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The Soviet Legacy in Contemporary Georgia:
A Psycho traumatological Perspective

"Stalin will not return to Gori, but temporarily."

"Stalin will not return to Gori, but temporarily." – with such a clearly Freudian slip began the news broadcast on December 14, 2013 by a reporter for one of the most popular TV channels in Georgia. She in fact intended to say that Stalin's statue would not be re-erected[1] on December 21st (Stalin's birthday), and that it would happen later, since the installation was postponed. But instead of a clear formulation, she articulated a message, which unconsciously mirrored an existing split within Georgian society.

In the period from December 2012 to December 2013, Stalin's sculpture became a symbol of antinomy between different fragments of the Georgian population, well illustrated by the fluctuations between re-installations and de-installations and/or the defamation of the re-installed statues in the different villages and cities of Georgia[2]. The sensitivity of the issue is confirmed by the fact that in response to the question "What do you think about Stalin and the Patriarch's evaluation of him?"[3] which was asked by media representatives to the seven candidates of the October 2013 presidential elections, four articulated double messages ("He is good, but he is bad" type formulations), while three candidates refused to answer the question under one pretext or another.

The fact that fluctuations (between re-installations and de-installations of the Stalin's sculptures) took place in this particular period could be explained, by a number of political factors, which remain outside the topic of the current discussion, but also by the peculiar emotional atmosphere triggered by the so-called "prison scandal"[4] which preceded the parliamentary elections and awoke in the population feelings of humiliation, dehumanization, helplessness and rage – triggering societal trauma associated with a totalitarian period, which exists and is at the same time denied within Georgian society.

This article discusses the impact of *totalitarian trauma* on Georgian society as a *large group*[5]. The conceptual framework of the paper is based on the psychodynamic research on individual development of Melanie Klein and Michael Sebek and the studies of small and large group processes by Vamik Volkan, Wilfred Bion and Earl Hopper.

In order to shed light onto societal dynamics resulting from traumatic events, the first part of the article analyzes the impact of totalitarian trauma on an intra-psychic level; further, the article focuses on the implications of totalitarian trauma on a societal level, the phenomenon preventing society from overcoming totalitarian trauma – the inability to authentically mourn is discussed; while the following section focuses on the mechanisms facilitating the denial of totalitarian trauma by the Georgian society. The last section analyzes the consequences of unprocessed totalitarian trauma and its impact on the current socio-political life of the country.

Totalitarian Trauma at an Intra-psychic Level

From a psychotraumatological perspective totalitarian society could be described as a dynamic interaction between three key stakeholders: "Victim(s)", "Aggressor(s)" and "Bystander(s)"[6]. An interaction which I would suggest calling "*a totalitarian situation.*" The three roles of the *totalitarian situation* often flow into one another. Victimization of "Victim" by "Aggressor" does not concern only the two of them. It is also a powerful message for the "Bystander," via which the external *totalitarian object* (Sebek, 1996) is "depositing" himself into the selves (of "Bystanders") who experience a feeling of helplessness triggered by witnessing repressions. To explore a particular totalitarian situation, all three subjects should be studied. Below are the findings of research (Javakhishvili, 2011), which uses in-depth interviews with the family members of the repressed ("Victims")[7] to shed some light on the processes of the *internalization of totalitarian object* (Sebek, 1996).

The identity formation of the children of repressed people was influenced by peculiar conditions. Namely, the label "son/daughter of the People's Enemy" put on them immediately following the repression of a parent was facilitating feelings of shame and guilt as well as the division of the inner (psychic) and outer worlds into *"good" and "bad" objects*[8]. On a phenomenological level, this division was experienced by a child as an existential reflection, in order to determine one's own position between "Good" and "Bad", i.e. one of the respondents stated: "I had to reflect on this when I was 11: as the society was divided, I was wondering where I stood: whether I live in enemy's family or proper family." If a child was so lucky that one of the parents (most often the mother) was not repressed, she was usually devastated to such an extent that the child perceived her as helpless, often emotionally numbed and detached (depressive position), or by contrast too emotional and over-controlling (anxiety/paranoid position). Both of these examples lead to

attachment difficulties among children. One of the coping strategies among the respondents was full acceptance of the "rules of the game" of the system, phenomenologically experienced as the desire "to be like others". I.e., one of the respondents whose father was repressed claimed during the interview: "I was standing as a guard of honor at Stalin's statue. It's bizarre, but everybody were there, so I wanted to be there as well." This was preventing the development of creativity and critical thinking and provoking a willingness to participate in the "full package" of "Soviet fabric" – starting with becoming "young Leninists", then moving to the "ranks of pioneers," and then to "Komsomol"[9]. In certain cases, daughters and sons of the repressed were trying to become members of the Communist Party and/or enter the secret police – though the attitude towards it was often negative i.e., according to the one respondent: "My attitude towards communist party – fully negative. But I really wanted to be in it, because this was giving me a possibility for advancement." The choice of a life partner was also influenced by trauma – i.e. some respondents of the study reported marrying representatives of the regime; out of those, some respondents reported the re-enactment of the victim-aggressor interaction within these families, i.e. one of the respondents claimed:

"I always wonder how my grandmother married my grandfather. Her parents were killed by the regime while that my grandfather was serving: he was a criminal investigator. Most likely, she tried to be somehow affiliated with the regime…at home he was very violent."

