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# CAUCASIA AND THE CAUCASUS\*

By A. GUGUSHVILI

**C**AUCASIA lies between two continents—Europe and Asia. It is separated from the former by the Black Sea and from the latter by the Caspian Sea.

Extending between the Black and Azov Seas and the Caspian Sea, Caucasia is tetragonal in outline; it stretches from a north-westerly to a south-easterly direction, and its angles rest on the mouths of the rivers Eya and Kuma in the north, and on those of the Astara and Chorokh in the south. Caucasia is thus situated approximately between  $38^{\circ}$  and  $46^{\circ}$  north latitude, and between  $37^{\circ}$  and  $50^{\circ}$  east longitude. It lies therefore in the same latitude as the South of France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria in Europe, and Khiva and Northern Japan in Asia.

Caucasia has an area of about 468,000 sq. klms. It is almost twice as large as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The term "Caucasia" is derived from Caucasus, the name applied since very early days to the main part of the Caucasian isthmus—*i.e.*, to the system of mountain ranges which stretches in a south-easterly direction between the Black and Caspian Seas. This system, however, is not isolated from the rest of the isthmus; in the north its spurs penetrate deeply into the region of the plains of North Caucasia, and in the south they fill up the broad latitudinal depression of Transcaucasia. Thus the Great Caucasus range forms not only the spine, as it were, of the Caucasian isthmus but also its ribs. To avoid confusion, I propose to use the form Caucasia to designate the country as a whole, and the form Caucasus to designate the great mountain range itself.

The name Caucasus has been in use since the sixth century B.C. It was first mentioned by Æschylus in his *Prometheus Vincetus*. Subsequently we find it employed by the Romans, and later it passed into other languages. Curiously enough, neither the Caucasian peoples of those days, nor the peoples adjacent to them, were acquainted with the term. Actually its origin and meaning have not as yet been definitely established.

Situated between Europe and Asia, Caucasia represents a borderland

\* This paper was the foundation of a lecture given on February 24, 1943, Sir Oliver Wardrop, K.C.M.G., in the Chair.

In introducing the lecturer, the CHAIRMAN said: For many years it has been a real misfortune for some of us that so little has been known about the Caucasus. Mr. Gugushvili knows the country and I can introduce him with some confidence. I have known him now for twenty years at least. He is lecturer in Georgian at the London School of Oriental Studies. At the same time he is one of the founders and the most active member of the Georgian Historical Society, an institution that is not sufficiently known in this country. Under his editorship it has produced admirable work, worthy to compare with any of our learned periodical productions, and beautifully illustrated.

of these two continents, and as such it is a country of Eastern Europe as well as of Western Asia. This borderland character of Caucasia is exhibited by the diversity of its physical features, and by the different character that exists in its western, eastern, northern, and southern regions.

For the purposes of description, Caucasia may be divided into three main parts, each of which differs sharply from the others. These parts are:

1. The Caucasus range, an extremely complicated system of folded mountain ranges, bounded on the north by the Kuban and Terek valleys and on the south by the Colcho-Azerbaijani depression or the valleys of the Rion and the Kur;

2. North Caucasia, a region of plains extending from the foot-hills of the Caucasus range to the Kuma-Manych depression, the northern boundary of Caucasia; and

3. South Caucasia, or Transcaucasia, a region consisting of the Colcho-Azerbaijani depression and the system of mountains known as the Little Caucasus.

THE CAUCASUS RANGE consists of a series of parallel ranges connected by short ridges or necks which form many enclosed longitudinal cauldron glens. The farthest of these parallel ranges throw off a multitude of perpendicular spurs which, in their turn, form a series of transverse or meridional glens. It is divided into three main parts—Western, Central, and Eastern Caucasus. Of these three parts the Central Caucasus is the highest. It contains the most extensive snow-fields and glaciers and the highest summits. In number and area of glaciers the Caucasus range concedes only to the Himalayas and the Mustagh or Karakoram range, and the Central Caucasus is richer in glaciers than the Central Alps.

To the north of the Caucasus range extends the second part of Caucasia known as North Caucasia. It is divided by the North Caucasian Elevation or the Stavropol Plateau into two parts: the Western, comprising the Kuban valley, and the Eastern, consisting of the Terek-Sunzha plain and the Kuma-Caspian depression. The plains of North Caucasia slope gently northwards from the foot of the Caucasus range; they slope also north-westward towards the steppes by the Black and Azov Seas, and north-eastward in the direction of the steppes by the Caspian Sea. Some parts of Eastern North Caucasia lie below the ocean level: in the region of the lower valleys of the Kuma and Terek, it sinks to 24 metres below the level of the Black Sea.

TRANSCAUCASIA, the third part of Caucasia, consists of the Transcaucasian trough and a system of mountains known as the Little Caucasus.

THE TRANSCAUCASIAN TROUGH represents a latitudinal depression extending all along the foot of the southern slope of the Caucasus, between the Black and Caspian Seas. It consists of the valleys of the rivers Rion and Kur, and of a plateau-like elevation known as the Imeretian Massif. For purposes of description it may be divided into six parts: the Colchian Lowland or the Rion Depression, the Imeretian Massif, the Kartlian Plain, the Steppe Plateau, the Kakhetian Plain, and the Azerbaijan Lowland or the Kur Depression.

The lecturer then gave a brief description of each of these divisions.

The second part of Transcaucasia, *the Little Caucasus*, lies to the south of the so-called Transcaucasian Trough. It extends from the south-eastern corner of the Black Sea in a south-easterly direction to the lower course of the Araks. It is essentially a plateau country. It has been divided into three parts: the Central Volcanic region of Transcaucasia and the ranges surrounding it known as the Western border ranges and Eastern border ranges of Transcaucasia. The Central Volcanic region is intersected by a number of ranges, mostly composed of volcanic peaks. After giving a brief description of these parts of the Little Caucasus the lecturer turned to

**THE CLIMATE OF CAUCASIA.** Although Caucasia occupies a comparatively small area, it is remarkable for the variety of its climatic conditions.

