

GEORGIA

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Thursday, June 27--Monday, July 15, 2002

Visit #28



"Sergo was the friend that every person in the world dreams of having....."

H. Kenneth Walker M.D.
Emory University School of Medicine

<http://www.emory.edu/MED/EXCHANGE/HKW/>

Thursday, June 27

On Tuesday evening at 6 pm, while driving on Piedmont Avenue from my office at Grady Hospital, I received a frantic call from Andro Kacharava, a Georgian and close friend who has just joined the cardiology faculty with us, "Ken, Sergo Kobaladze is no longer with us." Andro's cousin and my close friend Sergo had died two hours before tragically in a car accident in Tbilisi.

Sergo completed his sophomore year in the college at Emory a few weeks ago, and was working in Tbilisi this summer before taking his junior year abroad at the London School of Economics, starting in October. His father Archil had died of a glioblastoma at Emory Hospital December 24, 2001, a scant six months ago (visit #25). I have known Sergo since he was ten, and have happily and proudly watched him grow from a gangling kid into a secure and mature young man, full of life, promise and hope. He was the apple of his father's and mother's eyes, and the joy and pride of the rest of us who knew him. He was the third child, preceded by Salome and Tiniko, and the product of a difficult pregnancy complicated by several bouts of thrombophlebitis. His mother had insisted on going through the pregnancy, and the result had proven to be more than worth the effort and danger to her. Tom Burns, of the Department of History of Emory, had gotten him a scholarship to Emory. During his two years he had majored in economics, made virtually straight A's, become a pillar of the Sigma Chi fraternity, and was the beloved friend of classmates such as David, Alex and Perry.

An email from David, with whom he roomed during the last year:

Ken,

I'm writing this letter with the intention of you sharing my words with everybody that I don't have the ability to share them with. There is nothing that I would want more than to be with Sergo's family and friends in Georgia to do this in person but unfortunately that isn't a possibility for me.

Sergo was one of my best and closest friends I have ever had making his tragic death the worst news that I have ever faced. Sergo will always know the special bond that we had and the great and memorable times that we spent together but I want everybody who didn't to be aware of our amazing friendship and the special place he will forever hold in my heart. Most importantly, I want his friends and family in Georgia to know that he touched so many people in the States and the importance he played in our lives.

Reflecting back on the times we spent together I can honestly say that I have never met a better man in my life than my dear friend Sergo. He was by far the most loyal and genuine person that I have ever known and I will always admire the characteristics he possessed and the important role they played in our friendship.

He was a friend that was always there for me regardless of the situation. He was a friend that I trusted more than any other. Basically, he was a friend that knew the true meaning of friendship and the sincerity and love that goes along with it.

Sergo was the friend that every person in the world dreams of having as I'm sure anyone who has had the pleasure of being one of his friends knows.

As I mourn over the devastating loss of Sergo, I can't help but to smile over the amazing friendship we had and the great memories that we created together. As Sergo knows, words could never justify our friendship but I hope I have at least conveyed how much Sergo meant to me and how much I will dearly miss him.

Sincerely,
David Savett

I don't think anyone could sum up Sergo better than David's words: "Sergo was the friend that every person in the world dreams of having....." His death takes away from us one of the sweetest passions life has to offer: friendship. He had an extraordinary ability to remain very much his own person, yet fit himself seamlessly to the contours and needs of his close friends.

From Alex:

Brothers and friends, Sergo passed away on his way home from a trip with friends on Tuesday, June 25 near Midnight his time and around 3 or 4 in the afternoon our time. It was nearly 6 months to the day that his father passed away this year on Christmas eve. He was a victim of circumstance, the only one killed of the 41 in the car, and through no fault of his own. His friend said that he did not suffer, and that there was nothing that could be done. He is survived by his mother and two sisters, both older and married.

I met Sergo freshman year in the first few days of school. I had a great deal of trouble leaving home and my girl friend and he quickly became my best friend, always there to talk to me, eat lunch and dinner, and study. He embodied such beautiful traits: diligence, intelligence, athleticism, love, but what stood out most to those who knew him best was his loyalty. He was the most loyal person I will ever know. Once he heard a friend was in a fight and he ran outside with a switchblade and a hammer to defend him, caring less for who it was against or why. He was unwavering in his commitment to friends and unconditionally devoted to those that he loved. He put family in the highest regard, a trait that I initially thought excessive as he would punch me in the balls for calling him a son of a bitch, but later understood. He taught me that while everything changes, your location, job, ideas, friends, and income, family was constant, always there for you and loyal even beyond death. The beauty in this maxim is that he extended its grasp and enveloped all of us in his "family." His idea of brotherhood transcended that which we could ever comprehend.

The death of his father this spring was a complete shock to all of us. His father had been ill, but had been showing such signs of recovery that Sergo went to Germany for the holidays, only to return home for a funeral. But through the tough treatment and the deterioration of his father, and then through his death, Sergo remained strong and carried on with his life as his father would have wanted him too. As impossible as that sounds, it's now our turn to display some of the same strength that our friend showed with grace every day. He would want us to remember his life, not the tragedy of his death.

Everything in life happens for a purpose, and it's inconceivable to believe that we can ever comprehend a plan that is greater than us. The first thing we think is that Sergo is gone, robbed from us. However, while brief, the impact he had on our life sustains

for as long as we remember him. Sergo was more than a body; he embodied ideals, opinions, and feelings that will remain long after his death. As long as we remember what he lived for and exemplified, and carry the strength and loyalty that he practiced with us, Sergo never really leaves us.

I love you all and if you need anything, or want to talk, my cell is.....

Alex

Sergo had been riding down a hill in Tbilisi around midnight with several of his friends. He was on the passenger side. The car was going fast when a dog appeared in the road, and the driver swerved to avoid it. The car went out of control and hit a tree squarely on the passenger side. One of his friends in the car told me the car turned around like a roulette wheel before hitting the tree. Sergo was killed instantly. I saw the huge depressed skull fracture on the right frontoparietal area, and there is no doubt of that. He had several open fractures of the femur. The car was so compressed his body apparently had to be removed through the sun roof. His friends, remarkably, walked away from the wreck.

I had planned to leave next Tuesday to go to Tbilisi, and in fact Sergo and I had a number of plans for my two week stay. I had the habit of talking to him on his cell phone at least every day, and we were looking forward a lot to the next two weeks.

Date: Wed, 19 Jun 2002 10:08:09 +0400
From: Sergo Kobaladze <sergo.kobaladze@silkroad.ge>
To: Ken Walker <kwalk04@emory.edu>
Subject: Hey

Dear Ken,

It's a great pleasure to hear from you so often and we are looking forward to seeing you in July. I'm doing pretty well at work and in private life. As you could see yesterday we were in Graz (Austrian restaurant) with some girls that I find attractive. However I think that I'm getting into a lot of trouble because I have a feeling that I like two girls at the same time. It will be pretty hard to keep them secret from each other and if they find out, I might not meet you in July. Hopefully this is funny and it will remain funny.

Make sure that if your students need anything that they get in touch with me. Even if they don't need anything I would like to take them out for dinner or something sometime.

Take care,

Sergo

The comment "I might not meet you in July. Hopefully this is funny and it will remain funny." So poignantly prophetically pathetic.

His new credit card had come to my place, and he sent this message:

Date: Tue, 28 May 2002 02:07:22 -0400
From: Sergo Kobaladze <skobala@hotmail.com>
To: kwalk04@emory.edu
Subject: Re: credit card

send it with someone! If you can, no rush!

Good to hear that you are backj and well.

My close friend died in an accident two days ago and we are not doing too well, b uit after my father i think i became extremely cold-blooded and this scares me.

Best,

Sergo

His friend had died in a car accident also: a wire from an electric trolley had fallen suddenly in front of his car and in swerving to avoid it he had crashed. The friend died exactly one month earlier than the day Sergo died.

Some excerpts from emails he wrote to his friend and Emory classmate Alex, who is in New York this summer, and is also going to the London School of Economics for his junior year abroad:

X-FC-Forwarded-From: sergo.kobaladze@silkroad.ge

Sounds like you are living a decent life in NYC. I'm really looking forward to London a lot. Hopefully we will get a cool place to live and then we gonna have a great time. Some of my friends form here might come study in London as well, so you will be able to meet them. I'm getting into my job more and more, in the eveninng i usually go out hangin out at some hot spots(there aren't many) and if my girlfriend does not have to sing at night i spend time with her.

Watch out for those bombers, or i will have to avenge you, which will be unlucky for the Arabs.

I'm really glad to hear from you man. I do miss you too. Evrything is going more or less well over here. i'm working pretty hard, probably not as hard as yo guys over there(a little eastern advantage). My work is pretty lively and interesting so it keeps me involved. i'm in some deep shit with georgian girls. If you can believe me i'm literary dating 2 girls from the same neighbourhood. The singer girl and the new gorgeous girl that i met a week ago. I really don't exaggarate anything. I'm ablout to get busted and go down for a while, but i like both of them and sometimes wish i was allowed to have a harem.

In the Appendix I have placed two papers, one written by Sergo in applying to the London School of Economics, and the other an "interview" with him written by his friend Dave for an Economics paper at Emory.

I immediately changed my plans and caught the plane the next day to Tbilisi, going through London in order to get there and have two days with the family before the funeral.

Friday, June 28

Arrived in Gatwick and switched to Heathrow, getting into Tbilisi about midnight Friday. Met by Zviad Kirtava, and immediately went to the new Betsy's Hotel and to sleep.

