

EMPIRE AND  
BELONGING IN  
THE EURASIAN  
BORDERLANDS

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## CHAPTER 5

# “What Are They Doing? After All, We’re Not Germans”

## Expulsion, Belonging, and Postwar Experience in the Caucasus

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Extensive expulsion campaigns were carried out across the southern Caucasus in the years between the end of World War II and Stalin’s death in 1953.<sup>1</sup> While the wholesale deportation of Chechen, Ingush, Karachai, and Balkar “punished peoples” in 1943–44 has become perhaps the paradigmatic example of Stalinist deportation due to nationality, later expulsions from the southern Caucasus garner almost no attention outside of highly local contexts.<sup>2</sup> These campaigns were not driven by a desire to punish wartime deeds, and thus differed fundamentally from concurrent expulsion campaigns elsewhere in the USSR. Rather, borderland belonging in the greater Caucasus—not long before a common feature of this entangled, multiethnic outpost of empire—proved increasingly incompatible with the homogenizing ambitions of Soviet nation-building.

Expulsion represents one of the most radical tools available to empires and nations alike to define territories and refine populations.<sup>3</sup> As the Soviet state shifted its focus from class enemies to suspect national groups in the mid-1930s, expulsion operations expanded from piecemeal border-cleansing efforts to the wholesale removal of entire nationalities to Central Asia and Siberia. This process has been portrayed by scholars as a retreat from the “ethnophilia” of the 1920s, as ethnic cleansing, and as genocide, in each case emphasizing the perceived liability of minority, non-Russian populations.<sup>4</sup>

Yet while these explanations tell a compelling story at the macro level, the view from Georgia looks rather different. In the Soviet Union, what I call excisional institutions of nation-building (e.g., expulsions, population exchange, ethnic cleansing, and genocide) borrowed extensively from an imperial repertoire. Excisional institutions of nation-building worked alongside their productive counterparts, such as elaborating census categories, writing national histories, defining territories, and reaching out to diasporas—tools both endowed by Soviet nationality policy and in some cases extending beyond it.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I use the case of postwar expulsions from Georgia to show how a Soviet tool of imperial population management could just as much be an instrument of nation-building and national homogenization at the local level. In other words, by expelling minorities, Georgian authorities enacted imperial prerogatives toward national goals—and the republic’s population likewise answered in national idioms. In the process, a new hierarchy of markers of belonging emerged that combined prewar categories of “disloyalty” with nationalizing aims.

Scholars of the Soviet Union tend to use the all-encompassing term “deportation” in lieu of the official Soviet terms “expulsion” or “special settlement” (*vyselenie* or *spetsposelenie*) to refer to the practice of forcibly moving large groups from their places of residence to Central Asia or Siberia as a punitive or preventive measure.<sup>6</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch note the semantic distinction between expulsions, which emphasize removing a population from a particular area, and deportations, which focus on the destination.<sup>7</sup> The distinction between these terms is indeed subtle, but important differences remain with regard to scope and intent. I refer to these postwar acts as expulsions not only to preserve the actual nomenclature used to describe these actions in the event, but also to highlight the fundamental cleansing aspect of the operations. Such operations did not merely seek to empty a particular territory of its inhabitants for purposes of border security or economic development; rather, expulsion operations sought to reshape, through permanent excision, the territory’s population. This permits us to more precisely ask: expelled by whom, toward what end? And to what extent did the architects, executors, expelled, and remaining populations understand expulsion through the lens of the nation, even if defined otherwise?

By the postwar era, the terrain of the modern Caucasus had been reshaped through expulsion, flight, resettlement, and emigration for at least a century. From the *mukhadzhirstvo* of the 1860s–1870s, which expelled Circassians on the Black Sea coast to the Ottoman Empire, to the influx of refugees in the Armenian Genocide’s aftermath as detailed by Jo Laycock in this volume

(chapter 6), and from the emigration of Georgia's social democratic leadership to "national operations" during the Great Terror, population management through expulsion, resettlement, and even execution were familiar practices in the public consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Earlier episodes of expulsion and resettlement, such as the resettlement of Georgian and Armenian populations to Persia during Shah Abbas's reign in the sixteenth century, likewise retained important symbolic value in Georgian national narratives in the twentieth century.

Moreover, the Stalin-era Caucasus provides a peculiar political environment for examining expulsion campaigns. Despite Georgia's small population and peripheral territory, Georgians and others from the Caucasus played an outsized role in Union-level affairs at this time. Former Georgian first secretary (1931–38) Lavrenty Beria's promotion to lead the All-Union NKVD following his tenure overseeing collectivization and the Terror in Georgia and the South Caucasus strengthened important networks "between the Caucasus and the Kremlin" that shaped the contours of expulsion campaigns.<sup>9</sup> The roles played by Kandid Charkviani, who served as first secretary of Georgia from 1938 to 1952, and Akaki Mgeladze, a Stalin protégé who ran Abkhazia in the 1940s and replaced Charkviani as first secretary in 1952, in postwar expulsion campaigns illustrate the growing conflict between Stalin's and Beria's patronage networks vis-à-vis Georgia.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Beria, Charkviani, Mgeladze, and even Stalin himself took proactive roles not only in expulsion campaigns but also in Georgian nation-building projects such as consolidating census and linguistic categories, converting minority languages into Georgian orthography, writing a national history, promoting a national epic, making claims on "historic" territories and populations, and more.<sup>11</sup> The blurred space between the Caucasus and the Kremlin meant that expulsions were interpreted by contemporaries not as Soviet (read: Russian) attacks against minority populations, but rather as Georgian efforts to further reduce the role of non-Georgians in the republic.