On the west and east, Caucasia is bounded by the seas, to the north and to the south lie vast areas of steppe and high arid plateaus which, as they extend eastward and southward, merge into desert tracts.

The proximity of the seas and of the sandy and stony steppes and plateaus, climatically so different from each other, creates sharply contrasting climatic conditions in the various parts of Caucasia. These conditions are still further affected and determined by the mountain chains that intersect the Caucasian isthmus.

Hence Caucasia embraces so remarkable a diversity of climates that no single district can be taken as typical of the whole.

Caucasia has four varieties of sub-tropical climate—dry, humid, Mediterranean, and what is known as the maize climate. Then there are the steppe continental climates, which embrace the largest part of Caucasia. These are the so-called feather grass climate of the type of the South-Russian steppes, and the dry continental climate of the Aralo-Caspian type prevailing in the low-lying steppes of North Caucasia; and the elevated steppe climates which obtain in the Transcaucasian Plateau (the Central Volcanic region of Transcaucasia) and the alpine regions of Caucasia.

The moderately cold climate of the Western European type prevails in the forest regions of the Caucasus range and the mountain ranges of Transcaucasia, at altitudes from 300-600 metres to 1800-2000 metres. The higher belt of the mountain slopes (2000-2700m.) is occupied by the alpine meadows with their peculiar high-mountain climate, and at a still higher altitude prevails the polar climate which embraces the perpetual snow regions of the Caucasus range and of the highest ranges and isolated massifs of Transcaucasia.

**THE RIVERS OF CAUCASIA.** There are three types of rivers in Caucasia. First, mountain rivers—that is, rivers which rise in high mountain regions covered with perpetual snow; to these belong the Kuban, Terek, Sulak, Samur, Rion, Kodor, Engur, and their tributaries, and other rivers which have their sources in the Caucasus range. Second, the rivers which rise on plateaus, at lower altitudes than the mountain rivers; to these belong most of the rivers of the Little Caucasus, such as the Kur, the principal river of Transcaucasia, and the Araks. Third, the rivers rising in low elevations and exhibiting the character of the rivers of the plains; such are



the rivers of North Caucasian plains, the most important of which is the Kuma, the others being merely rivulets.

Low-water seasons of the rivers flowing from the summits of the Great Caucasus occur in the coldest season of the year—*i.e.*, in December and January—while the high-water season begins usually in the summer when the snow thaws in the mountains (June to July); but in the case of some of these rivers, there is another earlier high-water season in their lower courses during the thawing season on the plains and depressions through which they run. High floods of the rivers of the plateaus and low ranges occur in the spring during the thawing of the snow in their basins, especially in their upper reaches, while the low-water season coincides with the hottest summer period and with the period of the smallest amount of precipitation (July to August).

The Kuban is frozen from December, but the thaw begins about the middle of February.

**THE FAUNA OF CAUCASIA.** Caucasia is a country of so rich and diverse an animal population as is seldom found in any other country within such a comparatively limited area. According to Lyayster,\* a noted Russian geographer, here are found animals peculiar to every form of climate from sub-tropical to polar.

Of wild beasts we meet here, on the one hand, with tiger, leopard, hyena, jackal and porcupine, and on the other with snow vole, marten, ermine, brown bear, etc.—that is, animals which live in more or less cold countries. Here are also animals peculiar to Central Europe with its mild and comparatively humid climate, European wild goat, noble deer, aurochs and chamois. Side by side with these animals dwell here those of the Asiatic desert, where the summer is extremely dry and hot, and the winter very cold, such as the antelope and gazelle.

Almost alongside the animals peculiar to hot low-lying regions, one finds in Caucasia high-mountain forms of animal life, which pass all their lives near perpetual snow and glaciers, as, for instance, the above-mentioned snow vole, the tur—a Caucasian wild goat, chamois, and others.

Not only among wild beasts, but also among birds, reptiles and other animals, a similar mixture of forms peculiar to extremely diverse climates is to be found in Caucasia.

Besides these animals, which Caucasia possesses in common with other countries, we meet here animals peculiar to Caucasia alone and not to be found in any other country. To these endemic animals of Caucasia belong—from among wild beasts—the tur or the Caucasian wild goat, the Prometheus mouse, and from among birds a handsome rosy-red mountain finch, the Caucasian mountain grouse, and the Caucasian mountain partridge, and others. To the endemic Caucasian reptiles belong the Armenian viper and the Caucasian salamander.

**FLORA.** There are a great many types of forest and steppe vegetation, as, for example, the humid liana forests and forests with evergreen undergrowth of Western Transcaucasia; the drier leafy forests, approaching in character to the forests of the European type; the coniferous forests

\* A. F. Lyayster and Chursin, *Geography of Caucasia*. Tiflis, 1924.

of higher mountain slopes; the semi-desert halophytic vegetation of the steppes of Eastern North Caucasia and Eastern Transcaucasia, the feather-grass steppes of Western North Caucasia; the xerophilous vegetation of the elevated plateaus of Daghestan and of the Central Volcanic region of Transcaucasia; and the luxuriant alpine meadows.

The forests cover both flanks of the Great Caucasus with the exception of its high mountain zone; on the north they extend to the valleys of the Kuban and Terek, clothing also a considerable part of the North Caucasian Elevation, and on the south to the last spurs of the southern slope. In Transcaucasia they cover the slopes of the Kartl-Imeretian range and of the Western and Eastern border ranges of Transcaucasia facing respectively the Black Sea and the rivers Kur and Araks.

The distribution of vegetation, which generally depends on the habitat factors, is effected not only horizontally but also vertically. Five vertical zones have been distinguished in Western Transcaucasia.

