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The Right of all People to Self-determination at the Beginning of the 20th Century, Following the Example of the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia

This paper presents the essence of the right of all people to self-determination, the stages of its development, historical-legal analysis, its evolution – from individualist to collectivist doctrine, nature of the right to internal and external self-determination is explained. Furthermore, the letter illustrates the vision of the President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, regarding the right of all people to self-determination based on “Wilson's Fourteen Points” and his legal analysis. The theoretical and practical aspects of the struggle for independence of the Georgian people based on the right of nation to self-determination are discussed directly in the work of the members of the Georgian National Committee.

Keywords: *the right of nation to self-determination, people, Georgian National Committee, Wilson's Fourteen Points, self-government, people's sovereignty, political sovereignty, rights of oppressed nations, restoration of independence, state, government formation.*

I. Introduction

The right of all people to self-determination is a fundamental issue that was arisen in the legal space at the crossroads of the eras of imperialism and nationalism. It can be noted, that in the 20th century “no phrase has had such a great political resonance as the right of all people to self-determination” and at the same time, “no concept is as vague as it”.¹ However, the fact is that this did not prevent it from becoming a favorite slogan of almost all kinds of movements around the world and, at the same time, taking a key place in all prominent documents of international law since the forties of the 19th century.² The right of all people to self-determination became the main slogan for the members of the Georgian National Committee, the leading political organization of the Georgian national liberation movement operating in Europe during the First World War (1914-1918).³

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¹ *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, № 2, April 2015, 462.

² *Summers J. J.*, The Right of Self-Determination and Nationalism in International Law, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 12, № 4, 2005, 325.

³ In 1910, an organization named “Free Georgia Group” was founded in Geneva. At first, the idea of founding the union came to Petre Surguladze, an exile from Georgia, who contacted Nestor Maghalashvili, also exiled from Georgia, brothers Leo and Giorgi Kereselidze, and jointly formed the “Free Georgia

Before discussing the political-legal views of fighter-patriots who fought to restore state independence, at the very beginning of the paper, the essence of the right of all people to self-determination and the phases of its development are discussed, the nature of the right to internal and external self-determination, its evolution from individualist to collectivist doctrine is determined and based on the well-known so-called “Wilson's Fourteen Points”, the vision of Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America in 1913-1921, is demonstrated regarding this issue.

The next chapter of the paper is devoted to the theoretical and practical aspects of the struggle for independence of the members of the liberation committee based on the right of all people to self-determination. The memorandum of September 24, 1914 created by Mikhako Tsereteli and Giorgi Machabeli and the additional report card related to it – “On the Liberation of Georgia and the Caucasus and the Necessity of Their Obtaining a Neutral Status”, general telegram of the “League of Oppressed Nations of Russia” to President Woodrow Wilson (1916) and Mikhako Tsereteli's Speech at the Third Conference of the League of Nations (1916) are discussed.

In the next, concluding chapter of the paper, attention is focused on the sad reality that centuries after the introduction of the right of all people to self-determination into the legal circulation, the matter of implementing this fundamental right in life remains relevant. The difficulties faced by progressive-minded humanity in avoiding the facts of oppression of small nations by a large state are presented.

II. Historical Evolution of the Right of Nation to Self-determination

2.1. The Right to Internal and External Self-determination

The modern interpretation of the self-determination of all people, as presumed in international law, implies the right of peoples to freely determine their political status and to be able to freely

Group”. Such figures as Mikhako Tsereteli, Varlam Cherkezishvili, Geronti Kikodze, Aleksandre Shanshiashvili, Davit Vachnadze, Shalva Karumidze, Revaz Gabashvili, Shalva Amirejibi, Spyridon Kedia, Lado Garsevanishvili, Nikoloz Naskyashvili, Vladimer Mdzinarashvili and others connected their career with the activities of the group created for the independence of Georgia. The main goal of the people united around the group was the liberation of Georgia from Russia and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. After several years of work, in the fall of 1914, the “Georgian Freedom Group” created the “Committee for the Liberation of Georgia” in the city of Geneva, whose head was Petre Surguladze. The “Committee for the Liberation of Georgia” included the category of Georgian figures for whom the national interests of Georgia and the return of independence to the country were the most important. It will not be surprising if we note that the majority of the members of the committee were composed of the later created National Democratic Party. Accordingly, it can be said that the group of national democrats working without a party was united under the name of the committee at that specific stage of political activity – Petre Surguladze, Davit Vachnadze, Revaz Gabashvili, Spiridon Kedia, Meliton Kartsivadze and others. We should not lose sight of those persons who, although they did not later represent the National Democratic Party, but based on their own national interests, were enrolled in the ranks of the committee members and fought with common efforts to liberate Georgia from Russian oppression – Mikhako Tsereteli, Varlam Cherkezishvili, Giorgi Machabeli and others, see Citation: *Janelidze O.*, Essays from the history of the National Democratic Party of Georgia, 2002, “Science”, Tbilisi, 219-227 (in Georgian).

pursue economic, social and cultural development.⁴ Accordingly, it establishes the possibility for people to free themselves from foreign, colonial and racist domination.

The right itself includes the right to external and internal self-determination. In particular, the right to external self-determination is expressed in determining the international status of people, according to which each nation has the right to form an independent state or to integrate and be in a federal union with another state. The right to internal self-determination of the nation is reflected in the ability of the people to freely choose their own political, economic and social system. Considering the above, it is clear that the right to internal self-determination of the nation cannot be exercised in the conditions when the people are under the control of the colonizer. While the nation does not dare to oppose the ruler. The right can be used by people, as an entity that already has statehood, that requires other states not to interfere or influence their choices. The people themselves should be given the opportunity to freely define their own political, economic and social systems.⁵ Thus, it can be said that the right of a nation to external self-determination is a broader concept. Moreover, to some extent it includes the right to internal self-determination. The latter, in turn, represents the next level of legal security for the restored state.