The aforementioned conditions were preventing the children of the repressed from achieving their *developmental tasks*, especially the formation of the integrated personal structure and identity. Love towards the repressed parent, combined with the perception of him/her as a "People's enemy" and the associated conscious or unconscious rage and/or hate, as well as the absence of the parent and the depressive or paranoid-schizoid condition of an unrepressed parent were hindering accomplishment of the identification task. At the same time, via instrumentalization of fear and "deposition"(Volkan, 2006) of the totalitarian object, the Soviet system was creating conditions for the substitution of the absent parent with the most "available" and powerful Father figure – Stalin himself (and here the fact that Stalin was an ethnic Georgian was facilitating identification) – or any authoritative figure in the social surrounding (teacher, caregiver, etc.) symbolizing the aggressor/regime. Double identification both with the victim and aggressor was taking place among children of the repressed, resulting in the traumatic split of their identity, which is well illustrated by the known fact that many of the children of the repressed were crying with similar emotion both when they learned about the death of their repressed parent and of the death of Stalin. Respondents

report that they were surprised and confused by their own reactions. From the psychodynamic point of view their reactions seem consistent as they indicate an internalized totalitarian object.

The regime was instrumentalizing not only it repressions of the "Victims" but the repressed ("Victims") themselves were instrumentalized to represent a possible "worst case scenario" for the "Bystanders" and thus facilitated obedience to the regime and the internalization of the totalitarian object on a larger societal scale. Helplessness and fear triggered among "Bystanders" due to witnessing repressions was facilitative of their identification with the victim; at the same time, tolerating brutalities they witnessed was facilitative of their identification with the aggressor. As a result, "Bystanders" "wore" both (victim and aggressor) identities. This explains how easy these three roles flowed into one another – i.e. working for the regime did not help people to avoid repressions and thus "aggressors" were becoming victims themselves; "bystanders" had to often "earn" their right to stay apart from the repressions via voting or signing this or that document legitimizing the repression of other persons/groups, which was turning them into "aggressors" as well; if they would not agree/sign/vote – they were risking to be victimized as well. This cycle of violence was engaging all the three subjects of the totalitarian triangle.

Unmourned Totalitarian Trauma in Georgia

The traumatising potential of a stressor is mediated by two types of factors: scale and strength of the stressor itself (whether it is associated with violence or not, or whether it causes death or not) and the condition/maturity of the subject (individual/family/community/society as a large group) that is affected by the stressor (Shawn P. Cahill, 2007).

Georgia as a subject, at the moment of Sovietisation, was extremely vulnerable and immature due to the long-term experience of Russian colonization, and a very brief experience of statehood (from declaring independence in 1918 to annexation by the Red army in 1921). As of the system of stressors affecting country during the Soviet period, it is comparable with those causing *Complex trauma (*Herman*, 1992)*: repetitive, prolonged, evolving direct physical and/or psychological harm, unpredictable and at the same time inescapable. All three categories of traumatising stressors (Hopper, 2000) were present in the Soviet period:

* *Everyday life strains*, such as ongoing totalitarian control and fears related to it – i.e. fear to express a different opinion, to be denounced by ones

neighbour, to be blamed for "subversive" activity (which was enough to be arrested), etc.; It is interesting to note that one of the most common warnings against doing something, used in Georgia in the Soviet period, (often as a joke) was "dagicheren"/"dagvicheren," meaning "you'll be arrested"/"we'll be arrested."

* *Cumulative stressors*, such as small scale – family or close community level – incidents caused by the regime, such as the arrests of family members, attending interrogations, "wearing" the stigma of the "People's enemy's family member," somatic illness facilitated by trauma and the inability to obtain proper treatment due to poverty, etc.;

* *Catastrophic stressors*, such as mass killings, which affected all levels of society. Here we can list Russian annexation in 1921, the suppression of the rebellion against Russian annexation in 1924, the shooting of young demonstrators protesting against the condemnation of Stalin's cult by N. Khrushchev in 1956, the violent dispersal of the peaceful assembly demanding independence from Russia on 9th of April, 1989.

Due to the complexity of the system of stressors, totalitarian trauma in Georgia (as elsewhere) resulted in multiple losses – of security, dignity, strength, self-esteem, certainty, control over ones own life, as well as the loss of the objects in which a person or group invested considerable emotions – starting from loved ones and ending with possessions.

Overcoming the trauma of loss requires a process of *mourning*, which allows one to deal with the emotions related to loss, find explanation and put meaning in what has happened, facilitate an adequate appreciation of what has been lost, and integrate the psychic representations of their most valued aspects into one's own self (Volkan, 2006, Robert A. Neimeyer, 2002, James Gillies, 2006). Via this internal work, a new post-traumatic identity develops allowing *post-traumatic growth (Alex P. Linley, 2011)*. This has the effect of freeing societal energy from its attachment to the past (totalitarian object), allowing it to enter a new constructive *object-relationships* and regard the *Reality Principle(Freud, 1961)*. According to Hopper, authentic mourning "leads to more satisfactory social adjustment […] to the prevailing social, cultural and political conditions, allowing for attempts to change those conditions that are felt to be unacceptable, or in other words, to good citizenship"(Hopper, 2000, p.30).