1. The zone of liana forests, constituting the lower belt of forests of the lowlands and mountain slopes up to 900-1,000 feet.

This zone is characterized by a luxuriant and abundant development of forest vegetation, predominantly of oak; these forests are noted for the diversity of their constituent species; they are not only dense, but laced together with climbing and twining plants, and include some evergreen species. The grass cover in this zone is replaced by a dense undergrowth of ferns.

It is impossible to destroy these forests; on the contrary, man has to carry on a constant and often fruitless struggle with them.

2. The zone of leafy forests with evergreen undergrowth, occupying a belt of mountain slopes from 900-1,050 to 1,500-1,650 metres. This zone lacks the great diversity of the constituent species of the preceding zone. The liana is absent altogether. Herein predominate the usual leafy species, particularly the beech. The undergrowth of evergreen species which flourishes in this zone in luxuriant abundance consists of the cherry-laurel, the holm oak, the "Caucasian palm" or box, the Pontic rhododendron, the olive, and others.

3. The zone of coniferous forests, at an altitude of from 1,500-1,650m. to 2,100m., wherein predominate the spruce and the Caucasian fir, particularly the former, which attains a great size.

4. The zone of upper forest boundary at an altitude of from 2,100m. to 2,250m., up to the lower boundary of the alpine meadows, with birch, mountain maple, and mountain ash as the predominant species.

5. The zone of the alpine vegetation, from 2,250m. up to the perpetual snow-line, with vast alpine meadows, the grass cover of which attains a luxuriant development.

POPULATION. Caucasia was inhabited already at a very early epoch, in any case long before the Christian era. In the time of Greek classical writers the population of Caucasia appears to have consisted of numerous tribes speaking numerous tongues. Pliny, a Roman writer of the first century A.D., records that in the Greek colony of Dioskuria (near the modern Sukhum) one hundred and fifty interpreters helped in the trade relations with the Caucasian peoples. Later, the Arabs used to call

Caucasia "The Mountain of Languages." Caucasia has thus been known since ancient times as a country of many races and languages.

Caucasia is situated on the route over which peoples moved for many centuries from Asia into Europe and from Europe into Asia. It is supposed that peoples who moved along the southern slopes of the Caucasus range usually left behind them some of their numbers, and so Caucasia became gradually inhabited. These people were brought here by mass migration of peoples from the more early inhabited south under the pressure from new immigrants. Subsequently, new migratory waves forced the original immigrants of Transcaucasia to move further north, into the depths of the country, into the mountain defiles right up to the Caucasus range, and in places even to cross over into the northern slopes of the range, and into North Caucasia.

Similar migratory waves moved across the plains of North Caucasia; some of these peoples, like those of Transcaucasia, were, under the pressure of new immigrants, forced to seek refuge in the deep defiles of the northern slope of the Caucasus range, and in some cases to cross the range or to go round by the sea coast into Transcaucasia.

The mountainous character of Caucasia contributed to the estrangement of the separate tribal groups and to the isolation of their languages and dialects. The very restricted intercourse between the groups of the population, divided from each other by mountains difficult to traverse, not only hindered their unification, but brought about even new differences in the physical type and language among these groups. Thus, a once united people often broke up in the course of time into several related peoples.

Although, since the last century, scientists have made attempts to classify the Caucasian peoples anthropologically, linguistically and ethnologically, we have to-day only one scientifically reliable classification—the linguistic, worked out by the late Professor N. Marr, which is based on the Japhetic theory, founded by him. This theory, according to which the indigenous peoples of Caucasia constitute the Japhetic family of peoples, divides the whole population of Caucasia into eight groups—the Japhetids, Japhetido-Ario-Europeans, Ario-Europeans (Indo-Europeans), Turki peoples, Semites, Mongols, Finns, and Gypsies.

*The Japhetids* represent the most ancient indigenous population of Caucasia. In former classification the Japhetic peoples of Caucasia were called the "Caucasian peoples proper." The Japhetic family comprises three groups—The Kartvelian, Abkhaso-Adyghean, and Checheno-Daghestanian groups.

Linguistically the Kartvelian group is divided into three branches—the Georgian, Megrelo-Lazian and Svanian.

The Abkhaso-Adyghean group comprises the Abkhasians and the Aryan (that is, the Cherkesses or Circassians and the Kabardins).

The Checheno-Daghestanian group is constituted by the Chechen and Lezghian peoples.

*The Japhetido-Ario-European group* consists of the Armenians. In its ancient substratum the Armenian language belongs to the Japhetic linguistic group, but these Japhetic elements became merged with the

later Ario-European as a result of which a mixed Japhetido-Ario-European language was formed. For this reason linguistically the Armenians represent a mixed Japhetido-Ario-European type.

*The Ario- or Indo-European group* comprises the Iranians and the Europeans. Linguistically to the Iranian group belong the Ossets, Kurds, Tats, and Talyshians. The Europeans are recent settlers in Caucasia, and are divided into the following groups—the Slavs (Great Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, Poles, Czechs, and Bulgars), Romans (Italians, French, and Rumanians), Germanic peoples (Germans, Swedes, and Norwegians), Balts (Lithuanians and Latvians), and Greeks.

*The Turki branch proper* is represented in Transcaucasia by the Azerbaijanese, Osmans, Turkmens, and Karapapakhs, and in North Caucasia by the Kumyks, Karachais, Balkars, Nogais, and Turkmens or Trukhmens.

*The Semitic group* comprises the Jews, Syrians (Aysors), and Arabs. The Jews of Caucasia may be divided into three groups—the European Jews, "Mountain Jews" (Dagh-chufut) of the mountainous regions of Daghestan and Azerbaijan, and Georgian Jews.

To the *Mongol group* belong the Kalmyks of North Caucasia and the Kaytaks in Daghestan, who however have lost their mother tongue, and speak one of the Lezghian dialects.

