

# Repression of Greeks in Abkhazia

By Khristofor Kesanidis

## PART ONE. GREEKS - AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF ABKHAZIA

In 1890, a representative of the Imperial Caucasian Society of Agriculture, A. Rozov, while on a special mission in the Sukhum district focused on the Greeks of the Abkhazian coast, their industriousness, lifestyle, and tobacco cultivation, remarked:

“In this region, we observe a new element – the Greeks. They lead a prosperous life. Their dwellings are of stone, warmed by fireplaces, and equipped with special barns for livestock. The cleanliness within these homes, the wooden floors, and the well-maintained, tidy courtyards are something not commonly seen among the Russians, Germans, or Estonians, let alone other groups. A distinctive aspect of the Greek economy, enabling them to live better than others, is their engagement in tobacco cultivation. Buyers from Petersburg, Kerch, Trabzon, among other places, frequent here...”

At the 1884 meeting of the Caucasian Society of Agriculture, tobacco manufacturer A. Enfiadjian, director of the “Mir” factory Takielov R. I., and Abkhazian landowner Prince Shervashidze [Chachba] highlighted the Greeks' contributions to developing unoccupied lands and expanding tobacco cultivation.

Estimating the number of Greeks in Abkhazia involves analysing various sources and census data, which show significant variations:

- In 1886, there were 2,100 Greeks, constituting 3.1% of the total population.
- As of November 30, 1922, according to the census of the Georgian SSR, in Sukhum from a total population of 8,793 people, there were 2,490 Greeks, accounting for over 28%.
- The 1923 agricultural census identifies the number of Greeks in rural areas as 19,222, or 13% of the total agricultural population of the Abkhazian SSR.
- In 1923, the total Greek population in Abkhazia exceeded 21,500, representing 14.9% of the overall populace.
- According to the 1926 population census by language, there were 25,619 Greek-speaking individuals.
- The total number of all foreign nationals in Abkhazia in 1926 was 15,000, including 10,800 Greeks, 3,000 Turks, and 1,000 Armenians.
- Including foreign nationals, the total Greek population reached 25,645, which is likely more accurate as it aligns closely with the linguistic census.

The data on the Greek population census significantly deviate from the natural growth typical for Greeks, linked to some Greek refugees relocating to Greece for family reunification.

As noted by N[ikolai] N. Ioanidi, a former employee of the Central State Archive of the Abkhazian ASSR in his work "[Greeks in Abkhazia](#)" (Alashara Publishing, Sukhum 1990), the 1939 All-Union population census recorded the Greek population in Abkhazia as 34,621, marking an increase of about 9,000 over 13 years, despite the absence of immigration and the presence of emigration.

The calculated growth of the Greek population from 1939 to 1949 is approximately 13,800, suggesting a total Greek population of 48,400 in the pivotal year of 1949, coinciding with the mass resettlement of Greeks from the Abkhazian ASSR.

The Georgian leadership, focusing narrowly on nationalist aspirations, overlooked the significant labour and intellectual potential of the Greek minority. This oversight eventually backfired, adversely impacting the simple peasant population of Mingrelia who resettled in Greek homes and collective farms.

In the initial years of Soviet power, there was no dedicated effort towards national minorities in multiethnic Abkhazia. Moreover, the indigenous nation, the Abkhazians, did not constitute a relative majority, a consequence of the 19th-century Muhajirism (mass and purposeful resettlement of Muslims to Muslim countries from non-Muslim countries).

The government of the Republic faced practically no national problems, as the recent revolution had divided people by class, temporarily overshadowing national differences and interests. A key factor in the elections of Soviet power bodies was the free expression of the will and desires of the residents themselves.

The Greeks' influence in Abkhazian society is evident from their demographic presence. Data provided by [Adile Abbas-Ogly](#) in her book "I Cannot Forget" (AST Publishing, Moscow 2005), describing the challenging period of the 1930s in Abkhazia, reveal that in 1938, out of a total Abkhazian population of 300,000, only 56,000 were native Abkhazians. Meanwhile, Greeks comprised 11.5% of the population, and Abkhazians 18.8%, indicating that the Greeks were a significant yet slightly smaller group, making up 61.17% of the Abkhazian count.