If the normal process of mourning is hindered due to this or that reason, and a large group is not able to mourn, it develops traumatic identity and enters a state described by Volkan as "perennial mourner" causing regression to the less complex stages of development (Volkan, 2006). Unmourned trauma has a tendency to transmit from generation to generation via different

narratives, prevailing basic assumptions and discourses, patterns of communication and interactions within the group, causing a new cycle of traumatization. This drives large groups to a psychotic state of *exaggerated narcissism* (Vamik D. Volkan, 2009, Volkan, 2004) and disregard of the *Reality principle*, hinders its development, and increases risks of such catastrophic consequences as inter-ethnic conflicts and wars. According to Bion, within the group which has lost effective contact with reality there develops "a group mentality that has such a culture that the individual, despite his or her sophisticated and mature skills, can be caused to regress to and be temporarily caught up in primitive splitting and projective identification, depersonalization, and infantile regression"(Bion, 1961, p. 94).

In large groups there are both conscious and unconscious ways to mourn trauma. Mourning could involve different levels/spheres of societal life: a) erecting of monuments symbolizing loss, b) rethinking the past with an intention to explain and put meaning in it, c) implementing a restorative justice approach, etc.(Volkan, 2006).

In the Soviet epoch, mourning grief related to totalitarian trauma was not possible in Georgia, as it would interfere with the survival need. After regaining independence, the country again failed to mourn totalitarian trauma since it was denied. As of traumatic events that took place in the recent history of Georgia, the societal responses to them turned into what Hopper refers to as *pseudo-mourning* (Hopper, 2003) which prevents authentic mourning and thus hinders the processing/overcoming of traumatic experience. Hopper distinguishes three types of pseudo-mourning: *Sentimental, Triumphant and Revengeful*. We can easily track these patterns in Georgia.

If we take as an example, April 9, 1989, the violent events of that day 21 persons killed, among whom majority were young women, a large number of demonstrators dispersed in a violent way – using neuro-paralytic gas and spades, the Russian military in the streets in the aftermath of the violence, etc.] facilitated the victimization of Georgian society as a large group (perception of own self as a Victim), which complicated the process of grief. Mourning went on in a prolonged, ritualized and dramatic way: i.e. widely broadcasted sentimental-pathetic song "Give Tulips to One Another" composed following the event and sang together by the country's pop singers; a large number of people who were approaching hospitals due to feeling intoxicated by the neuro-paralytic gas, while medical doctors were finding signs of intoxication only among a few of them (which was indicative of post-traumatic mental health conditions among the rest); ladies in black – personified mourners, following representatives of the National-Liberation movement everywhere. All of these fit the description of *Sentimental mourning* – "mas-

ochistic defence implying compulsive ritualized prolonged wailing and sentimental optimistic clichés"(Hopper, 2003, p.61). At a certain point, cumulated frustration turned sentimental mourning into rage, provoking *Revengeful (sadistic) mourning* implying the urge for revenge. This, in combination with shared victimization contributed to the escalation of inter-ethnic conflicts in the country. Two years later, on April 9, 1991 the government of Georgia signed a document of independence thus turned the trauma anniversary into triumph or *Triumphant mourning* described by Hopper – "manic defence against anxiety caused by loss, denial of grief accompanied often with the illusion of own omnipotence" (Hopper, 2003, p.61).

A clear example of *Triumphant mourning* is the huge meeting in Tbilisi celebrating the end of the 2008 war, accompanied by singing, dancing and recitation of verses organized by the government. This did not allow the population to mourn the losses caused by the war in an authentic way, including the most often addressed loss in Georgia – the loss of its territorial integrity. In case of territorial integrity, there is an oscillation between triumphant and sentimental mourning. I.e. before the triumphant celebration of 2008, there was a campaign "Remember Abkhazia"[10] which displayed posters with the phrase "Remember Abkhazia" in public spaces, which is another example of sentimental mourning.

The latest traumatic incident concerning the previously mentioned "Prison Scandal"[iv] was also followed by pseudo-mourning. The way the stakeholders deal with it prevents authentic mourning. Namely, ex-government officials (perceived "Aggressor") did not acknowledge their responsibility for what has happened. At the same time, the legal responses initiated by the new government are not transparent. This combination resulted in the mythologization of the issue: nowadays the perception of what happened by the "Bystanders" differs: some of them believe that videos are fake while others believe that they are authentic. Due to this, "Bystanders" are not able to acknowledge what has happened to the "Victims" (former prisoners). The former prisoners have attempted several times to assault the former government representatives whom they blame for the torture and the injustices, which they suffered. This is indicative of *Revengeful (sadistic) mourning* – implying embitterment, blaming, unwillingness to forgive, and therefore an inability to mourn and recover from what has happened.