*The Finnish group* is represented by the Ests (Estonians), Mordvians, and Cheremyshehs who settled in small numbers in Caucasia in recent times.

*The Caucasian Gypsies* are the emigrants from India, and live in Transcaucasia, chiefly in Armenia, where they are called *Bosha*, and in Azerbaijan (*Karachi*).

**POLITICAL DIVISION OF CAUCASIA.** Before the Four Years' War (1914-1918) Caucasia was part of the Russian Empire, and constituted a separate administrative unit—the Vice-Royalty of Caucasia, which had its centre at Tiflis (now Tbilisi), the capital of Georgia.

The Four Years' War and the Russian Revolution produced a radical change in the political situation, territorial composition, and administrative division of Caucasia. As a result of the Four Years' War part of the territory of Transcaucasia went to Turkey, and as a result of the Russian Revolution Caucasia passed through various political and administrative phases.

The Peace Treaty signed by the Moscow Soviet Government in March, 1921, ceded to Turkey the Artvin circle (*okrug*) and the southern part of the Batum circle of the Batum Province, the Kars Province, and the Surmalin district of the Erevan Government. The total area thus ceded to Turkey equals about 27,000 sq. klm.

At present there are the following political formations in Caucasia:

In Transcaucasia—

The Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia;

The Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan;

The Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia.

These three Transcaucasian Soviet Republics at first formed the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (T.S.F.S.R.) which was established by the first Congress of the Soviets of Transcaucasia in January, 1923, and which was a member of the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.). The T.S.F.S.R. was, however, dissolved by the Stalin Constitution of 1936, when its present component states became direct members of the U.S.S.R.

In North Caucasia—

The Krasnodar Region (*Krai*) comprising the Adyge Autonomous Province;

The Orjonikidze Region (*Krai*) comprising the Karachai Autonomous Province and the Cherkess Autonomous Province;

The Kabarda-Balkar Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic;

The North Ossetian Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic;

The Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic; and

The Dagestan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic.

All these political and administrative formations of North Caucasia constitute part of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.).

It should be noted that politically Caucasia is divided into two parts—North Caucasia and South Caucasia or Transcaucasia—the conventional dividing line being the crest of the main chain or the water divide of the Caucasus range. In this sense both North and South Caucasia cover far larger territories than they do in the physical-geographical sense, for, while Transcaucasia, for example, in the physical-geographical sense embraces the part of the Caucasian isthmus which stretches to the south of the foot of the southern slope of the Caucasus range (that is, the Transcaucasian Trough and the Little Caucasus), Transcaucasia in the political sense (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) covers, in addition, the whole southern slope of the Caucasus range from the crest of the water-divide, and, moreover, in places even from the Bokovoy range, which lies to the north of it.

*The S.S.R. of Armenia*, proclaimed on November 2, 1920, is composed (a) of the former Erivan Government, without, however, the Surmalin district, ceded to Turkey, and the Nakhichevan district; (b) of the Zangezour district and part of the Karabakh district (Delizhan district) of the former Elizavetpol Government; and (c) of part of the Borchalo district (Lori district) of the Tiflis Government.

The S.S.R. of Armenia covers an area of about 30,000 sq. klm., with a population, according to the census of 1939, of 1,281,599. Its capital is Erevan, which has a population of about 200,000.

The Armenians belong to one of the ancient peoples of Caucasia. They call themselves Haik, and their country Haiastan, after Haik, their legendary eponym. They are called Armenians by their neighbours, after another legendary hero, Aram, who liberated the country from its conquerors and extended the boundaries of the State.

Occupying an intermediary position between powerful neighbours on the east and west, between Persia, and first the Roman and then the Byzantine Empires, Armenia was continually being invaded by either one

or the other, and suffered enormously. The seizure of some of her provinces by her neighbours contributed to the break-up of Armenia into several parts. The invasion of Tamerlane at the end of the fourteenth century put an end to the independent existence of the Armenian State.

At the present time the main masses of the Armenian people are concentrated on the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia, and a fairly large number live in Georgia and Azerbaijan, as well as in different parts of North Caucasia (Armavir, Kizliar, etc.). In Georgia the Armenians live chiefly in the towns and villages of Eastern and Southern Georgia.

Anthropologically, the Armenians represent a fairly distinct group, characterized by some typical peculiarities: height above medium (167 cm.), head short and broad, cephalic index about 86, for which reason the Armenians are considered extreme brachicephals. From among neighbouring peoples they are approached in this respect by the Mountain Jews (85.5) and the Aysors (89.5-7); they have dark hair, dark brown or black eyes and dark skins.

The Armenian language is of a mixed Japhetido-Ario-European type. The colloquial Armenian language of the present day is divided into several dialects and sub-dialects; one of these dialects—the Aiararatian—forms the basis of the contemporary literary language of the Caucasian Armenians.

The principal occupation of the Armenians is agriculture, partly wheat-growing, and commerce. In the Erevan and Echmiadzin districts they follow viticulture, and in the valley of the Araks fruit-growing.

The S.S.R. of Azerbaijan, proclaimed in April, 1920, is composed (a) of the former Baku Government; (b) of the former Elizavetpol Government without the Zangezur district and part of the Kazakh district; (c) of the Zakatal circle of the former Tiflis Government; and (d) of the Nakhichevan district of the former Erivan Government.

The S.S.R. of Azerbaijan comprises the Autonomous Province of mountainous (*Nagorny*) Karabakh and the Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Nakhichevan.

It has an area of about 86,000 sq. klm., with a population of 3,209,727, of which 2,274,805 are the Azerbaijanese proper. Its capital is Baku, which has a population of over 800,000.

The Azerbaijanese, or the Azerbaijan Turks as they call themselves, are the descendants of the Turkish tribes who entered Transcaucasia at different times. A considerable part of them settled there in the thirteenth century, after the Mongolo-Turkish invasion. In 1258 Hulagu Khan settled in Transcaucasia more than 150,000 families of Turkish people whom he brought from Asia.