Postwar expulsions built on Soviet practices honed during the prewar and wartime eras in the Caucasus and throughout the Union. Yet an important shift in intent seems to have occurred as the Red Army pushed through Europe in the spring of 1944: border-cleansing operations resumed in Georgia—a republic distant from the front and not occupied during the war. In May 1944, Georgian first secretary Charkviani and Georgian Council of Ministers chairman Valerian Bakradze calculated that 77,500 people (14,860 families) from the Meskhetian region's (Akhaltzikhe, Adigeni, Aspindza, and Akhalkalaki districts) "Turkish population" were subject to resettlement. At that time, Charkviani and Bakradze planned for resettlement within Georgia, to a vari-

ety of locales in the eastern parts of the republic more distant from the Turkish border. In June, Charkviani, Bakradze, and NKVD head Avksenti Rapava extended their planning to include Bogdanov district and Ajaria ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic). Rather than simply surveying the “Turkish” population, these plans included Turks, Kurds, and “Khemshils” (Muslim Armenians) and organized a “special resettlement” of 86,000 people (16,630 households).<sup>12</sup>

By July 1944, Beria recommended resettling “Turks, Kurds, and Khemshins” away from the border regions, and a July 31 GKO (State Defense Committee) resolution no. 6279 ordered the expulsion of these groups by the NKVD to the Kazakh, Kirgiz, and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs). The GKO order authorized the expulsion of 45,516 people, which the Georgian CC (Central Committee) expanded with a resolution on August 9 to include Ajaria in the operation. Nikolai Fedorovich Bugai and A. M. Gonov emphasize that the July 31 resolution drew purely on information provided by Georgian NKVD chief Rapava. Between November 15 and 18, 1944, NKVD forces deported 91,095 people from the Akhaltsikhe, Adigeni, Aspindza, and Bogdanov districts and the Ajarian ASSR to the Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kirgiz SSRs. The Georgian NKVD subsequently established a more strictly controlled border regime along the Turkish border.<sup>13</sup> With the freeing of lands in the Turkish border region, Charkviani and Bakradze recommended resettling “Georgian populations” to these newly available lands from other, land-poor regions of Georgia with the (ostensible) hope that the resettled *kolkhozniki* could improve agricultural output in the border region. Georgian and Armenian populations already residing in the area would remain in place.<sup>14</sup>

The Meskhetian expulsion was the last in a series of wholesale operations from the Caucasus and Black Sea region that took place in 1943 and 1944.<sup>15</sup> However, unlike the North Caucasian campaigns, the Meskhetian expulsions look more like efforts to cleanse frontier zones than attempts to punish real or suspected collaboration with Germans or resistance to Soviet rule. The concurrent pursuit of these aims beginning in late 1944 suggests a shift to postwar expulsion practices, applied to punish simultaneously: groups in newly acquired territories who, due to wartime deeds or past citizenship, were assumed by Soviet authorities to be unable to join the Soviet collective; *and* groups in territories that did not see German or Romanian occupation yet whose diversity and past citizenship made the Caucasus borderland potentially vulnerable, particularly at the dawn of the Cold War.

The postwar incorporation of new territories into the Soviet Union and solidification of “people’s democracies” in Eastern Europe entailed ambitious campaigns of population transfer and expulsion.<sup>16</sup> Following the expulsion of

alleged Ukrainian nationalists, accomplices, and their families to Central Asia and Siberia in 1947–48 and Operation Vesna (May 1948), which expelled nearly 50,000 Lithuanians to Central Asia, expulsion campaigns spread to new regions in 1949. Operation Priboi, between January and March 1949, expelled 87,000 alleged kulaks, bandits, nationalists, accomplices, and their families from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.<sup>17</sup> In April 1949, 40,850 people were expelled from Moldova for suspected collaboration with fascist occupiers, work in German or Romanian police units, participation in illegal religious sects, former White Guard membership, kulak or landowner status, or trading.<sup>18</sup> Such policies not only aimed to displace from the Soviet body politic through expulsion those individuals who allegedly collaborated with German or Romanian occupation regimes, but also to territorially consolidate ethnic groups in this historically multiethnic region of imperial borderlands.<sup>19</sup> The “thrice occupied” territories of Eastern Europe saw expulsions of titular nationalities for supposed actions undertaken in the prewar, wartime, and postwar period as well as for social statuses deemed incompatible with membership in the Soviet collective.<sup>20</sup>

Territories in the Caucasus untouched by German troops likewise experienced large expulsion operations in the early postwar era as Cold War alignments formed. Failed Soviet attempts to shape the political and territorial environment beyond the Caucasus left a perceived geopolitical encirclement of the Black and Caspian Sea regions in their wake. Such Soviet attempts included: claiming territorial concessions from Turkey on behalf of Armenia and Georgia in 1945–46; supporting the People’s Republic of (Iranian) Azerbaijan and the Communist Tudeh party as the joint Allied occupation of Iran wound down in 1946; and seeing a Communist Greece emerge from civil war (1946–49).<sup>21</sup> While Greece and Turkey would not join NATO (est. April 1949) until 1952, and Soviet attempts to support Iranian communists continued sporadically through the 1970s, by the late 1940s, the lines of the Cold War had been clearly drawn in the broader Caucasus region. War—or the perceived threat of it—“has everything to do with genocide,” as Norman M. Naimark makes clear in this volume (chapter 3). The sense among Soviet leaders that the same country that had defeated fascism’s march through Europe immediately faced threats from without and within presented new opportunities to target familiar borderland “enemies” from the prewar era, but also permitted enterprising local actors to pursue projects of national homogenization (without going so far as genocide). In this context, by the spring of 1949, plans were under way for a new expulsion operation in the larger Black Sea and Caucasus region to “cleanse” the area of politically unreliable minority populations.<sup>22</sup>

On May 29, 1949, a top secret Council of Ministers resolution signed by Stalin and Council executive secretary M. Pomaznev instructed local and republic Ministries of State Security (MGB) to “expel” (*vyselit*) “Dashnaks; Turkish citizens, stateless Turks, and former Turkish citizens who have Soviet citizenship; Greek subjects, stateless Greeks, and former Greek subjects who have Soviet citizenship” from the Georgian, Azerbaijan, and Armenian SSRs and the Black Sea coast. The destinations, by group, were Dashnaks to Altai krai (RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic]); Turks to Tomsk oblast (RSFSR); and Greeks to Iuzhno-Kazakhstan and Dzhabul oblasts in Kazakh SSR.<sup>23</sup> The deportation of Iranians occurred through a separate yet related operation. The order for expulsion framed the targeted populations by subjecthood, citizenship, or political orientation rather than by nationality. Yet Greeks, Turks, and Iranians fit within the official list of national minorities (diaspora nationalities) devised for the 1939 All-Union Census of the Population.<sup>24</sup> The Dashnak label, while an accusation uniquely applicable to Armenians (the Dashnaksutiun, or Armenian Revolutionary Federation, led independent Armenia from 1918 to 1920 and continued to exist in diaspora communities thereafter), entailed an explicit ideological content that supposedly distinguished nationalist Dashnaks from loyal Soviet Armenians.

