from Istanbul and began to deliver lectures in this short time," wrote "Sakhalkho Sakme" in connection with this.⁹

Ivane Javakhishvili used his stay first in Batumi and then in Istanbul to create works on issues that, in his opinion, were extremely important for Georgian politics of the time. These works are the "Borders of Georgia Considered from a Historical and Modern Perspective", which he wrote in January-March 1919 during his stay in Batumi and Constantinople, and "Relations between Russia and Georgia in the 18th Century", which he wrote in Constantinople in February-March 1919. The place and time of writing of the works are indicated by Ivane Javakhishvili himself. Both works were printed in Tbilisi in 1919.

3. Further activities of the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens in the Democratic Republic of Georgia

3.1. To establish a state-based mindset on the issue of borders

The Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens, despite not being able to present its representative to the Constituent Assembly, actively continued its activities and closely cooperated with those parties with which it shared a common vision on various issues. This is evidenced by the meeting held on August 3, 1919 regarding the borders of Georgia. The initiators of this meeting were the main committees of the National Democrats, Non-Party (Independents) Citizens and Radical Democrats.

The newspaper "Sakartvelo" reported about this:

⁹ "Sakhalkho sakme" April 9, 1919

The meeting was attended by a large number of people, despite the heat. There were especially many military personnel. The meeting was chaired and opened by Spiridon Kedia, who addressed the public with a speech about the importance of the border issue for Georgia."

Then reports were read by Pr. Iv. Javakhishvili and Gen. Giorgi Odishelidze.

The audience rewarded the speakers with loud applause".¹⁰

Unfortunately, the newspaper, despite its promise, did not publish the contents of the reports read at this session.

3.2. Preparations for new elections

An important event in the political life of Georgia at the beginning of 1921 was the creation of the Democratic Party of Georgia, which was joined by non-socialist democratic parties. The unification of the parties was preceded by serious preparatory work. On December 7, 1920, representatives of the main committees of the National-Democratic, National Landowners' and Radical-Democratic Peasants' Parties (K. Tkavadze, G. Veshapeli, L. Japaridze, Al. Asatiani, Sh. Karumidze, Sp. Kedia) agreed on the terms of unification. The main protocol of the agreement emphasized that "The unification of all non-socialist, democratic parties and unions into one party is necessary and dictated by the domestic and foreign situation of the republic."

The united party was to be legally and practically based on the principles set out in the program of the National Democratic Party. This program was to be revised and supplemented in line with new realities at a general unifying conference.

The United Conference of Non-Socialist Parties was held in Tbilisi on January 23-27, 1921. The conference was attended by 220 delegates, of whom 150 represented the National Democratic Party, 50 the National Party, 15 the Radical Democrats, and 5 the Union of Non-Party citizens. So far, there is no information on whether Ivane Javakhishvili participated in this union or not.

The Union of Non-Socialist Parties was created to participate in the elections to the Georgian Parliament, which were to be held in the fall of 1921 after the adoption of the Georgian Constitution. The attack on Georgia by Soviet Russia, the occupation of Georgia, and the Sovietization of Georgia led to a different course of events. Ivane Javakhishvili remained in Georgia to defend the Georgian University he had founded.

Conclusion

Ivane Javakhishvili adhered to liberal nationalist ideals, aiming to establish an independent and democratic Georgian state. He was willing to collaborate with any Georgian political party that shared this objective. However, he disapproved of partisan mindsets and inter-party conflicts.

¹⁰ Public meeting on borders - Newspaper "Sakartveli", 5 Mariamobistve 1919. N 165, p.1

During the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921), Ivane Javakhishvili found a political organization that stood above party conflicts and aimed to contribute to the construction of an independent democratic state through its scientific and analytical activities. This was the Union of Non-Party (Independents) Citizens.

Following the Soviet occupation of Georgia, a totalitarian regime was established, and the Communist Party systematically dismantled all other political organizations. Amid these challenging times, Ivane Javakhishvili worked tirelessly to safeguard the autonomy of the Georgian University, viewing it as a cornerstone for the eventual restoration of Georgia's state sovereignty.

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