From the second half of the twentieth century to the end of the century, the content of the right to self-determination became even clearer. The conventions and declarations of that time considered and still consider each nation as a subject of the right to self-determination of nations, which can “freely determine its own political status and freely pursue its own economic, social or cultural development policy”.⁶

Undoubtedly, the outstanding Georgian political emigrant, Warlam Tcherkezishvili (1846-1925),⁷ had in mind such a solution to the issue, when he reminded his young compatriots at the Geneva Conference in 1904 of the rights of the Georgian nation recognized by international law: “We have the right to talk to the Russian government as free states talk to each other... We can declare war on Russia by virtue of European international law. Right now, right here, we can form a committee for

⁴ *Summers J. J.*, The Right of Self-Determination and Nationalism in International Law, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 12, № 4, 2005, 325.

⁵ *Senese S.*, External and Internal Self-Determination, *Human Rights & Peoples' Rights: Views from North & South*, Vol. 16, № 1 (35), Spring 1989, 19, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/29766439>> [21.08.22].

⁶ *Summers J. J.*, The Right of Self-Determination and Nationalism in International Law, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 12, № 4, 2005, 325, *იხ. ციტირება: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 16 Dec 1966, General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>> [21.08.2022]; *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, 14 December 1960, General Assembly resolution 1514, (XV), <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Independence.aspx>>, [21.08.2022]; *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>> [21.08.2022]; *Helsinki Final Act*, 14 ILM, 1975, <<https://www.osce.org/files/f/ documents/5/c/39501.pdf>> [22.08.2022.]; *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, 25 June 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/vienna-declaration-and-programme-action>> [21.08.2022].

⁷ Warlam Tcherkezishvili had close cooperation with the members of the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia, despite the fact that he was in favor of the defeat of the German Empire in the First World War.

the independent governance of Georgians. . . Do you see what rights we have? . . . Why should we surrender our rights without a fight? The Europeans will never deceive us in their day by fighting for the protection of these rights. They will say that we are fighting the one who invaded our country by force. People should not abandon their rights. We should acquire new rights and not give up the old ones or leave them to someone else”.⁸

2.2. The Way from the Individualistic Nature of the Right to the Collectivist Doctrine

As it has already been noted, the formation of the right of all people to self-determination, its perception and seizure did not happen in one day. All this was preceded by a rather long preparatory period. Moreover, it can be said that society's attitude towards its essence continues to change even today. The development of the individualistic right to self-determination into a collectivist doctrine during the last centuries, namely from the middle of the 18th century to the First World War is a clear confirmation of the above mentioned.⁹ It should also be emphasized that the role of historical and political events was of equal importance in this process.

It is in the 19th-20th centuries that a new concept of nationalism and statehood, different from the previous ones, was formed, the formation of which was greatly influenced by the destruction of nationalism, imperialism and the “ruins” that humanity has survived from them to this day. The new concept combined the ideals of freedom and democracy with the common goal of the people to achieve independence. We believe this is what the great French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) meant when he linked people and political sovereignty through the ideals of nationality and freedom. For the French educator, the nation was the confirmation of the uniqueness of a particular people. That is, what we call today the right of foreign self-determination of nations.¹⁰

The consideration of people and political sovereignty in relation to each other led to the origin of the principle of people's sovereignty¹¹, in which society represents the source of independence, freedom and law – the people as the founder and creator of the state and its law. As we can see, in this case people are recognized not only as subjects of law and subordinates to it, but they are the main and only legal owner of this sovereignty.¹²

The French Revolution and its consequences undoubtedly played an immense role in the origin of the right of all people to self-determination and in its development as a concept. The event of universal significance, thanks to which “the divine powers of kings were replaced by the divine rights of men.”¹³ The fact that at the end of the 18th century, the principle of nationalism complemented the principle of democracy and laid the foundation for the vision according to which, after “the people” become sovereign, they have the right, and in fact it is their most fundamental natural right, to

⁸ Protocols from the first Conference of Georgian Revolutionaries, Paris, 1905, 179 (in Georgian).

⁹ *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, № 2, April, 2015, 463.

¹⁰ *Senese S.*, External and Internal Self-Determination, *Human Rights & Peoples' Rights: Views from North & South*, Vol. 16, № 1 (35), Spring 1989, 21-22, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/29766439>> [21.08.22].

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Cobban A.*, *National Self-Determination*, Chicago, 1944, 6.

establish themselves an independent state must be considered in connection with the revolution. The very term “people” is expressive of the natural union called the nation.¹⁴

Regarding the right of all people to self-determination, the views of German educators are extremely interesting. It is with the name of Immanuel Kant (1724-1802), one of the founders of German classical philosophy, German idealism, that the origin and establishment of the term (“Selbstbestimmung”) denoting the right itself in the German language is connected. It was later shared by the greatest figures of the German classical age: Goethe, Schiller, and many other outstanding thinkers of their generation, by the German philosophers who discussed freedom as a process of individual self-determination.¹⁵

Among them, one of the outstanding ones is a graduate of the University of Jena, later a professor of the same university since 1794, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). A person who was an active defender of the right to self-determination from the initial stage of establishment of this principle. In particular, according to Kant's thinking, the desire of every rational person was to establish general rules for himself, and this was the beginning of freedom or autonomy for him.¹⁶ According to Fichte's thinking, the realization of the right of self-determination by an individual led to the involvement of the world in this process, because human self-government and the development of the world is a dynamic and never-ending process.¹⁷ As the German philosopher considered, a person's right to self-determination and the use of this right affects the world and, in turn, leaves a similar right to him and the world. Therefore, it is no doubt the opinion that the Kantian doctrine on the freedom of the individual and the views of other German educators in connection with it, prepared an important theoretical basis so that in the first half of the nineteenth century, “the right of individual self-determination was transformed into the right of self-determination of nations”.¹⁸

Obviously, political processes developed in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century contributed significantly to such a development of events. Let's mention the fact of the occupation of German lands by Napoleon Bonaparte. It is undeniable, that this event largely led to the fact that the universal “I” was replaced by the “German nation”¹⁹ in Fichte's works, and instead of the individual's right to self-determination, the addressee of this right was presented in the form of the German nation – the people themselves. An individual, Fichte wrote, is never alone, he is able to realize his right to self-determination only with “others”. According to the deep conviction of the German philosopher, at this time the unity of individuals behaves as one. People are inseparably connected to each other and

¹⁴ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 51.