Their language is an Azerbaijanese dialect of the Turkish language, which they call Azeri. From the Turkish dialects spoken in North Caucasia it is distinguished among others by the fairly considerable number of Persian and Arabic words it contains.

Their occupations are agriculture, cotton-growing, some viticulture, cattle-breeding, carpet-making, the silk industry, fishing, and work in the Baku oilfields.

Anthropologically, the Azerbaijanese, owing to their mixed blood, do not represent a homogeneous type. The more-or-less common traits are as follows: dark hair and eyes, height of the majority above medium, by their cephalic index they are mezocephals with some tendency towards dolichocephaly, narrow and straight nose and of small build.

The S.S.R. of Georgia, proclaimed on February 25, 1921, consists (a) of the former Tiflis Government without the Zakatal circle and the southern part of the Borchalo district; (b) of the former Kutais Government; (c) of the former Batum Province without the Artvin circle and the southern part of the Batum district; and (d) of the former Sukhum circle.

The S.S.R. of Georgia comprises the Autonomous S.S.R. of Ajaristan (Adchara), the Autonomous Province of South Osseti, and the Autonomous S.S.R. of Abkhasia.

It has a territory of about 70,000 sq. klm., with a population of 3,524,289, of which 2,248,566 are Georgians proper—that is, the Kartvelians.

Its capital is Tbilisi (formerly Tiflis), which has a population of over 500,000.

The ancestors of the Kartvelians or Georgians lived in the south, at first in Mesopotamia and then in the Ararat region. They have also inhabited many districts of Asia Minor, which is testified by some monuments and geographical names preserved to this day. The Kartvels settled in Georgia about 1000 B.C.

Anthropologically the Kartvelian peoples form one group, the characteristic peculiarities of which are the whitish-coloured skin, dark hair, brown eyes, medium height; by their cephalic index they are brachicephals.

The Ajars or Achars of the A.S.S.R. of Ajaristan, which occupies the valley of the Acharis-dsqali and other tributaries of the Lower Chorokh, and the defiles of the river Kintrishi, are by type and language a Kartvelian people, but by faith they are Mohammedans. They were converted to Mohammedanism in the eighteenth century. Their language is Georgian with some admixture of Turkish words. They, however, speak also Turkish.

The Abkhasians or Abkhases are one of the ancient peoples of Caucasia. They have inhabited the present-day Abkhasia since before the first century A.D. Abkhasia—a Soviet Republic united with Georgia on a treaty basis—occupies the north-east coast of the Black Sea from the river Psou in the north to the river Enguri forming the boundary with Megrelia in the south. About the seventeenth century part of the Abkhasians crossed into the mountains of the Kuban (now the Krasnodar) region, on the northern slopes of the Caucasus range, where they still live under the name of Abazins. After the conquest of Western Caucasia by the Russians in 1864, a considerable part of the Abkhasians emigrated to Turkey. They were mostly from the Gumista district, which now has a mixed population of Armenians, Greeks, Russians, Megrelians, and others. Their language is Abkhasian, which belongs to the Japhetic family, and has affinities, on the one hand, with the Kartvelian group of languages, and, on the other, with the Adyghean language of the Cherkesses and the Kabardins. The typical physical traits of the Abkhasians are the high

stature, dark eyes, black hair, and by their cephalic index they are mostly mezocephalic and brachicephalic. Their occupations are agriculture (gardening and viticulture), also cattle-breeding and bee-keeping.

The *Adyghe Autonomous Province* was formed on July 27, 1922, by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.). It is situated along the left low-lying bank of the river Kuban, and stretches in a narrow belt (11 to 75 klm. wide) from the lower course of the river Afips, on the west, to the confluence of the Laba with the Kuban, and along the left bank of the Laba, on the east. It is in all a little over 300 klm. in length, with a total area of 2,654 sq. klm.

The majority of the population consists of the Lower Cherkesses or Lower Adygheans and the Upper Cherkesses or Kabardins, numbering together about 62,700; the total population of the Province was 112,515 in 1924.

The administrative centre of the Province is at Maikop (pop. 67,000).

The *Cherkess Autonomous Province* was established on April 26, 1926; prior to this date it formed together with Karachai the Karachai-Cherkess Autonomous Province, constituted on January 12, 1922, by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. It occupies the middle and lower valley of the Zelenchuk, a tributary of the Kuban. Until 1928 it was known as the Cherkess National Circle. The territory of the Province covers 3,383 sq. klm., and its administrative centre is at Ezhovo-Cherkessk (formerly Batalpashinsk). The majority of its population consists of the Cherkesses (about 18,100) and Abazins (about 13,100). The total population of the Province in 1933 was 80,800.

The Adyghe (Cherkesses) even before the Christian era dwelt on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea. Subsequently they spread out into the south Krasnodar (Kuban) region and along the Malka, a tributary of the Terek, and the Baksan and Cherek and other tributaries of the Malka as far as the river Sunzha, a tributary of the Terek. The people call themselves Adyghe; the name Cherkess is supposed to have been derived from Kerket, a name given to them by the ancient geographers.

Until 1864 the Cherkesses occupied the south of the former Kuban region and the whole coastal area of the Black Sea from the Taman Peninsula to the river Shakhe. The coastal region from the Shakhe to the river Khosta was occupied by the Ubykhs, whose language held an intermediate place between the Adyghe and Abkhasian languages. After the conquest of Western Caucasia in 1864 by the Russians, a greater part of the Cherkesses (470,000 people) and of the Ubykhs were compelled to migrate into Turkey. In the Russian annals the Cherkesses are known under the name of Kasogs. Their language is Adyghean or Cherkessian, which belongs to the Abkhaso-Adyghean group of the Japhetic family of languages; it is divided into two dialects: Upper Adyghean or Kabardian and Lower Adyghean or Chakhian (Kiakhian). The Adyghe who speak the Lower Adyghean dialect are usually known as Cherkesses, and their country bore the name of Cherkessia or Circassia, and those speaking the Upper Adyghean are called Kabardins.