The Georgian MGB began preparing for Operation Volna in late March and calculated 7,242 families subject to deportation. Rukhadze and the procurator approved each individual household’s “eviction.” On June 7, 1949—a week prior to the operation—First Secretary Charkviani and Council of Ministers chairman Chkhubianishvili wrote to Stalin about their plans to resettle kolkhozniki from other districts of Georgia to the tea, citrus, and tobacco plantations in Abkhazia and Ajaria inhabited by “Greeks and Turks” slated for expulsion. To replace the estimated 3,700 Greek and Turk families, Charkviani and Chkhubianishvili expected to resettle around 14,000 people from land-poor districts and requested funds from central institutions to facilitate the effort.<sup>25</sup> The USSR Council of Ministers, via Stalin and Pomaznev, passed a resolution approving this effort shortly thereafter, which also indicated that property of the special settlers would be transferred to the newly resettled kolkhozniki.<sup>26</sup>

The operation began in urban areas (Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Batumi, Poti, Kutaisi, and Gagra) at 3:00 a.m. and in more provincial areas at 4:00 a.m. on June 14, 1949. Expellees had been loaded onto trains bound for Central Asia and Siberia by midnight on June 15. In total, 7,220 households (31,606 people) were expelled in this operation.<sup>27</sup> While the number of Turks and Dashnaks subject to expulsion was higher than the number deported, the Georgian MGB

expelled more Greeks than initially planned. The most significant change occurred in Abkhazia, where some additional families and relatives of the deportees “voluntarily” joined the evicted. This required a later operation that resulted in the expulsion of an additional 1,074 households (5,099 people), consisting overwhelmingly of Greeks.<sup>28</sup> In total, across the entire Georgian SSR, Operation Volna expelled 8,294 households (36,705 people), including: 845 Turk households (2,548 people); 6,769 Greek households (31,386 people); and 680 Dashnak households (2,771 people). A total of 1,484 wagons in 25 troop trains transported them to their destinations in Central Asia and Siberia.<sup>29</sup> According to Major General V. Kakuchaia of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Operation Volna contributed to a total expulsion from Georgia in 1949–50 of 9,923 households (43,344 people).<sup>30</sup>

The expulsion of Iranians occurred in a subsequent operation not directed by Stalin and Pomaznev’s order. In October 1949, Charkviani wrote to Stalin regarding the 1,670 households (ca. 5,600 people) with current or former Iranian citizenship, regardless of whether members were Soviet citizens. He recommended resettlement for approximately 4,500 of this group. According to Charkviani, many in this population maintained ties and correspondence with contacts in Iran, practiced speculation and other anti-Soviet activities, and those residing in border regions presented a threat to state security due to the potential for espionage among them.<sup>31</sup> While Iranian citizenship provided the grounds for deportation, by nationality this contingent was more diverse: of the approximately 5,600 Iranian citizens in Georgia, most were Armenian or Azerbaijani by nationality (2,128 and 1,506, respectively). Smaller nationalities included Iranians, Jews, and Assyrians.<sup>32</sup> The correlation between Charkviani’s October proposal and the Iranian totals in the comprehensive 1949–50 list suggests that his proposal was carried out sometime between late 1949 and 1950.

The 1949 operations reached throughout the southern Caucasus. The initial plan for the entire Volna operation, as estimated by the USSR minister of state security S. Kruglov, anticipated expelling a total of 12,500 households from the Caucasus and Black Sea coast.<sup>33</sup> The actual number expelled exceeded the plan, and the largest number of expulsions took place from Georgia:

Odessa, Nikolaevskii, Kherson, and Izmail oblasts (Ukrainian SSR)	476 people (mostly Greeks)
Krasnodar krai	5,233 people (164 Dashnaks, 4,396 Greeks, 673 Turks)
Azerbaijan SSR	3,058 people (323 Greeks, 1,045 Dashnaks, 1,690 Turks) <sup>34</sup>



Armenian SSR	12,000 people (likely Dashnaks and Turks) <sup>35</sup>
Georgian SSR	36,705 people

The 1949 operations were neither wholesale expulsions of entire groups nor efforts to empty entire swaths of territory of its inhabitants. Still—or perhaps, as a result—the meaning and intent of the expulsions was less clear for those populations affected than concurrent operations in Eastern Europe or in prewar campaigns. Expellees, family and friends left behind, former neighbors, and newly resettled Georgians from other parts of the republic revealed in memoirs, official reporting, and letters of grievance how they understood the reasons for expulsion, constructed their autobiographical narratives when engaging with the state, and made claims for return and lost property.

Republic and local organs had been preparing for Operation Volna since at least March 1949. Oral history interviews conducted among Greek expellees suggest that at least some Greeks with close ties to the Party had limited knowledge of an impending operation, but that for the majority of respondents, their expulsion came as a complete surprise.<sup>36</sup> Arpenik Aleksanian, a young Tbilisi native who was Armenian by nationality, recorded in her diary that her father heard rumors around town on June 13 that “Greeks and Ajarians” were to be expelled and that someone asked about “our Greeks.”<sup>37</sup> When an MGB captain arrived at their home later that day and informed the Aleksanians that they were to be expelled from the city as former Turkish citizens, Aleksanian noted, “None of us could understand that shock.”<sup>38</sup> The captain gave the family members thirty minutes to collect their belongings. Nonna Erifriadi, a young Greek resident of Batumi, recalled that on June 13, she went to a friend Ioakimidi’s home to borrow a book and found it in complete disarray. Upon surveying the situation, “with difficulty I realized that the expulsion was prepared for all Pontic Greeks. Returning home, I told father everything.”<sup>39</sup> Nonna and her father surmised that rumors about expulsion of Greeks probably only applied to those Greeks with foreign citizenship, such as Ioakimidi.<sup>40</sup> Neither Aleksanian nor Erifriadi struggled to comprehend the possibility of *another’s* expulsion, yet both girls failed to understand why their own families—as Armenian and Greek Soviet citizens—ultimately fell under the rubric of this operation.