Saturday, June 2

After breakfast I went over to Sergo's house, to a scene eerily and brutally identical to that of Archil's death in December. The flat is on the third floor in a cement building with many flats. The outside and entrance are unpretentious. Inside are beautiful flats, completely unexpected based on the exterior--a characteristic of many such flats in the former Soviet Union. The visitor enters into an anteroom that opens into a hallway, three other rooms and the main room, which is a combination of dining room and family room.

Sergo's body is in an open casket in the center of this room, in the place where the dining room table is usually. He lies on embroidered damask.

The casket is polished blond wood. Sergo was 6'4" (193 cm), unusually tall for a Georgian. There were no caskets in stock that were long enough. Levan Kacharava, his cousin, put enough pressure (and lari) upon the casket makers for them to work through the night on Tuesday constructing a suitably long casket. The tops of the caskets are kept outside, often standing up against the walls. Andro Kacharava (cardiologist on our faculty at Emory; brother of Levan and cousin of Sergo) told me that as a child one of his most unpleasant images was being taken by his parents to view someone's body, and seeing the top of the casket leaning up against the wall of the building, awaiting the burial.

Upon close inspection of the body a very large depressed skull fracture is evident on the right frontoparietal area, with a sutured laceration extending frontally. The nose was broken, but in place, and I see evidence of fractures of the facial bones also. There are also some open fractures of the right femur. Sergo had been riding in the right passenger seat of the car, and I have remarked previously his three friends walked away from the car. The tree hit exactly on the right door. He was in the wrong seat. In Georgia the senior person sits in the right front seat. Nika, his friend who was in the back seat, told me Sergo was always in the senior's seat, without question. The wrong seat.

His face had the waxen pallor of death, but even in death the strength and comeliness of his facial features was such that one expected the eyes to open, twinkling, and his lips to crinkle into a warm smile at any moment. Sergo had formidable charm, and was precocious in his ability to interact with others both to their enjoyment and his pleasure.

There is a large cross by the side of the body, and two candles on a table at the head. To the right of and behind his body a succession of friends read constantly from a book of the Psalms. The women readers place a scarf over their heads.

The women of the family, twenty-three of them, are dressed in black and sit in a large semicircle around the room. The men, myself included, stand against the wall at the end of the semicircle. The ambient light is dim but not dark, coming from lights in surrounding rooms and a large bay window in the room about fifteen feet behind the head of the casket. The blond parquet floor resonates with the lighter blond casket.

Mourners enter the room, often with flowers they place on the floor beside the casket, or on it if they are especially close. They pass in the long semicircle between the women mourners along the walls and the body, ending up shaking the hands of the men at the end of the semicircle. Most of the mourners look once quickly at Sergo, then avert their eyes. On different and frequent occasions several young women leaned over him and wept copiously, resting their head on his body, and then kissing him.

Public mourners come each day from about four until seven o'clock, although the home is open at all times to anyone. During the reception for the public large numbers pass in the semicircle around the casket, kissing the mother and grandmother, shaking their hands, or simply nodding their heads depending upon the closeness of their relationship. Most of them place flowers by the casket, which rapidly pile up, and two of Sergo's young cousins are kept constantly busy taking the flowers away to a storage place, from whence they will be taken to the burial ground.

Sergo's two sisters are in constant attendance. Salome, the oldest of the three (Sergo the youngest), and Tiniko, who is married to one of Sergo's treasured mentors, Archil Arveladze. Archil is a world famous soccer player, as is his identical twin brother Shota.

I stayed at the house all the day, leaving briefly to have lunch with Andro and Levan and their father, and with them and their wives at dinner.

Sunday, June 30

After a late breakfast I went to the house again. Today is the day of the funeral. Georgians bury their dead on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays or Sundays, and not on the other three days.

Sergo is scheduled to leave the house around four, so beginning about noon an increasing succession of people came by to pay their respects to him and his family. At times there was scarcely any room to move due to the number of people. The scene was as I have described above, but emotions were more intense and open, given that burial is imminent.

A few minutes before four the room is closed to the public, with the family and me remaining. Sergo was prepared for burial.

The pallbearers took his body down the stairs into the street, where hundreds of people are standing. He is placed in what is basically a station wagon and carried to the grave. The casket remains open during all this time, and will remain so until just before it is lowered into the ground.

We went about five miles to the cemetery, the Pantheon. This is the second cemetery of any note for Tbilisi. The original Pantheon is high up on a small mountain above the city, and contains individuals such as Stalin's mother (although I hear she has been moved). This cemetery was opened in the fifties or sixties, and is already almost filled. It is on a small hill, in the outskirts of Tbilisi, sequestered but not isolated.

Sergo was taken from the hearse by his pallbearers to the grave site, next to his father Archil, and grandfather Sergo, who was a famous Georgian physician. The body, still in the open casket, was placed crosswise on the scaffolding just above ground surrounding the grave. There was a long period of silence, each of us dealing unsuccessfully with our private thoughts about Sergo. His sisters then placed the first ritual dirt around and over his body. Then the family, his young friends and myself went up, bent over and kissed him goodbye for the last time. The casket was finally closed, and lowered into the grave. I joined his friends in casting dirt upon it, and watched as the grave was filled.

Finis.

Sergo had died, the victim of his country, as surely as though it had put a gun to his head. The result of a society that tolerates corruption, nonpayment of taxes, bribery, complete disrespect of the law, youths driving at high speeds on the mountain roads around Tbilisi knowing police will never stop them. There had been the opportunity for Sergo to work in Washington this summer, but the first attempt to get the right papers didn't go through. I volunteered to see if I could fix things, but it immediately became apparent that Sergo wanted to spend the summer with his friends in Tbilisi, and there was no doubt about that. He had spent last summer in Tbilisi, and I was there shortly after he arrived. He often came in at 3 a.m. or later, to the complete dismay of his mother and father, who waited up for him, and remarked to me about their fears about high speeds on the mountain roads. His father even went so far as to say he wished he would work in Washington. Bitterly prophetic.

He was singularly gifted: "the best Georgian of his generation," to quote Alex Rondeli, one of his mentors.

Sergo had formidable potential. Highly intelligent, acutely insightful, charming, handsome, intensely motivated. No flaws. I had a close relationship with him, somewhere halfway between a very close friend and father, a relationship that had the advantages of both. Everything was shared; there were no inhibitions. The relationship became even more meaningful to both of us after the death of his father, my close friend. I loved Sergo dearly. The days the last few years that we didn't communicate one way or another were rare. We shared long flights from Tbilisi, many happy hours of racquetball in Atlanta, and uncounted other sessions.

An email from his friend Alex to me:

Finally, I do not know if any of Sergo's American friends have expressed to you how deeply he respected and admired you. He always called you Mr. Ken because he wanted to be as respectful as possible, but he loved you tremendously and a last minute invitation by you could pull him away from any plans he had. You were like his father in the States and he spoke often of you.

Along with many others I was looking forward to a distinguished career, and a wonderful friendship-- "*Sergo was the friend that every person in the world dreams of having.....*" Those memorable words of David Savett describe Sergo as well as words can.

Monday, July 1

Breakfast with the three Emory students who are doing a one month elective here: Mary, Vlad and Andy. They are rising sophomores, and they are working at the AIDS center on a TB project for Hank Blumberg of our department. Their parents (and one of them) were born in the former Soviet Union, and they speak fluent Russian. Last week they went to some tiny village up in the mountains where they drew blood from either prisoners or military people--I forget which. They live in a large flat close to the middle of downtown Tbilisi, and have been having a great time. I had also invited to breakfast Dazmir Tsanava, the chief doctor of a hospital in Zugdidi. His son David is in Atlanta. Dazmir brought along George Kukava, another Mingrelian, about 26, who just arrived back in Tbilisi one week ago from getting an MBA at a college in Boston, with a Muskie fellowship. Bright, articulate, seeking a job and clearly having a lot of success.

Back to the business of working on our grant proposal, albeit with a lot of pain. We have gone to Congress and gotten an "earmark" that asks US AID to work with us on a proposal for Tbilisi, to establish a nursing school, distance learning center, healthcare management training and an outcomes research center, all focused around a new hospital that will be opened in October. This is a 200 bed hospital built with World Bank money and furnished with the latest technology by Japan. I visited the site and was quite impressed. An old trauma hospital was gutted and completely renovated. In the last visit I gave the details. It is in the Digomi area on the outskirts of Tbilisi, and there are several other hospitals and various institutes (surgery, pathology) there. The Minister wishes to make this the "NIH" of Georgia, and it makes sense to focus our efforts on the hospital.

The healthcare management part will come from the Caucasus School of Business (CSB), that was established several years ago by Bijan Fazlollahi of Georgia State University in Atlanta. A joint venture of Tbilisi State University and Georgian Technical University. I have used it as a role model in thinking about how to start the nursing school. Faculty from GSU come over for short periods to give lectures, and young faculty from CSB go to Atlanta to take courses for one semester. CSB currently has 146 MBA and 259 BBA students. Students are clamoring to be admitted, and graduates are sought by businesses in Georgia. A smashing success in every respect, not the least financially.

There is also a healthcare management partnership working here under the auspices of Scranton University, and we will work with them in this project. They have been involved with the

National Health Management Center, which was set up by the Ministry of Health. They have been giving short 'certificate' courses in healthcare administration. We would like to set up a MBA course with specialization in healthcare in CSB. This will provide a secure foundation for healthcare administration for the future, an advantage short term courses given outside a university base do not have.

