THE ROLE OF CARICATURE IN SHAPING COLLECTIVE MEMORY

კარიკატურის როლი მეხსიერების შესაქმნელად[1]

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Abstract

Caricature is a genre of visual art whose expressive language is rooted in irony. It depicts reality in an exaggerated, grotesque manner. The most distinctive features of an event or individual represented in caricature are deliberately hyperbolized in order to create a sharp humorous or critical effect. At first glance, this seemingly harmless genre can, in fact, become a powerful tool of propaganda, as its symbolic language operates through emotion and immediate visual impact — it is not read, but perceived visually. Naturally, political groups clearly understood the potential of caricature and frequently used it to influence the masses and shape collective memory.

This article analyzes the function of caricature in the process of forming collective memory in Soviet Georgia. Particular attention is paid to the visual, rhetorical, and symbolic means through which satirical and humorous press not only represented contemporary political discourse but also deliberately interpreted the past. In this context, caricature is considered not merely as an artistic or entertaining genre, but as a form of ideological influence that participated in the redistribution of historical meanings and the reconfiguration of collective perceptions within public consciousness.

The analysis of materials from the magazines *Niangi* and *Tartarozi* demonstrates that caricature in the Soviet era became an active mediator of memory politics. Through the interaction of visual grotesque, irony, sarcasm, and textual captions, the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its political elite were systematically portrayed as weak, unsuccessful, and historically doomed forces, while Soviet statehood was depicted as a space of progress, order, and development.

Such oppositional representation served not only to discredit political opponents but also to revise historical processes and reinforce negative narratives within collective memory. As a result, caricature emerges as a powerful ideological instrument through which the Soviet regime reassessed the past, diminished alternative state experiences, and legitimized a new political identity.

Keywords: Democratic Republic of Georgia; caricature; Soviet Georgia; Bolsheviks; Mensheviks; *Niangi*; *Tartarozi*; propaganda.

[1] სტატია მომზადდა სადოქტორო კვლევის: „საქართველოს დემოკრატიული რესპუბლიკა კოლექტიურ მეხსიერებაში“ (1918-1953 წწ.) ფარგლებში; ხელმძღვანელი პროფესორი დიმიტრი შველიძე.

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აბსტრაქტი

კარიკატურა სახვითი ხელოვნების ისეთი ჟანრია, რომლის გამომსახველობითი ენა ირონიას ეფუძნება. იგი რეალობას გადაჭარბებული, გროტესკული ფორმით წარმოაჩენს. კარიკატურა მოვლენისა თუ ადამიანის ყველაზე ნიშანდობლივ თვისებებს ჰიპერბოლიზებული სახით გადმოსცემს, რათა გააძლიეროს იუმორისტული ან კრიტიკული ეფექტი. ერთი შეხედვით ეს უწყინარი ჟანრი, რეალურად პროპაგანდის ძლიერ იარაღად შეიძლება იქცეს, რადგან მისი „სამეტყველო ენა“ სიმბოლურია, მოქმედებს ემოციებზე და წამიერ ეფექტზე მუშაობს - არ კითხულობ, ვიზუალურად აღიქვამ მას. ცხადია, კარიკატურის ასეთი შესაძლებლობა კარგად ესმოდა სხვადასხვა პოლიტიკურ ჯგუფებს, რომლებიც ხალხის მასებსა და კოლექტიურ მეხსიერებაზე ზემოქმედებისთვის მას ხშირად იყენებდნენ.

წინამდებარე სტატიაში კარიკატურის ფუნქცია საბჭოთა საქართველოში კოლექტიური მეხსიერების ფორმირების პროცესშია გაანალიზებული. ყურადღება იმ ვიზუალურ, რიტორიკულ და სიმბოლურ საშუალებებზეა გამახვილებული, რომელთა მეშვეობითაც სატირულ-იუმორისტული პრესა არა მხოლოდ მიმდინარე პოლიტიკური დისკურსის რეპრეზენტაციას ახდენდა, არამედ წარსულის მიზანმიმართულ ინტერპრეტაციასაც ქმნიდა. ამ კონტექსტში კარიკატურა განიხილება არა მხოლოდ როგორც მხატვრული ან გასართობი ჟანრი, არამედ როგორც იდეოლოგიური ზემოქმედების ფორმა, რომელიც მონაწილეობდა ისტორიული მნიშვნელობების გადანაწილებასა და საზოგადოებრივ ცნობიერებაში კოლექტიური წარმოდგენების რეკონფიგურაციაში.

კვლევის პროცესში გამოყენებული ჟურნალების: „ნიანგისა“ და „ტარტაროზის“ მასალების ანალიზი აჩვენებს, რომ კარიკატურა საბჭოთა ეპოქაში მეხსიერების პოლიტიკის აქტიურ მედიატორად ჩამოყალიბდა. ვიზუალური გროტესკის, ირონიის, სარკაზმისა და ტექსტუალური მინაწერების ურთიერთქმედების საფუძველზე საქართველოს დემოკრატიული რესპუბლიკა და მისი პოლიტიკური ელიტა სისტემურად წარმოდგენილია როგორც უსუსური, წარუმატებელი და ისტორიულად განწირული ძალა, მაშინ როდესაც საბჭოთა სახელმწიფოებრივი რეალობა აღიწერება როგორც პროგრესის, წესრიგისა და აღმშენებლობის სივრცე.