The data demonstrate that representatives of all nationalities, including Greeks, played an active role in the Soviet administrative framework, holding significant positions. Notable examples from the 2nd All-Union Congress of Soviets include Theophanes Stephanovich Anastasiadi, who led the National Economy Administration, Feodor Anastasevich Pantelidi, the deputy chairman of the Gumista Cooperative Union, and Nikolai Yevgenyevich Delaveri, who managed the organisational department of the Sukhum city committee of the Communist Party. Also notable were Spiridon Semyonovich Popandopulo and Polychron Christophorovich Paskhalidi, both peasants, along with Sofia Ivanovna Barchal-Oglu from the union "Pischvukus," and Ivan Georgievich Mironov, a secretary and member of the Goumista Land Commission. At the III Congress of Soviets of Abkhazia, of the 246 delegates, 17 were Greeks, proportionally reflective of the Greek representation among the Soviet citizens in the republic.

In the early years of Soviet governance, the representation of Greek people in the governmental bodies of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Abkhazia was largely proportional to their population. This equitable representation was a result of the people's right to nominate candidates without any national constraints, quotas, or other limitations.

Later, on March 17, 1927, at the Central Executive Committee (ЦИК - CEC) of Abkhazia meeting, a commission for national minorities was established. This commission, chaired by S. Ya. Chanba and comprising representatives from Armenian (Minosyan), Greek (Delaveri and Semerdzhiev), Russian (Kuleshov), Estonian (Raudsen), and Turkish (Delaver-Ogly) communities, aimed to foster peaceful coexistence and collaboration among all nationalities in the Abkhazian SSR, and to promote the cultural and material prosperity of national minorities. At this time, Abkhazia functioned as an independent Socialist Soviet Republic. In line with this mandate, the Sukhum district of Abkhazia hosted 4 Greek rural and 23 mixed rural Soviets, integrating sections of the Greek population. Significant strides were made in the realm of education, with the number of Greek schools increasing from 34 in the 1921-1923 academic year to 48 by 1925-1926. Student enrollment and teacher numbers also rose significantly during this period. The percentage of Greeks serving in Soviet and public state institutions climbed from 5.97% to 6.8%. By 1929, the literacy rate among the Greek population reached 35%. Subsequently, in 1929, the commission for national minorities at the CEC of the Abkhazian SSR sponsored several Greek students for further education, including Homer Khioti at the Frunze Naval School, Savva Murtidi at the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy, Kharalampy Vonyatikidi at the Krasnodar Agricultural Institute, Orest Nomikos at the Georgian Polytechnic Institute in Tbilisi, and Yevgeny Kabasakalov at the Novochoerkassk Polytechnic Institute.

However, in the early 1930s, the approach towards national minorities altered, leading to a deterioration in their circumstances. Special attention needs to be given to the policy of "Mingrelization" of Abkhazian lands and the repression against the Abkhazian SSR itself. In 1931, the Abkhazian SSR was transformed into an autonomous republic within the Georgian SSR, bringing it under the hierarchical control of Tbilisi.

This change was orchestrated and directed by the NKVD, leading to a forced alteration in the national composition of employees, including the replacement of qualified personnel with less qualified individuals based on nationality rather than professional competence. This period saw the rise of bureaucracy, arrogance, and the dominance of one nation over many others.

These actions and others led to ongoing national turmoil that persists to this day. The current interethnic conflicts in the Caucasus region and elsewhere are direct consequences of the destructive nationalist policies enacted by authorities eighty years ago, which discriminated against national minorities.

In Abkhazia, the repressions were extensive, affecting nearly every city and village, ultimately impacting all nationalities, including the once-privileged Mingrelians. Illiterate peasants were accused of Trotskyism and promoting clericalism, while ordinary workers and peasants were labelled "enemies of the people," leading to executions or exile to Siberian camps, from which few returned. Their families were stripped of civil rights, property, and

expelled from the republic. The scope of discrimination and arbitrariness was unprecedented; even the Abkhazian language was removed from the educational curriculum, replaced by Georgian, and the Abkhazian script was converted to the Georgian script.

The relatively low literacy rate among the Greek population, their limited proficiency in Russian, the strong influence of religion, and the fragmentation and disunity among Greek refugees - categorised by their places of flight from Pontus, periods of settlement, and overall level of social and political inactivity in comparison to other populations in Abkhazia - should also be noted. The NKVD deliberately fostered conditions for mass migration of Greek peasants to Greek citizenship, cultivating emigration sentiments. This policy was facilitated by the fact that Greek citizens were not subjected to dekulakisation (liquidation of the kulaks as a class —Trans.), their properties were retained, and they were not compelled to join collective farms.