I drafted the following letter that outlines our initial plans, subject to a lot of negotiation and compromise as we set up the project:

DRAFT; Tuesday, July 9, 2002

H. Kenneth Walker MD
Executive Director
Partners for International Development
Atlanta, GA, USA

The Caucasus School of Business (CSB) strongly supports the plan of the Partners for International Development (PfID) to put in place a program that will strengthen the administrative program at the new Gudashauri Hospital in Digomi. This is a program we are committed to working with over the long term-- three to five years. This is an institution to institution cooperative agreement between CSB and PfID. We strongly endorse the short and long term objectives of this PfID proposal.

We stand ready to help with all our resources. We will establish in our business school faculty members who are trained in the business aspects of healthcare, who will support and work with the administrators of the new hospital.

We understand the proposal will involve putting in place a detailed program for on the job education and continuous training of administrators hired for the new hospital. The faculty of CSB will work with the administrative staff of the new hospital to develop a curriculum and time schedule that will cover the administrative functions of the hospital. The CSB faculty will provide materials both in English and Georgian for specific administrative functions. CSB will provide trained faculty to give these courses, working with the administrative leadership of the hospital. We will work with the leadership to establish dates for on the job training courses in the new hospital. These courses will include a combination of:

1. Practical training
2. Lectures with curricular materials and trained lecturers provided by CSB
3. Distance Learning utilizing the new Distance Learning Center of the new hospital.

We will be pleased to offer theoretical training to the administrators in CSB. We are prepared to offer three different instructional courses for the administrators, which would be provided at times that they can attend, e.g., at night, weekends, or other suitable times:

1. Certificate courses: these courses would combine theory at CSB with the practical training at the new hospital. These courses would be open to all the administrators and

would occur over short periods of times, such as weeks. Theoretical courses would include material in accounting, marketing, finance, etc., as appropriate for the administrators. The end result would be a certificate to the administrator attesting to his or her having successfully completed a course.

2. Bachelor degree courses: this would again combine practical training in the hospital with theoretical training at CSB. It would take place over several years, perhaps 2-3, depending upon the qualifications of the individuals. This degree course would be offered to administrators selected by the hospital who also would meet admission requirements of CSB.

3. Masters level courses: these would be similar to #2 above, but would start with administrators who have a bachelor degree, and the theoretical and practical courses would be at a higher level.

We would propose that these three courses be made available to the administrative staff of the Gudashauri Hospital free of charge. They would be a benefit of working in the hospital.

We see this combination of the faculty of CSB and the Gudashauri Hospital as an innovative collaboration that will be to the benefit of the hospital, the administrators and Georgia. Having the possibility of getting a certificate or degree from CSB should prove highly attractive to the nurses employed by the hospital.

Over a period of years the administrators educated in these programs will become the leaders of healthcare administration in every area of Georgia. They will bring to the healthcare system an unprecedented level of professionalism.

The Caucasus School of Business will provide the following:

1. Renovated space for instruction
2. Furniture
3. Trained faculty

The Partners for International Development will establish the following at CSB as part of the proposal:

A Distance Learning Center that is a satellite of the DLC in the hospital.

CSB of course has business students that are not part of the staff of the hospital. We would like to send the ones who are specializing in healthcare management to the Gudashauri Hospital for part of their practical training. This would be a period of internship, similar to that done by similar students in the U.S. The students would spend a specified time, months to a year, in the hospital performing appropriate duties, thus contributing to the work of the hospital.

We at CSB understand the process of determining the details of the implementation of the PfID proposal is still underway. We look forward to discussing and appropriately changing our proposal if necessary as all parties work together to implement this

important project for Georgia.

Sincerely,

copies to:

Amiran Gamkrelidze
Minister of Health

Marina Gudashauri MD PhD
Chair of the Advisory Board
Gudashauri Hospital

Kent Larson
US AID
Tbilisi

In a discussion with the Minister of Health before I left he made the point that any money that comes into this project needs to be shared with the National Health Management Center. I wholeheartedly agree.

I presented these plans to the senior staff of the CSB, along with Bijan Fazlollahi, who is there this week. There was general agreement.

Lunch with Andro and Levan Kacharava, and their wives. Then I went to the new flat of Lado Gurgendize, who was one of the first Georgians to get his MBA at Emory. Now a big deal in an investment bank in England. His mother and father live in Tbilisi, and he has just married an American, Laryssa: beautiful and smart. Sandro Kvitashvili was there. Spent several months with us at Grady in the early 1990's just after he got his MPA at Columbia in New York. Now married to Nicole Jordania, granddaughter of the first president of Georgia (during the transient period of freedom 1918-21). They are on their way to new jobs in New York.

I met Mike McCarthy at Betsy's. A favorite of mine, an Irish emergency physician who does various entrepreneurial healthcare projects for oil pipeline companies in this part of the world. Jovial, shrewd, articulate and highly entertaining.

Tuesday, July 2nd

Breakfast again with the Emory students, and Joe Lumpkin. Joe is about 30, is the recently arrived Deputy Director for the International Rescue Commission in Georgia. One of a kind I run into fairly often: U.S. citizen, got his degree in international affairs, and is hooked on working on projects for nongovernmental organizations in other parts of the world. Intelligent, motivated, sophisticated and experienced, with the right motives.

To the Turkish bath with Levan and Andro Kacharava. A bitter *deja vu*: the last time I was here was with Sergo.

Went to a meeting of the CSB advisory board, led by Gia Chanturia, the chairman of the Georgian International Oil Company, which is responsible for the new pipelines coming through Georgia. Also the chairman of Kazbegi beer, and other notables. Bijan was there, and made a presentation. He had made the point to me that the advisory board was a hard sell to the administration of CSB, but it has on it notables such as the two I have mentioned, and they will ultimately work hard to ensure the success of the school, and hire its graduates. The school had 405 BBA and MBA students last year, and expelled 70 of them for not meeting expectations. This was clearly a new concept in Georgia, and has attracted much attention.

I met with Marina Gudashauri, Deputy Minister of Health and the head of the new hospital project. A beautiful and talented woman, who is a practicing orthopaedic surgeon. I presented our plans for nursing at the new hospital, which are similar to our plans for healthcare management, and got her agreement. The new hospital will have about 250 nurses and 30 mid level administrators. Here is the draft letter that I have proposed TSU send to us, spelling out the plans for nursing:

DRAFT

H. Kenneth Walker MD
Executive Director
Partners for International Development
Atlanta, GA, USA

Tbilisi State University (TSU) strongly supports the plan of the Partners for International Development (PfID) to put in place a program that will strengthen the nursing program at the new Gudashauri Hospital in Digomi. This is a program we are committed to working with over the long term--at least three to five years. This is an institution to institution cooperative agreement between TSU and PfID. We strongly endorse the short and long term objectives of this PfID proposal.

We stand ready to help with all our resources. We will establish in our university a new nursing faculty to support and work with the new hospital.

We understand the program will involve putting in place a detailed program for on the job education and continuous training of nurses hired for the new hospital. The Nursing Faculty of TSU will work with the nursing staff of the new hospital to develop a curriculum and time schedule that will cover every nursing function of the hospital. The Nursing Faculty will provide materials both in English and Georgian for specific nursing groups, such as general surgical nurses, intensive care unit nurses, etc. The Nursing Faculty will provide trained faculty to give these courses, working with the nursing leadership of the hospital. We will work with the nursing leadership to establish dates for on the job training courses in the new hospital. These courses will include a combination of:

1. Practical training in a Nursing Learning Resource Laboratory in the hospital.
2. Lectures with curricular materials and trained lecturers provided by the Nursing Faculty.

3. Distance Learning utilizing the new Distance Learning Center of the new hospital.

We will be pleased to offer theoretical training to the hospital nurses in Tbilisi State University Nursing Faculty. We are prepared to offer three different instructional courses for the hospital nurses, which would be provided at times that they can attend, e.g., at night, weekends, or other suitable times:

1. Certificate courses: these courses would combine theory at TSU with the practical training at the new hospital. They would be in specific nursing areas, such as intensive care unit, anaesthesiology recovery room nursing, etc. These courses would be open to all the nurses and would occur over short periods of time, such as weeks. Theoretical courses would include material in anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, etc., as appropriate for the nurses. The end result would be a certificate to the nurse attesting to his or her ability in this particular area.

2. Bachelor degree courses: this would again combine practical training in the hospital with theoretical training at TSU. It would take place over several years, perhaps 2-3, depending upon the qualifications of the individuals. This degree course would be offered to nurses selected by the hospital who also would meet certain admission requirements of TSU.

3. Masters level courses: these would be similar to #2 above, but would start with nurses who have a bachelor degree, and the theoretical and practical courses would be at a much higher level.

We would propose that these three courses be made available to the nursing staff of the Gudashauri Hospital free of charge. They would be a benefit of working in the hospital.

Nurses can benefit by training in administrative skills in healthcare. We will work with our colleagues at the Caucasus School of Business to provide suitable instruction for nurses in administration.

We see this combination of the Nursing Faculty of TSU and the Gudashauri Hospital as an innovative collaboration that will be to the benefit of the hospital, the nurses and Georgia. Having the possibility of getting a certificate or degree from TSU should prove highly attractive to the nurses employed by the hospital.

Over a period of years the nurses educated in these programs will become the leaders of nursing in every area of Georgia. They will bring to the healthcare system an unprecedented level of professionalism.