ამგვარი ოპოზიციური რეპრეზენტაცია ემსახურებოდა არა მხოლოდ პოლიტიკური ოპონენტის დისკრედიტაციას, არამედ ისტორიული პროცესების რედაქციასა და საზოგადოებრივ მეხსიერებაში ნეგატიური ნარატივის განმტკიცებასაც. შედეგად, კარიკატურა წარმოჩნდება იმ მძლავრ იდეოლოგიურ ინსტრუმენტად, რომლის მეშვეობითაც საბჭოთა რეჟიმი ახდენდა წარსულის გადაფასებას, ალტერნატიული სახელმწიფოებრივი გამოცდილების დაკნინებას და ახალი პოლიტიკური იდენტობის ლეგიტიმაციას.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: საქართველოს დემოკრატიული რესპუბლიკა; კარიკატურა; საბჭოთა საქართველო; ბოლშევიკები; მენშევიკები; ნიანგები; თათაროზი; პროპაგანდა.

Introduction

The article examines the role of caricature in shaping collective memory, particularly in Soviet Georgia, where it functioned as an effective instrument of propaganda. The central research problem concerns how the Bolshevik authorities managed, through caricature, to marginalize the Democratic Republic of Georgia (the Menshevik government) and establish a negative representation of it in public consciousness.

The aim of the study is to identify the function of caricature as a form of visual media within the politics of memory and to determine the mechanisms through which a discourse discrediting the Democratic Republic was created and disseminated. According to the hypothesis, caricature represented not merely a satirical genre but a deliberate ideological tool that, through emotional and symbolic language, transformed historical reality.

The research draws on both primary sources and contemporary scholarly literature. A significant foundational work on the genre of caricature is *One Hundred Years of Caricature in Georgia (1880–1980)*, prepared in 2025 together with colleagues (Irine Abesadze, Nino Tchogoshvili, Kristine Darchia, Salome Tchanturidze). That publication examines the development and characteristics of caricature from its origins to the 1980s and played an important role in shaping this chapter of the dissertation. The present article represents one section of the dissertation *The Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1953)*, which explores the broader historical period associated with the formation of the Democratic Republic and the perceptions surrounding it. After 1921, following Georgia's incorporation into the Soviet system, opposition to the achievements of the Republic intensified, and over the years a systematic effort was made to disregard everything associated with independence. This process contributed to the persistence of negative perceptions and nihilistic attitudes toward the Republic that continue to exist today.

The study draws on satirical caricature journals such as *Niangi* (Crocodile) and *Tartarozi*, official historical textbooks, the Soviet newspaper *Komunisti* (Communist), as well as archival materials and memoir literature. The analysis demonstrates that after 1921 a deliberate negative narrative about the Democratic Republic was constructed to undermine its achievements and reshape historical memory.

The findings demonstrate that under Soviet rule caricature functioned as a significant ideological instrument that not only reflected political developments but also actively contributed to the reinterpretation of the past. This process played a crucial role in shaping collective memory and fostering enduring negative perceptions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

The importance of this research lies in its conceptualization of caricature not merely as an artistic expression but as a key medium within the politics of memory. By examining caricature through this lens, the study enables a critical reassessment of Soviet narratives and provides deeper insight into the mechanisms through which historical memory is produced and sustained.

Methods

The research is based on historical-comparative, retrospective, and content analysis methods, as well as the critical interpretation and generalization of empirical material, allowing the issue to be examined from multiple perspectives.

Results

The results indicate that the satirical press—particularly the magazines *Niangi* and *Tartarozi*—functioned in Soviet Georgia not merely as sources of entertainment but as active instruments of memory politics. Caricature was systematically employed to discredit the Democratic Republic of Georgia, undermining its political elite, symbols, and historical legacy. Through the use of grotesque imagery, irony, and sarcasm, these publications produced emotionally charged narratives that shaped public perceptions and reinforced negative attitudes toward the pre-Soviet past.

The study further demonstrates that caricatures deliberately constructed a sharp contrast between the "failed" Menshevik past and the "flourishing" Soviet present. Mensheviks were consistently portrayed as weak, defeated, and socially marginalized figures, whereas the Soviet citizen was depicted as strong, productive, and forward-looking. This binary opposition served not only to frame contemporary political discourse but also to reinterpret historical developments, presenting Soviet authority as the sole legitimate and progressive political order.

Importantly, the influence of caricature extended beyond visual representation to include accompanying texts, captions, and symbolic references that reinforced its ideological message. Over time, these representations became embedded in collective memory, contributing to the gradual consolidation of a nihilistic perception of the Democratic Republic. In this context, seemingly innocuous humor evolved into a powerful ideological instrument capable of delegitimizing political actors, redefining an entire historical period, and shaping Soviet identity.

Discussion

The satirical and humorous genre constitutes one of the most effective artistic forms for reflecting reality, drawing attention to social, political, and human issues through humor, irony, and sarcasm. The principal visual manifestation of this genre is caricature, which represents reality in a grotesque and exaggerated manner and exerts emotional influence through the use of symbolic language. Political actors clearly recognized this visual and emotional power and consequently employed caricature as an instrument for shaping public opinion.