Some remained unaware of the reason for their expulsion long after they arrived in Kazakhstan or Siberia. Levon Nikolaevich Matinov claimed he only learned that he had been sent to Altai krai as an “active Dashnak-nationalist” a year after the operation took place (May 1950).<sup>41</sup> In an earlier petition from December 1949, Matinov described how he and his family, “together with

other Armenians were expelled from Tbilisi by administrative order to Altai krai in permanent exile,"<sup>42</sup> which suggests that until he learned of his "active Dashnak" charges, Matinov could have believed that his expulsion was due to a national, rather than a political category. Similarly, Il'ia Semenovich Bidzhamov, an Assyrian born in the Ottoman Empire who obtained Soviet citizenship in 1923 after fleeing to the Russian Empire in 1915, as of December 1949 did not know the reason for his family's expulsion to Tomsk oblast from Tbilisi.<sup>43</sup> Bidzhamov perhaps suspected his expulsion was related to his "Turkish" origins because he emphasized his refugee background and enthusiasm for Soviet citizenship in his petitions as a means to correct this biographical liability. Matinov's initial interpretation focused on nationality rather than citizenship and, subsequently, attempted to refute ideological charges.

Confusion also existed among expellees regarding whether their expulsion was due to who they were (by nationality or citizenship) or what they allegedly had done (namely, participated in anti-Soviet groups or maintained ties to Turkey). Autobiographical statements provide contradictory accounts. As she and her family arrived in Avlabari to embark, Aleksanian observed that nearby they had gathered "nearly all the Armenians of Tbilisi, and there are even more Armenians in Tbilisi than Georgians."<sup>44</sup> Upon further reflection during the journey, she wondered:

We could not understand just why they expel us, what we had done wrong. If they expel such honest people, why did they leave behind all the gamblers, speculators, thieves, and robbers? They did not expel a single Georgian with us. Why did they expel us? If they expel us for being born in Turkey, as former Turkish subjects, then in fact they, my parents, fled from Turkey at the time of the Armenian massacres [*rezni*] in 1915. And Papa left Turkey in 1912 in search of work. They obtained Soviet citizenship in 1924. They've been in Tbilisi for 25 years already and are considered Soviet citizens, enjoy all the same rights as everyone has since 1936.<sup>45</sup>

Aleksanian correctly deduced that her parents' former Turkish citizenship provided the grounds for expulsion, yet she conveyed her experiences as a more broadly Armenian problem. Not all Armenians in Tbilisi had fled the Ottoman Empire in 1915, yet in Aleksanian's mind, the city's entire Armenian population appeared subject to expulsion in this operation. With his similar refugee background, Bidzhamov thanked the "wise Lenin-Stalin national democratic policy" for granting him and his wife Soviet citizenship and saving them from "the wild and barbaric national oppression and persecution at the hands of Turkish powers in the First Imperialist War."<sup>46</sup> Again, if former

Turkish citizenship was the crime, lavishly demonstrating commitment to Soviet authorities and laws seemed a logical strategy for appeal.

Aleksanian did not mention Dashnak-nationalist charges in her diary. For Solomon Vartanovich Postoian and his family, who were expelled to Altai krai from Tbilisi, the Dashnak issue proved central. For these charges, Georgian MGB officials relied on testimony and accusations from 1938, in which a group of witnesses in Nar-Baiazet, Armenian SSR, claimed Postoian was an active member in local Dashnak party activities—an accusation Postoian denied in petitions to Georgian authorities.<sup>47</sup> His son, Migran Solomonovich Postoian, emphasized his own service in the Great Patriotic War as a way to distance himself from Dashnak charges made against his father.<sup>48</sup> Matinov likewise denied any involvement with the Dashnak party, claiming “I was never a member of this party, that is, neither an active nor passive Dashnak. And as for nationalism, is it forbidden to love one’s long-suffering people? . . . After all, I was born in and lived in Georgia, which is just as close to me as Armenia.”<sup>49</sup>

Residents of Tbilisi surveyed by Georgian MGB officials in the immediate aftermath of the operation depicted more confident portrayals of the reasons for expulsion. The Tbilisi operation primarily targeted alleged Dashnaks, and that is why the report focuses on Armenians. Writing to Charkviani on June 16, 1949, MGB chief Rukhadze observed that “the vast majority treats this event as a measure to cleanse the frontier region of the country of a dubious element in connection with the coming war in the near future.” Yet he warned that, while “in most cases, the action to expel is regarded as extremely necessary in today’s international situation . . . among a known part of the Georgian population, such a necessity is construed with clearly nationalistic positions.”<sup>50</sup>

So-called characteristic responses from workers and members of the intelligentsia emphasized the coming war and the role of non-Georgians in the republic. Shalva Jikia, a radio committee worker, remarked, “I was convinced that war will break out this summer. No wonder they continuously send trains of troops to the Turkish-Iranian borders.” S. I. Chikovani, a member of the Georgian Writers’ Union, went further, noting, “The action is correct and useful, but it created such a mood in the masses as if there would soon be war.”

While these observations tended toward the practical, other interviewees aimed more directly at the targeted populations. Vasili Kakauridze, an engineer, commended the action “to purge Georgia completely of dubious elements. Among Georgians they scarcely find those who would not commend this action.” Konstantine Ninua, of the Academy of Sciences, meanwhile proclaimed, “Finally, the city is released from the Armenians. . . . The only pity is that the action is partial and the issue of unburdening Georgia is not brought

to a logical end, insofar as a significant Armenian population still remains in Georgia.” The poet D. A. Gachechiladze likewise anticipated that “under various pretexts nearly all non-Georgians will gradually be expelled from Georgia.”