Tbilisi State University will provide the following:

1. Renovated space for instruction
2. Furniture
3. Trained faculty

The Partners for International Development will establish the following at TSU as part

of the proposal:

1. A Nurses Learning Resource Laboratory, complementary to the one in the hospital.
2. A Distance Learning Center that is a satellite of the DLC in the hospital.

TSU will have regular nursing students that of course are not part of the nursing staff of the hospital. We would like to send them to the Gudashauri Hospital for part of their practical training. They would perform work duties as part of their training, thus contributing to the work of the nursing service of the hospital.

We at TSU understand the process of determining the details of the implementation of the PflD proposal is still underway. We look forward to discussing and appropriately changing our proposal if necessary as all parties work together to implement this important project for Georgia.

Sincerely,

We still have a lot of negotiations to do before getting this right, but this is a good beginning concept. The idea that both nurses and administrators can get free degrees in their spare time will hopefully be an attractive inducement. A side product will be that they are thereby committed to the hospital for some time.

Spent some time with Batu Kutelia. Twenty-eight, works in the Russian military liaison department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Responsible for a lot of my knowledge of and insights into young Georgians. Getting married late September. Will be an ambassador some day.

Went over and visited Nona Kobaladze, Sergo's mother, Tina his grandmother, and his sisters Salome and Tiniko. Nona is an exceptionally strong individual, and has my total admiration. She spoke feelingly of Sergo as a young lad, and of the emotional investment in his growing up. First she took him as a very young child to swimming lessons. Then it was taking him to tennis. Then karate, followed by soccer and finally baseball. The experiences and emotions that only a mother can have about a child.

A final brief dinner with Andro Kacharava and Misha Omiadze, the chief of the ophthalmology institute. Andro's age, around 40, classmates together. I was quite impressed with him, both as a person and professionally. I offered to help set up a visit for him to our ophthalmology department at Emory, which is one of the top two or three departments in the world.

Wednesday, July 3rd

Breakfast with the three Emory students and Zviad Kirtava, who is head of the Georgian NGO, Partners for Health, that all of us set up some years ago. Also director of the library, soon to be expanded distance learning center in the new hospital, the National Information Learning Centre.

A meeting with Gia Kechniashvili, director of the National Institute for Tuberculosis. He has worked for several years with Hank Blumberg of our department. They have a joint CRDF grant from the NIH, and many of his staff have gone to Hank at Grady for training. US AID has put out a RFP for a large grant for TB control in Georgia, and Hank is interested in participating as a

partner with one of the big NGOs. He had asked me to do some inquiries for him during my visit.

Gia said the grant should include the following regional TB centers: Kutaisi; Zugdidi; Gurdjaani (near Telavi); Batumi; and later Sukumi (when Abkhazia comes back!). These are also centers we need to consider for our distance learning satellites. He gave me some interesting facts on TB in Georgia:

- 75% of the TB cases are from prisoners, Georgians and Russians. Total 6,500; of these 40% of the total are multi-drug resistant. There were 220 new cases last year.

- the drug resistant cases are dying because there is no money for therapy-- \$10,000 needed for each patient. WHO has cheap drugs, but you have to have Directly Observed Therapy implemented, and Georgia doesn't.

- the national TB program has a budget of \$1.5 million.

A meeting with a delegation of four people from Project Hope. They are in Georgia gathering data about TB so they can apply for the AID grant. They already have several programs in other countries, and are considered a leading contender for the grant. I met them so we could get to know each other a bit, at Hank's request. My posture was to get information from them, and it became apparent rapidly this was their goal also. So we each asked open ended questions and got little information. My open ended questions were hampered by the presence of Zviad, who cannot let silence last more than a few seconds without a monologue.

I had a meeting with David Gordeladze, dean of the medical school at Tbilisi State University. I am chairman of the board of the medical center at TSU, so we meet and discuss the challenges he faces whenever I am over here.

Ended the day with a supra with the Emory students and their Georgian cohorts, with whom they are working. One of them, Koka, is leaving in a few days for a Muskie MPH at Emory. Another one, Archiko, is a very bright fifth year medical students who also wants to do an MPH. I will keep up with him over the next two years and help him do this.

Thursday, July 4th

I met with Ia Kamkhadze, a Georgian cardiologist who spent four months with John Merlino at Crawford Long Hospital learning echocardiography. John then gave her an echo machine, and she has a clinic in Kaspi. She wishes to come back and learn OB, GYN and fetal ultrasound, since she can do that with her machine. I will arrange this for her at Emory and Grady.

The Emory students and I met Andro and Levan Kacharava and had Adjaran hatchapouri (Georgian cheese bread) for brunch. A large slab of baker's dough with hot cheese overlaid with two eggs sunny side up. You can feel the arteries start to clog.

A meeting with George Nikolaishvili, who is the Georgian director of the World Bank healthcare project. They are funding Laura Hurt of Grady coming over on several visits to set up the

nursing service in the new hospital. Here are the plans for the nursing service at the new hospital:

Implement Structure Standards for the new National Medical Center.

1. Develop institutional Structure Standards including Safety, Infection Control, Nursing, and Unit Specific Structure through collaborative efforts.
2. Provide training for existing staff and orientation for new staff based on institutional Structure Standards.
 - a. Utilize existing EMS training for CPR and ACLS classes for nurses as appropriate.
 - b. Utilize existing Nursing Learning Resource Center to provide appropriate continuing education courses for nurses.
3. Implement Continuous Quality Improvement based on institutional structure standards.
4. Develop plans for policy change, continuing education, and other corrective action based on Continuous Quality Improvement data.
5. Develop forms to provide for documentation of patient care and ensure staff education
6. Develop Outcome Measures for Medical Center Nursing Division.
7. Evaluate and plan for sustainability.

This will be an exciting and much needed project.

This is the first day of Georgian Orthodox tradition that family and friends can visit the cemetery, so I went there with the family.

I had lunch with Buba Lezhava, and talked with him about the possibility of being the Georgian project director for our proposal. He is bright and quite able, and would be excellent. This is very preliminary, since we have to get all sort of agreements before implementing it, but I thought I would go ahead and sound him out in that context.

I went to the National Information Learning Centre where I met several people interested in coming to Emory:

-Mamuka Lortkipanidze. 32. Graduated from TMSU precociously, ultimately specialized in rheumatology. Now is deciding whether to pursue clinical rheumatology, or whether to concentrate on basic science research in immunology and rheumatology. I have arranged for him to spend four months with Doyt Conn, our rheumatologist at Grady, beginning in January.

-David Maisuradze M.D. (cell-phone:899 95 05 56), a 45 year old cardiologist in Rustavi who wants to study transesophageal echo at Crawford Long. Spent a couple of weeks with us two months ago.

-Sophi Chochua (friend of Iraklia Mania, who is with us now); high school in Mobile, Ala. Hasn't taken USMLE, but wants to observe on the wards; I asked her to email me when she sees a window, after taking USMLE.

-Dato Mrelashvili: Ayety student; knows Nick Chिताia, a former resident of ours.

Made 250 on USMLE part I; we will take him as a student for a four or so month elective; fifth year student at Ayety now. November for three months. Needs F1 visa.

-Akaki Kapanadze. 29; USMLE 79/80. Outstanding English. Will consider for September observer.

Went to a supra at David Gordeladze's house, with his senior leadership. Discussed once again their challenges. Lot of conflict with the Biology Faculty, who want the medical school to be under them.

I went to Graz restaurant and had two drinks in honor of Sergo. It is an excellent restaurant in a restored ancient underground cellar, and was his favorite eating place. His friend Nika, son of the owner Gia, met me there. Nika was in the car with Sergo at the time of the accident.

A supra for Bijan Fazlollahi at the home of George Turkia, head of the business school at Georgian Technical University. I was asked to give a toast, so I gave one comparing George and Bijan, who have worked closely together for the success of CSB. George, I said, was as smooth as eating boiled okra, while Bijan was like using a corn cob instead of toilet tissue. This is the sort of thing one can accomplish with toasting!

Final late night meeting with George Arveladze, a recent graduate of a business school in the US. Brother is David, and I have known them both a long time. George is about to be married, and he brought along his fiancé.

I stayed at the bar and had some late night thoughts, to paraphrase Lewis Thomas, about life, me, Tbilisi, Sergo.

Friday, July 5th

Breakfast with the two Emory students (the third one left early), Joe Lumpkin, and two of the students who had come to see me yesterday: Sophia and Akaki. I like to get students who want to come to Emory as observers into conversational situations, and see how they do. How spontaneous, friendly, etc., they are. A good measure of how they will do later. Much better than the artificial environment when they are interviewed by me.

I met with the Minister of Health, Amiran Gamkrelidze, and outlined our proposal. He was agreeable to it in principle. Namely, to starting a nursing school at TSU; to involve CSB with healthcare management but share work and money with his group; with the concept of the staff of the new hospital getting free education in their spare time.

I visited the cardiac cath lab of Alex Aladashvili, and was impressed again with what he has accomplished. Showed me a complicated case that he had put a stent in. Works with Georgian cardiac surgeons trained by German ones, the latter of whom spend several days a month in the hospital.

Went to the new hospital, to see how it is coming. I was quite impressed. It will be a lovely

facility, that could be in a Western city. All the new Japanese and German equipment is there, stored, awaiting the finishing of the construction in a couple of weeks.