With the development of the press, caricature attained remarkable popularity both globally and in Georgia. It evolved from a mere means of humorous expression into a powerful medium for evaluating and critiquing socio-political realities. For this reason, numerous Georgian publications that featured caricatures became subjects of Tsarist censorship.

In Georgia, the development of the caricature genre is closely linked to the period of the Democratic Republic (1918-1921). The relatively free political environment created new opportunities for artists: satirical and humorous journals and newspapers were published without censorship, where criticism remained sharp yet not cynical, and humor often retained a tone of goodwill. During this period, many distinguished caricaturists were active, and their works vividly reflected the political and social life of the country.

This atmosphere of freedom came to an end with the establishment of Soviet rule. The satirical and humorous press became subject to restrictions, ideological control over artistic production was institutionalized, and Socialist Realism was established as the official doctrine. As a result, individual perspectives and critical thought were increasingly constrained, and artistic production became progressively subordinated to the ideological objectives of the state.

In Soviet Georgia, proletarian works were produced alongside dithyrambic praise of Soviet leaders—poems, pamphlets, and other texts dedicated to them, frequently accompanied by propagandistic caricatures.

In 1922, the satirical magazine *Krokodil* was founded in Moscow within the Soviet Union. The publication rapidly achieved widespread popularity, and soon other Soviet republics began issuing periodicals of a similar character.

In Soviet Georgia, the Bolshevik authorities maintained their own satirical and humorous publications, most notably *Niangi* and *Tartarozi*. Within the framework of this study, particular attention is devoted to these magazines. The analysis seeks to demonstrate how Soviet authorities employed satire and caricature as instruments for managing public emotions and shaping the collective memory of the emerging Soviet citizen.

Niangi **Magazine**

The weekly satirical magazine *Niangi* was published intermittently between 1923 and 1924 and later on a regular basis from 1931 to 1981. In 1923, the magazine was edited by S. Todria, while from 1933 onward the position of editor was held by Sandro Euli. The editorial staff included figures such as S. Gachechiladze, I. B. Khomeriki, and I. Vakeli. Beginning in 1944, the editorial board expanded to include prominent cultural and literary figures, among them I. Grishashvili, K. Kaladze, U. Japaridze, S. Pashalishvili, and Grigol Abashidze, the latter subsequently serving as editor of the magazine (Gagoshidze, 2004).

It is noteworthy that from December 1924 to 1931 the magazine was published twice a month under the title *Tartarozi* as a supplement to the newspaper *Musha* (The Worker). From 1931 onward, it resumed publication under the original title *Niangi*.

Despite its satirical format, the magazine *Niangi* in fact performed an important ideological function. Analysis of its materials demonstrates that caricature was used as an effective instrument of propaganda aimed at discrediting the Democratic Republic of Georgia and reinforcing the Soviet narrative.

From the earliest issues, a sharply negative attitude of the Bolsheviks toward the Mensheviks is clearly evident. For example, a caricature of Stalin published in the 1923 issue with the caption “No Mensheviks” vividly reflects the political line aimed at the complete rejection and expulsion of the Menshevik force.

Beginning in the 1930s, this narrative became even more pronounced. The magazine systematically compared the industrial development of Soviet Georgia with the difficult living conditions of Mensheviks in exile. In caricatures, they were depicted as impoverished, defeated, and ridiculous figures, deliberately diminishing their political and moral significance. At the same time, Soviet reality was presented as a space of progress, construction, and success (Magazine "Niangi" (1923.) #13, Tbilisi).

Caricatures of the 1930s frequently featured the symbolic motif of the so-called “end of Menshevik hopes,” including images of their “funeral,” poverty in exile, and helpless existence in Paris. Such visual imagery served not only political criticism but also the transformation of historical memory. For example, a caricature by the artist Kokiashvili titled “February Has Come, They Have Stepped into the Water” depicts members of the Menshevik government leaving the country via the Black Sea. In the corners of the drawing, clenched fists symbolize the fists of Georgian workers, while the rest of the composition shows Mensheviks fleeing with bags on their backs across the sea (Magazine "Niangi" (1933.) #4, Tbilisi). This caricature creates the impression that the Menshevik government was driven out by the will of the people, whereas in

reality it was overthrown as a result of Bolshevik military intervention. Thus, the visual narrative deliberately distorts historical reality and contributes to the consolidation of Soviet ideological discourse.

In the 1940s, although international affairs became a priority—primarily ideological struggle against fascist Germany—the Menshevik narrative continued to retain its tragicomic form. The Menshevik émigré was portrayed as a nostalgic figure, detached from reality and lagging behind Soviet achievements.

"A Menshevik in a Foreign Café," created by Sandro Nadareishvili, published on the front page of *Niangi* in 1940.

It depicts a Menshevik émigré sitting in a café in Paris, mentally returning to Tbilisi, where in his imagination the streets are chaotic and backward. Meanwhile, a waiter brings him an issue of *Niangi,* showing a modern, illuminated, and well-developed city. When the émigré asks, "What city is this?", the waiter replies: "It is the capital of Soviet Georgia—one from which you were expelled twenty years ago."