Furthermore, the part of the Armenian population that was willing to comment on the operation regarded it as “oppression” of Armenians and looked toward a variety of historical parallels and ethnic stereotypes in their attempts to make sense of the events. Aram Nikitich Ter’ian, a senior scholar at the Academy of Sciences Institute of Minerals observed, “I remember that the Mensheviks wanted to unburden Tiflis of Armenians, but even they did not take practical steps in that direction.” And Georgii Iakovlevich Chakhalian, a worker at Tbilisi Sapurtrest, questioned the reasons behind the action against Tbilisi’s Armenians with the all-important wartime reference, asking “What are they doing? After all, we’re not Germans.” Like the Georgian Tbilisi residents quoted above, the “characteristic” Armenian respondents framed the Tbilisi expulsions as unambiguous national offenses against Armenians simply for being Armenian. The term “Dashnak” does not appear anywhere in Rukhadze’s report, even though Dashnaks and Turkish citizens were the stated objects of the operation.<sup>51</sup>

With time, expellees and their families came to realize the scope of the charges against them as well as ways to appeal to authorities for amnesty, return to their places of origin, and return of property (or compensation for loss thereof). Immediately following the operation, the Georgian MGB began to receive petitions regarding the expellees and requests to return to their places of residence in Georgia.<sup>52</sup> The petition campaign increased significantly after 1953, as waves of amnesties swept the Union. Among the Volna special settlers, the Greek Soviet citizens deported from Abkhazia lobbied most actively for the right to return and for property compensation. Greek petitioners viewed the 1949 operations as a problem specific to Abkhazia and as part of a broader trend of alleged “Georgification” of the autonomous republic initiated by Beria and continued by Mgeladze—charges that mirrored precisely those made by Abkhaz petitioners about the same period. For example, in a 1955 petition to Council of Ministers chairman Bulganin, Dmitri Khristoforovich Mistakidi highlighted what he viewed to be the spurious circumstances of the “voluntary” expulsion of Greek Soviet citizens from Abkhazia during Operation Volna. For Mistakidi, this violation of rights had deeper underpinnings: “The entire five-year period of work of the racist Mgeladze prior to our expulsion, characterized by inhumane oppression, discrimination, and other crimes, took on clear signs of genocide, with brutal chauvinism, carried out not only in relation to Greeks, but also in general. The preparatory five-year ‘work’ of Mgeladze had its apotheosis in the events of June 14–

21, 1949.”<sup>53</sup> Mistakidi distinguished between “local powers,” who allegedly sought to incite fear among Greeks, and Georgian neighbors who otherwise lived alongside Greek populations without incident. Yet the influence of such “savage nationalists”—even if in the minority among local Georgians—proved instrumental in how some Greeks comprehended their overall treatment in Abkhazia as well as the Volna operation specifically.

As was the case with other petitioners, memoirists, and eyewitnesses, Greek petitioners interpreted the Volna expulsion as an explicit attack on Greeks *as Greeks*, made most clear by the expulsion of Soviet citizen and foreign citizen alike, even if this departed from the purported ideological and security imperative of the operation. Such grievances were sufficient to garner the attention and involvement of Union-level authorities by 1955.<sup>54</sup> New Georgian first secretary Vasil Mzhavanadze acknowledged that over five thousand Greek “volunteers” had been illegally expelled from Abkhazia to Central Asia, yet he initially suggested that it would be best for the “Greeks to remain where they currently reside,” that is, in Central Asia. Following a Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) investigation, the Georgian CC began a complicated process of return and compensation the following year.<sup>55</sup> Similar suggestions by Georgian CC officials in 1957 to prevent the return of Meskhetians (on the grounds that their previous places of residence had since been occupied and that they likely still had relatives with ties to Turkey) proved more successful.<sup>56</sup> By then, the death of Georgia’s most famous son and impending de-Stalinization campaign would cause residents of Georgia to further redefine the official and lived contours of national belonging vis-à-vis the Soviet project.<sup>57</sup>

The 1949 operations were not the only expulsion campaigns in the postwar Caucasus. Only two years later, an additional 11,200 people were expelled from Georgia as “enemy elements” during the so-called Mingrelian affair, an effort orchestrated by Stalin to cripple Beria’s robust patronage network in Georgia.<sup>58</sup> Their alleged offenses included: ties to émigré Georgians; ties to Ajarian or Azerbaijani émigrés; suspected smugglers, border crossers, and accomplices with ties to Turkish intelligence services; recent “reemigrants” to Georgia from France, Iran, and China; and prisoners of war who allegedly collaborated with German forces by serving in the Georgian National Legion.<sup>59</sup> Many, though not all of these expellees were Georgian by nationality, albeit with alleged activities that placed them, for a time, outside the bounds of the Georgian collective as defined by Stalin and republic leadership.

Between 1949 and 1951, at least 54,544 people were expelled from Georgia to Central Asia and Siberia. This number comprises approximately 14 percent

of Polian's total estimated 380,000–400,000 postwar “internal forced migrations.”<sup>60</sup> Considering that in the 1939 and 1959 All-Union Censuses the population of the Georgian SSR made up approximately 2 percent of the USSR's total population, a 14 percent share of the postwar deportation total for this two-year window alone is quite disproportionate.<sup>61</sup> The expulsion of up to 80,000 Armenians from the Armenian SSR in the same period presents a related picture (with less than 1 percent of the USSR's population but 20 percent of postwar internal forced migrations), though perhaps half of that number were recent “repatriates” who had emigrated from Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere beginning in 1946 to build their national “homeland.”<sup>62</sup> In Georgia, purported ties with (geopolitically) western-leaning Turkey, Greece, and Iran or the Armenian nationalist diaspora overrode Soviet citizenship, service in the Red Army, Party membership, or other key markers of belonging in the Soviet collective.<sup>63</sup> This was true in both the 1949 and 1951 operations. Unlike the 95,000 Meskhetians, who remained in Central Asia for the duration of the Soviet experiment, expellees from the 1949 and 1951 operations were permitted to return relatively shortly thereafter, though not without logistical and legal difficulty. In many cases, Georgian residents were already resettled into expellees' homes, and gaining compensation for lost property remained difficult.