¹⁵ *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, № 2, April, 2015, 469-472.

¹⁶ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 51-52.

¹⁷ *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, № 2, April, 2015, 474.

¹⁸ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 62.

¹⁹ *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, No 2, April, 2015, 477.

become a common subject of the right to self-determination.²⁰ That is, as rightly pointed out by R.Rendle, a supposed association of people forms a particular type of society known as a nation and exercises the right to form an independent state through a government of its own choosing.²¹ Accordingly, the principle of people's sovereignty and the right of nations to self-determination can be noted to complement each other with their own stages of development.

We would like to draw the attention to the fact that the collectivist concept of the right to self-determination and along with all this the spread of nationalist ideal, in the conditions of the liberation struggle of the small nations conquered by the empires, acquired special importance. For the sake of visibility, we can recall the demonstrations of the people of Eastern Europe in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and from 1848, the people of Central and Southern Europe in the Habsburg Empire,²² uprisings caused by the desire to preserve identity in the huge Russian empire, turned into a prison for people. Among them in Georgia, where from the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, from 1801, in order to save the identity and restore statehood, throughout the century, until 1918, the Georgian people led an irreconcilable battle against Tsarist autocracy.

The creation of the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia by Georgian patriots in Geneva in the fall of 1914 can be considered as one of the final stages of this battle. The formation of such a national political organization, the main task of which was the liberation of Georgia from the Russian Empire. Unfortunately, despite the great merits to the Georgian nation, today the public knows little about this committee and its members in general: Petre Surguladze, Mikhako Tsereteli, Giorgi Machabeli, brothers Giorgi and Leo Kereselidze, Meliton Kartsivadze and their comrades, many great patriots. This is when each of them was ready to sacrifice their lives on the altar of their motherland without any hesitation.²³

Therefore, it is not surprising that when discussing the right of all people to self-determination, we chose the extremely interesting epistolary legacy of the members of the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia and the rich practical experience of the struggle for independence. The reality that the members of the committee encountered and the road to the set goal was really challenging. For a whole century, the Georgian nation was deprived of the opportunity to form a national government, taking into consideration its own interests and wills. That is, the most important thing, which is recognized as the right of nations to self-determination: "the possibility of self-expression of the society considered as a nation", to exist and conduct the activities of its own state independently from other states and empires.²⁴ In such circumstances, when the nation is deprived of the possibility of independent action, the right to self-determination includes within itself the right to revolution – the

²⁰ Ibid, 478.

²¹ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 49.

²² Ibid, 62.

²³ A clear confirmation of this is the fact that during the years of the First World War, members of the committee were on a German submarine many times secretly in Georgia to contact the political parties operating here and to supply weapons to the national liberation movement.

²⁴ Ibid, 50.

right of the national community to rebel against the regime that governs it.²⁵ In relation to Georgia, this is the use of that right, which Warlam Tcherkezishvili called upon his compatriots in 1904, and which the members of the Georgian National Committee were able to exemplify in 1914-1918.²⁶

2.3. Wilsonian Right of All People to Self-determination

2.3.1. “Wilson's Fourteen Points”

As for the issue of self-determination of all people as a universal slogan of an important right arising as a result of nationalist ideals. “Wilson's 14 provisions” laid the foundation to those fundamental changes on the world political map, which were initiated by the creation of independent states and on which the world still stands nowadays. It should be noted, that this phenomenon is primarily related to the political and diplomatic events that took place during the First World War.

On January 8, 1918, when the President of the United States of America, Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921), presented this post-war peace plan to Congress, his main goal was to create an international environment in which self-governing institutions and independent entities could freely strengthen their positions and develop.²⁷ At the same time, it should be emphasized that the inclusion of the most important paragraph 5 in the fourteen-point agreement in that form as it is known to the public was the merit of President Wilson personally, and not a general decision.²⁸ Therefore, it is legitimate to believe that it was the President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, who had a significant influence on the definition of the essence of the right to self-determination, and in fact Wilson was the first to help present the issue of self-determination in the form of a theory.²⁹

In his address to the Congress, the President emphasized that: the world should become safe and suitable for life, especially for peace-loving nations, who, like them, wanted to exist, arrange their own lives and state institutions. It was crucial for them to make sure that “justice and fair treatment will definitely oppose violence and aggression. The nations of the world are united around this interest and it is crystal clear that if justice is not served to others, it will not be served to anyone. That the program of the world peace is a common program of humanity”.³⁰

It is accurate that Wilson does not provide a broad definition of the right to self-determination in this document, however, the attitude that national interests must be taken into account in political

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ It should be noted that after the declaration of independence by Georgia, the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia considered its own mission accomplished and announced self-liquidation in June 1918. see Citation: O. Janelidze, “Essays from the history of the National Democratic Party of Georgia”, Tb., 2002, 255-256 (in Georgian).

²⁷ *Throntveit T.*, The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, No 3, June, 2011, 463.

²⁸ Ibid, 469.

²⁹ *Nawaz M.K.*, The Meaning and Range of the Principle of Self-Determination, *Duke Law Journal*, Vol. 1965, № 1, Winter, 1965, 83.