Through this imagery, the artist intentionally intensifies the sense of loneliness and alienation of the émigré, transforming the past into a ghostlike illusion in which Mensheviks appear weak, detached from reality, and opposed to progress and development (Magazine "Niangi" (1940.) #16, Tbilisi).

By the early 1950s, this narrative became fully established through a sharp contrast between past and present. Caricatures opposed the "chaotic" Georgia of the Democratic Republic to the "prosperous" Soviet state of the 1950s, thereby reinforcing the idea that Soviet rule was the logical and just outcome of historical development.

One such example is the caricature titled "Erased Image," created by the artist Doni. The drawing depicts Tbilisi as disordered and chaotic, highlighting social inequality and hardship. The accompanying caption reads: "This image was crossed out by Tbilisi on the thirtieth anniversary of Soviet Georgia" (Magazine "Niangi" (1951.) #4, Tbilisi).

Dozens of caricatures created in this spirit filled the pages of the magazine. Clearly, *Niangi* extended beyond the function of a humorous publication and became an important instrument of memory politics. Its caricatures deliberately shaped negative perceptions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, delegitimized it, and simultaneously constructed Soviet identity as a symbol of progress and victory.

The publication deliberately avoided mentioning the Democratic Republic of Georgia directly, or placed it in quotation marks in an attempt to delegitimize it, while the use of the term "Menshevik government" narrowed its meaning and portrayed it as acting against the interests of the people.

Tartarozi

The satirical-humorous magazine *Tartarozi* was first published in 1924. Its inaugural issue appeared on November 16 of that year. The periodical functioned as a supplement to the newspaper *Musha* and was issued on a biweekly basis. Its editor was P. M. Sakvarelidze. On the pages of the publication, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was consistently portrayed through pronounced grotesque imagery and sharp mockery. Among the preferred subjects of the magazine's cartoonists and correspondents were Noe Jordania and Noe Ramishvili. The publication systematically addressed the governance of the Menshevik administration, emphasizing what it represented as its treacherous character and condemning the alleged colonization of the country. Particularly notable was *Tartarozi*'s treatment of

the Church and the clergy: ruined churches, impoverished clergymen, and dispossessed nobles frequently constituted central targets of satire. In contrast, the principal positive emphasis was placed on the victorious working class and the process of Soviet construction (Gagoshidze, 2004).

The magazine *Tartarozi* fulfilled a significant ideological function within the Georgian press of the Soviet period. Analysis of its materials demonstrates that caricature was actively employed as an instrument for discrediting the Democratic Republic of Georgia and consolidating the Soviet narrative.

From the earliest issues of the magazine, a deliberate and systematic effort to discredit the Menshevik government is clearly discernible. In publications from 1925, the narrative of the so-called "fugitive government" begins to take shape, in which former ministers are depicted as figures who abandoned the country, pursued material benefit, and evaded responsibility. Visual and textual materials together construct a caricatured and degraded image of these political actors.

In the issue of February 25, 1925, the magazine *Tartarozi* once again directed attention to the Menshevik government and began to disseminate the idea of "runaway ministers" who had taken everything with them. On the title page of the publication, a caricature executed by Doni depicts a procession of victorious Soviet citizens accompanied by the inscriptions "Long Live Communism" and "Long Live the Working Class 1921–1925," presenting the scene as a festive parade (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #4, Tbilisi).

Another drawing by Doni attracts particular attention: members of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia are portrayed in Istanbul, seated in a boat as bent and destitute figures. At the bow of the vessel appears the torn flag of Georgia, while on the shore upright Soviet citizens, holding a raised Soviet banner, express visible joy (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #4, Tbilisi).

During the same period, caricatures clearly articulated a visual contrast between Soviet Georgia and the condition of Mensheviks in exile. On one side stands the victorious and elevated Soviet society; on the other appear impoverished, humiliated, and powerless emigrants. Such visual opposition deliberately shaped a negative perception of the Democratic Republic among readers.

From the second half of the 1920s onward, *Tartarozi* increasingly relied on personalized satire. Noe Jordania, Noe Ramishvili, Akaki Chkhenkeli, and other political figures were portrayed in caricatures as weak, ridiculous, and detached from reality. They were frequently compared to grotesque figures or associated with chaos, disorder, and futile political activity, with the clear objective of fully delegitimizing their political authority.

In the issue of December 13, 1925, an article titled "The Menshevik Struggle" was published. The concept of the caricature was inspired by the printing of the newspaper *Brdzola* in Paris by Noe Ramishvili. The caricature bears the caption: "Karlo Chkheidze is breeding rabbits at the Leuville farm." Based on this report extracted from newspapers, *Tartarozi* dedicated both a caricature and a satirical poem to the subject.

Noe Ramishvili is depicted holding a newspaper, followed by Noe Jordania, Akaki Chkhenkeli, and Karlo Chkheidze. Through this representation, *Tartarozi* sought to portray a supposedly "idle" political group whose struggle existed only on the pages of newspapers (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #27, Tbilisi).

