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Documents from the KGB archive in Sukhum. Abkhazia in the Stalin years

RACHEL CLOGG

Abkhazia is situated on the shore of the Black Sea and bordered by the Caucasus mountain range to the North, the Russian Federation to the West and Georgia to the East. Its territory is small, less than that of Scotland, and in the census of 1989, the entire population numbered just over 525,000. Abkhazia came to world attention in August 1992, following the invasion by Georgian forces which led to a bloody war. This lasted more than one year and resulted in thousands of casualties and tens of thousands of refugees and displaced persons.

The reasons for this conflict are many and complex. One of the primary factors in precipitating the outbreak of the war was the violent resurgence of Georgian nationalism which accompanied the demise of the Soviet Union. Zviad Gamsakhurdia came to power in Georgia in 1989 on a wave of anti-Russian sentiment and vehement nationalist rhetoric. Minority ethnic groups, which made up at least 30 per cent of the population of Georgia, included Armenians, Russians, Azeris, Greeks, Ossetians and Abkhazians. These last two groups had both had a degree of administrative and cultural autonomy under the Soviet system, as did the Adzharians (Muslim Georgians). The very existence of such proportionately large minority groups was identified by Gamsakhurdia and other nationalists as a threat to the prospects for an independent unitary Georgia, and a systematic campaign against non-Georgian minorities began.

In 1988 a Demographic Fund had been set up to encourage an increase in the Georgian birth rate. One year later, the final version of the State Programme for the Georgian Language was introduced. This proposed the obligatory teaching of Georgian in all schools of the Republic, and made access to higher education in Georgia conditional on passing a test in Georgian language and literature. There were violent clashes with Azeris in South Georgia in July 1989, followed by serious clashes in Abkhazia, and some of the Avars in Eastern Georgia were compulsorily expelled to Dagestan. The autonomy of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region was abolished in late 1990, leading to war and the mass displacement of tens of thousands of Ossetians who were forced to flee northwards.

Eduard Shevardnadze, returning to Georgia after Gamsakhurdia was ousted in

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a military coup, continued along much the same lines. On his orders, troops were sent into Abkhazia in August 1992 on the pretext of restoring order, and began what amounted to a programme of ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide. Meanwhile civil war, again largely on ethnic grounds, broke out within the territory. Georgia between the Georgians and the Mingrelians, a distinct ethnic group which has become largely assimilated by the Georgians.

This turmoil is certainly not exclusive to the post-Soviet period. The following words are taken from C. E. Bechhofer, as he travelled through the south of Russia and the Caucasus in 1919 and 1920.

I discovered from a high Georgian authority at Tiflis that the Georgian Government then intended, should Batumi come into their hands, to use their customary anti-Russian methods there. All non-Georgians engaged in the public services were to be given fourteen days to quit. Georgian was to be made the only language for official use, and was to be substituted for Russian everywhere. All non-Georgians engaged in trade or owning land—even under the 25-acre limit—would be subjected to such organized persecution that they would soon think themselves lucky to escape with their lives from Batumi.¹

Indeed, the events of the last few years in Georgia and Abkhazia may be seen as part of a recurring pattern in which language and ethnically motivated policies have played a key role. One of the major Abkhaz grievances concerns changes in the political status of Abkhazia; from independence and then full Soviet Socialist Republic status (albeit bound to Georgia by 'special treaty ties'), Abkhazia was demoted in 1931 by Stalin to an Autonomous Republic within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The material below serves as documentary evidence of the historical roots of other contemporary Abkhaz grievances. In just over one century the ethnic composition of Abkhazia has changed considerably. This began with the mass Russian conquest of the Caucasus. The demographic changes continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s under Lavrentii Beria, Communist Party Secretary for Transcaucasia, and himself a Mingrelian. Some Abkhazians were forced to leave under fear of persecution, and Germans and Greeks were deported to Central Asia. At the same time other nationalities, primarily Mingrelians and Georgians, though also Russians and Armenians, were encouraged to move into the vacated territory. In some cases whole villages of Mingrelians were forcibly resettled in purpose-built villages in the eastern areas of Abkhazia, often deliberately placed amongst Abkhazian villages to weaken feelings of cultural homogeneity.²

This 'Georgianization' of Abkhazia not only involved the physical displacement of Abkhazians. Under Akaki Mgeladze, Party Secretary in Sukhumi 1944–52 all Abkhazian schools were closed, and publishing and broadcasting became very difficult. Employees of ABNII (the Abkhazian Research Institute of Language, Literature and History) were particularly singled out for persecution. The material I have translated here provides a unique insight into how the Soviet system operated, through the reports of a vast network of informers, at least some of whom were presumably Abkhazians themselves. What stands out most, perhaps, is the detail of the reports, monitoring both subtle and more

outspoken manifestations of dissent, across a spectrum of people. The language is also interesting, particularly in the light of the contemporary post-Soviet rhetoric. In 1989, Gamsakhurdia identified the Abkhazians as 'agents of Moscow, instructed to kill innocent Georgians'.

These documents are also valuable in that they provide evidence of the depth of current ethnically motivated grievances and are of vital significance in our understanding of the political role such evidence can play in mobilising public opinion in terms of identity, and reinforcing notions of victim and persecutor in the laying of blame. This recent historical memory of persecution is of great importance in post-Soviet debates on cultural and ethnic identity. It is gratifying that this archival material, which was made available to me by Stanislav Lakoba, historian and Deputy Chair of the Abkhazian Parliament, survived the latest round of ethnic cleansing. Both ABNII, with its unique linguistic, cultural and ethnographic materials, and almost the entire State Archives of Abkhazia were set alight and burned in October 1992 by Georgian occupying forces in Sukhumi.

**Stanislav Lakoba
First Deputy Chair,
Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia**
(translated by Rachel Clogg)

These documents of the Stalin–Beria period of Soviet history are a product of the 1940s and were classified 'Completely confidential'. They were prepared for about half a century in one of the departments of the Sukhumi KGB [Committee for State Security], protected by seven different seals. After the liberation of the Abkhazian capital from Georgian occupation forces on 27 September 1993, the archive of this secret department came into the hands of the legitimate organs of power, the Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia.

For the first time, representatives of Abkhazian nationality gained access to this unique documentary evidence of a period of total Georgian tyranny and repression with regard to the Abkhazian people, which was secretly preserved in the Georgian section of the KGB. They reveal the inner workings of this all-powerful institution where accusations were in particular cooked up against those representatives of the Abkhazian intelligentsia who survived the avalanche of repressions in 1937–38 and 1941–42. This access to inside information enables us to see the true picture of the Georgianization of Abkhazia and throws light on the well-organised plan for the forced assimilation of Abkhazians in the 1940s.

The documents, which contain reports by special agents of the attitude of prominent representatives of the Abkhazian intelligentsia towards the politics of 'party and government' in Abkhazia, are of great value. They record their resentment and indignation at the closure of Abkhazian schools, the adoption of Georgian as the language of education, the settlement of tens of thousands of Georgians in Abkhazia and discrimination against Abkhazians. They were instantly branded with labels such as 'Anti-Soviet', 'Counter-revolutionary'.

'Of bourgeois-nationalist disposition'. Toward this aim, the General Major of the Ministry of State Security of the Abkhazian ASSR, I. Gagua (a Georgian of Mingrelian origin and protégé of Beria) compiled in the name of the Ministry of GB [State Security] of Georgia, detailed 'certificates', 'memoranda', 'reports', and 'messages'. For example, the 'special communiqué' from I. Gagua to the Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom [Regional Committee] of the CP(b) [Communist Party] of Georgia, A. Mgeladze, on 2 October 1945, speaks for itself. Here it is stated that Abkhazian children from the Ochamchira region refuse to study at school in the Georgian language. The Minister for Security even lists by name the 'guilty' children of the second, third and fourth years who deliberately miss classes and do not want to attend Georgian schools ...