There is a children's hospital in the same complex: M. Iashvili Children's Central Hospital. It has 210 physicians, and has a similar capacity as the new hospital. Irakli Sasania is the chief doctor, and I was tremendously impressed with him. He has computerized many of the hospital functions, set up a computerized CME room, and has patient satisfaction surveys. About 40, has an MPH after MD in Tbilisi. He has taken under the table payments to the physicians and put them above the table. Then he gives each physician 50% of the payment, but pays the taxes, so the physician gets back 75% of the fee. He ties salary to CME results. The hospital has 400 beds, 40% occupancy; 7,000 admissions per year. Lets Ayety medical school use the facility for their clinical student needs.

The best hospital I have ever seen in Georgia, and gives me hope for the future. Let me give a grating example of much of the medical care in Georgia, as described by a Georgian who was a resident with us three years, exceptionally bright, and is now an infectious disease fellow in a prestigious center:

Dear Dr. Walker,

How are you? Recently I have been to Tbilisi. My father suddenly became very sick, and I had to go. Fortunately, he survived. It turned that he had multilobar pneumonia, and probably, sepsis. For the first several days he has just been feeling poorly and did not want to eat and drink anything. Finally he suspected that something is really wrong with him, but by that time he became so weak, that he could not even call me or our relatives. He was found unresponsive by his friend who was alerted by neighbors that my father had not been seen for several days.

So my father was admitted to the hospital. It took them 48 (forty eight!) hours to figure out that he had pneumonia, and 72 hours to start antibiotics (even though they were paid 3 times what they asked for, and ALL meds they asked for were provided separately). The deal is that they attributed AMS (confusion), hypotension and arrhythmia to "heart attack " or stroke. Over 5 days period they managed to get one portable CXR, one EKG and something like CBC and Chem7. When I arrived and asked them what they are planning to do about creatinine of 2.5 and Gent they administered to my dad, they were mightily surprised by the notion that at least dose adjustment is needed. They were not negligent, just ignorant.

On the other hand they really tried to accommodate all my request (as long as I was paying). In addition to pneumonic infiltrate my father had a small cavitory lesion. I wanted to pursue some kind of w/u, because my father has a long history of smoking, also I wanted to r/o TB. I brought some people from Oncology Center. Their recommendation would be grossly inappropriate even for the person with M3 medical education level. CT scan was not available: my father was too sick to travel all over the city, and when I learned about quality of films and interpretations at Todua's Center, I kind of decided not to waste money.

Finally we did bronchoscopy (without any sedation whatsoever - it did not even occur to the pulmonologist that this procedure is somewhat uncomfortable). The lesion

resembled a tumor, but bx results were unrevealing, and ,of course ,nobody bothered to collect specimens for staining and cx. Despite their efforts my father survived. He is recovering at home. In a few months I'll take him to Moscow where my uncle arranged full diagnostic evaluation.

After returning back to xxxx I spent a lot of time thinking on what I encountered in Tbilisi. And decided that it's truly unsafe to take my family back there: I don't believe that I can achieve anything there other then spending my small savings. Actually, I am writing this letter to ask you what do you think about my decision?

I am not asking you to approve it, but I'd be happy if you could understand me. I already talked to some people. Surprisingly, with my credentials (Emory University and fellowship) it's not that hard to find a position not only here but also in Australia and New Zealand. If I decide to accept any of these offers would you feel comfortable enough to write me a letter of recommendation (like you wrote me for fellowship once)?

Sincerely,

We have trained about 32 Georgian physicians in our residency programs at Emory, and at least that many others have come for a few months and with our help gone to other programs. None of them will go back to the conditions in Georgia now. They cannot practice what they have learned. The new hospital is the beginning, I devoutly hope, of a place where they can return and practice quality medicine. I am hoping to set up one month rotations for them to return to the new hospital, during their vacation periods. I anticipate most of them will stay in the US, but if they will agree to the month rotations during their vacation period, they can still contribute immensely.

To Betsy's and a coat and tie, and to the US Ambassador's reception for the July 4th holiday. Then dinner at Betsy's with Zviad, and a late night visit to the Kobaladze home.

Saturday, July 6th

Coffee at Betsy's, then the Turkish bath by myself. A thorough scrubbing. To a picnic held up on the mountain overlooking Tbilisi, given by the American Chamber of Commerce. All the expatriates, but a lot of Georgians, too. A drink at Graz, with Sergo's friend.

Went to the Turkish baths again, with Buba Lezhava. About 26, teaches at CSB, spent a semester last year in Atlanta taking courses at GSU. Known him a long time. The bath was a cruel *deja vu*, since the last time I was here it was with Sergo. A supra for Bijan Fazlollahi, on his last day here. He is going to drive to Baku, with his wife and brother from Iran--whom he hadn't seen for twenty-two years.

Sunday, July 7th

Sat down at a table for breakfast with Ronald Suny, who I have met before over here. He is a distinguished historian, with many books about Georgia and Armenia. A late one on collective memory, an exploration of ethnic conflict. He is writing a book now on "young Stalin," about Stalin's formative years as a youth in Georgia. He is Armenian, grew up in Georgia.

The Emory students and I went with Misha Omiadze to the Tbilisi Sea, a 20 mile long lake that supplies drinking water to Tbilisi. I had never known of it. Misha has a 40 foot sailboat, and we had a good time. Thoroughly sunburned. Followed by a supra at a restaurant on the hills overlooking Tbilisi.

Monday, July 8th

Had breakfast with George Kukava. He told me of a friend, an architect, who lives in a small village an hour from Tbilisi. He has organized the surrounding farmers who produce potatoes, and he has set up the structure to sell them to Russia. Wildly successful.

People like the architect and Irakli Sansania of the Children's Hospital are slowly changing what is happening in Georgia. When I first came here, in August of 1992, this sort of activity was unthinkable, and it is just slowly beginning to happen. I think of Georgia as in a slow growth phase now, and in about ten years the results will be quite visible. When you ask someone "what do you think about what is happening in Georgia?" all of us start talking about the frail political situation, and the poor political leadership. But that is only a small part of Georgia. The real news is what young people are slowly putting together, that will change the face of Georgia in a few years. Young people like Sergo.

Lunch with Eric Johnson, an expatriate who is the brother of Steve, one of the owners of Betsy's. Came here about ten years ago, married a Georgian, and now basically is a Georgian.

Met with six students (I put them here so I have a record of them):

-Teona Maghlakidze; Ayety medical school; 79 on part I; part II in August; wants to spend 2-3 months on the wards; I told her this might or might not be possible; to email me.

-Estate (sic) Kokosadze; Ayety; fifth year; 93 on part I; I told him March, April May are good possibilities; he will be a student, and not an observer.

-Nino Usanetashvili; 5th year at Ayety; 89 on Part I

-Anna Japaridze; Ayety; fifth year; 86 on part I.

-Nino Idoidze; fifth year; hasn't taken part I

-Giorgi Sirbiladze; as above; to keep in touch with me.

-Alexander Gvelesiani, MD PhD; well known neurosurgeon who wants to spend a few months at Emory. I was noncommittal, said we needed to keep in touch. Wife having baby in December. About 40-45. Interests: skull based tumors; trauma; aneurysm surgery; microsurgery on brain tumors.

-David Usharauli; 23; student of Zviad's; just finishing medical school; wants to get PhD and do basic research in immunology. I asked him to send me his CV, and I am thinking about seeing

about a research job in immunology, or with Hank or Carlos, for a year while he takes GRE.

Zviad and I went over possible budget figures for the components of our proposal. Will be difficult to fit the money into all we would like to do, as usual. To Nona Kobaladze's. A supra with Levan Bakanidze, head and neck surgery resident I am trying to find a position in research for at Emory.

Tuesday, July 9th

I met with Temur Khurodze, provost of Tbilisi State University, and got his broad agreement as to our Nursing Faculty plans. I gave him the letter that I put here earlier. Lunch with Dito Makhatadze, who runs the EMS training center, and will be chief of staff of the new hospital. We discussed at some length governance problems. He is concerned about the security of the expensive high-tech equipment. There are no security bars on the windows. He estimates it will cost \$10,000 a month in guards to keep the equipment secure.

I met with George Gotsadze, the CEO of Curatio, the most successful Georgian NGO in the healthcare business. Met George when I first came here ten years ago. A 35 year old MD, highly competent and innovative. He has discussed their participation in healthcare management.

Bowling with Buba Lezhava and Beatrice. A very high-tech bowling alley. Buba says it used to be \$50 per hour.

Wednesday, July 10th

A red letter day. It started with Turkish bath with Roland and Vaho of Betsy's. To purify me and get me ready for the subsequent events. Then I had a meeting with David, also of Curatio. He is the consultant to the World Bank for the new hospital, and we discussed at length all the problems that are arising: governance; budget; nurses; physicians. Then lunch with Vlad and Andy of Emory.

Then I went with Irina Chanturishvili, mother of Levan Vasadze, to an incredible small jewel of Georgian Orthodox church in the center of Tbilisi, built in 1790. I was christened a Georgian Orthodox, with the name "Peter" (Petri in Georgia). Levan, of course, is the young Georgian who lived with me 1994-96 while getting his MBA at Emory. His wife Nino came to Atlanta for four months last year and had Giorgi, their second son. Levan asked me if I would consent to being christened so I could be his Godfather. Of course. So there I stood before the priest, who murmured various phrases, anointed me in various places with priestly unguents. I took off my shoes and socks, and stood in a pan of water. I walked around the altar three times behind the priest. I had chosen as my godfather Levan's grandfather, also Levan, whom I have known these ten years. A geologist. About 83, and a wonderful man. The priest finally put a necklace and cross around my neck.

