

Demography

Demographic Development of Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia

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ABSTRACT. Abkhazia, Georgia's historic, organic, inherent and constituent segment, has a rich and remarkable history of demographic development, which is similar to that of the rest of Georgia. Georgian chronicles and foreign historic sources abound with the information regarding the ethnogenesis and development of the population that inhabited the historical territory of Abkhazia. This fact permits us to distinctly envision Abkhazian population's number and its national composition in the course of millenniums. Since the 19th and 20th centuries, Georgian state systematically publishes official figures and statistics is more explicit in the supplied data on this matter. However, the entire Abkhazian history as well as its so-called demographic development process was crudely forged during the last decades. It serves a single goal of Russian imperial interests. It is an ineffective effort to justify the military occupation of 20% of Georgian territory by Russia. Meanwhile, real history and state of affairs indicate different events. Hopefully, genuine historical facts and definite methodical surveys are at hand to unmask the said slanderous political insinuations. Similar outrageous forgery takes place regarding the so-called demographic development of Ossetians in Georgia. The artificially created expression "South Ossetia" is used as an instrument of occupation. So-called "South Ossetia" is historically a truly Georgian territory. It represents a part of North Kartli highland historically inhabited only by Georgians. More or less compact groups of Ossetians began to settle on the said territory only in the 60-ies of the 19th century. Therefore, we can talk about the demographic development of Ossetians in Georgia but not about "South Ossetia". Historic, demographic, economic, social and political facts and events unmistakably indicate that conflicts in Abkhazia and so-called "South Ossetia" have no ethno-demographic origin and represent well-organized political and military conflicts. © 2019 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: demographic development, ethnogenesis, historical territory, population and nationality, political insinuation, occupation, political and military conflict

In recent years, especially since the occupation of 20% of Georgia's territory by Russia, there are efforts of falsification of the history of Abkhazia and "South Ossetia", including their progress and demographic development. More than once, Georgian scholars provided due reaction to them.

Naturally, these frauds are devoid of scientific arguments – mainly, they are made up and disseminated for political purposes.

However, it is of utmost importance that international scientific society and all parties concerned, to be systematically provided with well-

reasoned results of impartial scientific research based on true historic facts.

The said fakery is aimed to attest as though Abkhazia and so-called “South Ossetia” had been historically independent from Georgia and were joined to Georgia by J. Stalin only after the Soviet Union was created. Meanwhile, genuine historic facts tell quite a different story.

Abkhazia has historically always been natural and integral part of Georgia. The territory of modern Abkhazia is the ancient part of the world, which was inhabited by primeval people. Presumably, those primordial nations used to migrate to the South Caucasus in the Black Sea coastal area of West Georgia. That area of Caucasus abounds with early historic monuments. People used to settle on the territory of current Abkhazia since the ages of Ashley and Mustier. Dwellings and monuments belonging to the inhabitants of those eras were found by archaeologists in present-day regions of Gali, Ochamchire, Kelasuri, Bzyb, etc. [1]. Prior to Antique and pre-Antique ages, the territory of historic Abkhazia was a part of Colchis habitat i.e. segment of Georgian cultural environment. In the 6th century it made up a part of the Colchis Kingdom. Herodotus, Strabo and other historians wrote about only Colchians, who populated that area. Other authors echo their words, confirming the notion that all oldest communities, who lived in that area – Coraxes, Cols, Colchians, Geniokhs and others – were of Kartvelian (Georgian) origin [1,2]. As of the matter of Abkhazian ethno-genesis, deliberations on that subject could be assembled in three relevant groups: 1. Abkhazians are of Asiatic origin (from Asia Minor); 2. Abkhazians are of the North Caucasian origin; 3. Abkhazians are of Kartvelian derivation and the tribes, linked to Kartvelians. Anthropologic researches imply that initial Abkhazian tribes – Abazgs and Apsilans – are related to Kartvelian tribes. Relying on said studies, Georgian researchers as well as Russian scholars

believe that the tribes were interlinked genetically. They believed that anthropologically Abkhazians prominently resembled Georgians [2]. Relying on this and other similar reasons, we can assume that Georgian as well as Abkhazian tribes inhabiting current Abkhazian territory are aboriginal tribes. Therefore, we can assume that this period endorses to view them as an aboriginal populace [3].