## **PART TWO. VICTIMS OF RAMPANT CHAUVINISM**

In the economic sphere of the Abkhazian autonomy, especially within state institutions, resort organisations, and cooperatives, the most coveted and lucrative positions, colloquially known as “bread-winning,” “warm,” and “fresh penny” jobs, were predominantly occupied by privileged elements, primarily Mingrelians. According to specialised studies by A. Zhukov, I. Dzhuhi, and others, during the period of repression, the advanced and educated individuals from other nations of Abkhazia were systematically and physically eliminated.

In the 1980s, the presence of Greeks in deputy roles or other subordinate positions within these organisations was minimal, primarily restricted to executing specific tasks.

The Georgian population in Abkhazia increased significantly, mainly due to the migration of people from “small landholdings” in Mingrelia, purportedly to compensate for the deported Greek population.

State functionaries, including NKVD workers, disrupted the previously stable and harmonious coexistence of national minorities in Abkhazia. For instance, all Greeks were labelled as “newcomers,” and at local peasant gatherings, they were openly threatened: **“Regardless of whether you take Greek citizenship or not, you will be evicted, and we will not offer you any assistance... A Greek ship will arrive in March, as per an existing agreement, and we will deport you.”**

The intent to purge Abkhazia of these “newcomers” was apparent in many aspects of public life. A notable example included a widow of a Greek, who was ethnically Russian, being coerced to adopt Greek citizenship and leave the country (N.loannidi, “Greeks in Abkhazia,” p.41). It is clear that, since the 1930s, there was a meticulously orchestrated plan for the deportation of the Greek population, primarily from the Abkhazian ASSR, to the eastern regions of the country. The Greek citizenship status was used as the principal incriminating factor, branding them as “Unreliable Elements.”

The plight of national minorities, particularly the peaceful, industrious Greek community, which contributed significantly to the economy and societal development of Abkhazia

through the production of high-profit goods like tobacco and other agricultural products, was duly recognized by the local leadership of the autonomous republic. This was especially true in the case of N.A. Lakoba, a revered figure among all peoples of Abkhazia.

There arose a need to address and halt the growing discrediting and emigration sentiment among the labouring Greek minority, which was being fueled by authorities in Tbilisi and, to an extent, by local Mingrelians. Identifying the underlying problems and implementing appropriate measures to resolve the emerging challenges in daily life, land scarcity, and other issues became crucial. According to research presented by N. N. Ioanidi, it was discovered that “The foundation of the peasantry’s economic strength lies in access to arable, haymaking lands, and pastures. In this respect, national minorities, predominantly Greeks and Armenians, were significantly underprovided with land resources. The Greek peasantry, in particular, faced the most acute land and economic hardships.”

Greek peasants, who were refugees from the First World War and victims of mass slaughter by Kemalist nationalists, settled among the native Greek population. Many were allocated poor, mountainous-stony, or depleted small plots of land, typically no more than 0.5 desyatina (a unit of area in pre-1918 Russia, equivalent to 1.0925 hectares), despite having large families. This exacerbated the overall precarious situation of Greek farming households. For instance, in areas like the Azant district where Greek refugees resettled, the per capita land allocation for a Greek was a mere 0.1 desyatina, in stark contrast to the 1 desyatina or more allocated per capita to Mingrelians in the same district.

In this district alone, the Greek population – totaling around 2,000 people or 400 households – collectively owned just 300 desyatins ((Russian десятина refers to an old land measurement from tsarist Russia, roughly equivalent to 2.702 English acres. —Trans.) of land. This situation indicates a high percentage of small, inefficiently sized farms. The Greeks who arrived as refugees, particularly those who came before and during 1918, found themselves in challenging circumstances.

The crisis that unfolded in the Greek community within the Abkhazian ASSR during the late 1920s and early 1930s necessitated a series of targeted actions from the local autonomy leadership and, importantly, from the Georgian government. However, there appeared to be diverging viewpoints regarding the “newcomer” population. While the local Abkhazian leadership, led by N.A. Lakoba and S.Ya. Chamba, acknowledged the necessity and value of national minorities for the autonomy and took concrete steps towards their development and integration into society – aiming for mutual enrichment and the creation of a new Soviet community – the republican authorities of Tbilisi and their local affiliates seemed to harbour contrary intentions, actively working against these goals. They sought to expel the “newcomer” population from Abkhazia to serve their narrow nationalist interests.