The Cherkesses or Kiakhs are subdivided into several communities, which are often, though incorrectly, called tribes; these are the Abadzekhs, Shapsugs, Natukhais, Besleneis, Temirgois, Bzhedukhs, and others.

At the present time the Cherkesses (Kiakhs) inhabit only a small part of the Krasnodar (Kuban) region—the Adyghe and Cherkess Autonomous Provinces mentioned above. The Kabardins occupy the regions between the rivers Malka and Terek (the Great Kabarda) and between the Terek and Sunzha, a tributary of the latter (the Little Kabarda). The Kabardins together with the Balkars form at present the Kabarda-Balkar Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic.

Anthropologically, the Cherkesses and Kabardins are characterized by the following traits: Height above medium, brachicephalic, the predominant colour of hair black, eyes brown, forehead high and straight with well-developed bumps, nose fairly long and with straight back.

Their principal occupation is cereal growing, chiefly maize; cattle-breeding is developed mostly in Kabarda. Kabardian horses have been famous for a long time. Bee-keeping is their most ancient and favoured occupation.

According to the Census of 1939, the Adygheans number in all 92,074 and the Kabardins 164,106.

*The Karachai Autonomous Province* was constituted as a separate administrative unit on April 26, 1926, before which date it formed together with the Cherkess Autonomous Province a united Karachai-Cherkess A.P. It occupies the upper valleys of the Kuban, Zelenchuk, and Laba, and has an area of 9,900 sq. klm. Its administrative centre is at Mikoian-Shakhar, founded in 1927; near the confluence of the Teberda with the Kuban.

The Karachais are one of the Turki peoples. According to their legends their ancestors migrated into Caucasia from the Crimea in the fifteenth century. They have dwelt consecutively in the Zagdan valley (the upper course of the Great Laba), on the Arkhyz (at the headwaters of the Great Zelenchuk), and settled finally on the river Baksan. Pressed by the Kabardins, they later on, about 400 years ago, crossed over to the western slope of the Elbrus spur, into the headwaters of the Kuban. The Karachai language is a dialect of the Turkish language closely related to the Nogai and Kumyk languages. Their occupations are cattle-breeding, partly sheep-breeding; they have pursued agriculture in a small way for a long time.

Anthropologically, the Karachais represent a mixed type due to the admixture with the basic Turki element of the immigrants from the neighbouring peoples, Abkhasians, Kabardins, etc.

The Karachais proper number in all 75,737 (census of 1939).

*The Kabarda-Balkar Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic* was, until the Stalin Constitution of 1936, an Autonomous Province, formed on January 16, 1922, by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. Originally, however, Kabarda represented a separate unit—the Kabarda Autonomous Province—which was formed on September 1, 1921.

It covers a territory of 12,560 sq. klm., and its administrative centre is at Nalchik. Its population, as the name indicates, consists chiefly of the Kabardins (who have already been described) and the Balkars.

The Balkars are, like the Karachais, one of the Turki peoples. They call themselves Tauli—*i.e.*, Mountaineers (from *tau*=mountain). In early literature they were often called the "Mountain Tatars" of the Terek Province, or the "Kabardian Mountaineers." They dwell in the former Nalchik circle now forming part of the Autonomous Kabarda-Balkar S.S.R. The Balkars occupy the defiles of the upper courses of the rivers Cherek, Cherek-Tkhiakho, Chegem, and Baksan. The population of each of these defiles forms a separate community with a name of its own. There are five of these: the Balkar community, along the river Cherek; Bezing and Khulam communities along the river Cherek-Tkhiakho, Chegem, along the river Chegem; and Urusbi along the river Baksan.

The Balkars settled in their present homeland about 500 years ago, having evidently displaced the Ossets. The former occupation of this part by the Ossets is testified by some geographical names and archæological monuments. Balkars speak the same dialect of the Turkish language as the Karachais, and in the opinion of Chursin, a noted Russian ethnographer of Caucasia, they undoubtedly represent together with the Karachais two groups of people whose root is Turkish, part of which crossed to the west of Elbrus, and are known under the name of Karachais, and the other remained on the Baksan to the east of Elbrus, and are known as Tauli. Their occupation is cattle-breeding; the severe climate and lack of suitable land does not favour agriculture, which is not well developed. The Balkars number in all 42,666.

The *North Ossetian Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic* was, until the Stalin Constitution of 1936, known as Mountain A.S.S.R., formed on January 20, 1921, by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. This Mountain A.S.S.R., however, covered a much larger area than that of the present-day North Ossetian A.S.S.R., as it included Ingushia, which later on was formed into an Autonomous Province, and subsequently united with the Chechen A.P. to form the Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R.

The administrative centre of the North Ossetian A.S.S.R. is at Orjonikidze, formerly Vladikavkaz.

The Ossetians, or Ossets, are a people of the Iranian stock. They straddle the eastern end of the Central Caucasus, occupying both flanks of the great range; a greater number of them, however, dwell to the north of the range, in the North Ossetian A.S.S.R., and a smaller number to the south of the range, in the Autonomous Province of South Osseti, which forms part of the S.S.R. of Georgia.

The Northern Ossets are divided into several communities: the Digorian (in Digoria) along the defiles of the river Uruk and its tributaries; the Alagirian along the defiles of the river Ardon; the Kurtatian along the defiles of the river Fiag-don and its tributaries; and the Tagaurian in the defiles of Gizel-don and Genal-don. The Alagirians, Kurtatians and Tagaurians constitute the western group of the Northern Ossets, and call themselves *Iron* in distinction from the Ossets of Digoria, who constitute the western group and call themselves *Digors*. The Southern Ossets are known as Tualte.