Expulsions as a Soviet practice required close collaboration between central decision-making authorities in Moscow and local implementers at the republic and district levels to carry out the operations. Preparations and planning for the Meskhetian and Volna operations show the important roles played by actors within Georgia, from First Secretary Charkviani and Abkhaz Obkom head Mgeladze to the provincial MGB agent or border guard. In the case of Georgia, distinguishing between central and local agency is complicated by the overarching role of Beria, his continued influence in Georgia, and the mechanism of his police apparatus in facilitating expulsion operations. As a result, postwar operations in Georgia remain intimately linked to cadre politics and power struggles in Georgia and in Moscow between the end of the war and 1953. Even with an influential center, local actors still went above and beyond what was asked of them by Moscow in expulsion operations, as demonstrated by the expansion of the Meskhetian operation, the excess Greek “volunteers,” the expulsion of Iranians, and later reluctance to allow Greeks and Meskhetians to return to Georgia despite their legal ability to do so.

Whereas comparable operations elsewhere acquired a Russian versus non-Russian tinge, in Georgia the division fell broadly between Georgians and non-Georgians, with little to no reference in memoirs, intelligence reporting, or

letters of grievance against “Russian” interference or machinations. The “Russians” in this case were Georgians at the center *and* at the republic level. Indeed, with a muddled distinction between center and periphery in Stalin-era Georgia, the same person could embody the imperial official and the nation-builder due to the deep permeation of the patron-client networks of Stalin, Beria, and Charkviani. In her study of cleansing operations in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands in 1935, Kate Brown observes, somewhat surprisingly, that “*Kresy* dwellers interpreted the violence of mass deportations as a sign not of the state’s power but of its weakness,” due not only to the porousness of the border in practice but also the memory of Russian imperial borderland cleansing that was followed shortly by the loss of the territory, the war, and the state altogether.<sup>64</sup> In the postwar Caucasus, on the other hand, some locals interpreted the expulsions as a sign of increasing Georgian strength.

Expulsion and its aftermath provided important reference points for all involved to make sense of these policies within the evolving discourse of this transitional period. While officially framing the objects of expulsion policies as enemies from without and within, these familiar categories targeted not actions and affiliations from the most recent war (World War II), but rather resurrected, in a belated fashion, fights against lingering political foes from the imperial and revolutionary eras. This (not so) conveniently coincided with an unfolding Cold War climate in which Turkey, Iran, and Greece were increasingly aligned against Soviet interests in the broader Caucasus region, inviting a type of “Soviet xenophobia,” or absolutizing of cross-border ethnic ties among “nationalities of foreign governments” similar to that seen during the 1937–38 national operations.<sup>65</sup>

The resuscitation of prewar categories of disloyalty found new significance as the lines of the Cold War were drawn along Georgia’s borders. Yet in practice, the experience of expulsion caused those affected to comprehend and explain these processes through ethnic lenses rather than the aforementioned official, political categories. Expulsion from Tbilisi as a suspected Dashnak or former Turkish subject meant expulsion as an Armenian from the perspective of both the deportees and local residents. Though wholly fabricated, revelations of a Mingrelian nationalist group had some basis in recent history and could likewise appear at least plausible to a homogenizing Georgian populace for whom subnational identities remained palpable.<sup>66</sup> This larger ethnic consolidation effort entailed expelling Muslim Meskhetians due to purported diaspora nationality ties to Turkey; Greeks, Turks, and Iranians not only for diaspora nationality status but also for experiences living outside Russian or Soviet control, signaled by recent repatriation or former citizenship status; and

Armenian “Dashnaks” and Georgian “enemy elements” whose alleged political deeds and affiliations made the expelled incompatible with membership in the increasingly homogenizing yet still diverse Soviet collective in Georgia.

Expulsions were the darker mechanisms in a wider process in late Stalin-era Georgia motivated by nation-building aspirations among key local actors, and interpreted as such by affected populations. When considered alongside concurrent Georgian territorial irredentist efforts, consolidation of official Georgian nationality and linguistic categories, codification of a national history, and official and popular outreach campaigns to diaspora communities in Azerbaijan and Iran, expulsions look less like a center-driven Cold War security imperative than a more local effort to shape the contours of belonging among Soviet Georgia’s citizenry. Expulsions in the postwar period reinforced central geopolitical concerns while simultaneously endeavoring to refine and consolidate the republic’s Georgian population—a long-term Soviet goal embraced and adapted by enterprising nation-builders in Tbilisi and beyond.



1. Pavel Polian argues that around six million people endured “internal forced migrations” between 1919 and 1953 in *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 4.

2. On this nomenclature, see especially Aleksandr M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War* (New York: Norton, 1978); and Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

3. Ronald Grigor Suny and Valerie A. Kivelson note that deporting or massacring designated minority populations are “practices that nations have engaged in and that empires would have easily understood as part of an imperial repertoire,” *Russia’s Empires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 401. Moreover, such practices of “population politics”—however ubiquitous across the imperial *longue durée*—likewise advanced important modern goals, as detailed in Peter Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111–44.

4. On the 1920s and “ethnophilia,” see Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414–52; on the 1930s as retreat in nationality policies and application of ethnic cleansing terminology, see Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (December 1998): 813–61; on the genocidal components of Soviet nationality policy, including deportations, see Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin’s Genocides* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). On the first wholesale deportation of a national group, see Michael Gelb, “An Early Soviet Ethnic Deportation: The Far-Eastern Koreans,” *Russian Review* 54, no. 3 (July 1995): 389–412.

5. I discuss each of these nodes of nation-building in detail in Claire Pogue Kaiser, “Lived Nationality: Policy and Practice in Soviet Georgia, 1945–1978” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2015).

6. Punitive or preventive expulsions, of course, differed fundamentally in intent from economic resettlement campaigns occurring simultaneously in the Caucasus region, even if the memory of such operations at times elides this distinction. On post-war economic resettlement campaigns of Azerbaijanis from the Armenian to the Azerbaijani SSR and their historical interpretations, see Krista Goff, “Deportation or resettlement? History writing and contemporary ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus” (article under review).

7. Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch, *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia’s Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 286.