The early 1930s marked a golden era for the development of the Greek population in the Abkhazian ASSR across all facets of their lives. This period remains etched in the memory of the Greek community as synonymous with a prosperous life in Abkhazia under the guidance of Nestor Apollonovich Lakoba. It imbued them with a genuine sense of homeland and belonging in Abkhazia, as the diverse peoples inhabiting Soviet Abkhazia, despite numerous developmental challenges and difficulties, successfully addressed interethnic

issues, living in peace and harmony and working tirelessly for the advancement of their collective societal life.

Significant to note is that by the fifteenth anniversary of Soviet Abkhazia in 1936, the Greek population of the Abkhazian ASSR was represented in the governmental system by distinguished individuals such as Konstantinidi Persefona Agafoklievna, Chitkalidi Khariton Isaakovich, Parotidi Kiryak Konstantinovich, Semerdzhiev Konstantin Grigorievich, Anastasiadi Philipp Stavrovich, and Engelov Anastas Feofilaktovich, who also served as a representative of the Abkhazian ASSR government at the Georgian and Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republics' Councils of People's Commissars. All were esteemed members of the Central Executive Committee of the Abkhazian ASSR. Anastasiadi Philipp Stavrovich represented the Greek population of the Abkhazian ASSR in the CIK of the Georgian SSR, while Semerdzhiev Ivan Konstantinovich did so in the CIK of the Transcaucasian SFSR. Prominent figures in the primary Greek settlement areas within the autonomous republic included Frankopulo Dmitry Aristidovich, chairman of the "Soviet Abkhazia" collective farm of Mikhailovsky rural Soviet; Kyanzhev Evstafiy Ivanovich, chairman of the "Empros" collective farm; Kapasakalis Daniil Panaetovich, chairman of the Konstantinovskiy rural Soviet; and Parotidi Kiryak Georgievich, chairman of the Yekaterinovskiy rural Soviet, among others.

Shortly after the celebrations marking the 15th anniversary of the Abkhazian ASSR, the region was engulfed by a wave of severe repressions. Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria (Mingrelian—Trans.), a key architect of these mass repressions and baseless political accusations from the 1930s through the early 1950s, played a pivotal role. As the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Georgia from 1931 to 1938, he orchestrated the NKVD's efforts to expel the "newcomer" Greeks to facilitate the Mingrelization of Abkhazia.

In pursuit of his ambitions, including his future career prospects in Moscow, Beria identified N.A. Lakoba, Chairman of the CIK of Abkhazia, as a major obstacle. Consequently, via a telegram dated December 25, 1936, he summoned Lakoba and I. I. Gobechia, secretary of the Sukhum regional committee of the party, to Tbilisi. Tragically, Lakoba's poisoned body was transported back to Sukhum, a victim of Beria's machinations in Tbilisi.

This event marked a profound loss for the people of Abkhazia, who lost a dedicated leader and advocate for all, including national minorities. The beheading of Abkhazia's leadership created a power vacuum and a sense of despair.

Seizing the opportunity, Beria and his aides swiftly moved to dismantle everything associated with N[estor] .A. Lakoba, including his government, family, and relatives, branding them and Lakoba himself as "enemies of the people."

Among the first victims of repression and destruction, based on fabricated accusations, were prominent Greeks who had been members of the Communist Party since 1917: Semerdzhiev I. G., Afanasiadi F. S., Semerdzhiev K. G., Delaveri N. I., and Murtidi S. M., a party member since 1920, among many others. Further details about these individuals, Beria's villainous actions, and his origins in the village of Merkheuli in the Sukhum district will be covered in a separate publication I am preparing.

It is important to mention Ivan Grigorievich Semerdjiev (Khiotis), a member of the Central Executive Committee of the ZSFSR, People's Commissar of Health of Abkhazia, head of the main spa department, and a personal physician and friend of N.A. Lakoba's family, who unveiled the truth about Lakoba's demise.