The issue of February 21, 1926, of *Tartarozi* was devoted to Noe Jordania. The caricatures were accompanied by a satirical poem entirely dedicated to the discrediting of the Mensheviks. Georgian proverbs were incorporated into the poem, and each chapter maintained a consistent tone of irony aimed at diminishing specific political figures, their behavior, and their so-called "historical activity." In this way, the author sought to depict Mensheviks as comic figures abandoned by the people (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1926.) #37, Tbilisi).

Particularly illustrative are the issues from 1927-1928, in which caricature began to employ symbolic violence more openly. The Menshevik government was portrayed as a "fugitive," "defeated," or "submerged" force, while Soviet authority appeared as a victorious and historically inevitable system. Such representations served not only political criticism but also the restructuring of historical memory.

The opening caricature in the issue of February 25, 1927, of *Tartarozi* once again mocked the significance of February 25, 1921. The drawing is divided into two parts corresponding to two dates — February 23 and February 25. On February 23, represented on the left side of the page, Noe Ramishvili stands at a tribune addressing the crowd with the words: "Citizens, what is the matter — what has frightened you? In the name of democracy, I swear that we shall not move from here!" On the right side, representing February 25, a Bolshevik worker stands at the tribune holding a raised flag, while the figure of Ramishvili, now reduced in size, is shown being thrown from the platform amid the cheers and applause of a jubilant crowd (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1926.) #8, Tbilisi).

On the page following the title illustration, Noe Jordania is depicted in tears, carrying religious icons and crosses on his back as burdens. The caricature is accompanied by the caption: "How long must I carry this property…?"

The entire issue is devoted to portraying the lament of the émigré government, emphasizing its supposed misery and inactivity. Among the illustrations published in the magazine is a caricature by Doni titled "Have Mercy," which depicts an émigré dressed in torn clothing following a bourgeois figure and requesting financial contributions — mere "kopecks" — to continue the struggle against the Bolsheviks. The bourgeois responds: "I spent millions against them and nothing came of it — what good will a few kopecks do?"

On the final page, another caricature by Doni presents a sorrowful émigré immersed in contemplation, above whose head appears an image symbolizing six years of Soviet reconstruction. The drawing is accompanied by the caption: "Georgian Menshevik: There, in Georgia, the six-year anniversary weighs heavily on my heart, while here — the six-year leaderless existence of Jordania's government!" (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1927.) #38, Tbilisi).

In the issues published between 1929 and 1930, this narrative became even more firmly established. Caricatures increasingly emphasized Soviet industrial development, technological progress, and social transformation, while simultaneously associating the Menshevik past with poverty, disorder, and political impotence. Particular attention was also devoted to the ironic discrediting of the symbols of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, deliberately diminishing their perceived historical significance.

The eighth issue of *Tartarozi* in 1930 was devoted entirely to the theme of Sovietization and to the anniversary of February 25. On the title page, under the heading "Arriving to Work," the clandestine return of Mensheviks across the Black Sea is depicted. In the illustration, the "agents" seated in a boat observe Georgian towns and cities, newly constructed factories, and industrial enterprises, expressing disbelief at what they see: "No, this cannot be Georgia! Look how many factories there are! This is an entirely different country… We must have lost our direction and mistaken the road." (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi).

In the same issue, Doni's caricature titled "The Black Sea" is presented with the ironic caption: "The Black Sea — the Mensheviks' dark road." This is followed by a series of texts intended to diminish the authority of former government leaders. Among them is a satirical depiction of Shalva Karumidze's diplomatic missions to Germany. In another illustration titled "The Sight of the Blind," a Menshevik émigré is shown reading a newspaper received from Georgia describing the reconstruction of Soviet Georgia. The accompanying caption reads: "Did I not say that in Communist Georgia everything was being destroyed?"

The implication of the image, however, communicates the opposite message — reinforcing the Bolshevik narrative of progress and development.

One of the most memorable caricatures in the same issue presents the coat of arms of the Democratic Republic of Georgia — a central national symbol — rendered with pronounced irony and contempt. The caricature, titled "Fallen from the Saddle," depicts an emaciated and exhausted horse weakened by hunger, led forward by a rider holding a flag in one hand and a shield in the other. The sun and the moon — key elements of the state emblem — are portrayed as shedding tears. The illustration is accompanied by the caption: "Saint — White George: Alas! I have become so worn down over these nine years that my steed now resembles Solomon Morbeladze's spinning wheel" (Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi).

The publication of the magazine *Tartarozi* ceased in 1930. It was subsequently replaced by a new periodical published under the title *Niangi*, which continued the satirical tradition within the Soviet press.

The magazine *Tartarozi* cannot be regarded merely as a humorous publication. Rather, it represents a significant instrument of Soviet propaganda that, through the medium of caricature, facilitated the delegitimization of the past and the consolidation of a new ideological reality. Its visual and textual narratives functioned collectively to construct a negative representation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and to reinforce the politics of Soviet historical memory.

Conclusions

Thus, the conducted research demonstrates that satirical-humorous publications of the Soviet period — particularly the magazines *Niangi* and *Tartarozi* — extended far beyond the boundaries of the humorous genre and functioned as central instruments of memory politics. Caricature, which formally relied on seemingly harmless humor, in reality became a powerful mechanism of deliberate ideological influence through which the Democratic Republic of Georgia was delegitimized and its historical significance systematically diminished.