³⁰ President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, January 8, 1918, <<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-woodrow-wilsons-14-points>> [21.08.2022].

processes is clearly presented in his thinking.³¹ Moreover, it can be noted that the fifth point of the fourteen-point plan is dedicated to the post-war attitudes and legal status of the European colonies. In which the President's aspiration is clearly presented, to promote the development of self-government in various forms and methods.³²

In the fifth paragraph of the peace plan, President Wilson explicitly called on the states to make a “free, open and completely impartial settlement of all colonial claims...” and “to give the interests of the population equal meaning with the interests of the governments”.³³ In putting the subject like this, it was obviously meant to ensure the right of self-determination³⁴ of all people conquered by empires, Which, obviously, was a great challenge for the imperial states of that time and their agenda.³⁵

Therefore, it should not be surprising that these courageous calls of the president, outlined in the fourteen-point peace plan, did not have a uniform response. One part of politicians and diplomats did not share Wilson's plan as a new opportunity to establish peace in the world. For instance, the famous American diplomat and journalist, William Bullitt (1891-1967), considered the self-determination of nations, as it was given in the fifth paragraph of the agreement, not to be a salvation for the oppressed peoples of the world, but the beginning of new oppression, subjugation and division.³⁶

American senator George Norris (1861-1944), British historian and diplomat Edward Curry (1892-1982) and others made similar or even more far-reaching conclusions.³⁷ However, despite such a mixed attitude towards the Wilsonian right to self-determination, one thing is clear, the initiative of the American president, and in particular the fifth paragraph of the agreement, was understood by the “growing nations” of Eastern Europe as an absolute right to self-determination of nations.³⁸ They granted less importance to, for example, later statements by President Wilson and his adviser, Colonel Edward Mundell House³⁹ (1858-1938), that the operation of Article Five was primarily aimed at Germany, which had been declared defeated in the First World War, rather than Britain, which had won that war, or, in relation to the French colonies. The world's progressive-minded society

³¹ *Nawaz M.K.*, The Meaning and Range of the Principle of Self-Determination, *Duke Law Journal*, Vol. 1965, № 1, Winter, 1965, 83.

³² *Throntveit T.*, The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, No 3, June, 2011, 469.

³³ President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, Point V, January 8, 1918, <<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-woodrow-wilsons-14-points>> [21.08.2022].

³⁴ It is significant that the term “self-determination” does not appear in the agreement. However, in terms of content, it is meant. Which was later confirmed by the use of the term itself in the agreement in subsequent submissions to Congress, see Citation: *Weitz E. D.*, Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, № 2, April, 2015, 487.

³⁵ *Throntveit T.*, The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, No 3, June, 2011, 469.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 445.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 63.

³⁹ Edward Mendel House (1858-1938), American diplomat, advisor to President Woodrow Wilson.

understood the fifth article as a call to consider and recognize the right to self-determination of all European nations.⁴⁰

2.3.2. “People” as the Beneficiary of the Right and the Question of Their Identification

The analysis on the discussed issue will not be complete if due attention is not paid to the legal meaning of the term “people”, which has acquired a different meaning since the beginning of the 19th century. Moreover, the active lobbying of the right of all people to self-determination by President Wilson and the active involvement of this right in the political processes resulting from the First World War caused additional difficulties. Especially, in relation to the identification of those peoples who should have enjoyed the right to self-determination.⁴¹ Accordingly, it was put on the agenda to give a legal definition to the term “people”, which was not implemented at the legislative level. The different interpretations given to this term by scientists and politicians have created additional difficulties instead of clarity.⁴²

It is clear that it will not be possible to fully reflect these views in one scientific paper, however, we share the opinion that, considering the principle of self-determination, when discussing the subject with this right, it is necessary to take into account the ethnic, religious, linguistic, historical or other identity-determining indicators of the population living in a specific area.⁴³ Accordingly, the use of the term “people” also applies to the population of a state, colony, or group of individuals bound together by a common language, ethnicity, or race, whether or not they constitute the entire population of the state or colony.⁴⁴ The “people” united under each of these specific components (if they exist cumulatively) should be given the legitimate right, based on the external dimension of self-determination, to determine their own international status.

Here we will note that the reasoning shared by us regarding the meaning of the term “people” is in agreement with the articles of the Charter signed by the United Nations Organization on June 26, 1945 (entered into force on October 24, 1945) after the Second World War. In this international legal document, the term “people” is already officially used in connection with the right of all people to self-determination. In particular, in Article 1(2) of the Charter, which defines the purpose and mission of the United Nations, it is mentioned that one of its main goals is to “To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”⁴⁵ Article 55 of the same charter stipulates that the organization will help to create conditions of stability

⁴⁰ *Randle R.*, From National Self-Determination to National Self-Development, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, No 1, Jan.-Mar., 1970, 63.

⁴¹ *Whelan A.*, Wilsonian Self-determination and the Versailles Settlement, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 43, № 1, Jan., 1994, 101.

⁴² *Quane H.*, The United Nations and the Evolving Right to Self-determination, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 47, № 3, Jul., 1998, 537.

⁴³ *Whelan A.*, Wilsonian Self-determination and the Versailles Settlement, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 43, № 1, Jan., 1994, 107.

⁴⁴ *Quane H.*, The United Nations and the Evolving Right to Self-determination, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 47, № 3, Jul., 1998, 537.