Stanislav Lakoba, in his "Sketches of the Political History of Abkhazia," page 127, notes that I.G. Semerdjiev's brother, Grigory Grigorievich, was also aware of Lakoba's poisoning. Additionally, M. Gobechia had warned Lakoba's widow, Saria, about the planned desecration of Lakoba's remains: a plot to exhume his body from Mikhailovsky cemetery in Sukhum and dispose of it elsewhere. In response, Saria decided to exhume the body herself, transport it to the village of Lykhny in the Gudauta district, Lakoba's birthplace, and rebury it in a hidden location to prevent further desecration. Accompanied by Lakoba's mother, they covertly collected white pebbles by the sea and delivered them to the cemetery watchman, requesting him to mark Lakoba's grave for easier identification at night. The watchman, who later paid with his life for assisting them, complied, and Lakoba's body was reinterred in Lykhny. The ensuing commotion in Sukhum attracted Beria and his entourage, leading to a frenzied search at the cemetery and the subsequent arrest of many NKVD officials in Abkhazia for their perceived negligence (Adile Abbas-Ogly "I Cannot Forget," page 281).

On January 7, 1937, seven days post-funeral, following Beria's directive, the bureau of the Abkhazian regional party committee adopted a strictly confidential resolution linking Lakoba's death to "an anti-Soviet provocation by hostile nationalist elements." At the same meeting, G. G. Semerdzhiev, the head of the special treatment sector of the People's Commissariat of Health of Abkhazia, was dismissed for "attempting to discredit the officially published autopsy report of the late N. Lakoba." The NKVD of Abkhazia was ordered to prosecute G.G. Semerdjiev.

### **PART THREE. CONCLUSION**

The repressions of the 1930s dealt a severe blow to the Greek national minority's interests. Following the directive of the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs N. I. Yezhov dated 11 December 1937, the NKVD initiated the "Greek operation." This campaign subjected the Greek population to widespread repression across Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and beyond. Notably, mass arrests occurred in my native village of Mikhailovka (Kuma) on December 17, 1937. The persecution extended beyond the prominent figures of the Greek community, bringing about additional detrimental effects. During 1937-1938, Greek schools, colleges, theatres, publishing houses, and printing presses were shut down, Greek-language publications were banned, and Greek newspapers and magazines ceased publication in areas with significant Greek populations.

The destruction of Greek Orthodox churches, the abolition of the Greek National-Territorial District in Kuban, and the dissolution of Greek rural and settlement Soviets were nationwide.

These actions caused irrevocable harm to the national interests of the Greeks in the Soviet Union, stripping them of the opportunity to learn their native language, develop their national culture, and fulfil their spiritual needs. Yet, the plight of the Soviet Greeks did not end there; more challenging trials lay ahead.

**In Abkhazia, from July 1937 to October 1938, with a population of about 300,000, including some 56,000 Abkhazians and around 33,000 Greeks, a total of 2,184 people were arrested, and 786 were executed, predominantly Abkhazians and Greeks.**

These arrests led to the near-annihilation of those apprehended, both within Abkhazia and en route to incarceration sites. The list of arrested villagers from Mikhailovka illustrates that the majority were apprehended on a single day, December 17, 1937. Notable cases included Anastasiadi Lazar Dmitrievich (born in 1858), Anastasiadi Ilya Lazarevich (1898), Kalyakhidi Kharlampiy Polikhronovich (1879), Kalaychidi Khristo Georgievich (1898), Kamberov Kuzma Mikhailovich (1878), Keshanidi Vasily Savvovich (1892), Muta Dmitry Spiridonovich (1878), Muta Fyodor Spiridonovich (1882), Poturidi Fyodor Ivanovich (1870), and Chilikov Kharlampiy Konstantinovich (1893), all of whom were executed nearly a year after their arrest at various locations in Kolyma, where they were buried.

My uncle, Keshanidi Vasily Savvovich, born in 1892 in the village of Mikhailovka (Kuma) and a Soviet citizen, was executed on November 30, 1938, and buried at Loglykhtakh, Taskan. Before his arrest, he served as a deputy precinct officer and police officer in the village, known for his integrity.

My father Lazar treasured a letter from his brother Vasily, kept in Abkhazia and Kazakhstan until his death in 1956. The letter contained a haunting message: "We are being taken to the East." The fates of numerous villagers from Mikhailovka remain shrouded in mystery. A list also exists of Greeks arrested in Sukhum and other Abkhazian districts, who were later killed in Kolyma.

A 1990 KGB report revealed that 1,118 people were executed in the country in 1936, and a staggering 682,000 between 1937 and 1938. Further insights into these tragic events will be detailed in a separate publication I am preparing.