Guilt, Shame, Rejection of the Past and the Non-acceptance of the Present: Mechanisms of Denial of Totalitarian Trauma

To master totalitarian trauma, a society needs to work on dealing with the past. Due to the fact that society was (and still remains) divided onto "Victims", "Aggressors" and "Bystanders", a process of rethinking the past and reconciliation is needed to cure and heal. Especially important is whether the perpetrator is willing to acknowledge his guilt to the victim, as well as bystanders' willingness to acknowledge to the victims that events, which caused their trauma, really happened (Garland& Hopper, 1980). At the same time, uncovering and assessing the negative practices that happen during totalitarian regimes (reports to the secret police, treachery, slander and other brutal activities) trigger a huge resistance for a number of reasons. First of all, it has legal implications, as it might cause a sanctioned persecution of the perpetrators. Not surprisingly, during the Georgian civil war, the KGB archive located in the underground section of the Georgian parliament building was fully burned, in spite of the fact that according to professionals, the location and the safety mechanisms of the archive should have assured its safety in case of fire. Another barrier preventing a reconsideration of the past is what Volkan would call "software factors"(Volkan, 2004) due to their purely psychological nature: these are the feelings of guilt and shame associated with what happened, among all the key subjects of the *totalitarian situation*: aggressors, victims and bystanders. Shame is a strong predictor for the development of the problematic post-traumatic conditions both at individual and collective levels (Herman, 1992). This, in turn, further hinders the capacity to mourn and deal with the past.

Totalitarian trauma and its impact is overlooked and denied in Georgia: the issue has never achieved a serious scale of public attention, and does not attract enough attention from academicians[11] and civil society, except for the small community of social and political scientists and civil activists who speak about the need for "De-Stalinisation." Discussion remains limited to a very narrow circle of those interested in the issue[12]. Denial reveals itself in the professional community of psychologists as well, where the issue is completely ignored. In spite of a developed tradition of psychological research, until now not a single psychological study in the country has been dedicated to the impact of totalitarian trauma, while it is well known from the professional literature, that:

"(in) societies that are treated inhumanely due to political systems, such as . . . totalitarian regimes in former communist countries... even when political and legal systems change and traumatizing elements within the society

are removed, individual and societal responses to the previously existing and devastating political system do not disappear overnight. Depending on the severity of the traumatizing events and how long they lasted, the influence of the shared trauma on the victimized group and their descendants may continue for decades"(Vamik D. Volkan, 2002, p.83).

Totalitarian trauma remains outside the attention of Georgian politicians as well: since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Georgian independence, no consistent efforts have been undertaken to build institutional mechanisms to deal with the past in the country. Along with the other causes, there were certain "software" factors preventing it, which I will try to uncover below.

Immediately after becoming independent, under the rule of President Gamsakhurdia, the country suffered two interethnic-political conflicts and a civil war, accompanied by multiple (economic, political, social) crises, which did not leave time for rethinking the past, since it put the population into a survival mode. The ethnic conflicts were also facilitated by totalitarian trauma, but that is not the topic of this article. The National Liberation Movement, which led the struggle for independence, was focused on liberation from Russia. Thus, the totalitarian dimension of the past was pushed away. It required self-reflection, lustration, application of restorative justice and reconciliation within the society rather than the externalization of the locus of control whereby the responsibility for ones own condition is shifted onto external forces only.

Edouard Shevardnadze, who replaced President Gamaskurdia as a result of the civil war, served the Soviet regime himself, and thus the reconsideration of the Soviet past was suspended for the whole period of his rule.

In 2003, before the Rose Revolution, one of the promises of the National Movement party was the introduction of certain institutional mechanisms for dealing with the past,[13] but the discourse promoted after the movement came to power was implying the construct "occupation-de-occupation" (again, putting whole of the responsibility for ones own troubles on external forces) and fully ignoring totalitarianism. Though Saakashvili's government, in their revolutionary attempts to modernise the country, achieved a number of constructive changes, not much was achieved in the indicators for the unregressed large group. These indicators as described by Volkan and Stern are: freedom of speech, just and functioning civil institutions, a fair legal system, human rights based closed institutions such asmental health hospitals. And I would add: prisons and children's institutions, as well as an emphasis on gender equality and children's rights. On the one hand, this could be explained by the internalized totalitarian object within the ruling party, leading to the

division of the citizens into "Bad" and "Good" categories; another "software" cause could be the preoccupation of the government with the *re-birth and death fantasy* described by Carl Gustav Jung in 1939, manifesting itself via actions rejecting everything which was "before them" (people, institutions, approaches, even older people, etc.) as well as the assumption that the history of the Georgian state starts from their rule. Rejection of the past resulted in an inability to rethink it.