⁴⁵ United Nations Charter, 1945, Chapter I, Article 1(2), <<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-1>> [21.08.2022].

and prosperity, which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations between nations, which will be based on respect for the principle of equality of each nation and people.⁴⁶

It is significant that despite the use of the term “people” by the United Nations in the articles of the Charter and even if that this most important international legal document officially calls on the subjects of international law to respect the equal rights of “peoples” and the principle of self-determination, the emphasis was not placed on the legal content of the term itself. However, based on the general context of the normative act, it is clear that the legislator has in mind those groups of individuals who are connected to each other by a common language, religion and ethnic origin.⁴⁷

2.3.3. A Double Standard in the Practice of the Right of Nation to Self-determination

As for the issue of practical application of the right of nations to self-determination in political processes. The analysis of the historical facts of the use of the right of self-determination of all people in world politics, we keep in mind in relation to the discussed issue, for example, the members of the Tripartite Union during the First World War, the decisions made by Lenin in 1917,⁴⁸ and Hitler in the 1930s clearly prove that the great states, their leaders often disregarded the right of nations to self-determination as a moral principle, and even less considered it as an impartial, imperative rule that should be applied equally to all specific cases. Instead, as the analysis of the same practice shows, this right was often used for propaganda purposes, to gain supporters against a common enemy or to strengthen one's own positions.⁴⁹ In the same way, international practice is rich in the facts of double standard guidance by states in relation to the right of nations to self-determination.

For example, in 1916, the French, later the British and the Americans supported the right to self-determination of the Czechs and Poles,⁵⁰ while Italy's constituent regions did not accept the offer of a plebiscite in return for Italy entering the war on the side of the Entente;⁵¹ Just as the national minorities within Czechoslovakia were denied the right to self-determination;⁵² Moreover, for obvious reasons (bearing in mind the British alliance), Ireland's request for a plebiscite was not even

⁴⁶ Ibid, hapter IX, Article 55, <<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-9>> [21.08.2022].

⁴⁷ *Quane H.*, The United Nations and the Evolving Right to Self-determination, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 47, № 3, Jul., 1998, 539-540.

⁴⁸ It means the issue of realization of the right of national self-determination of all small nations within the Russian Empire by Lenin before the October Revolution. However, after the revolution, it only recognized the independence of the Finns and Poles, arguing that despite the universality of the right to self-determination, it is not always appropriate for small nations to exercise this right. As the reason for the difference between the theoretical approach and practical actions, he discussed the issue of transition from bourgeois nationalism to socialism, see Quote: *Diesing P.*, National Self-Determination and U.S. Foreign Policy, *Ethics – An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy*, Vol. 77, № 2, Jan., 1967, 86-88; *Boersner D.*, The Bolsheviks and the National and Colonial Question, Geneva: Droz, 1957, 62-63; *Lenin V.*, The Right of Nations to Self-determination, New York: International Publishers, 1951, 24.

⁴⁹ *Diesing P.*, National Self-Determination and U.S. Foreign Policy, *Ethics – An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy*, Vol. 77, № 2, Jan., 1967, 86.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, see Citation: *Masaryk T.*, The Making of a State, New York: Stokes, 1927, 96, 287, 500.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, see Citation: *Wambaugh S.*, Plebiscities since the World War, Washington, D.C.: Cernegie Endowment, 1933, 23.

⁵² *Ibid*, see Citation: *Masaryk T.*, The Making of a State, New York: Stokes, 1927, pp. 429-33.

considered by President Wilson;⁵³ In the same context should be evaluated the fact that the letters sent by the “Committee of Oppressed Peoples” to President Woodrow Wilson were left undiscussed and without any response, letters in which the issue of supporting the nations oppressed by the Russian Empire, including Georgia, based on the right of nation to self-determination, was raised⁵⁴ and others.

However, despite all of the above and despite the different standard of application of the right of nations to self-determination, which is primarily explained by the political and diplomatic intentions of the states themselves, it is crystal clear that the right to self-determination occupied a central place in Woodrow Wilson's political philosophy.⁵⁵ Moreover, it became a determining factor not only for American, but also for international politics in general.⁵⁶ This applies not only to the Peace Conference of 1919, but also to the events that developed after it.⁵⁷ The slogan of self-determination, built on the basis of Wilson's Anglo-American political traditions and nourished by the ideas of John Locke and John Stuart Mill, gave self-determination a different direction than before, and laid the foundation for the spread of this right throughout the world. The right, in which Wilson himself first of all considered, the possibility of civilized people to unite, to create a democratic polity.⁵⁸

It is no coincidence that attention is focused on the word unity this time, since President Wilson's consideration of the factor of people's unification and population's involvement in the process of struggle for self-determination is not only related to the fourteen-point plan. The leader of the American Democrats has repeatedly emphasized the importance of the population's involvement in this vitally important process for any nation, even before the creation of the peace plan. According to his definition: Self-government is not a mere form of legal institution that can be acquired when the need arises... but rather, its possession is associated with long-term discipline, and it “gives the people self-possession, self-mastery, a habit of order and peace, and a respect for law that must not be violated, even when they become law makers themselves.”⁵⁹

⁵³ *Ibid*, see Citation: Cobban A., National self-determination, New York: Oxford University Press, 1944, 22.

⁵⁴ L. Bakradze, “German-Georgian relations during the First World War” – activities of the Georgian National Committee, 1814-1918, Tbilisi, 2010, 117-119 (in Georgian).

⁵⁵ Nawaz M.K., The Meaning and Range of the Principle of Self-Determination, Duke Law Journal, Vol. 1965, № 1, Winter, 1965, 84.

⁵⁶ The reasoning developed by President Wilson regarding the right of oppressed peoples and self-determination largely led to the definition of three closely related conditions after World War I, according to which: 1. Statehood should be granted to identifiable peoples; 2. The fate of the disputed territories was to be decided through a plebiscite; 3. And those ethnic groups that were small in number or scattered, disintegrated and did not meet the previous two requirements, should benefit from the special protection of the minority regimes, whose supervisory function would be combined with the newly founded Council of the League of Nations, see Citation: Whelan A., Wilsonian Self-determination and the Versailles Settlement, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vol. 43, № 1, Jan., 1994, 100-101.