Particular attention is paid in the documents to representatives of the intelligentsia working in the Abkhazian Scientific-Research Institute of Language, Literature and History (ABNIL), which was previously the Abkhazian Scientific Society (ABNO, from 1922), and the Institute of Abkhazian culture of the Academy of Sciences in the name of Academician N. Marr (IAKAN). These people were continuously persecuted or destroyed from 1937 onwards, following the death of the Abkhazian Prime Minister, Nestor Lakoba (poisoned by Beria in Tbilisi, 27 December 1936).

The scientific community of this Institute in Sukhum, largely historians and philologists, had time and again, for decades right up to the present day, incurred the wrath of the Georgian powers in Tbilisi due to their stance of consistently defending their people, insisting on its distinctiveness and culture. A great number of academics at ABNIL, including its director, were wiped out in the 1930s and 1940s. Many young researchers at the Institute were persecuted from the 1950s through the 1980s. A literal storm of hatred and abuse, equivalent to the time of Stalin and Beria, was unleashed when, in 1990, ABNIL's director, the philologist and academic Vladislav Ardzinba was elected as the Chairman of the Abkhazian Parliament. Various chauvinistic insinuations were made under Z. Gamsakhurdia,³ G. Gumbaridze⁴ and E. Shevardnadze.⁵ The latter's occupational Georgian forces entered Sukhum and, in November 1992, committed one particular act of vandalism: on a single day ABNIL and the State Archive of Abkhazia were set on fire simultaneously. The former contained a unique library, historical sources, linguistic and folk records, and archaeological and ethnographic materials. Searches and confiscations were carried out by representatives of the occupational forces of Georgia in the homes and flats of ABNIL academics, and private archives and books about Abkhazia were destroyed.

This selection of documents from the 'Green Folder' of the Sukhum KGB, by the name of 'the IV, s. report', certificates and memoranda on the counter-revolutionary element of bourgeois-nationalist disposition among Abkhazians', is thus of great value as a source for further research. It will add new hitherto unknown information and facts to the dark period of Abkhazian history in the 1940s.⁶

GLOSSARY

- u.s.*, *a.s.*: Anti-Soviet
 ABNIL: Abkhazian Research Institute (of Language, Literature and History)
 Abvimprom: Abkhazian Wine Industry
 ASSR: Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
 GB: State Security
 Gorsovet: Town soviet
 Gosizdat: State publishing organisation
 k/r, k.r.: Counter-revolutionary
 KGB: Committee of State Security
 Kolhoz: Collective farm (produce divided among workforce after deliveries)
 Komzag: Committee for the Procurement of Agricultural Products
 KP/b: Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)
 MGB GSSR: Ministry of State Security, Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic
 Narkompros: People's Commissariat of Enlightenment [Education]
 Narkomsobes: People's Commissariat for Social Security
 NKGB: People's Commissariat for State Security
 Obkom: Regional Committee
 RaifO: Regional Department of Financial Security
 RaiONO: Regional Department of People's Education
 Raitorgoidel: Regional Department of Commerce
 RK: Regional Committee
 RKP: Regional Party Committee
 RO: Regional Department
 RONO: Regional Department of People's Education
 Sel sovet: Village soviet
 Soiuzpechat': State publishing organisation
 Sovkhoz: State farm (workforce receive a wage)
 Tekhnikum: Technical College
 TsK: Central Committee
 VKP/b: All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)

In the second report, No. 2/1767, some words and phrases had been underlined using a pen. I have indicated these in the text by underlining. I have used the Library of Congress system for transliteration. Translator's notes are in square brackets.

FILE No. 2

Directives, reports and memoranda on the k/r [counter-revolutionary] bourgeois-nationalist element among the Abkhazian population

opened 11.11.1944
 closed

PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF STATE SECURITY
ABKHAZIAN ASSR

SECOND DIVISION

30 May 1945

No. 2/1/766

Sukhumi

~~TOP SECRET~~

To the head of the Gagra division of NKGB [People's Committee for State Security],
Abkhazian ASSR [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic]
Lieutenant Colonel of GB [State Security] Comrade PARTSKHALADZE

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Gudauta RO [Regional Department] of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR
Captain of GB Comrade KODUA

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Ochamchira RO of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR
Lieutenant Colonel of GB Comrade KHARCHILAVA

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Sukhumi RO of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR
Captain of GB Comrade DYALI

For Your Personal Attention

In connection with the continuation of the resettlement programme from Western regions of Georgia, the number of those settled in the Ochamchira, Gudauta, and Gagra regions and in parts of Sukhumi region in 1945-46 is estimated at up to 1500 households.

Settlement will be carried out both in kolchozes [collective farms] in the designated areas of resettlement, where deserted and vacant houses will be restored, and in vacant territory and plots of land, where new homes shall be built.

It is possible, in reaction to these developments, that there will be attempts at sabotage by anti-Soviet elements from among the local population, in particular by those of a k.r. nationalist disposition, both by the dissemination of a/s [anti-Soviet] provocative rumours, and by hostile demonstrations and conduct (creating an atmosphere of terror, arson, theft of livestock and so on).

Following on from the aforesaid, and in the interest of a timely cessation of all a/s enemy actions,

I PROPOSE:

1. That you encourage existing authorised agents to expose all negative actions and a/s manifestations promptly. At the same time, recruitment of appropriate staff should be made.
2. That you inform the First Secretaries of the RKP of all shortcomings in the building of houses and in the settlement programme, and of all instances of the oppression of newly settled people, of theft, etc. which come to your attention. You are to inform me immediately of any a/s incidents or conduct of a political nature by means of a special communiqué giving a detailed account of the facts.
3. That work according to this directive must be carried out personally by the head of the RO of the NKGB.
4. That you send me reports by the 20th day of each month of the results of the measures you have taken.

People's Commissar of State Security
Abkhazian ASSR Commissar of State Security

Exec. Ublava

I. GAGUA [signature]

PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF STATE SECURITY
ABKHAZIAN ASSR

SECOND DIVISION

30 May 1945

No. 2/1/767

Sukhumi

TOP SECRET

To the head of the Gagra division of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR

Lieutenant Colonel of GB Comrade PARTSKHALADZE

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Gudauta RO of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR

Captain of GB Comrade KODUA

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Ochamchira RO of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR

Lieutenant Colonel of GB Comrade KHARCHILAVA

For Your Personal Attention

To the head of the Sukhumi RO of NKGB, Abkhazian ASSR

Captain of GB Comrade DYALI

For Your Personal Attention

At the petition of progressive segments of the Abkhazian population, it is intended that from the start of the 1945/46 school year teaching in all subjects in all Abkhazian primary schools will be conducted in the Georgian language. The Abkhazian language will be taught as a subject in the higher years only (from the fourth and fifth years). Narkompros [The People's Commissariat for Enlightenment (Education)] in the Abkhazian ASSR is conducting preparatory work towards the realization of these plans; the selection and placement of cadre teachers, the supply of teaching materials, etc.

With the introduction of these measures, it cannot be ruled out that certain anti-Soviet individuals, particularly those of a k/r nationalist disposition among teachers and others of the Abkhazian intelligentsia, will attempt to obstruct the successful realization of this important State political measure. They will disseminate a/s provocative rumours and create k.r. groups with the aim of obstructing these measures.

