

From War to Peace: The Literary Life of Georgia after the Second World War

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After the Second World War, political changes occurred in the Soviet Union. In 1953 Joseph Stalin—originally Georgian and the incarnate symbol of the country—died, and soon the much-talked-about Twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Nikita Khrushchev followed in 1956. In Georgia, Khrushchev's speech against Stalin was followed by serious political unrest that ended with the tragic events of March 9th, 1956. It is still unclear whether this was a political event or demonstration of insulted national pride. Soon after that, the Khrushchev Thaw (Russian: Ottepel) occurred throughout the Soviet Union. The literary process during the Thaw yielded quite a different picture compared to the previous decades of Soviet life. Under the conditions of political liberalization, various tendencies were noticed in Georgian literary space: on the one hand, there was an obvious nostalgia for Stalin, and on the other hand there was the growth of a specific model of Neo-Realism and, of no less importance, the rise of women's writing.

Keywords: literature and ideology / Georgian literature / World War II / Khrushchev thaw / Soviet Union

Modifications of the Soviet regime

Georgian literature before the Second World War was by no means flourishing. As a result of the political purges of the 1930s conducted by Soviet government, the leading Georgian writers were eliminated. Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde, which had found itself in antagonism with the ideological principles of the Soviet dictatorship from the outset, ceased to exist.¹ This current of

¹ Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde as two literary styles or variants were formed in the first half of the twentieth century, during the modernist period. With its depth and subjectivism, the openness of its thinking, and the transgression of stylistic boundaries, Georgian Modernism constituted a threat to the Soviet ideological

literature that rejected Socialist Realism was based on the progressive Western spirit and modernist philosophy (intuitivism, Freudianism, pragmatism, and neo-positivism). However, the traditional synthesis of national values with Western tendencies was particularly observable in the establishment of the idea of Georgian renewal, which was the sign of a desire to change reality. Accompanied by literature with the status of a bearer of culture, new interpretations of national identity became “associated with awareness of the national cultural image against the background of the inevitable process of Europeanization—in order to acquire a strong position with regard to European culture” (Tsipuria, “Modernistuli” 11). These ideas were intractable for Soviet ideologists. With the help of the aggressive efforts of the authorities, a “new Soviet canon emerged to replace the universal one” (Ratiani 161). The Soviet literary canon soon replaced the national one, and Georgian literature was distanced from Western European literary space.

During the Second World War, the generalized Soviet mental correlate of *Homo sovieticus* was finally formed: the “Great Patriotic War” served as a prop of the dictatorship. The concept “I” had long since been replaced by the concept “We,” which was the most significant achievement of the policy of equality and collectivism declared in the Soviet Union. During the war, the speech of Soviet journalism proved to be the most successful functional and stylistic implementation of Soviet discourse. Social and political journalism proceeding from its genre specificity fully fit the process of the ideology; however, in a discourse of this type two different layers can be distinguished:

a) The official press as a manifestation of the position of Soviet ideologists; this included the leading newspapers (*Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Komunisti*, etc.) as well as journals in which popular and scholarly articles were controlled, and radio reports (one need only recall the well-known timbre and dramatic texts of Yuri Levitan, a Soviet radio announcer during the Second World War);² and

b) Artistically refined patriotic texts of authoritative writers expressing sincere support for the overall ethnic problem.

system, but according to Bela Tsipuria (“Modernistuli” 262) the Georgian Avant-Garde created no less a threat to Soviet cultural policy, despite the fact that it rejected the entire system of spiritual problems and existential relations. Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde, as forms of anti-Soviet discourse, expressed the anti-Soviet pathos of artists distinguished by their free ideological position. For more details, see also Tsipuria (“Modernizmi”) and Lomidze (“Modernizmi” and “Simbolizmi”).

² Yuri Levitan was the primary Soviet radio announcer during and after the Second World War. He announced all major international events from the 1940s to the 1960s.