The Osset language belongs to the Iranian branch of the Ario-European family of languages. It is divided into two dialects, Tagaurian and Digorian; the dialect of the Southern Ossets represents a sub-dialect of the Tagaurian.

The Ossets are considered as the descendants of the Alans (the Yases of the Russian annals), who once occupied the steppes of South Russia and North Caucasia.

The geographical names preserved in South Russia (for instance, "Don," which in Ossetian means "water"), and in Karachai, Balkaria and Kabarda, show that the ancestors of the Ossets once occupied a much larger area, from the Caucasus range to the mouth of the river Don. The Turkish tribes who came later and the Kabardins pushed the Ossets to the south into the defiles and gorges of the Ardon, Fiag-don, Uruk, and other tributaries of the upper Terek, whence later on, about the sixth century A.D., part of the Ossets, owing to the shortage of land and tribal disorders, crossed over the Caucasus range into Georgia, to the valleys of the Aragvi, Ksani and Great and Little Liakhvas, and the headwaters of the Rion. The Ossets are mostly tall, with dark hair (64 per cent.) and dark eyes, and fairly large, straight noses. They are sub-brachicephals and brachicephals.

The chief occupation of the Ossets is agriculture; in the mountains, where good pastures and arable land are lacking, they pursue cattle-breeding, mostly sheep and large-horned cattle.

The Ossets number in all 354,547.

*The Chechen-Ingushian Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic* represented before the Stalin Constitution of 1936 two separate Autonomous Provinces, that of Ingushia and that of Chechnia, which was formed in 1923. The administrative centre of the Autonomous Republic is at Grozny.

The Chechens are a Japhetic people and their language belongs to the north-western group of the Japhetic family of languages. They call themselves Nakhchi. The name Chechen was given them by the Russians in the seventeenth century, after the aul of Great Chechen (on the river Arghun), which served as the headquarters in the operations of the Chechens against the Russians during the Russo-Caucasian wars.

The Chechen peoples are divided into several communities, the principal ones being: Ingushes, speaking the Ingush dialect of the Chechen language, Kists in the region of the headwaters of the Assa and Arghun, Ichkerians (Ichkeria—the region of the headwaters of the Aksa and Khulkhulan, tributaries of the Sunzha), Galasheians, Nazranians (formerly called Galgais), and others.

Anthropologically, the Chechens represent a mixed type which is expressed in the great variation in their cephalic index, colour of eyes, hair, etc. The Chechens have greater dolichocephaly than any other people in Caucasia; however, there are many sub-brachicephals and even pure brachicephals among them. The colour of eye varies from black to dark brown and from blue to light green; the colour of hair varies from black to dark auburn. Chechens are tall and well built; the women are distinguished for their beauty. Their occupations are cereal-growing, cattle-breeding and bee-keeping.

The Chechens number 407,690 and the Ingushes 92,074.

The *Daghestan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic* was formed on January 20, 1921, by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. It lies between the Eastern Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, and it extended north as far as the river Kuma. But in February, 1938, its northern part—the Kizliar circle (the Karanogai steppe)—was separated from Daghestan and added to the Orjonikidze Region. Its northern boundary, therefore, runs at present along the lower course of the river Terek. The administrative centre of the Daghestan A.S.S.R. is at Makhach-kala, formerly Petrovsk.

The many mountain tribes that inhabit Daghestan are known under the general name of *Lezghians*. Part of the *Lezghian* peoples inhabit the southern slopes of the Caucasus range also—*i.e.*, the Kuba, Shemakha, Nukha and Zakatala districts of Azerbaijan. The name *Lezghian* embraces a series of peoples speaking different tongues and united on the basis of existing kinship into several groups. In Daghestan not fewer than twenty-five languages or dialects are spoken, united into five groups, namely: The Avars (215,000), Laks (90,000), Dargians (130,000), Kiurians (215,000), and Ando-Didoans (45,000).

The *Avars* are the most important group in Daghestan. The Avar language is spoken all over central Daghestan from Chir-yurt to Zakatala, extending thus beyond the boundaries of Daghestan into the Zakatala district of Azerbaijan. The tribes speaking the Avar language are known by the name of the communities to which they belong or by that of their principal villages. The appellation by which they distinguish themselves from other tribes in *Maarulal*—*i.e.*, Mountaineers. The name Avar was given them by the Kumyks, and denotes "Restless." The Avars of the upper Avar Qoisu and Andi Qoisu are also called *Tauli*—*i.e.*, Mountaineers, from the Kumyk word *tau*, meaning "mountain." The Avar Khanate played an especially important rôle in the middle of the eighteenth century, and it continued to exist until 1863, when the office of the Avar Khan was abolished and the Khanate transformed into a circle.

The Avars are one of the most cultured *Lezghian* tribes; their principal occupation is agriculture and cattle-breeding.

The *Laks* or Kazi Kumukhs occupy the Kazi-kumukh circle of Daghestan. The appellation Kazi Kumukhi was given to them after the aul of Kumukh. In the year 777 the Laks were the first of the peoples of Daghestan to embrace Islam; and they showed great zeal in spreading Mohammedanism amongst the neighbouring tribes, and for this zeal they received from the Arabs the honorary appellation of *Kazi*—*i.e.*, "Fighters for Faith." For the same reason their village Kumukh began to be called Kazi-kumukh, and the Laks themselves Kazi Kumukhs. The Kazi Kumukhs are famous for the daggers which they make and for their filigree work.

The *Dargian group of dialects* is used in the Dargian circle of Daghestan, also in small areas in the Buinak, Kaitago-Tabasaran and Kazi Kumukh circles. All the Dargian dialects fall into three groups: the Akusha (the most spread), Khaidak, and Vurkun groups. One of the Dargian dialects was studied by Uslar, a famous Russian linguist, which

was called by him the Khyurkil language; the name Khyurkilians is now applied to the northern Dargians.