With the aim of the timely cessation of possible a/s incidents and organised attempts to frustrate the above-mentioned measure,

I PROPOSE:

- 1.) That the Head of the RO of the NKGB personally studies with utmost care work carried out in this sphere in RONO [Regional Department of People's Education].
- 2) That you ascertain, by the deployment of agents, the mood and opinions both of the teaching staff and pupils, and also among other areas of the population.
- 3) That you recruit capable agents from among the more faithful and trustworthy members of the teaching staff and intelligentsia, and regularly remain aware of both the work carried out in this sphere by local Party and Soviet organs and of all a.s. incidents and conduct. So, too, should you be aware of any shortcomings.
- 4) That you regularly inform the First Secretaries of the Party RK of all shortcomings in the placement of cadres, the supply of teaching materials etc, which come to your attention. You are to inform me immediately of all anti-Soviet incidents and conduct of a political nature by means of a special communique giving a detailed account of the facts.
- 5) That all work according to this directive should be carried out personally by the head of RO of the NKGB.
- 6) That you send me reports by the 20th day of each month of the results of the measures you have taken.

People's Commissar of State Security
Abkhazian ASSR Commissar of State Security

Exec. Ublava

I. GAGUA [signature]

PEOPLES COMMISSARIAT OF STATE SECURITY
ABKHAZIAN ASSR

SECOND DIVISION

TOP SECRET

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ABKHAZ OKROM KP/b/GEORGIA
COMRADE MGELADZE

SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE

Here [Sukhumi]

about incidences of truancy among pupils in certain schools of the Ochamchira region.

In certain schools of the Ochamchira region instances of mass truancy among school pupils have been observed. Some of the pupils not attending school have stated they do not wish to study in the Georgian language and would like to transfer to a Russian school. Others of them do not attend due to a lack of clothing and footwear. As a result of this, many school hours are being lost.

In Gup middle school, where the director is TUZHBA, member of VKP/b, there are 81 pupils in the four primary years. A record of registration has been kept only from 10 September; from 10 to 20 September in only the second year, which comprises 22 pupils, 399 school hours were missed. In the fourth year, of 21 pupils, the total was 486 hours, and in the third year, of 13 pupils, the total was 198 hours. Altogether, over the three years (second, third and fourth), a total of 1083 hours were lost in the course of ten days. A register was not kept for the first year.

The following regularly do not attend school:

- a) Second year:
1. Kvartskhava, V. missed 12 days
 2. Piliia, Shura missed 14 days
 3. Piliia, Shota missed 16 days
 4. Kogoniia Ushveng missed 13 days
 5. Kogoniia, Tsitsina missed 15 days
 6. Grigolia, Zhulua missed 16 days

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b) Third year:

1. Lazaria, Babu
2. Piliia, Tina
3. Gabelia, Shota and others

c) Fourth year:

1. Gabelia, Shota [sic] missed 16 days
2. Grigolia, David missed 16 days
3. Zzukhba [sic], Shamil missed 10 days
4. Zukhba, Zhora missed 13 days
5. Kogoniia, Zhora missed 15 days
6. Lagvilava, Archil missed 7 days
7. Cherkezia, Nona missed 7 days

According to a statement by the head of the educational section, Mamiia KIRILA, the majority of the aforementioned pupils refuse to study in the Georgian language. The school's director, TUZHBA, is not pursuing any measures as regards pupils not attending school.

In Mokva middle school, where the director is TARBA, member of the VKP/b, 22 pupils are registered in the first year. On 4 September of this year the following stopped attending school:

1. Achvadze, Babutsa
2. Akobiia, Ariko
3. Kuteliia, Nura
4. Tsulaia, Bgagh
5. Kvaratskheliia, Kosta
6. Khadz-Ogly, Vanicka

Of these, Kosta Kvaratskheliia and Batu [sic] Tsulaia, said they want to study but their parents have forbidden them. The others do not have sufficient clothing.

Of second year pupils, the following regularly do not attend lessons:

1. Akhalia, Mado missed 22 days
2. Kvaratskheliia, Iva missed 22 days
3. Achkadze, Leontii missed 22 days
4. Kvaratskheliia, Sako missed 15 days
5. Akhuba, David missed 13 days

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In the third year, Simon TARB, Dusia BIGVAVA, and Zina BIGVAVA have stopped attending school altogether. They stated that they do not wish to study in Georgian and want to transfer to the Russian school in Mokva sovkhos.

There are four pupils in the fourth year of this school, and of these three have stopped attending, saying they do not want to study in Georgian. Suliko GANGILA in particular refuses to study.

In Tkhtia middle school, where the director is VOVBA, registration of pupils has been conducted only since 17 September. A significant number of pupils do not attend this school. However, the director and teachers have not clarified the reasons for truancy. The director VOVBA puts the lack of attendance down to the pupils' apparent reluctance to study in the Georgian language.

In Achdava Primary School, Mokva Village Selsovet [Village soviet], five pupils out of ten in the fourth year have left, namely:

1. Adleiba, V.
2. Kvikhiniia, M.
3. Samsoniia, B.
4. Samsoniia, M.
5. Dzhindzhua, Zh.

These pupils stated they cannot study in Georgian.

The above is communicated for your information.

People's Commissar for State Security
Abkhazian ASSR Commissar for State Security

I. GAGUA [signature]

October 1945
No. 2/1/-1573
Sukhumi

PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF STATE SECURITY
ABKHAZIAN ASSR

SECOND DIVISION

TOP SECRET

TO THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR OF STATE SECURITY GEORGIAN SSR
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL COMRADE RAPAVA

Tbilisi

REPORT

of expressions of intensified anti-Soviet sentiment by Abkhazian individuals of a nationalist disposition in Sukhumi and the Gudauta and Gagra regions.

In addition to my report No. 2/2-1542 of 30 September 1945, I report that in connection with the introduction of teaching in the Georgian language in Abkhazian schools, the strengthening of the Party-Soviet apparatus by immigrant workers from other regions of Georgia, and the resettlement of collective farm workers from areas of Georgia which have insufficient arable land to the territory of the Abkhazian ASSR, expressions of malicious anti-Soviet sentiment by individual workers and counter-revolutionaries of nationalist disposition among the Abkhazians both in the town of Sukhumi and in Gudauta and Gagra regions have been growing recently.

These anti-Soviet expressions have taken the following forms:

1. Making statements as to the alleged persecution of Abkhazians.
2. Making statements concerning apparent attempts to liquidate Abkhazian culture, language and nation.
3. Protesting that the introduction of teaching in Georgian is unsuitable and, in connection with this, forbidding children to attend schools.
4. Encouraging people to leave Abkhazia.
5. Provoking and mocking workers coming from Georgian regions.

1. Statements as to the alleged persecution of Abkhazians.

The former Deputy People's Commissar for Education in the Abkhazian ASSR, Nikolai Erastovich GERILA, who was dismissed for sabotage, said the following about his dismissal, in conversation with our agent "Svet" [light];

....I managed my post as Deputy People's Commissar for Education for seven years, and then at the end of '33 I decided I can't manage my work....It is, of course, nothing to do with this. They just don't want to keep me on as I'm Abkhazian and so they dismissed me....

People's Commissar for Social Security in the Abkhazian ASSR, Aleksandr Lavrent'evich KHASHBA said, in conversation with our agent "Pulemet" [Machine-gun];

....In order to learn the Georgian language you have to marry a Georgian woman....The Georgians are bypassing the law....We'll see what comes of this. Wherever you turn, they're everywhere....There was an exceptional, educated Abkhazian - Nikolai GERILA - and they dismissed him....

In conversation with our source "Kostrov", Shamid Shvintovich CHITANAVA, head of the Abkhazian ASSR branch of Soizspechat' [State publishing organisation], stated;

....It's becoming difficult for Abkhazians to live in Abkhazia. The Georgians are squeezing us Abkhazians out....