⁵⁷ Whelan A., Wilsonian Self-determination and the Versailles Settlement, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vol. 43, № 1, Jan., 1994, 100.

⁵⁸ Weitz E. D., Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right, The American Historical Review, Vol. 120, № 2, April, 2015, 485.

⁵⁹ Woodrow W., Constitutional Government in the United States, New York, The Columbia University Press, 1908, 52.

III. The National Committee on the Georgian People's Right to Self-determination

On the example of the Georgian nation as a subject of international law, it should be noted that from the first day of the loss of independence, under the leadership of the best sons of the nation, the society expressed a firm and unwavering position to restore the Bagration's royal dynasty and state independence. Accordingly, the processes dictated by nationalist ideals and the unwavering desire to preserve the identity of the nation have been marked in the history of Georgian state and political thought since 1801, which is in full compliance with the vision that "self-government is not something that can be given to any people, because it is a form of character",⁶⁰ which the nation must generate and manifest itself.

It is also worth mentioning that Wilson's vision regarding the right of nations to self-determination was not limited to the formal marking and establishment of territorial or ethnic boundaries, but his belief included the issue of practical political ethics, that each person should have had a voice in the government, under whose rule he lived and politically mature communities had to control the state institutions that were involved in shaping their lives.⁶¹ Moreover, this right should have been enjoyed by the Georgian society, which was not only a politically mature community, but also one of the oldest subjects with statehood in Europe before 1801 year. Accordingly, the Georgian people, by virtue of the right to self-determination, had the legitimate right to demand the recognition of state sovereignty and to form state institutions according to their own opinion.

As already stated, the historical evolution of the principle of self-determination showed that the right of the individual to lead his own life according to his own interests and choices was transformed into a collective right of the people and it was applied in the context of decolonization, which entered a decisive phase during the First World War.⁶²

Parallel to the development of nationalist ideals in the world, the national interests and requirements of the Georgian national liberation movement and the Georgian society in general were developing and being clarified. A concrete manifestation of this is the activity of the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia to ensure the right of the Georgian people to self-determination. It should be noted that the materials kept in the political archive of the German National Library, the State University of Jena, and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped us immensely to get to know the life and creative heritage of the members of the committee, as well as the Georgian political emigration in general. In particular, the letters, books and brochures⁶³ published by the members of the

⁶⁰ Ibid, 53.

⁶¹ *Throntveit T.*, The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, No 3, June, 2011, 455.

⁶² *Nawaz M.K.*, The Meaning and Range of the Principle of Self-Determination, *Duke Law Journal*, Vol. 1965, № 1, Winter, 1965, 100.

⁶³ In this direction, it is worth noting the support of the German government ("Nachrichtenburo" founded by the German state in the spring of 1915, the so-called "Nachrichtenstelle Office"), through which a number of propaganda works were published by the members of the committee. For example, in 1915, Mikhako Tsereteli's book titled "Georgia and the World War" was published in Germany, specifically in Zurich, and in August 1917, Mikhako Tsereteli's "Georgia's Rights", Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's "Caucasus in the World War" and others were published in Berlin.

committee in the press of different countries, as well as the words spoken at the gatherings and conferences about the sovereign state of Georgia. Also, materials depicting personal and official correspondence between the members of the Liberation Committee and international partners, primarily representatives of the German Empire, regarding the restoration of Georgia's independence.

It is known that part of the strategy of the German Empire to defeat the enemy in the First World War was the rebellion of its neighboring countries and colonies against the metropolises.⁶⁴ First of all, it is in this context that the mutually beneficial cooperation of the officials of the German Empire with Georgia, in particular with the National Committee, is presented. Obviously, this time it will not be possible to fully present the documents reflecting the rather intense relationship that has been going on for years, however, depending on the research goals, it is undoubtedly important to focus on a few of them.

a) Memorandum of September 24, 1914 and additional report card of September 27 “On the Need for the Liberation of Georgia and the Caucasus and Their Acquisition of Neutral Status”.

First of all, let's consider the memorandum and additional report card prepared by the committee members for the German Foreign Ministry.⁶⁵ The memorandum of September 24, 1924, was created by Mikhako Tsereteli and Giorgi Machabli and was intended to be sent to Otto Gunther von Wesendonck, Secretary of the Legation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the German Empire and Secretary of the Middle East Affairs of the Political Department. The name of the memorandum, “On the need for the liberation of Georgia and the Caucasus and their acquisition of a neutral status”, defined the intention of the committee members to return independence to the Georgian people based on the right of self-determination of nations, in which they hoped for the help of the German government.

At the beginning of the memorandum, it is explained that the current war and the world political situation should be used to restore “the political rights of the Georgian people, which were trampled down by the Russian authorities”.⁶⁶ The members of the Committee focused on the “Georgian people as the beneficiary of the right of nations to self-determination and presented the criteria, which had already explained above, were needed to identify “people”. In particular, the appeal states: “The Georgian nation does not consist of conspirators or traitors. It also does not represent any unorganized mass, but a united nation that has existed for twenty-three centuries, which continues to exist

⁶⁴ *Bakradze L.*, “German-Georgian relations during the First World War” – activities of the Georgian National Committee, 1814-1918, Tbilisi, 2010, 31 (in Georgian).

⁶⁵ *Mamulia G.*, *Astamadze G.*, “Committee for the Liberation of Georgia 1914-1918 – documents and materials”, volume, 2019, 83-90 (in Georgian); see Quote: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA AA), Akten Betreffend den Krieg 1914, 'Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unsere Feinde im Kaukasus'. R 21008. 24.09,1914 (B1.65-70) / PAAA, R 21008, 27.09.1914.; < <https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml> > [21.08.2022.].