Understanding the past is crucial for comprehending the present, as the past lays the foundation for the present. Many contemporary issues trace their roots back to the totalitarian Stalinist regime era in the Soviet Union. The horrific wave of repressions in 1937-1938, primarily targeting the intelligentsia, active workers, and peasants, disrupted the historically established lifestyles of many peoples and led to the forced resettlement of various nationalities in the 1940s and early 1950s. These crimes continue to manifest themselves in interethnic animosity, armed conflicts, cultural decline, rising criminality, economic devastation, and the impoverishment of entire regional populations.

During Stalin's era, characterised by unchecked arbitrariness and lawlessness, the brutal policy of national chauvinism affected the peoples across all Soviet republics. However, in the small region of Abkhazia, the consequences of the heinous crimes committed by Stalin's and Beria's executioners were particularly devastating.

Countless Abkhazians, Greeks, and others from the autonomous republic suffered unimaginably. Many were burned alive in lime pits, a horror still etched in the memories of the survivors. Others were beaten to death in NKVD interrogation rooms or succumbed to starvation and disease in prisons, during transfers, and in the notorious death camps. The



initial years in Kazakhstan proved fatal for over 50,000 Greeks, who perished due to the harsh, alien conditions, suffering from cold, hunger, diseases, and the oppressive regime, compounded by a lack of medical care and numerous other adversities.

**The Georgian Government's ultimate, barbaric objective was clear: to evict the Greeks and assimilate, and ultimately dissolve the Abkhazians by inundating Abkhazia with settlers from Georgia's western regions. The imposition of the Georgian language, personnel policies favouring Georgians, and ideological manipulation of the populace sought to establish a sense of inferiority in Abkhazians, Greeks, Armenians, Russians, Estonians, Persians, Turks, Jews, and others compared to the "exceptionally gifted" Georgians. The aim was to discredit all nationalities, elevating the Mingrelians as a distinct race, purportedly the original inhabitants of these lands, and to justify the Mingrelization of the entire Black Sea coast.**

This dark chapter in history, marked by the dictatorial rule of Stalin, Beria, and their local functionaries, led to a profound loss of respect and trust from the national minorities towards the Mingrelians, who, in effect, sawed off the branch they were sitting on.

The manipulation and provocation orchestrated by the NKVD in the 1930s, targeting the Greek minority in the Abkhazian ASSR to fulfil their chauvinistic national policy, culminated in a significant sabotage for such a small population. It resulted in the mass resettlement of the entire Greek population from the Black Sea region. The NKVD's ploy, meant to mislead the population about their true intentions, successfully manipulated the sentiments of the long-suffering Greek refugees. These refugees still vividly remembered the Turkish pogroms, the killings of men, and the violence against their women, girls, and children, as well as the perilous and painful experiences of fleeing from their ancestral homeland in Pontus.

Months before the mass deportation day, as narrated by many living witnesses, including my uncle Khristofor Savvovich Keshanidi, a construction foreman on the bridge over the East Gumista river, people were aware that Greek citizens would be resettled. Despite rumours of relocation to Greece, few believed it, though such possibilities were considered since the NKVD had been openly discussing such plans at peasant gatherings since the 1930s.

On 13 June 1949, NKVD troops deported all Greek citizens by noon. By that evening, they were transported to the Gudauta station, loaded into freight cars, and locked inside. The trains carrying the Greeks passed through the Krasnodar region non-stop throughout the night.

The following day, June 14, as I vividly recall, rural Soviet officials, including the Greek secretary, informed the remaining Greek citizens that those wishing to join their Greek citizen relatives could also be sent upon application.

The exact number of applications is unknown. However, on the morning of June 16, trucks were brought in, one for every three houses. Officers, armed with holsters and accompanied by soldiers with automatic weapons, announced the deportations. The decision to evict Soviet citizen Greeks appears to have been a local republican one, as it was followed by widespread complaints and later condemnation and acknowledgment of this criminal local autocracy by a special commission from Moscow.

Consequently, on June 16, following their Greek citizen relatives, all individuals, including Soviet citizens, Communist Party members, war veterans, Soviet and party workers, etc., were deported. In the village of Mikhailovka (Kuma) - Shroma, for instance, only about ten families remained, including those of former chairpersons of collective farms and rural Soviets, such as G. Shaplahova, M. Kalaidopulo, and families in mixed marriages with Mingrelians and others.