In order to assess these scientific matters precisely, it is important to study toponyms, especially oeconyms (names of human settlements) and hydronyms. Let us begin from Sokhumi – Tskhumi. We see its first reference in Georgian historical sources in the 8th century A.D. Tskhumi is Svanetian name of a hornbeam tree. In antiquity, City of Dioscurias happened to exist at the place of Sokhumi. Some scholars believe that Dioscurias is a Greek translation of an indigenous name. They explain it with the help of Kartvelian tongues. For example, “dio” was derived from Zanian i.e. old Colchian where “dio” means a word “mother” and “scuri” is a “river”, “channel”. Even more important are hydronyms. It is a well-known fact that they endure time and they seldom change. 57 rivers of various size flow on Abkhazian territory between the rivers Enguri and Psou. Out of them, 37 rivers have Georgian names and 20 rivers – carry Abkhazian titles. 18 out of those 20 rivers begin at Sokhumi, from the river Gumista and end at the river Psou [3]. These facts clearly demonstrate that from olden times current Abkhazia was populated by Georgians; at the same time, at least since A.D., ancestral tribes of modern Abkhazians used to live there [4].

In our era, history of Abkhazia took an interesting turn. Thanks to the influence and support of the Byzantine Empire, in the 3rd-5th centuries A.D., the Abkhazian Princedom started to gain power. It was the period, when the Kingdom became a strong and capable state. King Vakhtang Gorgasali united Eastern and Western parts of Georgia. In the 4th century A.D., official adoption and consolidation of Christian faith was an extremely significant event.

Thanks to that situation, in the 6th-8th centuries, Georgian Christian architectural monuments were built intensively. Since that period, Byzantium started to lose its influence over Abkhazia. Besides, Georgia gained power due to the problems, which occurred in the Byzantine Empire. Apart from the invasions of Arabs, Byzantium faced some other inner problems as well. As a result, Abkhazian alignment towards Georgian state and its culture got intensified. Moreover, Leon I, the Prince of Abkhazia, refused to obey Byzantium and became a vassal of Archil, ruler of all-Georgian state (the 40-ies of the 8th century). Accordingly, Abkhazia became an essential part of Georgia's overall political, social and cultural world. When Leon II became the ruler of all-Georgia, in the 70-ies of the 8th century, he totally freed Georgia from the influence of the Byzantine Empire. Leon II was decreed the King of Abkhazia; consequently, Abkhazia's capital was moved from Anakopia to Kutaisi, Georgia's political and cultural center. The point is that Leon II achieved this deed thanks to the fervent wish and support of Georgian concurrent political elite [3]. Unfortunately, this historical fact was and is still used as a mechanism for speculations and falsifications. Some pseudo-scientists suppose that the territory of modern Abkhazia as well entire Western Georgia, including Kutaisi, historically belonged to Abkhazia. Meanwhile, Georgian scholars as well as foreign researchers have more than once credibly proved that the said realm: 1. Was a Georgian Kingdom; 2. Due to their cultural belongings, its kings were Georgians and 3. General strategic political way of those kings was to follow overall Georgian inner and foreign political course. Over the centuries, they endeavored to consolidate Georgian state [2].

On the basis of these facts, we can assume that reckoning that Kutaisi and entire Western Georgia made up Abkhazia's integral parts; it proves quite the contrary: it verifies the truth that at all times – then and now – Abkhazia was and is Georgia's integral part.

As early as in the Early Middle Ages, in Abkhazia, as in all other parts of Georgia, Georgian feudal culture was widespread with its Georgian language, Georgian writing, Georgian Christian faith and Georgian feudal relations [2]. The first quarter of the 15th century witnessed a significant event: Abazin (Abaza) tribe from the North Caucasus (to wit, from the valley of Kuban region) migrated to Abkhazia and settled there. Scientists regard them as natives of Arabistan. Modern-day Apsuas (as they call themselves) originated from those Abazas. They were of Idolator faith. Majority of scholars believe that Apsua-Abazins, who had migrated from the North Caucasus mixed with aboriginal population, that is Abkhazians and Georgians, to wit – Megrels. We should stress the concept that Abkhazian territory was always an integral part of Georgian state; from time immemorial, Georgians are aboriginal residents of Abkhazia. Current borders of Abkhazia appeared at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century. Later on, Abkhazia's boundaries were expended at the expense of the Northern part of Samegrelo (so-called Samurzakano) [3]. Most notably, the territory of Abkhazia has never been a unified and separate state body. It has always been Georgia's intact part.