I discovered later that my late friend and Sergo's father, Archil Kobaladze, the descendant of a long line of distinguished Georgians of hundreds of years, had gotten christened also just over one year ago! I asked his wife Nona about this. She pointed out he was born in the 1940's, during the deepest of Communist times, and it would have been severe trouble for his father (also a

distinguished physician and leader in Georgia) if he had had Archil christened in the church. Last year he was asked also to be someone's godfather, so he had to be christened. He was too embarrassed to ask his friends ("they would laugh at me"), so he asked Levan Kacharava, who is about 28. I was planning on asking Sergo.

I suspect my staunchly Baptist father turned cartwheels in his grave. Probably not my mother, who was as pragmatic as I am.

I went and visited Misha Omiadze in his ophthalmological center. A typically shabby run down Georgian hospital, but with good equipment and excellent work being done. We talked again about his coming to Atlanta.

The students and I then went to the State Museum, and met with David Lordkipanidze, who had a paper published this week in *Science*. The *National Geographic* is publishing a twelve page article, with cover photo, of his work in the August issue. He has been doing archeological excavation at Dmanisi, one hour from Tbilisi, for twelve years. It is amongst the most exciting current archeological work in the world. He and his associates have discovered human bones, including skulls, that are 1.8 million years ago. They have cranial capacities of around 600 cc, compared to modern man of 12-1500 cc. Before his work the prevailing view was that early man had not migrated out of Africa until he was much more developed than the 600 cc cranial capacity humans. David's work indicates that humans were much more primitive than previously believed when they migrated from Africa, and also that, at least based on current evidence, they came to Georgia, and then dispersed throughout the rest of the world. He showed us the skulls and allowed us to handle them. It was tremendously exciting.

Another meeting with David Gordeladze, the dean, who gave me an instructive lecture on his challenges. His web site: www.caumedserv.com.ge.

Some private time, and then dinner with Alex Rondeli. To a newly opened restaurant--five days--at Shindisi, high in the summer dacha territory of the mountains surrounding Tbilisi. Alex is the Henry Kissinger of Georgia, and the proud mentor of a large number of successful young Georgians who have gone to the West. Goes to Princeton and the like to spend time as a lecturer. Sergo was his favorite of Sergo's generation, and we spent the evening speaking about Sergo and the Georgia that spawns these kinds of tragedies.

Thursday, July 11th

Met with Philippe Creach, the TB specialist of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Hank Blumberg had asked me to sound him out about collaborating with them. They work exclusively with TB in the prisons. I was quite impressed by his work and extensive knowledge of the problem.

Soso, Archil's driver, in Archil's elderly Saab, was driving me to the next meeting when we were stopped by a cop in a new BMW. A ten lari (\$5) bribe. BMW's much be cheaper in Tbilisi than in the US.

I went to the Metechi Hotel and met Kent Larson, the healthcare director of US AID in Tbilisi, to

talk about our project. He gave me a letter which asked us to send them a revised proposal, answering certain questions, and said the proposed funding would be \$500,000 per year for three years. It has taken us two years, a Congressional earmark, and a lot of work to get to this point. Zviad and I were happy. Now we will start working on the details, in Tbilisi, Atlanta and Washington. Hope to have everything worked out by September, altho that might be optimistic.

Lunch with the rectors of TSU and GTU, the leaders of CSB, Gia Chanturia of Georgian oil, and two visiting US academic luminaries from Washington University and Yale: James Wertsch (Wash U) and the chair of comparative literature of Yale (didn't get his card). They have done extensive work in the former Soviet Union. Jim Wertsch worked with Luria in Moscow in the early seventies. A good conversation.

A haircut for ten lari. Private time. Meeting at Graz with Sergo's friends. Dinner with Buba, talking about the possible job.

Friday, July 12th

Breakfast with George Geguchadze. I met Gogi in Atlanta. Has been a medical student and a politician, now works in the United Georgian Bank. A good example of the young Georgian who is and will significantly change Georgia in the next ten years. Dazmir Tsanava came by with \$400,000 of plans for renovation of his hospital in Zugdidi.

I then met with the people who are working with orphans. A couple of years ago I visited an orphanage in Kaspi, and have been interested since in this difficult problem in Georgia. Jane Corboy, wife of the former European Union ambassador to Georgia, has raised funds. Today I went with her people from "First Step" to see a ward for 20 orphans from Kaspi at the Guramishvili Hospital, where Ketis Nemsadze is chief doctor. Kaspi is for children with neurological disease. One of the children, age about 15, had phenylketonuria deficiency, discovered when he was found in the orphanage. Jane and her people have social workers, psychologists, special education workers and other specialists working with the orphans. After the hospital we visited a \$150,000 cottage where the children go after the hospital. Designed to be structured as much as possible as home living. About 15 children. Leaving today to go to a summer place. I was extremely impressed at what Jane is doing.

To another Georgian Orthodox church for the christening of Levan's son, George. The bishop himself officiated. The same as mine, but a lot more elaborate, and Giorgi was dipped into the container of water. Irina had gotten a gold cross for me, which I gave to him. Two other godfathers. We then went up into the mountains and had a super supra. Many toasts to the lad.

I returned to Betsy's around midnight, and decided to have several drinks and think about things, once again. About a trip that began with Sergo's funeral, and was ending with Giorgi's christening. About a country that kills its promising youth, but has other promising children that are being brought along, hopefully for the success Sergo won't know. About my own intense relationships with Sergo, Sergo's father Archil, Giorgi, and Giorgi's father Levan. I first came to Tbilisi on Saturday, August 15th, 1992; I quote from my report to my dean about the trip:

We arrived at Tbilisi around 11 p.m., and were met by the Minister of Health and his

entourage. We were put into two long black limousines, just like you saw Brezhnev and the like riding in on the news, and taken to the *dacha* reserved previously for visiting Communist leaders such as Gorbachev. This is a large airy building that is quite comfortable. Two people share a suite with two bedrooms (small short beds) and a large conference room; the furniture is elegant.

At midnight we sat down to a typical Georgian meal that lasted until about 3 a.m. We gather this is invariable when guests arrive.

The distance I have come personally since that initial visit is virtually unimaginable, exemplified by this trip, beginning with the funeral of Sergo and ending with the christening of Giorgi. The depths of despair, and the heights of hope for the future.

Saturday, July 13th

I went to the Turkish bath with Sergo's friend. We talked at length and in detail about him, continuing through lunch. The three who were in the car were his closest friends in Georgia. They are profoundly depressed, in the way that twenty year olds get when faced with such a tragedy.

I went then to Kaspi and saw the orphanage. The kitchen is being renovated, which is an accomplishment in itself. We had a supra at la Kamkhadze's, complete with harmonizing by four male Georgians that was absolutely wonderful. Andy and Vlad of Emory, along with their friend Archchiko, were swept up into the emotion engendered by this unique Georgian tradition of supra and singing.

I returned at 6 pm for a meeting with the Minister, with Zviad and Nata Avaliani of AIHA, but I left them to the minister for the meeting when he was an hour late.

I had dinner with "the Kobaladze women," as they described themselves. The daughters Salome and Tiniko, and Tamara, the sister-in-law. Elegant in black, beautiful beyond description. A private and intimate dinner. I suspected they had a motive, and it emerged. "Sergo went to Atlanta two years ago a boy," they said, "and he returned this summer a man. How did this come about?" I thought some, and talked at length about what might be called the various divisions of his life: scholastic work (straight A's); soccer; night life in Buckhead etc on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays; work for money in the medical library; activities with me; interactions with certain other Georgians in Atlanta; fraternity; it formal in the Bahamas; and his women. I summoned all the anecdotes I could think of. About the highly attractive young Russian classmate who he occasionally invited to spend time with him because "she talks all night and thereby improves my Russian." I walked the fine line between protecting his privacy and sharing what he did with them. They reciprocated, by telling me of the time a couple of years ago that a young lady, around 1 a.m., rode standing in a convertible down Sergo's street, screaming loudly and repeatedly "Sergo, I love you!" His red face lit up a moonless night. Sergo virtually never drank. But about two weeks ago his friends brought him home at 3 a.m. drunk beyond belief. His mother had a lot to say, he vomited for hours, his sisters listened quietly, and his friends ministered to him.

We then went to their house, and visited his mother and grandmother. They gave me a framed picture of him, and his watch, which survived his death untouched. And pictures for his three close friends at Emory.

Another night requiring a lot of thinking.

Sunday, July 14th

Got up at the ungodly hour of 4:30 a.m. and caught the 7:30 Georgian Airzena flight to Moscow. Walked and talked all afternoon with Levan Vasadze. He had left his wife and the boys in Tbilisi, having arrived in Moscow the day before to go to a board meeting of his company. He is the first vice president of Sistema, a \$20 billion holding company. Watched him play tennis with his CEO in a new \$20 million complex they have built. Had lunch with him and the CEO, who is one of the leading figures in Russia today. Talked about Georgia. Visited a two acre plot Levan has just bought, where one neighbor is the mayor of Moscow, and Putin is just down the road in his dacha. Reviewed the plans for the house he will build there this year, designed by his father in law, and they are incredibly beautiful.

A lengthy conversation over Scotch and dinner, about things.

And off to Atlanta on Monday.