The totalitarian period does not attract attention of the Georgian Dream party and their supporters either. After taking power at the end of 2012, the focus of their attention narrowed to the injustices, which took place during the previous government's rule. Any attempt to focus public attention on the justice issues related to Stalinism or the totalitarian period is met with emotional resistance and the stereotypical objection "Let us rather focus on the last nine years". The typical rationale articulated by the Georgian Dream supporters sounds like the following:

"You are speaking about things which happened 70-80 years ago, which we have not experienced personally and therefore are not interested in them, while there is more "alive", newer violence committed by the ex-government, experienced by us, and of a scale with Stalin's repressions!" (Javakhishvili, 2013).

There is no acknowledgement of the links between the "new violence" and totalitarian past. A dual position towards the rethinking of the past is maintained by another powerful stakeholder in the country: the Orthodox Church. On the one hand, in the epistles of the Patriarch of Georgia "communists" are mentioned often as aggressors and damage-bringers to Georgia (Epistles, 2014). To a certain extent this might reflect the trauma, which the ecclesiastical community developed in response to the Soviet repressions of the clergymen. On the other hand, the Patriarch is complimentary to Stalin[iii]. Since regaining independence, the Patriarch has become the most popular father figure in Georgia. The sociological surveys reflect his stable approval rating which is often higher than 90% (NDI, 2014). Stemming from the norms of the Georgian Orthodox Church – full obedience of the believers to their "spiritual fathers", forbidding the application of critical thinking both to the instructions received from them as well as to the religious dogma, and instrumentalization of fear (of God's punishment) to achieve obedience – it is possible to suppose that the Georgian Orthodox Church and its leader filled a gap which appeared after the country became independent and became an internalized ("good") totalitarian object for the Georgian population as a large group. It is symbolic that upon advocating an increasing birth rate, the Patriarch literally became a Godfather to more and more Georgians[14].

Flashbacks of the Totalitarian Trauma: Basic Assumptions in contemporary Georgia

Unprocessed traumatic experience leads groups to a shared feeling of helplessness, fears of annihilation and loss of identity. When a group fails to apply constructive coping strategies to deal with these feelings, it regresses (to the earlier stages of development) and is unable to maintain effective contact with reality. This last Volkan defines as *Narcisstic regress of a large group*, Bion – as *Psychotic state of a group*, implying three basic assumptions, which kaleidoscopically alternate each other in the course of group's psychodynamics. These are: basic assumptions of a. Dependency, b. Fight& Flight (F&F) and c. Pairing.

If a group's mentality is based on a *Dependency assumption*, group members try to deal with their own helplessness via idealization of a leader, perceiving him as omnipotent; at the same time they envy him/her; expectations towards the leader are so high and assumption of own responsibility is so diminished that usually leaders fail to satisfy expectations. The group interprets this as unwillingness to help; in response, the unconscious envy turns into anger/rage and they try to replace the leader with a new one, with whom the Dependency-cycle tends to repeat. Basic assumption of Fight & Flight reveals itself via splitting of the group: it could be a transitional stage, when a group becomes divided into supporters of an old and a new leader, and some group members fight with each other, while others are leaving the scene. The third basic assumption – Pairing – tries to deal with the anxiety and fear of identity loss via pairing and propagation projects, encouraging flirting and sexual relationships while at the same time requesting sacrifice of one's own interests for the group's interests.

In addition to three basic assumptions described by Bion, Earl Hopper introduced a fourth basic assumption – Incohesion – with two possible modes: Aggregation and Massification (Hopper, 2003). According to Hopper, a large group experiencing the fear of annihilation could employ two polar defence strategies: either Fusion with the object or Fission (internal fragmentation). Fusion results in Massification, Fission results in Aggregation. Massification turns a large group into a homogenous conglomerate of individuals united around pseudo-solidarity, where individual autonomy no longer exists and is not tolerated, and instead anonymity and minimal role differentiation occurs; total uniformity of beliefs, values and norms are presumed and any deviation is considered as dangerous for the group's identity and therefore not tolerated; here, following Volkan, it could be said that "minor differences become major issues"(Vamik D. Volkan, 2009). Within a

massified group, affects are contagious, and enchantment, magical thinking and pseudo-morality exhibited. As for Aggregation, it turns the group into a conglomerate of individuals with excessive role differentiation, polarization, cross pressures between the polarized fragments and corresponding conflicts, encapsulated sub-groups and contra-groups, with an absence of solidarity due to the absence of norms or ignorance of norms (Hopper, 2003).

In spite of the fact that Bion elaborated his theory based on research focused on small groups, and Earl Hopper was studying processes within groups uniting up to 150 individuals, all the basic assumptions described above are clearly observable in the contemporary socio-political life of Georgia. This is in line with Volkan's statement about finding basic assumptions of "Parasitic Dependency" described by Bion and Hopper's in cohesiveness at the level of large groups (uniting hundreds, thousands and millions of individuals) which he studied (Vamik D. Volkan, 2009). According to Volkan, this could be explained by the regression of the large group to the earlier stages of development, which makes psychodynamics of the large groups similar to what happens in the psychodynamics of small groups or even individual intra-psychic realm.