In contrast to these two layers, epistolary texts (i.e., writers' personal records and private correspondence) were one of the rare examples in which the split was felt between the official stance and the real situation. Owing to the experience of general physical threat, from 1941 to 1945 anti-Soviet discourse, which was well shaped in the 1930s, was present only in the underground, and it also acquired a relatively fragmentary character. Even a desire to single out the identities of Soviet peoples was regarded as treason: the wartime film directors were forced to introduce a multiethnic gallery of characters into their films, which further intensified the pathos of universal consolidation and harmonious coexistence, much more significant than national self-determination. Invocations of the common social threat and consolidation further refuted the necessity of determining identities: the acute issue of ethnic identity fell into oblivion for a long period.

Moreover, the dictatorship distorted the interpretation of the texts by classic Georgian writers. During the war, one can observe that the process of returning to the works of classic nineteenth-century Georgian writers such as Ilia Chavchavadze (1837–1907), Akaki Tsereteli (1840–1915), Aleksandre Qazbegi (1848–1893), and Vazha-Pshavela (1861–1915) was neglected against the background of post-revolutionary passions, and, when they were used as a reference, they were reinterpreted against the grain of new revolutionary thought. This was a deliberate ideological maneuver: Soviet criticism “diligently” rewrote the strategies of romantic, realist, and even modernist classical texts that had previously served as a cultural-literary reference for Georgian national identity, and it reduced the issue of ethnic identity to the level of education. This spirit immediately spread to visual art (theatre, cinema, and painting), resulting in narrative patterns that were “modernized” according to the Soviet pattern in both literary texts and visual art. Films such as *Otaraant Qvrivi* (*Otar's Widow*) and *Glakhis Naambobi* (*The Story of a Beggar*) are perfect examples of this reduction. Both examples are especially noteworthy because both movies are adaptations of texts written by the aforementioned Chavchavadze, a representative of critical realism. However, even when visual art did not draw on the preceding literary text, during the Second World War Soviet power was assisted by scriptwriters and playwrights that devoted special attention to the heroism of the Soviet people, or entertained audiences with light naive comedies.

Against this background, it was obvious that every step against the flow was punished severely. In 1942 the young but already well-known writer Kote Khimshiashvili was shot for participating in an

anti-Soviet conspiracy. Twenty promising Georgians were shot along with him. The incident is known as the Samanelebi Case. At the beginning of the Second World War, an anti-Soviet underground organization called Samani was established; the organization brought together young nationalists and its aim was to overthrow the Soviet regime and to restore the independence of Georgia and private property in Georgia.

The Second World War gave rise to young authors and poets such as Lado Asatiani (1917–1943), Alexandre Sajaia (1916–1944), and Mirza Gelovani (1917–1944). All of them died before the end of the Second World War. Their verses were mostly dedicated to their motherland or beloved Tbilisi, to friendship, or to love and beauty. Their poetry thus changed the point of view of the lyrical narrator from the distant and often pathetic address adopted in Soviet poetry of the time to an intimate conversation with the reader. Viewed from this perspective, this was a new phenomenon, in a way comparable to the epistolary texts and their anti-Soviet (i.e., anti-official) stance, despite the fact that Asatiani's, Sajaia's and Gelovani's poetry, in fact, merges styles from the nineteenth century; namely, both realism and romanticism. Their mixture therefore complements the poetry of an older generation that was still present, especially in Galaktion Tabidze (1891–1959) and Giorgi Leonidze (1900–1966).

After the war, the political changes occurred in the Soviet Union. The guns fell silent, and in 1953 Joseph Stalin—the incarnate symbol of the country—died. Soon the much-talked-about Twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union followed (1956). In a speech by the leader of the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, the following was declared:

Comrades, we must decisively abolish the cult of the individual, once and for all; we must draw the proper conclusions concerning both ideological-theoretical and practical work.

It is necessary for this purpose:

First, in a Bolshevik manner to condemn and to eradicate the cult of the individual as alien to Marxism–Leninism and not consonant with the principles of party leadership and the norms of party life, and to inexorably fight all attempts at bringing back this practice in one form or another.