Appendix A

Sergo's Application to the London School of Economics

01/22/2002

**Sergo Kobaladze
Emory University
Further Information**

I was growing up in a very rapidly changing environment. Now independent country of Georgia, former republic of Soviet Union, went through political and economic turmoil during the early nineties. During these times I was studying in high school and at the same time experiencing everything that was going on in the country. In 11th grade I worked for one year in Georgian parliament as a page in the main chamber. I witnessed the development of the new laws and projects that were discussed by the members of parliament. Then I became an anchor of the very popular teenage talk show "Who's Who?" and later on "Barrier." In this shows we discussed the problems and issues that were important to teenagers in Georgia. We even had our resident psychiatrist who was giving advices to the viewers and guest of our show. When I left for college and went to Atlanta to study at Emory University there was not much I could do but to study very hard and establish myself here. But as soon as I went to Georgia for summer I completed an internship with AIHA (American International Health Alliance). It took me on couple of trips to the neighboring Baku, Azerbaidjan, where I had an opportunity to immerse into the culture of the Asian part of Caucasus. I found it very exciting and interesting, working with people from many different nations. Azerbaidjan is experiencing same grave consequences of the soviet regime that Georgia is and both of them need a lot of attention to pay to their economies. Although Azerbadjan is rich with natural oil reserves, but poor management of this resources cannot save it from a problems in its economy. Both of these countries need new people who will lead their economies into the rapid development and prosperity. This was one of the main influences on my decision to choose to concentrate in economics.

Since I started college at Emory I have been taking various courses to find what I'm most interested in and finally by the end of the third semester I decided to major in economics. I am convinced that an academic year at London School of Economics and Political Science will contribute greatly to my education and will influence my future academic route. I am eager, after getting bachelor degree in economics to continue my studies and get a Ph.D. in political science. In my opinion, economics is a very good foundation for everything that one might want to do in future.

I was born in February of 1982 in Georgia, republic of former Soviet Union, which is now

independent but still suffers from heritage of the terrible communist regime that reigned there for 70 years. Even though our country has been trying to complete the transition from a command economy into the market one, for a decade of its independence it accomplished very little. In my country the importance of economy is being overseen by the government just because of the lack of experience and knowledge of the market-oriented economy. Hopefully this will change, as the new generation fills in the ranks at the top of the government. The present economic situation is extremely grave and there is no prospect of anything changing in near future. The best, what Georgia can count on right now is human capital. Government has been very energetic in sending students abroad, hoping that they will return and contribute to the reconstruction of the country with the skills and knowledge that they have acquired in developed countries. Also families have been eager to send their children abroad for continuation of education. My family was very western-oriented even during the time when Georgia was part of the Soviet Union and more so after we regained our independence in 1991. As soon as I graduated from the high school they helped me apply to Emory University and are supporting me while I am studying in college. For centuries now my family has been keeping tradition of providing Georgian society with people of high achievement and similar are the expectations that are placed upon me. Although my parents never directly had showed this, but the pressure on me still exists, because I represent my country wherever I go and have no right in putting it to shame, considering that there are so few of us.

There were many events that had been passing before my eyes when I was growing up. Since the time I can remember myself I had lived in soviet Georgia, witnessed a coup de tat, had gone through a very bloody revolution that took lives of many civilians and had seen the restoration of the legitimate government. This is just a brief list of many events that took place in the last decade in my country. As I was growing up I saw the need of every profession that exists in the world, because everything need a reconstruction. I was thinking about becoming a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher and many other very important figures in society. As I was growing up I saw that economy was a foundation stone for everything in the country, so when I came to Emory I started to take some introductory courses in economics and by the end of my third semester I chose it to be my major subject of study. I think that it is essential for one to understand how the economy works, as it the primary underlying structure of a civilized society.

When I found out that there was an opportunity for Emory students to study at London School of Economics and Political Science I started thinking on getting into the program. Spending an academic year in London will be an ideal progression of my degree here at Emory and I'm sure that I will be able to contribute to the diversity and academics of London School of Economics and Political Science as well. I will bring the experience that I will acquire in London to share it with my peers and friends. While in London I will be able to add some European spice to my American college education and this way make my skills and knowledge more valuable and multifaceted. In converging future world this kind of multi-sided education experience will be essential. United States and European Union are growing economic rivals in the modern world,

thus understanding both mentalities and ways of thinking is crucial for building the bridges between countries in the century of globalization. I realize that London School of Economics and Political Science is one of the best in the world, and that I will need a lot of effort to meet the requirements of the professors at school, but I am motivated to work hard and meet all the expectations that will be placed upon me by the members of the faculty.

Appendix B

Interview of Sergo for a Paper by his Roommate David Savett

(sent to me by Sergo, and used with permission of David)

----- Forwarded message -----
Date: Sun, 05 May 2002 00:32:58 -0400
From: Sergo A. Kobaladze <skobala@LearnLink.Emory.Edu>
To: kwalk04@emory.edu
Subject: Fwd: paper

here it is bud-

David Savett
Econ 390S
Dr. Patron
April 11, 2002

Living Through the 1993-94 Georgian Hyperinflation

Abstract

This paper looks at the economic causes of the Georgian hyperinflation of 1993-94 and the hyperinflation's effect on a Georgian citizen. This is accomplished by analyzing the primary factors that caused the hyperinflation, which include endogenous fiscal expenditures and money supply, depreciation, and currency substitution. The paper focuses on the hyperinflation's effect on Georgian citizens by giving a synopsis of an interview with a Georgian who lived through the hyperinflationary period.

I. Introduction

The Republic of Georgia, a former republic of the Soviet Union, received its independence with the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. Like many other countries of the former Soviet Union, Georgia confronted critical disruptions in its trade and payments relations along with increased energy prices when making the initial transition into a market economy. Furthermore, Georgia's initial years of independence were marked by civil conflict that disturbed economic activity along with preventing strong governmental leadership. As a result, Georgia's GDP severely slumped from its levels during communist times and the country accumulated a serious debt. Georgia responded to the economic slowdown by introducing an independent currency that financed the majority of the debt. This in turn led to a hyperinflation from 1993-94 that had a severe impact on the Georgian citizens.

In this paper I describe the economic developments that led to the hyperinflation and provide a first-hand account of a Georgian citizen and his upper-class family that lived through the time period. The information was provided by Sergo Kobaladze who is an economics student at Emory University. Although Sergo was in his adolescence during the hyperinflation period he provides an interesting perspective based on his later acquired knowledge of economics. He remembered the time as an impressionable young man but was able to interpret his memories through his learned abilities in economic analysis. Therefore, he was an ideal candidate for giving an inside look at the hyperinflation that severely disrupted his country. In addition, he supplemented his memories with information that other family members provided for him. In the interview I asked him questions pertaining to the time period after Georgia's independence in 1991 to the end of the hyperinflationary episode in late 1994. The questions were designed to have Sergo describe the time period through his memories and then allow him to use his current understanding of the situation to elaborate. The questions regarded the morale of his family and society, the visual differences in Georgian society, his current and past perceptions of the events, and the changes in living standards, among other pertinent subjects.

The paper is organized as follows. The second section of the paper analyzes the economic and political events that caused the Georgian hyperinflation. The third section of the paper gives the synopsis of the interview with the Georgian citizen Sergo Kobaladze who lived through the hyperinflation. The paper concludes with some final remarks about the impact of a hyperinflation on a society.

II. Causes of the hyperinflation

After Georgia received its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the country experienced both adverse economic shocks and political unrest. These events lead to a very unstable economic environment. In addition there were fiscal imbalances, generalized consumer subsidies, and poor monetary policy. As a result, the country's GDP plummeted from communist times and eventually the economy was overtaken by hyperinflationary conditions from 1993-94.

Prior to Georgia's independence, the Georgian economy was a fragment of Russia's closed economy. Namely, Georgia produced goods and traded with the other Soviet republics to obtain all the goods that were demanded in Georgia. Georgia's economy was very dependent on energy imports from the other republics, which were priced below free market rates during communist times. Consequently, Georgia's economy was not ready or able to convert to an independent market economy because they relied on the dynamics of the communist command economy. Furthermore, Georgia had no prior experience operating under a market economy. After Georgia's independence and the preliminary transition to a market economy, the imported energy prices rose sharply. For example, in 1992-93 Georgia's key energy imports, gas and refined oil products rose by 4% and 21% respectively. This sharp rise in energy prices was a severe negative shock to the Georgian economy and caused the GDP to fall by 20.6% in 1991 and another 44.8% in 1992.

The economic effects of the adverse trade shocks were intensified by civil war and the failure of operative law in 1992-93. The Conflicts in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and with the supporters of

ex-President Gamsakhurdia caused serious destruction throughout Georgia. Among the conflicts' consequences were a large number of refugees and the demolition of the only railway connection with Russia. These events caused GDP to fall another 25% in 1993.

The economic shocks and domestic conflicts quickly effected the fiscal revenues of the Georgian government. Specifically, the tax base was shrinking, there were lags in tax collection, and the population was not complying with the tax laws. Consequently, tax revenues dropped from 22% of GDP in 1991 to 2% of GDP in 1993. To exacerbate the fiscal performance, the government's expenditures did not decrease during the time period, which resulted in the government accumulating a serious debt.

The debt was increased further by the government's decision to place subsidies on certain key commodities in the Georgian market. Among these commodities were bread, natural gas, electricity, and public transportation, which were primarily imported at high prices and sold to the Georgian people at artificially low prices. By 1993 these subsidies were costing the government 70% of their total expenditure and net lending.