The deployment of troops around the villages and the armed presence at each household, overseen by officers, underscored the criminal nature and malice of the Georgian rulers' actions against the defenceless Greek national minority. Notably, no one dared to resist or protest against such rampant lawlessness. The fearsome machinery of the NKVD effectively intimidated and crushed the spirit and resistance of the simple, hardworking peasant populace.

The instigators of this contemptible act against the innocent people lacked any sense of human morality or humanitarian ideals. They disregarded the rights and heritage of one of the world's oldest peoples, not to mention the actual indigenous inhabitants and cultural bearers of the entire Black Sea region – the Greeks. They emerged as nothing more than predators draped in the guise of authority, a fact that their contemporaries must remember.

True power belongs to those who live in harmony, work tirelessly for the benefit of all, and possess the wisdom and capability to lead others. In their frenzy, Georgian national chauvinists forgot that every peasant has the right to live peacefully on the land they cultivate, contributing to society at large. The executors of this heinous crime were mere predators in power, a fact that should not be forgotten by their contemporaries. These were the local leaders of Georgia and “Georgianized” Abkhazia, namely:

- Charkviani Kandid Nesterovich, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) of Georgia in 1949,
- Mgeladze Akaki Ivanovich, secretary of the Abkhaz regional committee of the Communist Party (B) of Georgia in 1949,
- Bokuchava Shalva Illarionovich, Minister of Internal Affairs of Abkhazia in 1949,
- Mzhavanadze Vasili Pavlovich, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia in 1955.

These individuals, especially the first three – Charkviani, Mgeladze, and Bokuchava – abused their power egregiously, resulting in the expulsion of all Greeks, approximately 48,400 in number, from Abkhazia and other areas, and seizing everything they had accumulated over 70-100 years: homes, properties, livestock, land parcels, and collective farms. The fourth, Mzhavanadze, denied the Greeks, expelled in 1949, the right to return to their homes and reclaim their properties after being released from special settlement regimes in Kazakhstan and other areas in March 1955.

As a result, as of 2010, these antitheses of the Georgian people have deprived the Republic of Abkhazia of approximately 132,000 Greeks, based on the estimated number with natural growth since the last census of 1939. They also stripped the Greeks, an integral part of

Abkhazia's social life and a significant source of intellectual and economic development, of their homeland.

It is crucial to highlight that these unlawful actions have deprived Abkhazia of productive forces and significant income sources from agricultural products like tobacco, tea, valuable timber, and premium fruit varieties. The lands once cultivated by the Greeks now largely lie fallow, unused as they were before their initial settlement.

The tens of thousands of Mingrelians from Georgia's western regions, primarily peasants like the Greeks, ultimately became victims of the same negligent racist guardianship of the republic. Due to the same misguided policies, they too became refugees within their own country, now "homeless."

As for the Greeks of Abkhazia, they remain displaced from their ancestral lands, regardless of their current residence, including those in Greece.

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He worked at the Dzhambyl Technological Institute of Light and Food Industry, serving as an Associate Professor, Dean, and Chairman of the trade union organisation of the collective.

Khristofor is the author of 33 scientific works related to his dissertation topic, 5 inventions, a monograph, and a device that was mass-produced for enterprises in the USSR bread products system.

Since 1990, he has been residing in Greece. A family man, he retired in 2007. He has published over 20 articles in Greek media in Russian and Modern Greek languages, as well as the following books:

- A. "Ellinoromei Ponta (Pontus Rumlari)," Athens, 2012.
- B. "The Ideology of the Revival of Hellenism in Pontus," Athens, 2013.
- C. "The Deportation of Greeks from the USSR in 1949," Athens, 2014.
- D. "The Origins of the Tragedy of Hellenism in Pontus," Athens, 2017.
- E. "Ethnogenesis of the Hellenes-Romeans of Pontus (their origins and timeline)," Athens, 2020.
- F. "Santa Ponta (The Fortress of Orthodox Christianity)," Athens 2021.
- G. "The Origin of the Greeks of Pontus," Athens 2022.

He is passionate about travel and history. He has visited Pontus, the historical homeland of his ancestors, twice.

His last wish in life is to move to Pontus, to the historical lands of his great ancestors, the cradle of Hellenism.

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