According to agent "P", Aziz Rashidovich AGIBA, former artistic director of Abkhazian drama, commented on the actions of Deputy Head of the Committee for the Arts, comrade GABISKIRILA, as follows;

....As far as GABISKIRILA is concerned, he's not acting according to his personal opinions. He's supported by the general policy adopted by the Georgians as regards Abkhazians...However, it's dangerous, it's not worth talking about this matter. Keep quiet...

and straight away he added;

....You see they're closing Abkhazian schools. They're bringing Georgians to Abkhazia by the village. So, to put it simply, the Georgians are colonising Abkhazia. But we must keep quiet. DELBA isn't saying anything, that means there's nothing we can do....

According to reports from agent "Rodina" [Homeland], the poet and dramatist Mikhail Aleksandrovich LAKERBAL, said of Party and government measures taken in Abkhazia;

....Now Georgians are going on everywhere. Before people were different, the atmosphere was different. You can suffocate in this atmosphere. They're driving out Abkhazian cadres....

The Abkhazian actor Razinbei AGIBA said, in conversation with our source "Ivan";

....They're gradually picking us all off. There's no one to protect us. They forced Aziz Agiba out. The Georgians don't want Abkhazian culture to develop....

Aleksei Solomonovich LAFISHBA, former member of the KP/b of Georgia, and accounts clerk at Makharaade kolkhoz, stated in conversation with our source "Glaz" [Eye];

....I don't know what sort of national policy this is. Wherever you go there are Georgians everywhere, and there's nothing left of the Abkhazians...

Khadzhabat GABNIIA, Inspector of Gudauta RONO, attached to Barnysh village in the Gudauta region, spoke among kolkhoz workers;

A large number of additional Georgian workers are arriving from Georgia and are occupying all the jobs in the region held by Abkhazians. The latter are being sacked and sent to the kolkhozes....Before long the Georgians will take over Abkhazia once and for all, and there will be nothing Abkhazian left here....

In conversation with our source "Svet" [light], Iradion IOLUA, Procurator of Gudauta region, said;

....Gudauta was the heart of Abkhazia, and now it's full of Georgians. You seldom hear the Abkhaz language when you walk around town. Everywhere you can hear the cursed Georgian language....Only "katso" [Georgian term of address for "man"] and "genatsvale" [Georgian for "dear/darling"]. Soon there'll be no place for us in our native town - instead the collective farms are waiting for us. There won't be any Georgian spoken there....

Chichiko KOLBALIA was demobilised from the Red Army, has a degree, and now lives in Sukhumi, though he is originally from Abgarkhuk village in Gudauta region. In a conversation he declared;

....I still haven't found work, and don't hold out any hope that I'll be able to, as they have to find all those from Gegechkhori [today's Mart'vili in Mingrelia, Western Georgian] work first and then, if there are vacant places left, they'll give us jobs....A lot of them have arrived in Sukhumi. No one trusts us, so until they've been found cosy places we have to wait, and then they'll probably tell us - there's no work. Would you like us to send you to work as a brigade-leader at the kolkhoz?...

Maksim Petrovich KURMAZIIA, the former head of the Gudauta section of Abvinprom [Abkhazian wine industry], spoke of his dismissal for sabotage, in conversation with our source "Svetlio";

....I didn't deserve dismissal, but they had to give the place to a Georgian, that's the reason

only. I copied perfectly well with my job. My deputy TSIVTSIVADZE has a thousand crimes to his name but no one touches him as he's a Georgian...

The head of the Savings Bank of the Abkhazian ASSR, Mikhail Kharitonovich GONDZHU, in conversation with our agent "Svet" [Light], said:
...There won't be a life for us Abkhazians anymore here in Abkhazia. The Georgians have taken over Abkhazia and are gradually pushing us out...

Ivan Pavlovich ACHBA, a former member of the gentry and member of the Bar, declared in one of his conversations with serviceman Razden AGRA, in the presence of our source "Svet" [Light]:

...Two or three Abkhazians are left among the leadership of Abkhazia, but they'll replace them soon too. Not long ago they dismissed GERILA, Deputy People's Commissar for Education. He was a very good worker. They dismissed his brother too - the director of the Abkhazian Tekhnikum [Technical college]. They're all planning to leave for Russia. They dismissed our best ones, RYA and PACHALIA. They're generally driving out Abkhazians...

2. Making statements concerning apparent attempts to liquidate Abkhazian culture, language and nation.

Mikhail Aleksandrovich LAKERBAL declared, in conversation with our source "Petrovich",

...I, as a writer, am interested in seeing an increase in the study of Abkhazian language and literature. The measures being taken - the introduction of the Georgian language, the arrival of Georgian cadres and so on, are leading to a stage where there simply won't be an Abkhazian language and literature. And there won't be any Abkhazians...

The same LAKERBAL said, on another occasion;

...The policy of the Georgian government as regards the Abkhazian people is incorrect...Abkhazian culture and art at present is not being shown the sort of support it should be shown...

The People's poet of Abkhazia, Dmitri Ioslovich GULLIA, discussing the fact that "Georgians and Abkhazians are two distinct nations, with nothing in common with each other historically" said, in conversation with our agent Apsny [The Abkhazian name for Abkhazia]:

...The people of this world have been interacting with each other over the course of centuries. This interaction has led those nationalities which are less developed to borrow many words and national characteristics from the more developed culture, in order to enlarge their
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vocabularies...There are not a few French and Tatar words, for example, in the Russian language. But does this mean that Russia and her culture are related to French or Tatar culture?...In the first Abkhazian alphabet, created by myself and K. D. MACHAVARIANI, there was not a single character from the Georgian alphabet, and it was completely satisfactory to the Abkhazians. The political situation created the necessity to replace the almost Russified alphabet with Georgian characters. If necessary, it's possible to replace the Georgian characters with any others, but again this is no way to prove or establish kinship between one nationality and another....

Aleksandr KHASHBA says, with regard to the alleged oppression of the culture of the Abkhazian nation;

...Shinkuba is the one talented poet of Abkhazia, he is on a level even with Pushkin, yet no one promotes him, no one supports him. Were he a Georgian, his name would probably resound throughout the Soviet Union. All is being neglected because a process of Georgianisation is taking place, we are a nation which is becoming obsolete...

Lieutenant Colonel GOLANDZILA, Commander of Regiment 407 of the infantry division stationed in Akhal-Afoni [The Georgian name for Novyi Afoni], declared the following in the presence of a group of people on 14/12/45;

...The local authorities closed Abkhazian schools and introduced teaching in the Georgian language unauthorized, without any directives or decision making on the part of the higher bodies of power, thus engendering the dissatisfaction of the local population...

Ivan Ioslovich GULLIA, Director of the Abkhazian ASSR Narkomsobes [People's Commissariat for Social Security] factory for training and production, expressed acute discontent;

...They have denied us Abkhazians our language. What does this mean? What have they done it for? Why won't they let us live in Abkhazia?...

3. Protesting that the introduction of teaching in Georgian is unsuitable and, in connection with this, forbidding children to attend schools.

A group of leaders from the Gudauta region; Gerasim GUNBA, Head of the Department of Commerce, Firat AKHUBA, People's Judge, and Gerasim TARBA, Head of the RAIFO [Regional Department of Financial Security], held a conversation amongst themselves outside in Gudauta about Party and government measures, in the presence of our agent "Svet" [Light] in which AKHUBA said;

....This introduction of teaching in Georgian is absurd. This method can in no way be justified. After all, to teach in an incomprehensible language is an anti-educational approach. This will only go as an assist on children...

TARKIL, Procurator's Assistant of Gudauta region, said in one of the conversations:
....There is enormous dissatisfaction in the villages with the introduction of teaching in Georgian...

Tina GERILA, teacher at Lykhny middle school, said in conversation on the theme of the introduction of the Georgian language:
....There is a lot of discontent over this question as the population doesn't understand why it's happening...