To return to and actually practice in all our ideological work the most important theses of Marxist–Leninist science about the people as the creator of history and as the creator of all material and spiritual good of humanity, about the decisive role of the Marxist party in the revolutionary fight for the transformation of society, about the victory of communism.

In this connection we will be forced to do much work in order to critically examine from the Marxist–Leninist viewpoint and to correct the widespread erroneous views connected with the cult of the individual in the spheres of history, philosophy, economics, and other sciences, as well as in literature and the fine arts. . . .

Second, to systematically and consistently continue the work done by the party's central committee during the last years, work characterized by minute observation in all party organizations, from the bottom to the top, of the Leninist principles of party leadership, characterized, above all, by the main principle of collective leadership

Third, to completely restore the Leninist principles of Soviet socialist democracy, expressed in the constitution of the Soviet Union, to fight willfulness of individuals abusing their power. (XX s"yezd KPSS 3–5)³

This was a modification of the Soviet regime, stressing Stalin's political and personal despotism.

Social and cultural reaction to the political transfiguration of Soviet government

In Georgia the Twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party was followed by serious political unrest that resulted in several casualties in the events of March 9th, 1956. It is still unclear whether the unrest spread from a clear political position, or if it was a demonstration of insulted national pride.

Criticism of Stalin's cult had gained unexpected dimensions. Khrushchev substantially emphasized Stalin's nationality, although it was widely known that Georgia was terribly affected by political repressions. Georgians perceived Khrushchev's speech as insult to the Georgian nation, inasmuch as Stalin was a native Georgian, and starting on March 3rd, 1956 protest marches began in Tbilisi, organized by Georgian students. On March 7th the number of participants in the protest rallies exceeded several thousand. Slogans concerning Georgia's independence also emerged. Some young poets publicly read newly composed poems dedicated to Stalin, emphasizing his best national characteristics. In a strange way, Stalin's name was linked with the idea of Georgian independence. Meanwhile, the situation was getting out of hand, and the government decided to use force against the demonstrators. On the night of March 9th, the Soviet Army killed more than 150

³ Translated by Irene Kujtsia.

young people and drowned more of them. The exact number of dead is still unknown. According to various sources, the number of casualties ranged from one hundred to one thousand people (Verulava). Soon after, Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1939–1993)⁴ and Merab Kostava (1939–1989), members of the illegal anti-Soviet group, protested against the Soviet regime. On December 15th, 1956, the Security Committee detained all the members of the illegal group. It is possible to characterize the March 1956 events as the first open rebellion against the Soviet regime in Georgia: in the early 1960s this energy was transformed into the Georgian dissident movement, led in particular by Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, Zurab Chavchavadze (1953–1989), and Giorgi Tchanturia (1959–1994).

Soon after, in the mid-1950s, the Khrushchev Thaw (Russian: *Otтеpel*)⁵ began throughout the Soviet Union; the sound of guns was replaced by influence from the West.

The literary processes during the Thaw also present quite a different picture compared to the previous decades of Soviet life. Under liberalization, various tendencies can be noticed: on the one hand, authors following Soviet ideology felt the need to reevaluate their own texts (which in individual cases even led to tragic results), and on the other hand, after an interval of almost thirty years, the influence of Western literary trends grew markedly. The literary life of the Soviet countries, including Georgia, moved to a qualitatively new stage. Against the background of the painful experience of intellectual terror, repressions, fighting, controversies, and fear under the Communist regime, even a slight parting of the Iron Curtain had a significant influence on the cultural and literary life of this artificially constructed country. Whereas the world beyond the Iron Curtain found its way into the homes of Soviet leaders in the form of Marlboro cigarettes and other imported wares, literature was given the opportunity to “glance” at Western trends and conceptions. Inside the Soviet Union, the influence of

⁴ Gamsakhurdia was the first president of Georgia (1991–1993), elected after its political independence.