Basic Assumption of Dependency in Georgia reveals itself permanently via placing a bet by the general population on a certain leader and linking all hopes for the future to him. At a certain point, disenchantment with the leader occurs and the Dependency set-up turns into *Fight and Flight* (F & F). For example, President Gamsakhurdia, a former Soviet dissident and one of the national liberation movement leaders, was elected with 82% of the votes in 1991. Within one year, frustration of the *basic human needs* (Neef, 2011) within the population triggered rapidly increasing dissatisfaction with the government and its leader. This turned into *F & F* between his supporters and supporters of the opposition (behind whom the next leader, Shevardnandze, stood). F & F developed into the civil war, president Gamsakhurdia, together with his supporters had to leave the country; Shevardnadze took the reigns of power. The fight between Shevardnadze/his supporters and Gamsakhurdia/his supporters continued until the end of 1993, when Gamsakhurdia was found shot into head in one of the villages in Western Georgia where he was widely supported by the population. At some point in 1993, Shevardnadze used Russian military troops (up to 2000 soldiers) to fight Gamsakhurdia's supporters, which illustrates that geo-political factors influenced the described events, although, in parallel with the external and internal political factors, psychodynamics significantly contributed to the development of the described scenario.

Upon the return of the former Soviet leader, Shevardnadze, to the Georgian political stage in 1992, assumption of dependency was encouraged/legitimized by Patriarch of Georgia. He requested that several thousand people gather for a meeting with Shevardnadze, fall on their knees and "convince" him to take power. 75% of the vote received by Shevardnadze in 1995, was indicative of *F* & *F* assumption, which prepared context for his return to power.

Disenchantment with Shevardnadze culminated with the Rose Revolution,[15] which brought to the power president Saakashvili – young ex-member of Shevardnadze's team, ex-minister of Justice, surrounded by a young team of his own and supported by the West. At the beginning, Saakashvili received more than 96% of the votes, and became another personification of the Georgian population's hopes, revealing the entrenched *basic assumption of Dependency*. After 5 years, in 2008, he collected around 53% of votes due to a number of reasons (the lost war with Russia, restricted freedom of expression and other human rights violations). By the end of 2012, disenchanted with Saakashvili and his government, majority of the population (54.97%) elected the Georgian Dream Coalition, though National Movement (ex-government's) party still gained 40.34% of voices and became a parliament minority. The pre-election period was characterized by an acute *Fight and Flight*, where the Georgian Orthodox Church took the side of the new political coalition as, according to anecdotal evidence, many orthodox priests at the time were advising their congregations to vote for them. *F* & *F* did not stop after the change of the government, it continues through the last two years and prevents co-habitation of the political sides. As for today, several key members of Saakashvili's team are imprisoned and a criminal investigation is initiated against him personally, which has led to him fleeing the country.

Relationships between the leader of the Georgian Dream coalition – Ivanishvili (the richest person in Georgia, who earned his capital in 90's, in Russia, and since then has been implementing a lot of charity projects in Georgia) and his followers is based again on the basic *assumption of dependency*. From the very beginning, the electorate perceived the leader and founder of the coalition – as omnipotent. In spite of the multiple problems existing in the country, the most-publicized message related to him and his coalition coming to power in 2012 was "Now everything will be wonderful". Expecting a miracle is also typical to the society in a regressed state.

The presidential elections of 2013, is another illustration of the Dependency assumption: the presidential candidate Margvelashvili (a philosopher, who used to work as a rector of a private university, and then – after the Georgian Dream won – as a Minister of Education) was elected at Ivan-

ishvili's urging (who became the Prime Minister). Ivanishvili introduced the candidate to the general public as his "good friend," promised that "he would be a lovely president" and convinced the electorate to vote for him. As a result of a blind trust conditioned by the dependency assumption, Margvelashvili gained the majority of the votes in the second round of elections.

The above mentioned kaleidoscopic alternation of the basic assumptions of *Dependency* and *Fight* & *Flight* takes place in the peculiar societal context created by the fourth basic assumption described by Hopper. Here, the two parallel realities could be distinguished in Georgia – religious reality led by the basic assumption of *Massification*, and socio-political reality led by the basic assumption of *Aggregation*.

Massification is clearly observed in the relationship between the Georgian Orthodox Church and its congregation via existing Fundamentalism, intolerance towards everything which is different from Orthodox Christian ideology (as it is understood by the Church), and pseudo-morality which is revealed through double standards and magical thinking. The most recent example of such double standards and magical thinking is the case of the congregation mobilized around the remains of a monk, much respected by the believers, Father Gabriel.[16] Father Gabriel's case reveals a tendency of the Church to act as a gatekeeper and seek control of the socio-political life in the country by means of massification or by utilizing the massification of its congregation around religious issues.

Aggregation reveals itself on the current socio-political scene of Georgia via the polarization of the ex-government and current government supporters, politicians and the electorate belonging to these two camps, as well as via all the other stakeholders existing on the socio-political stage who do not belong to these two polarised camps but play roles in societal psychodynamics: ethnic, religious, sexual and other minorities, civil society, so called "Thieves in Law", etc. Competing pressures between these segments of society, corresponding conflicts and utilized double-standards represent aggregation. I.e. the fact that the ex-prime minister Ivanishvili formally left the political stage but informally goes on ruling reveals the absence of norms, which create conditions for further confusion and hostilities within the society. The Georgian Orthodox Church is one of the players in the aggregated societal scene as well: the latest example is the hearing of the Antidiscrimination Law by the Parliament of Georgia, where Church representatives were trying to prevent the adoption of the law. After failing to convince the Parliament, they tried to use the potential of the massificated congregation and to mobilise people via collecting signatures against the adopted legislation in the streets.