The decision on how to finance the Georgian government's fiscal imbalances became a major concern for the government. In 1993, nearly 80% of the deficit was financed through external loans and grants, and the rest by the central bank. However, external financing was not an option that could be sustained in the following years, and there was not enough liquidity in the Russian ruble to cover the country's escalating debt. Consequently, in April 1993 the government decided to introduce a national currency called the coupon to assist in the cash crisis and by August 1993 it was the sole legal tender of Georgia.

After the introduction of the Coupon the young National Bank of Georgia implemented easy monetary and fiscal policies to help alleviate the governments accumulated debt. Moreover, the central bank had little independence from the government and parliament. The National Bank of Georgia, therefore, issued extensive credit to the government while continuously printing more coupons. From April 1993 to August 1994 the currency in circulation and domestic broad money (M2) increased by more than 152% and 130% respectively. The central bank eventually tried to control the explosive growth in money and credit in the second quarter of 1994. However, the parliament quickly demanded another coupon 10 trillion in late June to try to stabilize government accounts in the commercial banking system. The expansion of credit eventually became so large that there were not enough physical coupons in circulation to cover the credit issued by the central bank, although the monetary expansion would have resulted in a quadrupling of the base money supply.

The liquidity in the coupon that resulted from the increases in the base money supply immediately made its way to the Tbilisi Interbank Currency Exchange. Consequently, the foreign reserves were quickly depleted from the foreign exchange market and the coupon's exchange rate rapidly depreciated. A dual economy formed due to the rampant currency substitution where the coupon was used only for governmental transaction and foreign currencies were used for all other purposes. The severe exchange rate devaluation lead to the hyperinflation that plagued Georgia from the introduction of the coupon until late 1994. The hyperinflationary conditions resulted in the circulating coupons' value falling to 6% of the real stock in June 1993. Moreover, inflation levels were at 7,487.9% and 6,473.9% for the years 1993 and

1994 respectively.

III. Interview Synopsis

My interview with Sergo Kobaladze provided an account of Georgia's hyperinflation from a first-hand perspective. Sergo was born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia and lived there until coming to the United States to attend Emory University in 2000. As a student of economics he has a better understanding of the economic causes of the hyperinflation that his country experienced than most Georgian citizens, which assisted in analyzing his recollections. The hyperinflation's bearing on Georgia has left Sergo with vivid memories that he shared with me throughout the interview. These accounts gave a sense to the true impact on a population who lives through a time of rampant inflation.

Sergo described his family as being in an "upper-upper middle class" socioeconomic position in Georgia. He added that his family is one of the few families that can be classified as such. The majority of the families are poor with a few families that are very wealthy. This makes Sergo's socioeconomic position unique to most Georgians but he believes that the hyperinflation's effects on his family were "relatively similar to most." During the hyperinflationary episode Sergo was twelve to fourteen years old. Due to his age Sergo supplemented the interview with stories that other family members have passed on to him to give a better feel for the hyperinflationary time period

Sergo described the transition to a market economy as "rapid." He highlighted the structural problems that Georgia faced in moving from a communist command economy. He recalled that the new economy brought an inflow of foreign goods that were not previously available on the Georgian market, which were primarily imported from Turkey. This trend was apparent in the department stores, where there were a greater variety of goods, and the opening of a variety of new stores. For example, the traditional farmers market that carried only agricultural goods during communist times began to supply "almost anything you could imagine." Furthermore, the economy's transition led to "an increase in emigration and the lifting of the censorship on media."

Sergo mentioned that as an adolescent he didn't understand the economics behind the transition in the early 1990's but it was very apparent that his country was going through a drastic change from communist times. For example, the day that Georgia received its independence, the first thing Sergo and his friends did was to "rip off their communist uniforms that they were required to wear to school." He emphasized that the initial transition had a damaging psychological and political effect because almost immediately after the transition wars broke out around his house and the political unrest was obvious. However, Sergo insisted that his family's morale remained optimistic. His family members reassured him that things were going to get better in the near future. Sergo's father was educated in many fields including economics and politics, so he understood the great possibilities that the transition could produce for Georgia. Sergo's father also realized the power of monetary and fiscal policy, which would make dealing with the developing hyperinflation more bearable.

Sergo recalled that with the introduction of the coupon in April 1993 the Georgian citizens immediately started using it as their primary currency. However, Sergo noted that the coupon

was “the worst looking money” and reminded him of “toilet paper.” Furthermore, he said that the coupon “didn’t look authoritative but the Georgian were excited to finally have their own currency.” However, the hyperinflation quickly followed the issuance of the coupon, which resulted in “an immediate increase in the demand in foreign currencies such as the US dollar and ruble.” However, Sergo mentioned that most salaries were still paid in coupons.

Sergo was able to tell that Georgia was experiencing a hyperinflation almost immediately after the introduction of the coupon. As a resident of the largest city in Georgia, he often went to the local bakery to purchase the bread for his family. After the introduction of the coupon he instantly began paying for the bread in the new currency. The price of the bread went from 1 coupon to 200 coupons within the first month of the currency’s circulation. Moreover, after two months of the currency circulating he was carrying 250,000 coupons at a time for everyday adolescent transactions. Consequently, he was very aware that the coupon was rapidly losing its value.

Sergo also brought up that when the coupon was first introduced the notes were printed in France. After being printed the notes were transported to Georgia by train cars and then put into large trucks that brought the currency to the central bank. However, when the notes arrived in Georgia, three of the trucks that were contracted to transport the currency to the central bank immediately stole the truckloads of notes. These notes later made their way to the foreign exchange markets where they were converted to dollars and rubles. This act exemplified the extreme liquidity that resulted in the introduction of the new Georgian currency. Sergo spoke of some of the every-day effects that the hyperinflation had on him and his community. For example, Sergo had been taking private lessons in art for some time before the hyperinflation began. The sessions were approximately three miles from his house and his parents usually drove him there. However, after the hyperinflation started his parents could no longer give him a ride because the availability of gas was very limited. Consequently, Sergo had to walk with his parents to the session where he was able to see “lines as long as a kilometer long waiting for bread and other food goods.” He also mentioned that “the streets were basically empty of cars” and at night there were no lights because of the electricity shortage. Moreover, almost all prices in the city were quoted in dollars and rubles to avoid the menu costs that result from rapid inflation. Sergo emphasized that “cash management became the primary job of every household” because everybody was constantly concerned about their money losing its value before they were able to buy their necessary goods.

Another major problem that Sergo recalled was the government’s selling of public buildings for coupons an effort to privatize. After the transactions, the coupons devaluated so quickly that the building were actually sold for a small fraction of their actual price, which only exacerbated the government’s fiscal deficits.

Although all Georgians standard of living decreased dramatically, Sergo’s did not lower as much as most Georgians. His parents received a small portion of their salary in dollars, which de-emphasized the importance of cash management. However, the majority of his parent’s salary was paid in coupons which made the hyperinflation a serious threat to his family’s existence, as well as the majority of other Georgian families.

Throughout the hyperinflationary time period, Sergo recalled carrying primarily US dollars

and rubles, although he did carry coupons for certain transaction purposes. He therefore verified the existence of a dual economy. He also spoke of how the bread prices did not seem to inflate at the rapid rate that other commodities were experiencing. Sergo recalled his family purchasing a slip from the government that rationed the bread off on a daily basis. The governments rationing slips served to subsidize the bread prices and deal with the food shortages. He described the bread's quality as "gray" and "poor" but affirmed that it was better than nothing.

Sergo recalled that the social sentiment at the time was exacerbated by political unrest. There was a war in near by Abkhazia where many young Georgian boys were off dying at the same time as the economic hardships. Moreover, Sergo described an "unbearable criminal situation" that made safety a serious concern. Criminal gangs were used to protect shops by charging an illegal tax on the store owners. This led to an anarchical state where Georgian citizens were not sure who controlled what aspects of their lives. As a result, most Georgian were only concerned about surviving and, therefore, focused on attaining the necessary goods to achieve a subsistence level of existence. Although many citizens dreamed of leaving the country to escape the dire conditions most did not have the means to do so. The majority of the Georgian citizens lacked the necessary skills to operate in a market economy and the few that did left the country almost immediately.

Sergo indicated that it was difficult to escape the consequences of the hyperinflation in any aspect of life, which made the schooling environment no different. The teachers were going through the same hardships as the rest of the Georgian citizens, which included low and delayed pay. To complicate the situation there was no heat in the school buildings during the winter months. As a result, the teachers had a difficult time abstaining from talking about their struggles with the students. Namely, the country's severe economic conditions became the subject matter of most classes. Sergo mentioned that his public school was one of the best in the country and, therefore, assumed that the situation must have been worse for other school in Georgia.

The most serious consequence of the hyperinflation was on Sergo's family savings. The family savings was converted to the coupon after the currency's introduction. As the coupon devaluated, Sergo's family saving diminished and by the end of the hyperinflation in late 1994 the savings had been eliminated. Along with the lost savings came a great social fear for the future uncertainty of the economy, which had a major negative psychological impact on the Georgians.

IV. Conclusion

After Georgia's independence in 1991, the combination of economic shocks and structural problems in the economy led the Republic of Georgia into a hyperinflation after the introduction of the coupon in 1993. Sergo Kobaladze described the negative economic, social, and psychological effects that the hyperinflation had on a Georgian citizen. Although the hyperinflation did not affect all Georgians in the same way, Sergo's description provided an account that demonstrated how a hyperinflation impacts all aspects of life. Moreover, according to Sergo, the hyperinflation had an immediate impact on the Georgian citizens' lives and their primary concern became "maintaining the existence level."