⁵ Khrushchev’s Thaw refers to the relative liberalization of the USSR’s internal policy (de-Stalinization) and external policy (based on the principle of peaceful coexistence) in the late 1950s and in the first half of the 1960s. The term arose in association with Ilya Ehrenburg’s 1954 novel *Otтеpel* (The Thaw). However, the party leadership and Khrushchev himself condemned the new trends in literature and art, declaring them to be a “perversion” of Soviet reality, formalism, and imitation of the bourgeois culture of the West (Orlov et al. 376–377). At the end of 1960s, the Thaw was exhausted.

Western literary tendencies increased openly, invading Soviet territory with Hemingway themes,⁶ as well as with Neo-Realistic experiments, accompanied by romantic dreams of friendship, sincerity, refined relations, and a desire for freedom (Ratiani 176).

The questions to be answered are as follows: How much did Soviet Neo-Realism, as developed in the literatures of Soviet countries, resemble Italian and, in general, European Neo-Realism? How strictly was reality reflected in it? Was the contrasting play of realistic chiar-oscuro perceptible?

Discussion about Neo-Realism in the Soviet Union was started in the 1920s by Yevgeny Zamyatin. In doing so, he tried to establish his own style of literary experiments. Interpretation of the term by Zamyatin was based on the reconciliation of the aesthetics of Realism with the aesthetics of Romanticism and Modernism, and especially with the aesthetics of Surrealism.⁷ Despite the fact that the majority of Russian scholars still recognize the term Neo-Realism in the way it was established by Zamyatin and although they admit its effectiveness for Russian literature of the 1920s, it seems that the definition of the term, based only on an aesthetic criterion, was insufficient to become more widespread. This was possible only later, when Neo-Realism became connected with a concrete political phenomenon: the Second World War and the life of the postwar community.

It is widely known that Italian and European Neo-Realism in cinema and literature reflected the difficult living conditions of ordinary people from the political and social viewpoint in post-fascist European society. Special significance was given to worthy behavior and proper life principles. Against this background, great attention was attached to details and nuances, which facilitated identifying the narrated story with the realism of life after the Second World War, and at first glance simple life values became important: the humanism, morality, kindness, and sincerity of human relationships (cf. Pacifici; Chiaromonte). Soviet Neo-Realism was an interesting variant of European Neo-Realism (Ratiani 177): Soviet power, unlike defeated fascism, was modified, but still continued to exist. It was a reality that offered to restore and observe the “Leninist principles” within society, thereby hindering one of the main principles

⁶ The first book by Hemingway published in the Soviet Union (in 1935) was *The Sun also Rises*; soon after, other works of his were translated.

⁷ Zamyatin's concept of Neo-Realism was manifested in lectures and articles from 1918 to the 1920s: “Sovremennaja russkaja literatura” (“Modern Russian Literature”), “O sintetizme” (“Syntheticism”), “O literature, revoljutsii i entropii” (“Literature, Revolution, and Entropy”), “Ob jazike” (“Language”), and so on.

of Neo-Realism: realization of the just uprising of an individual against ideological violence and moral humiliation. Nevertheless, in the literary model of Neo-Realism, Soviet writers intuitively observed the perspective of the encounter of postwar Soviet literature with the literatures of the non-Soviet European countries. An adaptation of the Western model was nevertheless needed. Soviet Neo-Realism moved away from political themes and was shaped into thoughtful literature distanced from ideology, which was imbued with anticipation and the feeling of freedom, rather than searching for and analyzing its real results.⁸ Distance from ideology gave it an opportunity to exist, whereas the change of the engine of the ideological machine allowed it to orient itself toward human problems and to react to actual deep, often unhealed wounds. Perhaps, this is the charm of Neo-Realism, which, unlike the classical Realism of the nineteenth century, is able to exist with almost equal effectiveness under the conditions of dissimilar political and social systems.