David LAKOBA, born in 1894, non-Party member, who lives in Gudauta and is the cousin of Nestor Lakoba, enemy of the people, declared, expressing severe discontent with the introduction of teaching in the Georgian language:
....The Abkhazian language is taught only as a subject now, and this is not satisfactory for us... Abkhazian teachers are now being thrown out of schools and left to the whim of fate...

Dzhir AVIDZBA, member of the Il'icha kolhoz of Eshera Sel'sovet [Village soviet] said to the teacher Veneta GVALIA:
....I'll show you how they shake children by the ear for not mastering the Georgian language. I don't let my children go to school anymore, it's better for them to sit at home...

Roman Domant'evich GUNBA, Director of Dzhirkha middle school No.1, in Gudauta region, deliberately delayed the purchase of books from "Sakhegani" [State publishing house] for Georgian classes, thereby disrupting the work of the school.

According to our source "Sukhumski", almost all school directors in the Ochamchira region are not purchasing various teaching materials in Georgian from the department Gosizdat [State publishing organisation]. These materials have accumulated to the value of 150,000 rubles while at the same time school funds are left unused. For example, in Merkula middle school there are 2,000 rubles in excess, in Mokva middle school, 2,000 and so on.

Instances have been noted of parents not allowing their children to attend school due to the teaching being held in Georgian. For example:

Khukhuna Zasovich ZARANIDIA, a collective farm worker from Merkula village in the
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Ochamchira region, would not let his two sons go to school, and in answer to the Secretary of the Sel'sovet's question as to why not, he said:
....What will they gain from learning Georgian. I'd rather my children worked in the cornfields...

The collective farm worker Keskin ADLEBA, from Merkula village in the Ochamchira region, won't let his two sons attend school. He sent one of them to work in the tea factory, and one of them to work as a shepherd, saying there was no point in teaching them Georgian.

Andrei Tigovich SHONIA, who doesn't allow one of his sons to go to school, said:
....What is this learning of Georgian for? What use is it? I mean I can't send them off to work in Tbilisi. It's better if he works at home with me...

Similar behaviour has also been noted by our source "Sukhumski" on the part of parents living in Mokva settlement in the Ochamchira region.

4. Encouraging people to leave Abkhazia.

Nikolai Erastovich GERILA, former Deputy People's Commissar for Education, expressed his discontent at having been dismissed, saying in conversation with our source "Sukhumski":

....I wanted to leave for Moscow, but it's hard to find a flat there. I'd be better off waiting, trading for a while to earn some money, and then I'll leave for Leningrad and find work there. Especially as my wife comes from Leningrad...

According to our source "Puleme", Aleksandr KHASHBA asked Aleksei GERILA on 27 November 1945, "Where have you put down anchor?". In reply to the latter's answer that he had settled in Krasnodar, KHASHBA said:

....Now you must settle down, create a base for yourself there, and when things here become tough for us, we'll join you at your place...

The manager of the Savings Bank of the Abkhazian ASSR, Mikhail Kharitonovich GONDZHUA, declared in conversation with our agent "Svet":

....They were wrong to dismiss the GERILA brothers. One of them was in the People's Commissariat for Education, the other from the Tekhnikum. But then the one whom they dismissed from the post of Director of the Tekhnikum is already working as Head of the Raiono [Regional Department of People's Education] in Krasnodar region, and the other is planning to move to Moscow. I would also have left long ago, if it weren't for my family...

Georgii Zakharovich SHAKIRBAI, formerly a researcher at ABNII [Abkhazian Research Institute], said, in conversation with our source "Apsny";

....The wheel of life keeps turning, and nowadays the Georgian language and Georgian culture are held in esteem here. They've wiped Abkhazia, past and present, off the face of the earth... That's why I decided to leave academic work and stopped studying the Abkhazian language... I'll improve my material situation a little and then leave for Leningrad...

Mikhail Aleksandrovich LAKERBAI, the dramatist, in conversation with our agent "Apsny" declared;

....The developing situation is telling me to leave Abkhazia soon. I'm going to try to make it to Moscow, I'll advise you to go too...

M. A. LAKERBAI did indeed leave for Moscow on 1 December for one month, but he still has not returned.

Grigori ZVANBALA, former Director of Lykhny middle school in the Gudauta region, began intensive preparations to leave after the introduction of the Georgian language in the school. Indeed, at the end of 1945 he left the region for Russia.

Former Director of the Abkhazian Teacher-training College, Aleksei Nestorovich GERLIA, said, in conversation with our source "Petrovich";

....There's no place left for me in Abkhazia. I dream of somehow getting out of here soon... In fact, A. N. GERLIA did leave and found work in Krasnodar region.

In conversation with our source "Apsny", the leader of the Abkhazian choir, Ivan Aleksandrovich LAKERBALA, stated;

....Over the last few years, Abkhazia has turned into Mingrelia. Zugdidi and Gali have flooded Sukhumi, and it is hard to live here. If the Party Obkom [Regional Committee] would release me from my work I would leave immediately...

In one of several conversations about changing the language of office correspondence into Georgian, the People's Commissar of Justice, Tenur KETISBA, in conversation with our source "Lykhny", said;

....It's difficult to do. We need cadres. A lot of preparatory work will be necessary. I, of course, won't then be able to work, I'll have to take my leave. I'll go to Moscow, where there are people who know me and will help me with finding work...

5. Provoking and mocking workers coming from Georgian regions.

On January 13 of this year, our source "Svet" was in Gudauta on business. At 11.00 a.m. he met with a group of Abkhazian workers' leaders from the region, outside, by the restaurant opposite the "Sotuztrans" lorry park. They were namely; TARBA, Head of Raifo; ABUKHBA, People's Judge; MIKADZE, Director of Industrial Enterprises; and GUNBA, Head of the Regional Department of Commerce. Suddenly, TARBA burst out laughing and, nudging ABUKHBA who was standing next to him, began to speak;

....Look, look, that "katso" [Georgian term of address for "man" of ours wants to have his photograph taken. Probably they've just promoted him to Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics...]

Indeed, one well-built man was knocking on the photographer's door. In answer to our source's question as to who this man was, TARBA answered ironically;

....He's one of those who's been mobilised here, works as Chairman of Gudauta Gorsovet [Town soviet].

ABUKHBA said;

....They'd be better off using him as a shepherd, not as Chairman of the Gorsovet...

TARBA continued;

....They've sent all the Georgian thickies here. It's all "katso" and "katso", Gudauta's full of them...

GUNBA said;

....Before, these Georgians could gain admission to our restaurants as barnen and waiters, and now they're driving us out and want to be in charge of us...

To this ABUKHBA replied;

....That's all very well, but we from Gudauta have suffered in one way. Before, these Georgians and Mingrelians came here to pick grapes, and now who's going to do the grapepicking? That's why no one's harvested the grapes this year...

TARKIL, assistant to the Procurator of Gudauta region, in a conversation with our source about Georgians newly arrived in Gudauta, said;

....They've packed all the hairdressers and shoemakers off to us...

Aleksandr Lavrent'evich KHASHBA, Narkomsobes [People's Commissar of Social Security], said ironically,

...I already learnt to speak Mingrelian. I wish they'd just clear off with this language of straight away added, in Abkhazian; ... *Khazku shruzei dzhina?*... (translated into Mingrelian reads; ... *mus moekhvadi dzhina?*...) [Should read 'Hazykwshwazei dzhina?'... which translates as: 'What times have we fallen on?...']