⁶⁶ *Ibid:* 83, PA AA, R 21008. 24.09, 1914., < <https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml> > [21.08.2022.].

independently, despite its own bitter fate. Under Georgia it is meant a large part of Transcaucasia, along with the cities Tiflis, Kutaisi, Batumi and Poti'.⁶⁷

In addition to the territorial component, the appeal focused on the centuries-old existence, history and the common religion of the Georgian people as a nation: 'Georgians belong to the number of ancient nations in the world'⁶⁸... about 2,500,000 Georgian live in Georgia, most of whom, since 326, belong to the Greek-Orthodox religion... from ancient times, Georgians were known as a brave and freedom-loving people who waged endless wars against their neighbors who wanted to conquer their rich country. The 12th century AD represented a Golden Era for us, an era of development of higher culture, science and literature. The treasure of this literature that has reached our time has excited many scientists and researchers'.⁶⁹

Mikhako Tsereteli and Giorgi Machabeli named the Alliance of Agreement of 1783 as the main legal document that gave full legitimacy to the Georgian peoples demand for independence and briefly reviewed the period before the agreement was signed and the current political situation. In the text of memorandum, it is emphasized that an international agreement was concluded between Erekle II and Russian Empress Catherine II, according to which Georgia became a protectorate of Russia, however on the condition that it would maintain its political freedom and complete independence in matters of internal management. The mentioned agreement which had an international character, was included in the Book of the Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. This Book can be found in Volume XXI. The Russian Emperor, who had officially sworn to forever uphold the terms of this treaty, soon broke his word and divided Georgian into four Russian provinces. As a result of this, the independent kingdom was abolished, despite our protests and soon the well-known policy of Russification made its appearance'.⁷⁰

After drawing attention to the worst consequences brought to the Georgian people by the Russian forced rule, the memorandum emphasizes on the importance of the help of Germany and its allied countries, not only for the Georgian and other European peoples, but also for the German people themselves.⁷¹

As for the supplementary report card of September 27, 1914, attached to the memorandum of September 24, 1914, like the main text of the memorandum, it once again emphasizes the will of the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ For example, the memorandum states: 'the legend about the journey of the Argonauts to Kolkheti, i.e. to modern Western Georgia – which according to the members of the committee, should be considered, along with others, as evidence of the ancient history of our people', See: Ibid, 84, PA AA, R 21008. 24.09,1914., < <https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml> > [21.08.2022.]

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ According to the memorandum, the neutralization of the Caucasus: '1. Disarm dangerous neighbor of Turkey; 2. Liberates Persia from Russian guardianship; 3. Creates a credible guarantee of lasting peace in the Middle East; 4. It opens a wide field of action for trade and business connections of Europe and especially Germany, whose influence can irreversibly spread over the entire Caucasus and Central Asia'; Ibid: 86, See: PA AA, R 21008. 24.09,1914., < <https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml> > [21.08.2022.].

Georgian people to achieve political independence in order to end the ‘political oppression and economic exploitation’ by the Russian Empire for over a century.⁷²

At the same time, in the additional card, the presence of criteria related to ‘the people’ in general is presented once again and in more detail in relation to ‘Georgian people’. It is emphasized that ‘the Kingdom of Georgia existed as an independent state for 23 centuries, until 1801, and was only temporarily under the protectorate of the Persians und Turks. It has bounded territory with firm borders and is inhabited by two and a half million Georgians’. . . Besides, the attention is focused on the fact that the kingdom of Georgia restoring its independence should include all its all provinces (Abkhazia, Samegrelo, Svaneti, Imereti, Guria, Tao-Klarjeti, Samtskhe, Javakheti, Kartli, Kakheti, Pshavi, Khevsureti, Tusheti and Saingilo), which are mostly inhabited by Georgian People’.⁷³

The Georgian National Committee considered it necessary to draw attention to the common language of the Georgian people as one of the most important criteria for identifying the people. It is significant that while discussing the issue of language, they did not forget to focused on the old Georgian dialects, so that the Russian government would not use this issue to oppose people groups. In the provinces included in the territory of Georgia, as we read in the additional card, ‘people use the old Georgian dialect, as, for example, in Samegrelo and Svaneti, which, in fact, should be considered as provincialisms (like the literary German language and the lower-Saxon dialect. The Russian government and politicians tried to create a policy of division between these provinces under the pretext that they were not Georgian, but their efforts turned out to be futile. Besides using their own dialect, the entire population of Samegrelo, Svaneti and other provinces also speaks the pure Georgian language and fourth against the aforementioned Russian defamation. This language remains the church and the literary language of all Georgian tribes from the beginning of our history to the present day.’⁷⁴

b) Collective telegram of the “Nations League Oppressed by Russia” to President Woodrow Wilson

We should pay attention to the fact from the history of the liberation fight of the Georgian people when “Oppressed Nations of Russia” sent the telegram to President Woodrow Wilson in May 1916 based on the right of self-determination. Through this message, the nations oppressed by Russia reported their difficult situation to the President of the United States of America and asked for help. It is meaningful that the violated rights of Georgian people, the issue of the struggle for its independence were presented extensively in the telegram. And the Georgian National Committee had a great contribution to this.

That document is also significant because the members of the Georgian National Committee justified the Georgian people’s demand on restoring independence with the right of nations to self-

⁷² Ibid: 88, See: PA AA, R 21008. 27.09,1914., <<https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml>> [21.08.2022.].

⁷³ Ibid, See: PA AA, R 21008. 27.09,1914., <<https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml>> [21.08.2022.].