If one accepts the definition above, it is possible to define Guram Rcheulishvili (1934–1960), Archil Sulakauri (1927–1997), and Erlom Akhvlediani (1933–2012) as the main representatives of Georgian Neo-Realist prose at the end of the 1950s. Their work can be regarded as a successful attempt to return from the isolation of Soviet literature to the international literary process, accomplished after slightly less than thirty years from the destruction of Georgian Modernism. Guram Rcheulishvili's prose is proof of the fundamental changes of literary subjects and style, by means of which the writer completely disowns the cultural-stylistic model of *Homo sovieticus* and is directed toward conceptual, emotional, and representational freedom. His legacy includes numerous brilliant stories and novellas, such as *Bizia kotes shemodgoma* (*Uncle Kote's Autumn*), *Sikvaruli martis tveshi* (*Love in March*), *Neli tango* (*The Slow Tango*), and *Alaverdoba*, which in a realistic manner of vision and laconic style of narration depict postwar cities and people that feel sadness and pain, tackle everyday monotony and small problems, adhere to high moral principles and civil values, and at the same time are full of love, nostalgia, and an insatiable desire to support one another. For Rcheulishvili the world is built on the Neo-Realistic play of chiaroscuro.⁹ It should be noted that, despite introducing a new

⁸ A clear example is the fact that the events in Georgia on March 9th, 1956 in fact did not find adequate reflection in Georgian literature and produced only a dull echo in a few texts.

⁹ Chiaroscuro, a term that derives from painting, may be used in analyzing various literary forms involving the contrast of light and darkness, which is characteristic for Neo-Realistic art and fiction.

narrative strategy, Rcheulishvili does not reject the characteristics of Georgian classical narrative, manifested in the traditionally conceived reflection of the Georgian character and anguish. Instead, his works harmoniously combine the classical narrative with the modern narrative technique (see Tsereteli; Asatiani; Kvachantiradze; Jaliashvili). In the opinion of Georgian literary history, despite his early death Rcheulishvili thus became one of the most influential authors in modern Georgian literature.

The first stories by Archil Sulakauri—*T'alghebi nap'irisk'en miists'rapian* (*Waves Strive for the Shore*), *Ts'q'aldidoba* (*The Flood*), *Mt'redebi* (*Pigeons*), and *Bich'i da dzaghli* (*A Boy and a Dog*)—are also filled with the Neo-Realistic mood. Despite the vicinity of the war, people are gradually returning to leading a normal life and, along with this, to the world of human feelings, frozen in the cold of the war, or perhaps thawed by the postwar tears: feelings of love, expectations, excitement, and hopes. However, somewhere, as a necessary texture, there is always a memory—an open wound, trace, or grief that cannot be cured by time. A contemporary of Guram Rcheulishvili and Archil Sulakauri, Erlom Akhvlediani is also oriented toward the Western literary standard. The writer boldly leads the Georgian reader, still having the Soviet mentality, into the unusual and deep layers of imagination. Later Erlom Akhvlediani's book *Vano da Nik'o* (*Vano and Niko*), which shattered the stereotypes of the worldview, acquired a landmark importance for the history of Georgian literature (Ratiani 178).

Nodar Dumbadze (1928–1984) also began his literary career within the Neo-Realistic mood, although later he resorted to the format of other literary schools as well. In 1960 the writer's Neo-Realistic novel *Me, Bebia, Ilik'o da Ilarioni* (*I, Grandmother, Iliko, and Ilarion*) created a furor. This, at first glance, inoffensive, humorous text, narrating of the life of a Georgian village during and after the Second World War and of kind, often naive adventures of its inhabitants, is tinged with great human sadness. Laughter is again a protective mask; behind the mask the profound sadness of people and their unsolved problems are covered: the parentless existence of a little boy (a result of the war), pain and emptiness, and the inability and incapability of people to prevent the tragedy of the war. Behind the sad laughter the author demands answers to global questions: Why is war necessary? Why wars are waged? Why do people die in wars? What kind of imprint does a war leave on the life of a new generation? Nodar Dumbadze's humor mixed with sadness successfully moved into several other of his texts as well; for example, into his next novel *Me vkhedav mzes* (*I See the Sun*).