Russian colonial policy in Abkhazia. In order to support their lies that Abkhazia had always been independent, the falsifiers of history appeal to the facts that Abkhazia joined Russia in 1810, while Georgia united with Russia in 1801. This statement is an obvious lie, intended to mislead ignorant people. History tells us that in 1801 Russia incorporated only Eastern Georgia – Kartli and Kakheti. Whereas, Russia conducted annexation of Western Georgia gradually, at various times; this process lasted over 30 years (Kingdom of Imereti, Principalities of Guria and Samegrelo). Russia incorporated Abkhazia in parts also at different times: Samurzakano was annexed in 1805; Abkhazia itself – in 1810 and Tsebelda – in the

30-ies of the 19th century. It seems rather significant that the appeal written by Abkhazians to the Russian Emperor in 1810, requesting him to incorporate Abkhazia into the Russian Empire, was written in the Georgian language [5].

Until 2008 Russia had always recognized Abkhazia as part of Georgia. It is noteworthy that in 1864, when the last Prince of Abkhazia Mikheil Shervashidze and his entire generation were deprived of the right of ruling Abkhazia for entire life term and annexed the Abkhazian Principality. Russia renamed the Principality into a Sokhumi military district and incorporated it into the Kutaisi Province. Following the disintegration of the Russian Empire, Abkhazia remained integrated in Georgia. In June, 1918, on the grounds of the agreement concluded between the People's Council of Abkhazia and the Leadership of Democratic Republic of Georgia, employing its autonomous rights, joined the rest of Georgia. In March, 1919 that decision was approved by the newly elected People's Council. According to the Constitution of Autonomy, received in 1920, it was also legitimized in the constitution of the Georgian Democratic Republic, which was adopted in 1921.

Abkhazia remained linked to Georgia even after the Bolshevik rule was established in Russia. Agreement, concluded between Georgia and Russia, which was signed personally by V. Lenin in May 7, 1920, recognized Abkhazia as an integral part of Georgia.

In December, 1922, Georgia, and not Abkhazia, was incorporated in the Soviet Union. Abkhazia merged with the USSR as an integral part of Georgia. Abkhazia had never transacted a separate agreement with Russia; Abkhazia did not have its representative in Russia; neither did Russia have its legate in Abkhazia. Whereas, Russia had its envoy in Georgia and Georgia used to have its representative in Russia.

Specifics of recognizing Abkhazia as a part of a Georgian state, is confirmed by the significant fact

that Russia never considered the Communist Party of Abkhazia as an independent party organization; it was always viewed as an autonomous party organization, integrated in the Georgian party with its provincial party committee, which was subordinated to the Georgian Communist Party Committee [5].

After the breakup of the USSR, Russia acknowledged Georgia's territorial integrity and Abkhazia as its integral part. Despite the fact that following the conflict in Abkhazia, its self-declared de-facto leadership conducted various elections Russian leadership did not acknowledge their legitimacy and did not recognize their results up to 2008.

Aforesaid facts verify that till August, 2008, Russia used to view Abkhazia as Georgia's integral part.

Moreover, we should not forget an additional scam, which is employed by the above mentioned falsifiers of history. They appeal to a non-existent declaration, issued by the UNO, which allows Abkhazia to follow the principle of self-determination, which should be considered as a compulsory political and legal code of synchronizing the transnational relations. This judgment seems correct, however, the counterfeiters in question are "forgetting" that the UN has declared three mandatory principles as well: 1. It must be determined to whom the territory belongs, which is proposed for self-determination. 2. Ethnic composition of the people, who live on that territory 3. Citizens of all nationalities, i.e. entire population; not only those inhabitants, who demand self-determination, should support that decision. In case any of these three principles is not realized, the UN will decide that the problem of self-determination is out of question. Meanwhile, as regards Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region, all these three principles have been grossly violated. At the same time, the International Law was violated as well. They had infringed its fourth most important principle – standard of country's territorial integrity.

The presence of Abkhazia as natural part of Georgia is also confirmed by the data of demographic development. The fact that Abkhazia has always been Georgia's integral and natural part is supported by Abkhazia's demographic progression and other germane records. Until the Late Middle Ages, Abkhazia was ethnically homogeneous. It was mainly inhabited by Georgians and Abkhazians; besides, Georgians have always noticeably exceeded Abkhazians in number. Relying on the survey, conducted in 1770, Academician V. Jaoshvili concluded that at that time, 64 thousand people lived in Abkhazia. And according to the estimation of Academician P. Gugushvili, in 1800, Abkhazia was inhabited by 30 thousand citizens; while in 1832, its population amounted to 34 thousand residents. By the order of the Russian State Council, they compiled family lists of Caucasian inhabitants (the figures were published in the format of a book in 1893) [6]. In 1886, there were 29 thousand Abkhazians, who lived on the current territory of Abkhazia and about 40 thousand Georgians resided there. Out of entire Abkhazian population 89% were Christians; while people of Muslim faith made up 6%. According to the family lists of Caucasian population compiled by the order of Russia's State Council, only three Abkhazians – one woman and two men - used to live in Sokhumi, the capital of Abkhazia. Official documents that describe Sokhumi (records are dated by 1867) inform us that the citizens of the Capital consisted of indigenous Megrels (i.e. Georgians) – 450, Greeks – 217, Armenians – 78, Russians – 25. The records do not mention either Abkhazians or Turks [6].