This same KHASHBA said about comrade KARCHAVA, the Second Secretary of the Abkhazobkom [Abkhazian Regional Committee] of KP/b of Georgia; ... *This man is not Secretary of the Obkom, but Chairman of slander. He's only ever involved in slanderous 'activities'. He just phoned me and checked where I was yesterday evening (21/1/46), and why I was not present at the memorial session. As though it's such a big deal that I could not attend the session...*

Similar instances of anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary sentiment have been recorded also on the part of other people.

These sentiments are typically expressed by the aforementioned people among themselves, at every convenient opportunity; at work, in town, in the villages, and in other places. In this way, they provoke misunderstanding among the Abkhazian population as to the aims and benefits of the measures carried out by the Party and Government, as a result of which a sizeable proportion of the Abkhazian population has a negative opinion of the said measures.

In spite of the fact that those who fall into the above indicated categories have been monitored by loyal and capable agents, we do not have at our disposal information as to the presence of an organised counter-revolutionary organisation. We are assured by our agents that such an organisation does not exist.

We are conducting a programme of intensive agent observation of the actions of the above mentioned names.

The First Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom [Regional Committee] of the KP/b of Georgia, comrade MGELADZE, has been informed of the substance of the enclosed material. He is responsible for the intensification of mass agitation and politically instructive work among the Abkhazian population, with the aim of confronting and countering anti-Soviet work carried out by discontented persons of a counter-revolutionary nationalist disposition

Reporting the above, I await your instructions.

People's Commissar for State Security of the Abkhazian ASSR
General Major

I. GAGUA [signature]

24 January 1946
No. 2/1 - 178
Sukhumi

1950 198

DOCUMENTS FROM THE KGB

TOP SECRET

REPORT

of agent observed in of anti-Soviet, bourgeois-nationalist elements of Abkhazian nationality.

In the 1941 school year, teaching in the Georgian language was introduced in Abkhazian schools. At the same time the soviet and economic apparatuses have been reinforced by cadres sent from other regions of Georgia.

Several Abkhazians of anti-Soviet chauvinist disposition began to express their discontent with these Party and government measures, and on several occasions they spread provocative rumours and held anti-Soviet conversations.

According to our special agents the a/s element among Abkhazians was particularly active in the Gudauta region, the town of Sukhumi, and in parts of the Ochamchira region.

Towards the end of 1945 and in the first half of 1946 they were recorded as being particularly active. Therefore, highly qualified agents were assigned to those most active in expressing anti-Soviet sentiment, and the monitoring of nationalist elements was stepped up.

As a result of these measures, more than fifty people were determined to have held various provocative a/s conversations directed towards sabotaging Party and government measures by provoking discontent among the Abkhazian population. They were placed under the intensive observation of agents.

Among the most active were the following:

1. Nikolai Erastovich GERILA - former Deputy Narkompros [People's Commissar for Education] of the Abkhazian ASSR.
2. Aleksei Nesterovich GERILA - former Director of the Abkhazian Teacher-training College Sukhumi.
3. Aleksandr Lavrent'evich KHASHBA - former Narkomsobes [People's Commissar for Social Security] of the Abkhazian ASSR.
4. Mikhail Aleksandrovich LAKERBALA - Abkhazian writer.

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5. Aziz Reshitovich AGRBA - former Director of Abkhazian drama.
6. Dmitrii Iosifovich GULLIA - Abkhazian writer.
7. Georgii Dmitrievich GULLIA - former Head of the Arts Administration, Abkhazian ASSR.

8. Grigori Almaskhanovich ZVAMBALA - former Director of a middle school.
9. Kirill Urusovich GRIGOLIA - former Menshevik officer.
10. Aleksandra Konstantinovna LAKOBA - niece of Nestor Lakoba, enemy of the people, and wife of the repressed Trotskyist Grigori ADZHBA.
11. Nikolai Mustafovich ANKVAB - teacher.
12. Shamil' Shvintovich CHITANAVA - former Director of 'Souzpechat' [State publishing organisation].

13. Grigori Zakharovich SHAKIRBALA - former researcher at ABNII [Abkhazian Research Institute].

14. Mikhail Kharitonovich GONDZHUA - former Head of the Board of Savings Banks, Abkhazian ASSR.

15. Mikhail KHINTBA - former Head of the Bureau for Ration Distribution, Abkhazia. Expelled from the VKP/b for k/r activities.

16. Vasilii Nikolaevich MAAN (aka MARGANIYA) - writer.

17. Irodion [sic] LOLUA - Procurator for Gudauta region.

18. Gerasim Mammedovich GUMBA - Head of Gudauta Raitorgotdel [Regional Department of Commerce].

19. Ivan Iosifovich GULLIA - Head of the Training-Production Complex of the Ministry of Social Security.

20. Ferat Aslanovich ABUKHBA - People's Judge, Gudauta region.

21. Maksim Petrovich KURMAZILA - former Director of the Gudauta Raibvinprom [Regional Abkhazian Wine Industry].

22. Ivan Pavlovich ACHBA - advocate.

23. Gerasim Osmanovich TARBA - Head of the Gudauta RailFO [Regional Committee for Financial Security].

24. Roshan Doment'evich GUMBA - Director of Dzhirkha middle school.

25. Aleksei Chantovich CHICHBA - former Head Organiser of the Gudauta Regional Party Committee.

26. Andrei TARBA - Head of the UNKHU [I was unable to identify this. Perhaps the Board of Management of People's Agriculture?], Gudauta region

.....and others.

Comrade MGELADZE, Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom of KP/b Georgia, and the MGB [Ministry of State Security] of the GSSR [Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic] have been informed of provocative and anti-Soviet conversations held by the above

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TOP SECRET

REPORTabout the counter-revolutionary nationalist movement in Abkhazia

Semen Petrovich BASARILIA was born in 1884 in the village of Kvitali [Kv'tol], in the Ochamchira region, Abkhazian ASSR. He completed higher education and is a teacher by profession. (He was convicted in 1941). In 1917 he arrived in Sukhumi from the North Caucasus, where he worked teaching villagers from the mountainous areas until the February Revolution.

Being a narrow-minded and enthusiastic Abkhazian nationalist, supporting the idea of Abkhazian State Independence in union with the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus, he began to work towards the realisation of his aims.

His first step towards this aim was the all-Abkhazian congress of laymen and clergy which he organised and in which he played a leading part. He chaired the congress, and suggested the resolutions to be taken. He raised the question of the secession of the Abkhazian clergy and church from the Georgian. He was able to achieve the passing of a resolution at the Congress on the secession of the Abkhazian church from the Georgian (see M. I. TARNAVA's pamphlet on the history of the Abkhazian church.)

Following this, BASARILIA, with the collaboration of representatives of the North Caucasian Mountain Peoples, including SHERIPOV and others, prepared and organised the first all-Abkhazian congress to deal with the question of the national and constitutional status of Abkhazia.

At this Congress, BASARILIA put forward a proposal to enter the North Caucasian Union of Mountain Peoples, which was accepted. Moreover, on BASARILIA's suggestion, a delegation was sent from Abkhazia to the Union of Caucasian Mountain Peoples to register Abkhazia as a member. The delegation consisted of BASARILIA himself, Aleksandr SHERVASHIDZE (deceased), Tatash MARSHANILIA (deceased), Semen ASHKHATSAVA (convicted 1937), Vasilii AGRBA (convicted 1937), and several Abkhazian peasants. As a result of this visit, Semen Mikhailovich ASHKHATSAVA was left as Plenipotentiary Minister of Abkhazia in the Union of North Caucasian Mountain Peoples.

On returning to Abkhazia, S. P. BASARILIA continued his work as Chairman in the Abkhazian National Soviet, with Georgii Davidovich ADZHAMOV (convicted 1937) as

mentioned people. We have no information as to the activities of these people over the last three months due to the fact that the contact with whom our agents work has been on a protracted business trip. According to agents of Gudauta RO of the MGB of the Abkhazian ASSR, it would seem those elements whom they see to be anti-Soviet have not been active lately. It is also necessary to note the positive results achieved by intensifying the propaganda work carried out by Party bodies among the population.