The literary model of Soviet Neo-Realism could be considered one of the main markers of current and future challenges in the literary life of Georgia.

Establishment of modern Georgian literature

The main landmark of the metamorphosis of the time and its concepts as well as that of the boundary of the decades (the 1950s and 1960s) is a history of a death. In 1959 a significant stage of the history of Georgian poetry of the twentieth century, distinguished by the fatal clash of Soviet dictatorship and genuine poetry, ended in a tragedy. Galaktion Tabidze, who had a negative attitude toward Soviet power from the outset, committed suicide. Discussing one of Tabidze's poems, Teimuraz Doiashvili notes:

The poem *1920*, written a few days before Sovietization, might have proved dangerous for the poet. Despite its intimate-lyrical character, the poem evidently contains a negative characterization of the new, post-revolutionary time: we are dealing not with a time of renewal—the great revolution that should have brought the desired freedom to the people, but a “horrible time”—an “ignorant century”, when the “curse of the time” on behalf of social equality destroys people physically and spiritually. (Doiashvili 110–111)

Galaktion Tabidze's suicide divided not only the period, but also the history of Georgian literature. Georgian poetry and literary taste of the subsequent period, distinguished by large-scale thematic and stylistic transformations, was built either in harmony with or in opposition to Tabidze's poetry. Exactly in this syncope, or gap in time, the outlines of modern Georgian literature assumed shape. At the beginning of the 1960s, Georgian literature, having already passed through the stages of acute opposition with the ideological regime, struggle, liquidation, and renewal, was looking toward new horizons. Although the regime was still strong, literature itself was ready for a reconstruction.

Every literary period is a result of a certain preliminary, often long, cultural preparation. Hence, the history of contemporary Georgian literature should be counted from the end of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, the period when Georgian literature was largely affected by thematic and stylistic innovations of landmark importance. However, the literature of the second half of the twentieth century, despite its different format, is closely intertwined not only with the Georgian literature of the first half of the same century, but also with the Georgian lit-

erary tradition of the previous periods. Georgian poets of the new wave were in close contact with remarkable, still living and active Georgian poets of the older generation—Giorgi Leonidze (1900–1966) and Simon Chiqovani (1902–1966)—as well as with representatives of Georgian classical poetry. I share the viewpoint according to which

literature of the twentieth century is a manifestation of a single “long line” of heredity, where the traditions are traced back not only to the immediate predecessors, not only “beyond the generations” (e.g., beyond the generation of “fathers” to the generation of “grandfathers”), but often to the deep historical layers of culture (this became a stimulus for discovery of intertextuality as a phenomenon). . . . *Heredity lines, vectors of artistic interrelation* not only extend and go to the depth of the centuries, to the origin of culture, but are also divided. Division and branches of culture and its roots are manifested in the fact that the European literature of the twentieth century is traced back not only to its own European traditions (medieval cultural tradition in novels by Umberto Eco), but also to African traditions (Picasso’s cubism) and Oriental traditions (stories by Fazil Iscander). (Borev 461–462)

The Soviet machinery was also unable to oppose this tendency, the more so after the war, when even ordinary soldiers were given the opportunity to see European countries (many of them did not even return to the Soviet Union). The tendency of “heredity” and “division” little by little emerged in the already modified Soviet literary area. Coherence not only with Georgian, but also with non-Georgian, world literary, and cultural tradition is revealed by Georgian literature of the second half of the twentieth century, which gradually opened the circle formed by the regime, transforming it first into a spiral, and then into an open construction, in order to finally achieve freedom.