8. On the Circassian expulsions and emigration, see Vladimir Bobrovnikov and Irina Babich, eds., *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007) and Dana Sherry, “Social Alchemy on the Black Sea Coast, 1860–65,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 7–30; Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark, eds., *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford Uni-

versity Press, 2011); and on Georgia's Terror, see Marc Junge and Bernd Bonwetsch, eds., *Bolschewistische Ordnung in Georgien: Der Große Terror in einer kleinen kaukasischen Republik* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

9. On the prominence of Georgian and Caucasian political networks in the 1920s and 1930s "between the Caucasus and the Kremlin," see Erik R. Scott, *Familiar Strangers: The Georgian Diaspora and the Evolution of Soviet Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

10. Mgeladze and Charkviani both discuss these links at length in their fascinating memoirs of the Stalin era, Kandid Charkviani, *Gantsdili da naazrevi: 1906–1994* (Tbilisi: Merani, 2004) and Akaki Mgeladze, *Stalin: kakim ia ego uznal* (Tbilisi: N.p., 2001). On patronage networks between Georgia and Moscow, see especially Timothy K. Blauvelt, "Abkhazia: Patronage and Power in the Stalin Era," *Nationalities Papers* 35, no. 2 (May 2007): 203–32; Blauvelt, "March of the Chekists: Beria's Secret Police Patronage Network and Soviet Crypto-Politics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 44 (2011): 73–88; and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, "Kremlin—Tbilisi: Purges, Control and Georgian Nationalism in the First Half of the 1950s," in *Georgia after Stalin: Nationalism and Soviet Power*, ed. Timothy K. Blauvelt and Jeremy Smith (New York: Routledge, 2016), 12–31.

11. I discuss Charkviani's enthusiasm for outreach to Georgian communities in Iran and Azerbaijan; Georgian efforts to gain territories in northeastern Turkey; Stalin and Charkviani's involvement in writing Georgian history textbooks; and Beria's role in the construction of Georgian census categories in Kaiser, "Lived Nationality," chaps. 1 and 5. On Charkviani's role in Georgian diaspora outreach in Azerbaijan, see Krista A. Goff, "'Why Not Love Our Language and Our Culture?': National Rights and Citizenship in Khrushchev's Soviet Union," *Nationalities Papers* 43, no. 1 (January 2015): 27–44.

12. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia Archive (sakartvelos šinagan sakmeta saminstros arqivi II, or sšssa (II)) Charkviani, Bakradze, and Rapava to Beria, June 1944, f. 14, op. 18, d. 266, ll. 20–22.

13. Nikolai Fedorovich Bugai and A. M. Gonov, *Kavkaz: narody v eshelonakh, 20–60-e gody* (Moscow: INSAN, 1998), 213–19.

14. Charkviani and Bakradze to Beria, May 1944, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 18, d. 266, ll. 6–9. For further details about budget, timing, and construction, see "Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov Gruzinskoi SSR i TsK KP Gruzii 'Voprosy perezelencheskikh kolkhozov Akhaltsikhskogo, Aspindzskogo i Adigenskogo raionov Gruzinskoi SSR,'" January 10, 1945, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 19, d. 12, ll. 75–78.

15. For a reassessment of the motives behind the Crimean and North Caucasus wartime expulsions, see Alexander Statiev, "The Nature of Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance, 1942–1944: The North Caucasus, the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic, and Crimea," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 285–318.

16. The wholesale expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe is perhaps the most wide-reaching example, though Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, and Jews likewise faced expulsion and population transfer. On the relationship between postwar "ethnic cleansing" and the establishment of people's democracies, see Jan Tomasz Gross, "War as Revolution," in *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944–1949*, ed. Norman M. Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 17–40; Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the*

*European Idea during World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

17. Nikolai Fedorovich Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu: “Posle vashikh ukazanii provedeno sleduiushchee . . .”* (Moscow: Grif i K., 2011), 350–53.

18. Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu*, 346. See also Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 476, ll. 110, 126, accessed via Hoover Institution Archives, reel 3.5938.

19. Operations Vistula (April–July 1947) and Zapad (Autumn 1947) are especially illustrative in this regard. Operation Vistula, carried out by Polish forces, resettled over 140,000 Ukrainians from the south and east of the country to new Polish territories in the north and west, previously inhabited by Germans, to force assimilation into Polish culture and distance Ukrainians from the shared Polish-Ukrainian border region. Meanwhile, the first mass deportation in Soviet Ukraine, Operation Zapad, expelled alleged Ukrainian nationalists and their families from western Ukraine to Siberia and Central Asia. On “ethnic cleansings” in postwar Poland and Ukraine, see Timothy Snyder, “‘To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All’: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943–1947,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, no. 2 (1999): 86–120; Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), chap. 10.

20. I borrow the term “triple occupation” (Soviet-German-Soviet) from Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 239.

21. On the occupation of Iran, see Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941–1946* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006) and Louise L’estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). On great power politics in the region, see George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918–1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1949) and Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

22. A. Mgeladze to Charkviani, March 28, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, ll. 60–63. I use the terms “Greek,” “Turk,” “Dashnak,” and so on, in this chapter to reflect the categorization of these persons and groups in soviet party and security archival documents. The categories often obscure the issues of Soviet citizenship or long-term generational residence. For instance, the “Greek” community in Georgia was part of the Pontic Greek diaspora, a group that had lived on the Black Sea coast for hundreds of years. Similarly, the “Turk” label at various points referred to Muslims, Tatars, Azerbaijanis, or subjects of the Ottoman Empire or Turkey. As was the case with “Mensheviks” in Soviet Georgia, “Dashnaks” remained a convenient enemy for Soviet authorities to invoke. On the role of the Dashnaks in modern Armenian history, see Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

23. “Sovet Ministrov SSSR postanovlenie ot 29 maia 1949 g. #2214-856ss ‘Ob obezpechenii perevozok, rasseleniia i trudovogo ustroistva vyselentsev s territorii Gruzinskoi, Armianskoi, Azerbaidzhanskoi SSR, a takzhe poberezh’ia Chernogo moria,’”

I. Stalin and M. Pomaznev, Svetlana Savranskaia, National Security Archive, personal collection.

24. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), chap. 7.