In line with the basic assumption of *Dependancy*, participation in *Fight* & *Flight*, catalization of massification and taking part in aggregation, the Georgian Orthodox Church actualizes basic assumptions of *Pairing* in tandem with different stakeholders within the country; i.e. the so-called "National Demographic Foundation" was initiated, taking further the pairing/propagation assumption introduced by the Patriarch and uniting three stakeholders: representatives of the Parliament of Georgia, businessmen, and the Patriarch of Georgia. Besides baptizing practices a clear illustration of the *Paring* assumption is the coming together of the Georgian Orthodox Church/patriarchy and the descendants of the Georgian royal family. Several years ago, the Patriarch facilitated the marriage of the representatives of the royal families in order to give birth to a legal heir of the Georgian monarchy. For this reason, a representative of the Bagrationi royal family, which immigrated from Georgia due to the Russian occupation in the beginning of the 20th century, returned to Georgia and married a daughter of the Bagration-Gruzinski royal family line which remained in Georgia during the Soviet period. After a baby boy was born, the pair divorced, the patriarch baptised the baby and announced him as the legal heir of the monarchy, even though no Georgian kingdom has existed for centuries in the country; in addition – the two families are in the middle of *F* & *F,* due to which the legitimacy of the heir is not yet acknowledged.

Conclusions

Totalitarian trauma in Georgia is present both at an individual and societal levels and reveals itself as the internalized totalitarian object. Unlike at the individual level, where the trauma is acknowledged, totalitarian trauma is denied at the societal level, which leads to the resistance in dealing with the past.

Internalized totalitarian object reveals itself on a societal level via totalitarian object-relationships, with the political and religious leaders. This creates regressive basic assumptions-based psychodynamics within Georgian society as a large group.

Totalitarian trauma reveals itself in the contemporary life of the Georgian Society via four problematic basic assumptions: Dependency, Fight and Flight, Pairing, and Incohesiveness (Aggregation & Massification). All of these four basic assumptions are interchangeable, and keep Georgian society in a closed circle of traumatic identity, implying Victim-Aggressor-Bystander modus of interaction and preventing effective contact with reality.

The Georgian Orthodox Church plays a significant role in the realization of all the basic assumptions: it catalyzes the realization of the Dependency, takes sides in the F & F responses, works to realize the basic assumption of Paring, facilitates massification and at the same time, tries to play a role in the aggregation via attempts to influence politics and different policies.

Unprocessed totalitarian trauma made the country's population vulnerable to new traumas, which took place after becoming independent (traumas related to the ethnic-political conflicts, civil war, 2008 war with Russia, the prison scandal). This vulnerability increases the risk of having these traumas be utilized for political manipulations, which, in turn, hinders the development of the country.

Notes:

1. The Stalin's statue in the city centre of Gori (his hometown) was erected during his lifetime, in 1953, and removed on November 25, 2010, during the night to avoid public protest from his supporters in his hometown.
2. For the first time the sculpture was reinstalled in the village Zemo Alvani of Akhmeta region on December 21, 2012. In one week's time the monument was painted pink by unknown persons. In January 2013, Stalin's bust was re-erected in the village Akuri in the Telavi region. About three weeks later, people removed the bust from the pedestal and painted it pink. In Telavi, Stalin's sculpture was erected on 1st of September. The same night, unknown people painted the sculpture red.
3. In July of 2013, Georgian Patriarch Ilia II went with an official visit to Moscow where he met the Russian Patriarch Kirill, as well as the Russian president Vladimir Putin and was complimentary of Stalin in his conversation with the Russian leader and confirmed his perception of Stalin as a great leader (and a believer at the end of his life) in his interviews with the Georgian media widely broadcasted in the country.
4. In the pre-election period of 2012, political opposition facilitated a public broadcast (via leading TV channels) of the videos showing torture that took place in the penitentiary system of Georgia. The reaction of the public was extremely emotional and played a critical role in the ousting of the National Movement Government.

5. Following Volkan, under large group, I mean groups of tens, hundreds, millions of individuals who share religious, and/or ethnic, and/or national and/or ideological identity; due to the group's size, most of the individuals will never meet with each other in their lifetime, but share certain identity linking them. "Under large group processes is meant not homogeneousness of the certain group but observable societal trends revealing themselves in societal life." In: Volkan, Vamik, D. and Folwer, Christopher, F.: Large Group Narcissism and Political Leaders. Psychiatric Annals, 39/4, April 2009.

6. Those who were witnessing repressions and keeping silent, did not protest/intervene.

7. The given sub-chapter reflects some findings of the research studying intergenerational transmission of the Stalinist totalitarian trauma among family members of the repressed (Javakhishvili, 2011).