The materials of both publications clearly demonstrate that caricature consistently constructed a sharp contrast between the Menshevik past and the Soviet present. Mensheviks were portrayed as weak, defeated, impoverished, and detached from reality, whereas the Soviet citizen was represented as a strong, productive, and victorious force. Such visual and textual opposition sought not only to discredit a particular political group but also to reshape historical processes and strengthen the legitimacy of Soviet authority.

It is particularly significant that caricature operated through the combined use of symbolic, emotional, and visual codes, which granted it a distinctive influence on the formation of collective memory. The deliberate diminishment of the symbols, historical figures, and political significance of the Democratic Republic of Georgia — achieved through ironic and grotesque reinterpretations — ultimately produced a negative narrative that became firmly embedded in public consciousness.

The present study does not seek to undertake a formal artistic or stylistic analysis of caricature. Nevertheless, a comparison between Soviet and pre-Soviet caricatures clearly reveals a decline in artistic quality: weaker draftsmanship, coarse and inconsistent lines, reduced dynamism, and simplified forms.

Such an aesthetic corresponded precisely to the requirements of Soviet ideology: form gradually lost its value, while content was transformed into a powerful instrument of propaganda — an instrument that did not require refined artistic execution, since its principal objective was emotional impact and the transformation of collective memory.

Thus, Soviet caricature should not be understood merely as an artistic or satirical expression. Rather, it constitutes an ideological instrument designed to reinterpret historical reality, construct a new political identity, and shape the figure of the "new Soviet citizen." Within this context, caricature must be examined as an active mediator of memory politics, whose influence extends beyond its own historical period and continues to shape contemporary perceptions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

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Periodical press

Magazine "Niangi" (1923.) #13, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Niangi" (1933.) #4, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Niangi" (1940.) #16, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Niangi" (1951.) #4, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #4, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #27, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1926.) #8, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1927.) #89, Tbilisi.

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Professor Dimitri Shvelidze, for his guidance and support.

Illustrations

Photo 1

Magazine "Niangi" (1923.) #13, Tbilisi.

Photo 2

Magazine "Niangi" (1933.) #4, Tbilisi.

Photo 3

Magazine "Niangi" (1940.) #16, Tbilisi.

Photo 4

Magazine "Niangi" (1951.) #4, Tbilisi.

Photo 5

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #4, Tbilisi.

Photo 6

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1925.) #27, Tbilisi.

Photo 7

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1926.) #8, Tbilisi.

Photo 8

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1927.) #89, Tbilisi.

Photo 9

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1927.) #89, Tbilisi.

Photo 10

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1927.) #89, Tbilisi.

Photo 11

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi.

Photo 12

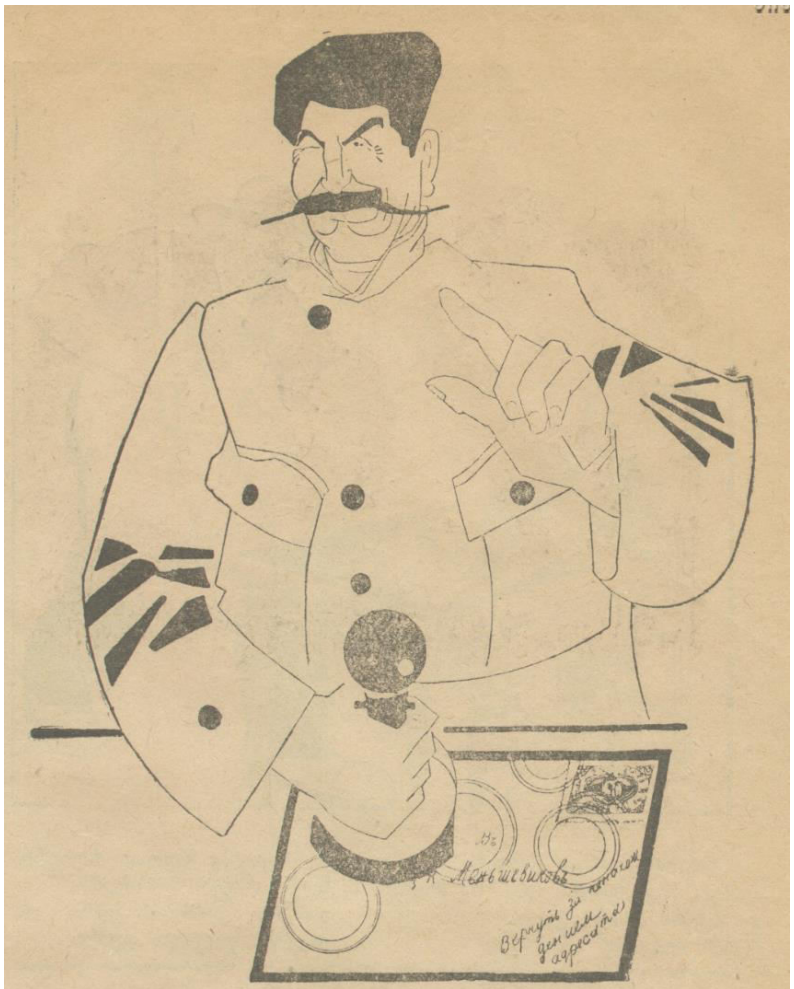
Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi.