Moreover, several of the persons most actively involved in a/s activity have been removed from the posts they held, namely: KHASHBA - Narkomsobes [People's Commissar for Social Security]; GERILA - Deputy Narkompros [People's Education]; AGRBA - Director of Abkhazian drama; GULLIA - Head of Arts Administration; GONDZHUA - Head of the Board of Savings Banks, and others. Several of them (including Aleksei GERILA, Grigori ZVANBALA, Mikhail LAKERBALA, Aziz AGRBA), have left Abkhazia, and Vasilii MAIAN died. It seems likely that the anti-Soviet element has been affected by the afore mentioned conditions, which have led to a weakening of their active anti-Soviet behaviour. However, there are no grounds to conclude that they have become reconciled with or loyal to our aims. Moreover, several of them (Aleksandr KHASHBA, Aleksei CHICHBA, Mikhail GONDZHUA, and others), have been out of work for some time, a factor which undoubtedly has some influence on them. Thus it is essential to encourage our agents to unremitting activation of the actions and behaviour of anti-Soviet nationalist elements of the Abkhazian population.

Moreover, the backgrounds of all those on the operations register will be checked, and in the event that compromising material is found, this will be added to the basic information we already hold.

Head of the Fifth Section of the Ministry for State Security, Abkhazian ASSR

Lieutenant-Colonel

(Ublava) [signature]

7 December 1946

his Deputy, and Mikhail Ivanovich TARNAVA (convicted 1937) as Secretary. Samson Iakovlevich CHANBA (convicted 1937) and Radzhan Ivanovich KAKUBA (convicted 1941) were members.

In 1918, S. P. BASARILIA and his members of the Abkhazian National Soviet were replaced by Varlam Aleksandrovich SHERVASHIDZE, Chief Surgeon of the town hospital, who became Chairman of the Soviet, and by others who denied links with the Mountain Peoples.

On his defeat, S. P. BASARILIA visited Turkey (Constantinople) clandestinely, together with the eminent princes Aleksandr SHERVASHIDZE and Tatash MARSHANILIA. There, having agreed with representatives of the Sultan in Turkey on help and intervention in Abkhazian affairs, they were able, at the end of 1918, to arrange for military aid, and sent marines to the area of Tskhurgel, in the Ochamchira region. This mission was not successful, however, and the forces were trapped within Mokva monastery where they were defeated.

Semen Mikhailovich ASHKHATSAVA, Samson Iakovlevich CHANBA and Mikhail Ivanovich TARNAVA were actively involved with BASARILIA in this matter.

Once Soviet power was established in Abkhazia, BASARILIA was chosen for leading work in the People's Commissariat for Education. In 1923, his book *Abkhazia: from a geographical, economic and ethnographic perspective*. This book, particularly where it dealt with history, and the national question, was BASARILIA's program concerning the national issue in Abkhazia. A hateful enemy of Georgia, he tried to be on good terms with everybody except Georgians.

In this position, S. P. BASARILIA began to indoctrinate young Abkhazian students at the Middle School. He was in direct contact with them as Director of the Abkhazian Middle School.

As a result, he was able, with the aid of Vladimir MARGANILIA, formerly a researcher at ABNII (convicted 1941) to attract many young people to his cause. We can see evidence of this in the latter's appeal to "Worthy Sons of Abkhazia", written in 1929 and illegally distributed to many young Abkhazians, in which MARGANILIA slanders the Georgian government and calls upon school children to organise illegal organisations, to be run according to BASARILIA's book, making him out to be the ideologist behind this movement.

The following, under the influence of S. P. BASARILIA, and following the instructions of Aleksei AGRBA, the former Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom [Regional Committee] KP/b/ Georgia, today a repressed enemy of the people, wrote in 1937, in their reports to the Regional Committee, about the harmfulness of transferring to a new Abkhazian alphabet.

Zakharii Sulemanovich AGRBA	convicted 1937
Viktor KUKBA	convicted 1937
Zosim Krugovich TARKIL	
Platon Semenovitch CHKADUA	Director of Eshera sovkhov (state farm)
Mushni Lavrentevich KHASHIBA	Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Abkhazian ASSR

Arsentii Konstantinovich KHASHIBA (convicted 1937), was at that time the Director of LAKAN' [now ABNII], supervising researchers including Grigorii DZIDZARILIA, now an employee of ABNII, and Konstantin SHAKRYL, also at present working at ABNII, and others. He worked actively to try to prove false kinship links between Abkhazians and the Mountain Peoples and to estrange Abkhazia from Georgia.

As shown above, S. P. BASARILIA, and his followers S. M. ASHKHATSAVA, M. I. TARNAVA, and S. Ia. CHANBA published literature of a k/r nationalist-chauvinist nature, encouraging Abkhazians to struggle for secession from Georgia leading to reunification with the North Caucasian Mountain Peoples or to union with Turkey.

For example:

In 1925, S. M. ASHKHATSAVA issued a pamphlet on "The paths of development of Abkhazian History". The then People's Commissar for Education, Andrei Maksimovich CHOCHUA, now Director of ABNII, sanctioned the publication of this brochure. Moreover, it was published by the People's Commissariat for Education of Abkhazia.

S. P. BASARILIA published a booklet *Abkhazia: from a geographical, economic and ethnographic perspective* which was used until 1925 by teaching staff as material for Abkhazian schoolchildren.

M. I. TARNAVA wrote a pamphlet in 1928 "On the economics of tobacco and tobacco cooperatives in Abkhazia" which was not published but had an obviously anti-Soviet slant.

At that time Mikhail Konstantinovich DELBA was Head of Glavlit, Abkhazia, and chief editor of IAKAN'. He did not hinder the publication of these books, moreover, we have evidence to support the fact that he approved of their k/r slant.

As stated above, Arsenii KHASHBA was Director of IAKAN', now ABNII. Here, S. M. ASHKHATSAVA, Vladimir MARGANITA, Samson CHANBA, Zakharii AGRBA, Grigori DZIDZARILA, Konstantin SHAKRYL, Viktor KUKBA and others grouped together as "academic" researchers. This institute, which was nominally researching cultural issues, interpreted them in the light of bourgeois nationalism.

As regards the planning of subjects at this institute, there was no subject on the history of Georgian culture, and not a single topic which would look at the relationship between Georgian language and the Ubykh and Circassian languages" (led by A. KHASHBA), and "Turkish elements in the Abkhaz language" (led by Georgii Zakharovich SHAKIRBA, resident of Sukhumi, at present unemployed), were included in the Institute's programme.

Those working in the Institute were of the opinion that the Bzyb (Gudauta) dialect was the purest dialect of the Abkhaz language. The Kodor (Ochanchira) dialect was supposedly spoiled by the abundance of Mingrelian words in its vocabulary. (See K. SHAKRYL).

The Georgian literature received by the Institute in the form of an exchange (without charge) was not lying about in the shed, while the Institute's Library contained no books in Georgian. Members of the Institute have avoided making working trips to Tbilisi. The Institute had no close links with Tbilisi academic circles. On the other hand, S. V. KUKBA went on a working visit to Krasnodar in 1936 (to the Circassians). 35. In this same Institute, S. P. BASARILA worked in 1933 as Head of the History Department.

In 1937, A. KHASHBA and his workers at the Institute had a distinctly negative reaction to the transition to a Georgian script [for the Abkhazian language]. He was a

member of the so-called "Abkhazian Committee for the New Latinised Script" which was headed first by N. LAKOBA, and later by ZANTARILA, the former People's Commissar for Education who has now been repressed. Arsenii KHASHBA and his associates from the Institute carried out endless tests towards the "perfection" of the Latin script, and would always defend it zealously.