8. According to Klein, division of the external world into "good" and "bad" objects is a stage in the development of a child (Paranoid position by Klein's terms), and the normal course of development leads to the unification of good and bad and the ability to perceive them as the two qualities of one entity (Depressive position by Klein's terms). Even when the developmental task of unification is achieved, in the particular circumstances (i.e. totalitarian environment which splits the external world into victims and aggressors) a person could regress to the earlier stage of development.

9. At different ages, a Soviet person was always a part of an ideological system (the Lenin youth, the pioneers, etc.) which comprised a chain of the Soviet factory, meant for the production of the "homo Sovieticus."

10. Abkhazia, a region of Georgia, following the inter-ethnic-political conflict during the early 1990s is now separated from Georgia; more than 250.000 internally displaced persons fled from the conflict to the rest of Georgia.

11. Except Ilia State University, which introduced a Soviet Studies masters program as well as a doctoral program and facilitates relevant research since 2010.

12. Only a few civil society organizations are focused on it: Sovlab, non-governmental organization founded as a project of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, operating since 2009. Memorial, founded in 1992, and based on the model of the Russian NGO Memorial focusing on Soviet repressions, which due to scarce finances does not have even an office at the moment.

13. In the document "10 Steps to Freedom" composed by the civil society leaders together with the future government representatives, lustration was named as one of the 10 key steps of the intended reforms, but the promise was not accomplished. The legislation concerning lustration was adopted by the parliament only in 2011, it was elaborated without consultations with civil society and discussion within the general public, and was never realized. Also, the measures foreseen there were of a symbolic character (i.e. ban of Soviet symbols in public premises) with little real impact on addressing the Soviet past.

14. The patriarch of Georgia, in 2007, introduced an initiative to baptize every third and following child of those families who are Orthodox and are wed according to the Orthodox tradition. For 2011, it was estimated by the Church that up to 7,000 children were baptized (according to the Church, "some possibly would not be born if not for this initiative), and Patriarch declared his will to continue the baptizing of every fourth and following child. After a child is baptized, the family is awarded the title of "Safeguard of the Patriarchy Throne" plus "Dedicated Son/Daughter of the Fatherland" (at: http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/53557-patriarqi-axali-iniciativit-gamovida [Accessed 29 Oct. 2014]).

15. Rose Revolution – a peaceful revolution supported by the civil society of Georgia and the West, resulted in a change of government in 2003.

16. Father Gabriel is a very interesting figure whose life reflects peculiarities of the totalitarian past and post-totalitarian present of Georgia. He was born in a family with a communist father and a religious mother. His father forbade his mother from exercising her faith, until he was killed by anti-communist rebels in 1931. Father Gabriel became a prist after returning home from military service, in the early 50's. Though it was still in the Stalinist period (1951), upon arrival he built a little church in his yard. In a while, he became the first monk to be baptized in Soviet Georgia (after the repressions of clergymen nobody dared to become a monk). During Khrushchev's rule, he burned a big (12 square meter) poster of Lenin displayed on the building of Tbilisi Municipality for the 1st of May demonstration, in 1965. He was immediately imprisoned and sentenced to death; later on he was diagnosed as mentally ill and was transferred from prison to the psychiatric hospital for "treatment" where he spent several years. After coming out of the hospital he started to live and serve in a monastery. He began healing people and gained an outstanding popularity and respect among the population. At the same time, he distanced himself from the Church, due to his un-compromising and non-conformist nature, which did not appreciate the collaboration of the

Church with the Soviet regime. After the liberation of the country in the 90's he continued his life in monastery – helping people and shunning the power struggles and the luxurious life-styles, which became the norm within the Georgian Orthodox Church. His popularity was steadily increasing among the Georgian population – especially due to his honesty and dedication as well as his capacity for healing. He passed away in 1995, was buried according to his will in the yard of his monastery and his grave became a holly place for many people. Mother Paraskeva was taking care of him during his life and after his death became a kind of a gatekeeper of his grave and some of his belongings, which were considered sacred. Father Gabriel's popularity increased even more after his death.

In 2012, the Church canonized Father Gabriel as a saint, thus laying claim to the ownership of father Gabriel's legacy. At the beginning of January 2014, mother Paraskeva stated that she had a vision according to which if a person would visit father Gabriel's grave before Christmas (the 7th of January for the Georgian Orthodox), two of his/her wishes would be fulfilled. Tens of thousands of people started visiting the place of the monk's burial, expecting a miracle.

Following this incident, the Church, in February, moved the remains of the monk from the grave located at the monastery's cemetery, organized an official funeral, which lasted for several weeks and re-buried him inside the monastery. A large amount of people were trying to attend the ceremony of the removal of the remains as there was a widespread rumor that the father's body was uncorrupted by decay. But the Church made an iron fence to restrict people's access and at the same time distributed "VIP" passes to politicians and those whom it considered as "privileged" to attend the event. Shortly after mother Paraskeva was withdrawn from the Monastery where she lived. Thus, the Church became a literal gatekeeper of Father Gabriel's legacy.

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