Photo 13

Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi.

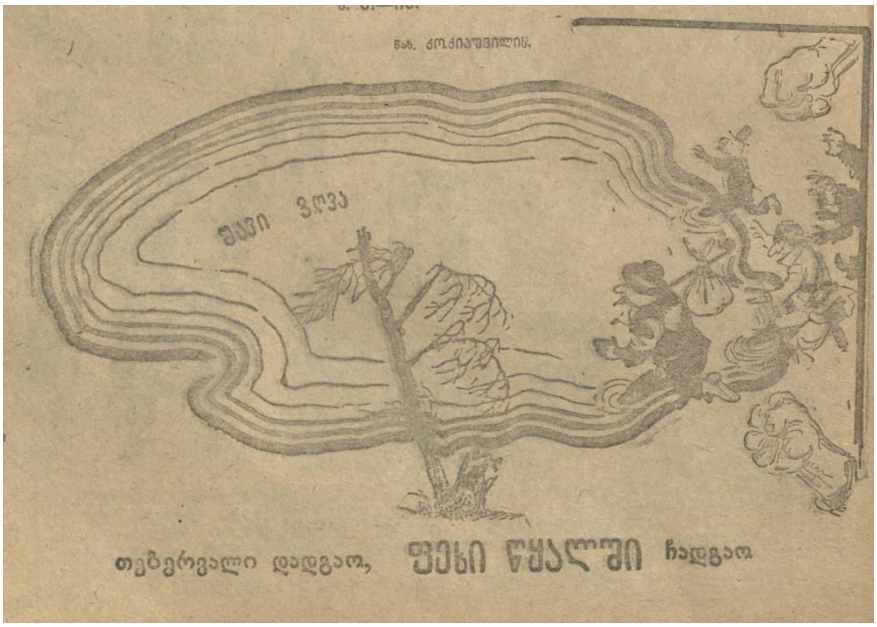
Photo 14 Magazine "Tartarozi" (1930.) #8, Tbilisi.

ფოტო 1



ამხ. ჯუღაშვილი—სტალინი: არავითარი მენშევიკები!..
(„კროკოდილიდან“).

ფოტო 2


ნახ. კოჭიაშვილის.
ფუტი ვოვა
თებერვალი დადგაო, ფეხი წყალში ჩადგაო

ფოტო 3


ნახ. ს. ნაფარეიშვილისა
ნიანგი
მენშევიკი უცხოთის კაუჭში
№16. 1940 წ.
თბილისი

ფოტო4


ნაშრიში სურათი
ამ სურათს თბილისმა საბჭოთა საქართველოს XXX წლისთავზე სამი ჯვარი (XXX) გადაუხვა.

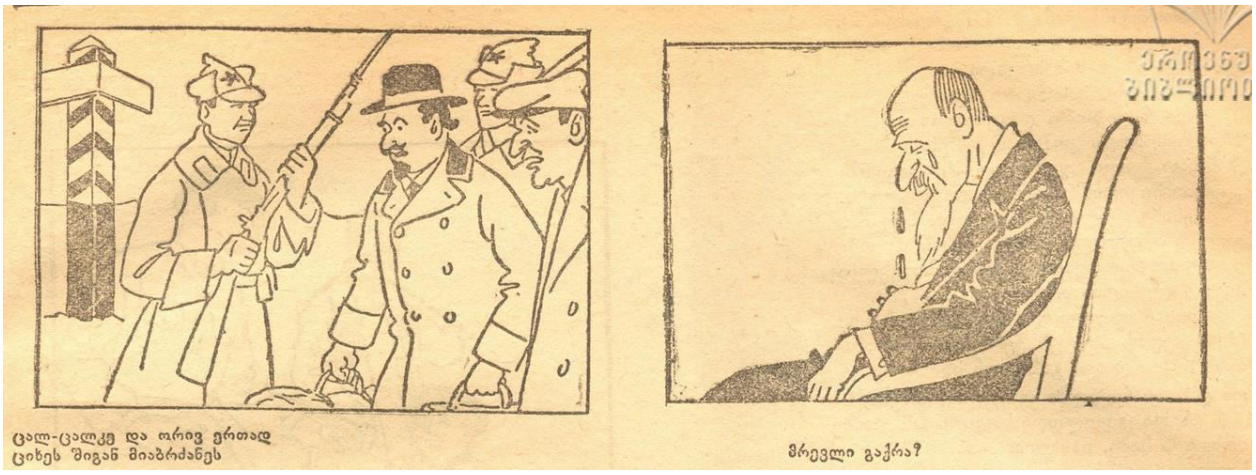
ფოტო 5


ქვეყანა იყო ღვთის განწირული,
ოთხ წელს იწვიმა კოკისპირული.
ტალღები სტორცხნა კავკასიონსა,
აღარ შეეძლო შველა სიონსა.
ღმერთმა უბრძანა: აგე მალე
„კიდობანი და უ ველე თავსა.
„სადღაც შორს მხარეს გადაიმალე,
„რათა ასცილდე საქმესა ავსა".
გემი კოლხეთის სტოვებს ნაპირებს,
სამშვიდობოზე გასვლას აპირებს.
— უნდა ავიდეს მთა არარატზე,
მაგრამ გაჩერდა ის არარაზე.