In May 1937, when the decision was taken at a Party Conference to transfer to using a Georgian script, this was [the rest of this sentence is illegible]. A. KHASHBA and V. KUKBA said that "It's not easy to make such a transfer; this is going to be a drawn out affair", and indeed it did drag on. Dimitrii Iosifovich GULILA (state poet of Abkhazia), Semen ASHKHATSAVA, Andrei Maksimovich CHOCHUA, and N. PATEIPA (convicted in 1941) were involved in this. They would often go to see Arsenii KHASHBA at the Institute, together with Mushni KHASHBA, and confer with them in a small group about this matter.

As a result two proposals had emerged by November 1937. Semen ASHKHATSAVA's draft script, with its full-stops and commas, proved to be generally unintelligible. Arsenii KHASHBA's draft script made separate characters very similar to one another so that it was impossible to distinguish between them. His script contained characters not present in the Georgian script.

This was done to demonstrate that the transfer to the Georgian script was not feasible. This information is also borne out by a statement sent by Mushni KHASHBA, Zakharii AGRBA, Platon CHKADUA, Viktor KUKBA, and Zosim TARKIL to Aleksei AGRBA, then Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom [Regional Committee] of the KP/b of Georgia, arguing that the transfer to the new script would be impossible.

Nestor LAKOBA, an ardent k/r nationalist, was aware of all this and was one of the "ideologists" of the counter-revolutionary nationalist movement in Abkhazia. When he was still alive, and Aleksei AGRBA was appointed Secretary of the Abkhazian Obkom of the KP/b of Georgia, he [Agrba] began, independently [of Lakoba], to surround himself with separate k/r nationalists, although he was of the same k/r nationalist disposition [as Lakoba]. After N. LAKOBA's death and [Agrba's] appointment as Chair of the TsIK [Central Executive Committee] of Abkhazia, he founded a k/r nationalist organisation which was liquidated in 1937.

After the downfall of this k/r organisation and the arrests of its active members, S. P. BASARILA, Mikhail TARNAVA, and Vladimir MARGANITA, who escaped arrest, refrained from action.

From the beginning of the Second World War, inspired by the temporary defeat of the Red Army and convinced of the inevitable fall of the Soviet Government, they became more active.

Vladimir Murzakanovich MARGANIIA, under the guidance of Zosim Iosifovich KOBAKHIIA, a Trotskyist who had returned from exile on the eve of the war, and with the aid of several people dissatisfied with the Soviet system and the Communist Party, founded a k/r fascist organisation with the aim of taking power into their own hands by linking up with the Command of the German forces and availing themselves of direct military help.

S. P. BASARIIA and Mikhail Ivanovich TARNAVA were not in agreement with the Soviet system in Abkhazia, and, having expressed their discontent over immigrant kolkhoz workers and over the introduction of the Georgian script, they decided that the time had come, with the help of fascist Germany, to realise their dream. They decided to rally a suitable group from among the k/r nationalist intelligentsia so that, with the entry of German forces into Abkhazia, they could set about their nationalist task - the secession of Abkhazia from Georgia.

They got together a group from among their sympathisers, they established contact with them, they continued their illegal k/r work with the aim of overthrowing the Soviet Government and the consolidation of a fascist dictatorship in Abkhazia.

In September 1941, all 20 of them were arrested and convicted.

In Abkhazia at present there are those who are involved to some extent in this k/r nationalist movement who were not made to answer for their actions at that time for reasons unknown to us. They are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Georgii Alekseevich DZIDZARIIA | Employee of ABNII |
| 2) Konstantin Semenovich SHAKRYL | Employee of ABNII |
| 3) Andrei Maksimovich CHOCHUA | Employee of ABNII |
| 4) Dimitrii Iosifovich GULIIA | Employee of ABNII |
| 5) Mushni Lavrentevich KHASHBA | Peoples Poet of Abkhazia |
| Supreme Soviet, | |
| 6) Platon Semenovich CHKADUA | Secretary, Presidium of |
| | Abkhazian ASSR |
| 7) Zosim Khugovich TARKIL | Director, "Eshera" sovkhos |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8) Shalva INALIPA | Employee of Komzagh
[Committee for the
Procurement of Agricultural
Products] |
| 9) Konstantin Semenovich DBAR | |
| 10) Misha Makhtevich CHOLOKUA | Employee of MGB, Abkhazia |
| 11) Ermolai KUCHBERIIA | Chair, Presidium of Supreme |
| 12) Isidor Konstantinovich BAGATELIIA | Soviet, Abkhazian ASSR |
| 13) Mikhail Konstantinovich DELBA | People's Judge, Gudauta |
| 14) Konstantin Konstantinovich CHERKEZIIA | People's Judge, Gudauta |
| 15) Dimitrii Musovich KHASHIG | Director Middle School, |
| 16) Mikhail Fedorovich KVARCHELIIA | |
| Gudauta | |
| 17) Maksim Petrovich KURMAZIIA | Employee, Abvinprom, |
| 18) Razhden Petrovich KURMAZIIA | Gudauta |
| 19) Kotsia OSIJA | Former employee, Gudauta |
| 20) Kotsia AVIDZBA | RK, KP/b, Georgia |
| 21) Niko D. KOGONIIA | Inhabitant of Kvitolii |
| 22) Maritukha KAKALIIA | [?Kw'toll] village |
| 23) Mikha GVINDDZHIILIIA | |
| 24) Kiava [?] KIUT | Inhabitant of Ochamchira |
| 25) Murat ABUKHBA | region |
| | Inhabitant of Gudauta region |

A number of anti-Soviet nationalist Abkhazians have continued since 1945 to express their discontent with the adoption of several measures to improve teaching at Abkhazian schools and to settle unused tracts of land with kolkhoz workers from areas of insufficient arable land.

Several from the above list figure among those who are dissatisfied. Having escaped repression at the time for their k/r nationalist activities, they are involved not only in talking among themselves, but in drawing up slanderous statements concerning Party and Government measures.

Georgii Alekseevich DZIDZARIIA, and Konstantin Semenovich SHAKRYL, employees of

ABNII (formerly IAKAN), sent a slanderous provocative letter, together with Bagrat Vasil'evich SHINKUBA, to the TSK [Central Committee] of the VKP/b, on the alleged persecution of Abkhazians in Abkhazia.

It is of note that here the Director of ABNII, Andrei Maksimovich CHOCHUA, although he associates with them, did not, according to his statement, "see it [the letter] through".

The TSK [Central Committee] found the letter to be slanderous, and a punishment was inflicted on them by the Party.

Minister for State Security of the Abkhazian ASSR
General Major

I. GAGUA [signature]

25 September 1947

Notes

1. C. E. Bechhofer, *In Dzhik's Russia and the Caucasus, 1919-1920*, Collins, 1921, pp 60, 61.
2. For further information see S. Lakoba, *Dokumenty svidelei' svutur 1937-1953*, [Documents Bear Witness], Sukhum, 1991.
3. Leading anti-communist nationalist leader, first post-Soviet elected president, withdrawn in January 1992, and died under unclear circumstances New Year 1993-94.
4. Georgian Party Boss from April 1989 till Gamsakhurdia's election.
5. Georgian Party Boss 1972-85, Soviet Foreign Minister 1985-90, leader of Georgian since March 1992.
6. For more information see S. Lakoba, *Essays on the Political History of Abkhazia*, Sukhum, 1990; *Abkhazia: Documents Bear Witness 1937-1953*, Sukhum, 1991; *The History of Abkhazia*, Sukhum, 1992.