*The Kiurian linguistic group* contains, besides the Kiurians, about ten small tribes speaking different related languages. It comprises the Tabasarans, Aguls, Archins, Rutuls, Tsakhurs, Khinalugs, Budukhs, Udins and the Jeks, with the Kryzes and Khaputlins. The region of the Kiurian language embraces the middle and lower course of the river Samur and the course of the Kurakh-chai, occupying the Kiurian and Samur circles of Daghestan. The Kiurians occupy the fairly large territory stretching along both banks of the Samur. This region was known as Kiura or Kiure. In 1812 it was formed into the Kiura Khanate, which, however, was later on transformed into the Kiurin circle.

The occupations of the Kiurians are agriculture (cereal-growing and gardening) in the valley of the Samur, and cattle-breeding (in the alpine zone of the Eastern Caucasus).

*The Ando-Didoan group of languages* embraces 12 separate peoples, of which 8 belong to the northern (Andi) group, and 4 to the southern (Didoan) group. These small tribes dwell in Western Daghestan along the defiles of the Andi-Qoisu and in the south-western part of the Gunib circle. The northern or Andi group comprises the Andians, Botlikhians, Godoberians, Karatai (Karatins), Akhvakhians, Kvanadians (Bagulals), Chamalals and Tindians. They occupy 62 villages. The southern or Didoan group, named after the community Dido, comprises four small tribes, Didoans (Tsetses), Kvarshians (Dvarshins), Kapuchians (Beshitl) and Nakhads (Khunzals), occupying 53 villages.

All the Lezghian peoples of Daghestan are officially Mohammedan Sunites. In the year 777 the Arab commander Abu-Muslim crossed into the northern slopes of the Eastern Caucasus, conquered some Provinces of Daghestan and, to ensure the Arab domination over the population, he converted the people to Islam. From then on Daghestan became the centre from which Mohammedanism of the Sunite creed gradually spread among other peoples of North Caucasia.

In 1939 Daghestan had a population of 857,371.

Mr. Gugushvili illustrated his lecture by showing slides of hypsographic and schematic orographic maps of Caucasia, also a coloured map of climatic regions of the country, reproduced from the maps which illustrate *The Geography of Caucasia: Nature and Population* (Tbilisi, 1924), by A. F. Lyayster and G. F. Chursin, the noted Russian professors, the former a geographer and the latter an ethnographer of Caucasia, whose chapter on "The Population of Caucasia" is a mine of information. The lecturer has also made use of Professor A. Javakhishvili's monumental work on *The Geography of Georgia. I. Geomorphology* (Tbilisi, 1926, in Georgian), and he has drawn his more or less up-to-date statistical and other information from the articles in *The Great Soviet Encyclopædia* (in Russian).

The lecturer concluded by showing many delightful slides of the country, villages and houses of the Caucasian mountaineers.

Prince SOUMBATOFF: I congratulate my friend Mr. Gugushvili on a most learned and interesting lecture, and I can only regret that he dwelt a little too long and too much in detail on the first part of it. Otherwise we might have heard more of the very interesting subjects of his concluding chapters. But the subject is enormous, and I realize that it is very difficult to fit it into fifty minutes. I thank him very much and thank our Chairman for presiding.

Sir HARRY LUKE: I have very great pleasure in seconding Prince Soumbatoff's remarks. I will not take up your time unduly, but I cannot refrain from saying how glad I am to see my old friend, Sir Oliver Wardrop, here to-day. For it was under his kindly auspices that I first became acquainted with that fascinating country Transcaucasia. Sir Oliver is remarkable for many things, but for two in particular. The first is that he knows more about the Georgian people, their history and their language than any other Englishman past or present; the second, that he is one of the outstanding examples of a civil servant who was sent to serve in the country where he was supremely fitted to serve.

When, as a young man, he was Private Secretary to our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, as it was then, he used to spend his holidays travelling about in Georgia. There he got to know—and to know was to love—the Georgian people.

Many years passed, and meanwhile Sir Oliver was posted to such diverse countries as the negro republic of Haiti and to Norway; but by an unexpected turn of the wheel of history Georgia recovered in 1917 the independence that had been taken from her in 1800. It became necessary to send a British representative to Georgia and to the other two Transcaucasian republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and, as I say, the miracle happened and the first occupant of that post was the man so obviously fitted to be sent there, in the person of Sir Oliver Wardrop.

I regard it not only as good fortune but as an honour to have followed him in that post when temporary ill-health made it necessary for him to return to England; and although I cannot boast one-hundredth part of his knowledge of the Georgian people, I venture to claim to share a considerable part of his affection for that artistic, gallant and handsome race.

There is much I could say if the hour were not so late, for the lecturer in his modesty did not tell us nearly enough about his own people. They are notoriously one of the best-looking races in—I was about to say in Europe until I recollected that they are technically in Asia. When I first went to Tiflis a Georgian friend of mine said to me: "You have probably heard a great deal of the good looks of the Georgian women. Well, you will be disappointed, because the Persians took our best lookers and the Turks our next best lot. For what we have left we have to apologize." But he was quite wrong. There was no need to apologize.

But beautiful as they are physically, they are equally attractive in their culture, their history and their literature. There is now no time to enlarge on the arts of Georgia, but one of their classics, written at a time when most of Europe was living in the dark ages—*The Man in the Panther's Skin*—has lived for centuries since it was written by the poet Rustaveli in the reign of Queen Tamara. This great poem has remained one of the world's classics and has been translated into most European languages—into English by the late Miss Marjorie Wardrop, the sister of Sir Oliver.

I have great pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks to Mr. Gugushvili for his lecture, and to Sir Oliver Wardrop for taking the chair.

Sir OLIVER WARDROP closed the meeting with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.