ფოტო 6


მენშევიკთა „გრძოლა“
„რამიშვილმა პარიზში გაზეთი „ბრძოლა“ გამოუშვა.
კარლო ჩხეიძე კურდღლის ბაკიებს აშენებს ლიონვილის ფერმაში“.
გაზეთებიდან.

ფოტო 7


ცალ-ცალკე და ორივ ერთად
ციხეს შიგან მიაბრძანეს
მრევლი გაქრა?

ფოტო 8

ნ. რამიშვილი. რაშია საქმე მოჭალაქენო, რამ შეგაშინათ! დემოკრატიის სახელით ვიცავ ვდებ, რომ აქედან ჩვენ ფეხსაც არ მოვიცლით!

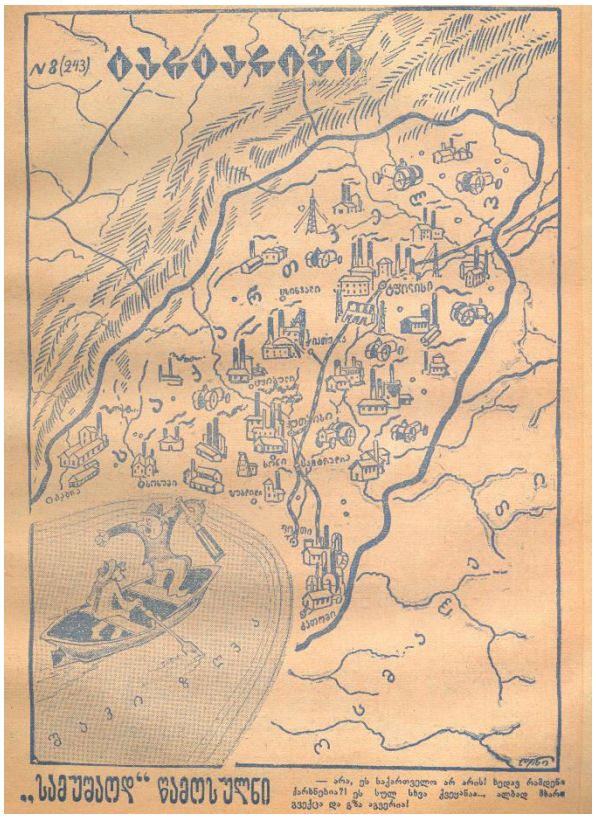
ნ. რამიშვილი. (ძეშას). რა შია საქმე. აძხანაგო, რომ ასე უწრდელათ ეპყრობით ჩემს ალმატებულებას?..

ფოტო 9

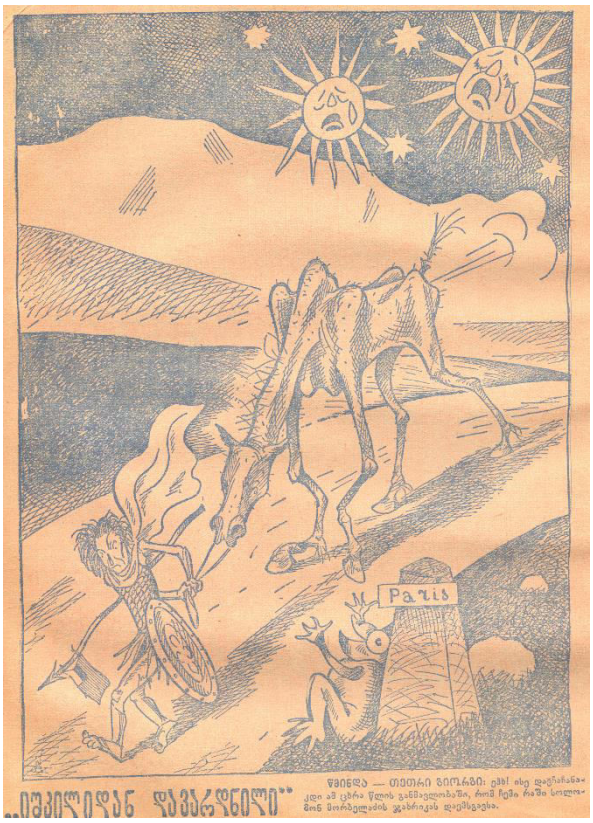
ფოლადანია: როდემდის ვათოიო ეს ქონება...

ფოტო 10

ფოტო 11



ფოტო 12



„ოცნებიდან დამგრწილი"

ფოტო 13

ბრძის მზედველობა

ფოტო 14


„მთავრობის“ სხდომა
11
— ამჯერად, ქარუმიძემ ჩვენ იმედი ვერ გაგვი მართლა, ჩერჩილების საქმე ჩაფლავდა. დავრჩით უფლავით. გადავდივარ შემდეგ მთავარ საკითხზე: ვის ვეხ ტუმბროთ დღეს სადილზე?
„დიდი ნოე: — ეს მეცხრე მძივიც გადაითვალა, ნეტა ვიცოდე —რა გველის „ხვალა“?.
პატარა ნოე: — მძივნი ალბად მთლად გადაითვლება, ჩვენი იმედიც გარდაიცვლება.