One of the outcomes of those processes was the rise of women’s writing. The first important author of women’s writing is Ana Kalandadze (1924–2008), who went through quite a thorny experience of relations with Soviet power. In addition to the fact that her poetic voice was distinguished by the innovativeness and progressiveness that were topical for the new period, the appearance of a talented female poet in the poetic arena, where women’s literature was in a marginal position, also had a significant gender loading. The work of Ana Kalandadze became one the earliest manifestations of the liberation of poetic discourse from Soviet political influence. By means of emotional, pensive verse, based on minimalist manner, Kalandadze’s poetry bears an organic resemblance to the visions of contemporary Western female poets. However, in Kalandadze’s poetry a woman’s vision is elegantly intertwined with

the traditional Georgian model of national consciousness—that is, with the system of Georgian historical, mythological, and cultural archetypes—due to which her poetry retains the form of an original poetic model (Ratiani 183). At the beginning of the 1960s and later in the 1960s and into the 1970s, the history of contemporary Georgian poetry—in the form of liberalized poetic discourse—consists of young poets such as Shota Chantladze, Otar Chiladze, Tamaz Chiladze, Mukhran Machavariani, Murman Lebanidze, Givi Gegechkori, Shota Nishnianidze, Archil Sulakauri, Taniel Chanturia, Vakhtang Javakhadze, Mikheil Kvlividze, Jansugh Charkviani, Emzar Kvitashvili, Rezo Amashukeli, and Moris Potskhishvili. This is an incomplete list of the poets of the 1960s in whose poetic texts the influence of Western literary fashion is clearly observable. The free poetic style increased, but at the same time it organically merged with the traditional Georgian poetic spirit. Patriotic and even anti-ideological themes were also manifested. The best example of this is a poetical cycle by Mukhran Machavariani (1929–2010) dedicated to the Georgian conspiracy in 1832.¹⁰ “Is Georgian a language only? / No, it is Georgian’s Religion! / God! / Fate!” declares Mukhran Machavariani to manifest that a sense of national identity, national values, and dignity still remained in the Soviet Republic of Georgia.

The works of young poets were published in leading newspapers and magazines; they published poetry collections and offered Georgian readers various poetic visions and rhymes, and semantic and formal innovations. However, this relatively free, pro-Western model of discourse, equally established in Georgian poetry and prose, proved to be a result of the brief political Thaw. Starting in the 1970s the Thaw became dangerous, and the instinct of banning foreign influences was again reactivated—the aggression of the Soviet government intensified toward any innovation, which, on the one hand, acquired an extremely artificial character, and on the other, violated the elementary norms of communication. As a result, writers as some of the most qualified users of information were suffering from a lack of information. This period held in a political grip gained the status of a period of stagnation, and Georgian literature patiently started searching for alternative means of representation.

¹⁰ In 1832, Georgian nobles united against Russian Tsarism, but the conspiracy was betrayed and all the members of the conspiracy were punished by the Russian emperor.

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Med vojno in mirom: gruzijski literarni prostor po drugi svetovni vojni

Ključne besede: literatura in ideologija / gruzijska književnost / druga svetovna vojna / odjuga / Sovjetska zveza

Po drugi svetovni vojni je v Sovjetski zvezi prišlo do večjih političnih sprememb. Josif Stalin – po rodu Gruzijec in utelešeni simbol te dežele – je leta 1953 umrl, temu pa je leta 1956 sledila razvpita dvajseta skupščina sovjetske Komunistične partije, tedaj že pod vodstvom Nikite Hruščeva. Govor Hruščeva, uperjen proti Stalinu in njegovemu kultu, je v Gruziji sprožil velike politične nemire, v zvezi s katerimi še vedno ni povsem jasno, ali je šlo za izkaz politične opozicije sovjetskemu režimu ali za izbruh užaljenega narodnega ponosa. Nedolgo zatem je v Sovjetski zvezi zavladovalo obdobje t. i. Hruščeve otoplitve. V tem obdobju je bil gruzijski književni razvoj zaznamovan s precej drugačnimi tokovi od tistih, ki so prevladovali v prejšnjih desetletjih. V obdobju politične liberalizacije je v gruzijskem literarnem prostoru mogoče zaznati različne težnje: na eni strani nostalgijo po Stalinu, na drugi strani razmah specifičnega modela neorealizma in – kar je vsaj enako pomembno – razmah pisanja ženskih avtoric.

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