Annual account compiled by Russian officials in 1902 reported that 46 400 Abkhazians and 51 000 Georgians lived in Abkhazia. As for religion, there were 89.5% Orthodox Christians, 7% Muslims and Gregorian Christians – 3.1% [3, 6].

During the existence of the Soviet Union, Georgian population used to outnumber other nationalities living in Abkhazia. As per the

statistics of the first overall survey, conducted by the Soviet Union in 1926, 201 thousand people lived in Abkhazia; among them – 67 494 Georgians (33.6%), 55 918 Abkhazians (27.8%), 12.5% Armenians, 6% Russians and 20.4% other nationalities [6].

According to the last overall survey organized by the Soviet Union in 1989, all-in-all, 525 thousand people lived in Abkhazia; among them: 240 thousand Georgians (45.7%), 93 thousand Abkhazians (17.8%), 77 thousand Armenians (14.6%), 75 000 Russians (14.2%) and 40 thousand other nationalities (7.7%) [7].

As regards the tempo of population growth throughout the entire 20th century, especially in the last 30–40 years, the number of Georgians and Abkhazians used to grow evenly in Abkhazia. Compared to the growth of the number of other nationalities, it looks this way: in the 20th century, number of Georgians increased 2.9 times, number of Armenians – 2.9 times, Russians – 7.8 times. Abkhazians had better natural movement indices. In 1989, overall birth rate in Abkhazia was 13.7 per thousand; among them Abkhazians had 16.2 per thousand and Georgians had 14.7 per thousand. At the same time, Abkhazians had considerably low death rate, which in the long run resulted in twice greater natural population growth than Georgians had [3,6].

Accusations that Stalin and Beria deliberately changed demographic picture in Abkhazia by means of forcibly resettling Georgians from other regions of Georgia to Abkhazia does not hold water. For example, during the entire 20th century, population of Abkhazian cities and towns used to increase not at the account of Georgians, who had resettled from other regions of Georgia but due to the people, who had arrived from the other Republics of the USSR. For instance, among the migrants, who had arrived to settle in Ochamchire region during the last decades, Georgians amounted only to 20%, while 80% had moved from Russia; namely from Krasnoyarsk, Kemerovo, Smolensk, Amur and other regions [3].

Did the conflict have an ethno-demographic basis in Abkhazia? All above said statistic figures and demographic exponents were compiled and published in the 19th and 20th centuries not by Georgian scholars but by Russian state officials and statisticians. Therefore, Georgian researchers cannot be blamed for their falsification and imprecision; hence, the demographic analysis, offered by our part, allows us to uphold an important conclusion: conflict in Abkhazia had no ethno-demographic origin. It was not an ethnic divergence but a well-organized and purposeful political-military conflict. All kinds of cynical falsifications of Georgian history serve the purpose of disguising and “justifying” political essence of the said conflict.

So-called „South Ossetia“ territory has historically always been Georgian. Analogous falsehood regarding the demographic development of Ossetians in Georgia is aimed at the similar goal. Efforts to implement terms “North Ossetia” and “South Ossetia” serve Russia’s vested imperial interests. Russia wants to substantiate that holistic Ossetia has been unnaturally split into two parts; Russian cock-and-bull story recounts that there is just one complete Ossetia, whose one segment lies in the northern part of the Caucasus Range and the other part – in the southern division of its range. Allegedly, that is why, it would be fair to unify the divided country and its people, which have been split by somebody (supposedly, Georgian state, Stalin, etc.). Actually, the truth is completely different; historical reality has nothing in common with such political conjectures. As a matter of fact, there have never existed two Ossetias; it is a universally acknowledged fact that Ossetians’ native land is situated in the Northern Caucasus, on the territory of today’s “North Ossetia”. As for so-called “South Ossetia”, ever since the time immemorial, the territory of the Southern Caucasus has belonged and belongs to the Georgian nation. Georgians always have lived there [3, 6]. These two