25. Charkviani and Chkhubianishvili to Stalin, June 7, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, ll. 64–65.

26. sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, ll. 66–67 and Pomaznev to Chkhubianishvili and Charkviani, June 18, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, l. 88.

27. Consisting of 10,240 men, 10,512 women, and 10,854 children.

28. Only forty Turks and five Dashnaks were in this additional group.

29. N. Rukhadze and A. Valis to USSR MGB officer N. N. Selivanovskii, June 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, ll. 72–77.

30. Kakuchaia to Beria, April 1953, sšssa (I), f. 13, sp. 27, ll. 1–3.

31. Charkviani to Stalin, October 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 25, d. 229, ll. 4–5.

32. N. Rukhadze, August 29, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 25, d. 229, ll. 11–13.

33. S. Kruglov to L. Beria, May 26, 1949, GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 476, l. 1, accessed via Hoover Institution Archives, reel 3.5938.

34. GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 476, ll. 22, 29, 36, 38, accessed via Hoover Institution Archives, reel 3.5938.

35. Maiké Lehmann, *Eine sowjetische Nation: Nationale Sozialismusinterpretationen in Armenien seit 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2012), 110–11.

36. Violetta Hionidou and David Saunders, “Exiles and Pioneers: Oral Histories of Greeks Deported from the Caucasus to Kazakhstan in 1949,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 9 (November 2010): 1484.

37. Arpenik Aleksanian, *Sibirskii dnevnik, 1949–1954 gg.* (Yerevan: Gitutium, 2007), 57.

38. Aleksanian, *Sibirskii dnevnik*, 59.

39. Svetlana Alieva, ed., *Tak eto bylo: Natsional’nye repressii v SSSR, 1919–1952 gody*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Insan, 1993), 3:213–16.

40. Alieva, *Tak eto bylo*, 3:213–16.

41. Matinov Levon Nikolaevich to MGB GSSR, July 11, 1952, sšssa (I), f. 13, d. 46, t. 3, l. 16.

42. Matinov Levon Nikolaevich to N. M. Shvernik, December 11, 1949, sšssa (I), f. 13, d. 46, t. 1, l. 12.

43. Bidzhamov Il’ia Semenovich to MGB SSSR, December 12, 1949, sšssa (I), f. 13, d. 41, t. 1, ll. 17–20.

44. Aleksanian, *Sibirskii dnevnik*, 67. Avlabari is a neighborhood in Tbilisi with many Armenian residents.

45. Aleksanian, *Sibirskii dnevnik*, 69. The reference to 1936 is most likely regarding the Soviet constitution of that year, which also lifted restrictions on categories of citizenship and associated rights.

46. Bidzhamov Il’ia Semenovich to MGB SSSR, December 12, 1949.

47. Postoian Solomon Vartanovich to MVD GSSR, April 21, 1953, sšssa (I), f. 13, d. 47, t. 2, ll. 106–7.

48. Postoian Migran Solmonovich to G. M. Malenkov, April 14, 1953, sšssa (I), f. 13, d. 47, t. 2, ll. 21–22; Postoian Migran Solmonovich to Rukhadze, September 30, 1951, sšssa (I) f. 13, d. 47, t. 2, ll. 79–80.

49. Matinov Levon Nikolaevich to MGB GSSR, July 11, 1952.
50. Rukhadze to Charkviani, June 16, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, ll. 83–86.
51. Rukhadze to Charkviani, June 16, 1949.
52. MGB GSSR Major Khoshtaria, June 20, 1949, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 27, d. 252, l. 82.
53. Mistakidi Dmitri Khristoforovich to Bulganin N. A., March 25, 1955, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 31, d. 221a, l. 134.
54. See especially Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishoi Istorii (RGANI) f. 5, op. 31, d. 25, ll. 69–95, 117–69.
55. Mzhavanadze to Malenkov, January 12, 1954, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 28, d. 232, ll. 1–2.
56. P. Kovanov to CC CPSU, September 1957, sšssa (II), f. 14, op. 32, d. 219, ll. 1–2.
57. On the responses to Stalin's death and de-Stalinization in Georgia, see Blauvelt and Smith, *Georgia after Stalin*.
58. Mingrelians are a subnational Georgian group from western Georgia. The November 9, 1951, resolution ordered only to prosecute the antiparty and antistate activities of Baramia and his "nationalistic group," though this vague charge was followed by a November 16 (November 29 in the Council of Ministers) order that arrested and deported to Kazakhstan 37 purported leaders and more than 11,200 others, April 8, 1953, Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AP RF), f. 3, op. 61, d. 83, ll. 144–7, reprinted in V. Naumov and Iu. Sigachev, eds., *Lavrentii Beriia 1953: Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow: Demokratiia, 1999). See also Khlevniuk, "Kremlin—Tbilisi."
59. sšssa (I), f. 13, sp. 27, l. 225, and GARF, R. 9479, op. 1, d. 607, l. 48, accessed via Hoover Institution Archives, reel 3.5961.
60. Polian, *Against Their Will*, 171.
61. Compiled from *Vsesoiuznaia perepisi' naseleniia 1939 goda: Osnovyte itogi* (Moscow: Nauka 1992), 20–21; Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda: Gruzinskaia SSR* (Moscow: Gosstatizdat, 1963); and Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda, vol. 4: Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow: Statistika, 1973), 9–13. The total population of Georgia in 1939 was 3,540,023 and, in 1959, 4,044,045.
62. Lehmann, *Eine sowjetische Nation*, 110. On the repatriation efforts, see also Maie Lehmann, "A Different Kind of Brothers: Exclusion and Partial Integration after Repatriation to a Soviet 'Homeland,'" *Ab Imperio* 2012, no. 3 (November 2012): 171–210; and Joanne Laycock, "The Repatriation of Armenians to Soviet Armenia, 1945–49" in *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in Soviet Eastern Europe, 1930–1950*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 140–62.
63. These sources of legitimacy likewise provided persuasive evidence in appeals for amnesty and rehabilitation.
64. Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place; From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 139.
65. Martin, "Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 855.
66. Timothy K. Blauvelt, "The 'Mingrelian Question': Institutional Resources and the Limits of Soviet Nationality Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 6 (July 2014): 993–1013.