⁷⁴ Ibid, See: PA AA, R 21008. 27.09,1914., <<https://politisches-archiv.diplo.de/invenio/main.xhtml>> [21.08.2022.].

determination. In particular, in the address to President Wilson, the centuries-old history of Georgia and the deplorable consequences for the Georgian statehood as a result of the violation of the alliance agreement of 1783 are once again fully described.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, as we have already mentioned, the appeal of the “Nations League Oppressed by Russia” to President Woodrow Wilson did not have any tangible results.⁷⁶ After the victory in the First World War, given the political plans of the Entente states and the spirit of the Versailles treaty, this is not strange. However, the very fact that at the beginning of the 20th century, the members of the Georgian National Committee, with all the legal levers at their disposal, including Fourteen Points Peace Plan initiated by President Wilson in international law, fought for the restoration of Georgia’s independence based on the right of nations to self-determination, speaks volumes. It is another clear proof of determination and high legal culture of Georgian politicians working in the international arena at the beginning of the 20th century.

c) Speech delivered by Mikhako Tsereteli at the Third Conference of the Union of Nations (1916)

While working on this topic, my attention attracted to the speech delivered by Mikhako Tsereteli, a member of the Georgian National Committee, at the Third Conference of the Union of Nations Held on June 27-29, 1916.⁷⁷ The Georgian delegate made a report on the first day and clearly presented the need to separate Georgia from Russia and restore its independence, which actually determined the future course of the conference.⁷⁸ As we learn from the materials found about the conference, the “anti-Russian spirit” reached its culmination during the discussion about Georgia. “Mikhako Tsereteli was allowed to speak as much as he considered necessary. All his words were greeted with admiration and applause” as though “he was settling scores with the Russian Empire”.⁷⁹ After such a speech, it is not surprising that “among the Eastern Nations, the Georgian Tsereteli had the greatest success with his well-grounded explanation. He was able to convince the session not only of the indisputable right of the Georgians to be independent, but also of the unprecedented cruelty how Russia treated the conquered nations”.⁸⁰

IV. Conclusion

Although the Kantian definition of the right of nations to self-determination described in the letter, or you prefer, the highly interesting historical process of transforming the same ‘right of

⁷⁵ *Bakradze L., German-Georgian Relations during the First World War’ – Activities of the Georgian National Committee 1814-1918, Tbilisi, 2010, 117-119; See: ‘Qartuli Gazeti’, N6, 15 June, 1916 (in Georgian).*

⁷⁶ *Bakradze L., German-Georgian Relations during the First World War’ – Activities of the Georgian National Committee 1814-1918, Tbilisi, 2010, 119. See: ‘Qartuli Gazeti’, N12, 16.09.1916 (in Georgian).*

⁷⁷ *Tsereteli M., The Rights of Georgian Nation, ‘Qartuli Gazeti’, 1916, N16, 17, 18 (in Georgian).*

⁷⁸ *Bakradze L., German-Georgian Relations during the First World War’ – Activities of the Georgian National Committee 1814-1918, Tbilisi, 2010, 128 (in Georgian).*

⁷⁹ *Ibid, 129.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid 130-131, See: “Von der dritten Nationalitätenkonferenz”, Korrespondenzblatt der N.O., Nr. 13, 13 Juli, 1916..*

individual self-determination into the right on nations to self-determination' is centuries away and political map has 'changed color' many times during this period, the right of peoples to self-determination remains one of the most pressing issues of the international law. As for its viability, the right of nations to self-determination is presented in the letter as a combination of features characteristic of both international law and the doctrine of nationalism. International law is oriented and based on the state, and nations and people are the basis of nationalism. For both the state is the common fundamental component. The main goal of every nation or people fighting for independence. Accordingly, the paper shares the opinion that the right of nations to self-determination includes both nationalist ideas in the context of the protection of the right of nations, as well as positive international law, as it is a product of international law itself.⁸¹

In the long process of defining the essence of the right of nation to self-determination and especially, presenting it in the form of a theory, the contribution of the 28th president of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, is undoubtedly outstanding.⁸² It can be said with certainty the peace plan presented by him to the Congress contributed to increase in the relevance of the issue of self-determination and had a positive effect on the process of struggle for self-governance and independence of the peoples living in the colonial territories. Among them, the Georgian people who were deprived of their independence by the Russian Empire and at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, the right of nations to self-determination was considered as the best legal lever for the protection of their rights.

As it is presented in the paper, determination of new criteria of the self-determination played the greatest role in directing these extremely interesting political processes in the right direction for the Georgian State. In particular, taking into account, the ethnic, religious, linguistic, historical or other identity-determining indicators of the population living in a specific territory⁸³ Based on these criteria, the members of the Georgian political organization created in the fall of 1914 in Geneva, Georgian National Committee, showed an amazing ability to feel political realism, they managed to bring the pain of the Georgian nation to the world's progressive-minded society. They convinced the partner states that the Georgian people, who were not only a politically mature community, but also presented one of the oldest subjects with statehood in Europe before 1801, had the right to legitimately demand the recognition of state sovereignty and the formation of state institutions according to their own opinion within the framework of the right of nations to self-determination.

On the international arena, they also managed to present clearly one of the most important signs which gives people possibility to live in any part of the world and to enjoy the right of nations to self-determination. In particular, the Committee members were focusing on the centuries-old history, culture, language and ethnic origin of the Georgian people. In addition to the above, they focused on the Alliance Agreement of 1783, which obviously gave the Georgian people's demand for

⁸¹ *Summers J. J.*, The Right of Self-Determination and Nationalism in International Law, International Journal on Minority and Group Rights, Vol. 12, № 4, 2005, 328.

⁸² *Nawaz M.K.*, The Meaning and Range of the Principle of Self-Determination, Duke Law Journal, Vol. 1965, № 1, Winter, 1965, 83.

⁸³ *Whelan A.*, Wilsonian Self-determination and the Versailles Settlement, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vol. 43, № 1, Jan., 1994, 107.

independence even more legitimacy. As a result, at the beginning of the 20th century, Georgia, this time as a democratic republic, returned to the world political map and gave other oppressed nations an excellent example of realizing the right of nations to self-determination in life.

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