territories and the people, who live there, are divided by a natural watershed – the Caucasus Range. According to the maps, drawn up at various times by Georgian as well as foreign scholars, Ossetia is shown only on the northern Range of the Caucasus. This circumstance is confirmed by the works of Ossetian scholars as well (B. Fliev, O. Tedeeva, Z. Gagloiti, P. Doguzov, etc.). In January, 1992, Ossetian scholar V. Abaev published an article, in which he wrote that the Caucasus Range was a natural boundary between Georgia and Ossetia and all attempts of annihilating this border, will initiate the state of permanent conflict between Georgians and Ossetians... “First of all, we must end talks about South Ossetia’s separation from Georgia. Those, who back peace between Ossetians and Georgians, should reject once and for all the idea of bonding South Ossetia with North Ossetia. The people who support peace between Georgia and Russia should also forget the above said idea. This is an inevitable reality”. Consequently, this discourse confirms the fact that there never existed so-called “South Ossetia”. The territory in question always belonged to Georgia and hence, we should forbid all talks about Ossetia and its history in Georgia. We can only discuss the life of Ossetians and the history of their development in Georgia [8].

Historical chronicles have recordings of Ossetians’ first arrival in Georgia. They arrived in Georgia after they were severely thrashed by Mongols and Tamerlane on the valleys of the Northern Caucasus. After the defeat, the Ossetians were forced to seek refuge in the gorges of the Central Caucasus. At that time, the arriving groups were scanty and their stay in the highland region of Kartli was temporary [3]. Ossetian settlements in Kartli started to appear only in the middle of the 17th century. This process is recorded in Georgian and foreign historic archives; the chronicles keep various information, language fluctuations, Ossetian folklore, architectural monuments, toponyms, epigraphs and so on. In the 18th century,

from the canyon mouths, small groups of Ossetians begin to move to the flatlands of Kartli region. As the well-known Brockhaus and Efron encyclopedic dictionary informs, in 1860-ies Ossetians began to move from their former fatherland in North Ossetia to Georgia en masse; according to the encyclopedia, 46 802 Ossetians inhabited the North Caucasus in 1860 while 19 324 Ossetians lived in Georgia, namely in the highlands of Kartli region, i.e. 2.5 times more Ossetians resided in the North Caucasus than in Georgia. According to the data of 1833, 35 750 Ossetians lived in entire Russia and 14 thousand Ossetians resided in Georgia (Earlier, Russia used to house 25 thousand Ossetians).

It is noteworthy that according to the figures supplied by the Caucasian Statistics Commission, 58 926 Ossetians lived in the North Caucasus in 1880 and 51 988 Ossetians – in Georgia. Thereby, during 20 years, number of Ossetians in the North Caucasus increased by 12 thousand, that is – by 1.2 times and in Georgia it grew by 33 thousand, i.e. by 2.7 times. Naturally, such noticeable growth of the number of Ossetian population in Georgia could happen only mechanically, that is to say – as a result of migration [6].

Intensive resettlement of Ossetians continued throughout the entire 20th century. In 1926, number of Ossetians in Georgia amounted to 113 thousand; out of them 60 thousand people lived in the territory of former “South Ossetia”; 53 thousand – elsewhere. In 1989, number of Ossetians in Georgia reached 164 thousand; out of them – 64 thousand lived in the former province, while 100 thousand people inhabited other towns and districts. As we can see, in 1926-1989, number of population in the autonomous district increased only by 4, 8 thousand, i.e. by 8%; while in the rest of Georgia it grew by 47 thousand; that is to say by 87%. According to the survey of 1770, 700 families used to live in Tskhinvali. There were Georgians, Jews and Armenians among them. As per the data of that time, no other national, including Ossetians, had ever lived there [9].

As per the survey of Tbilisi Province of 1858, only Georgians, Jews and Armenians inhabited Tskhinvali. According to the family lists of 1886, 3 832 people used to live in Tskhinvali; out of them 1135 were Georgians, 1953 were Jews and 744 - Armenians [3].

National composition of Tskhinvali population changed in the beginning of 1920s; it happened especially after 1922, i.e. after they created an Autonomous District of “South Ossetia” and Tskhinvali became its capital. In 1922, number of the city’s population amounted to 4 543; out of them 1 436 people were Georgian, 1 641 were Jews and Armenians amounted to 1 465 [3]. Only after that Ossetians moved to Tskhinvali and settled there. In 1926, 5 818 people lived in Tskhinvali; out of them 1 920 were Georgians, 1 772 were Jews and 827 were Armenians and Ossetians already amounted to 1 152. As per the survey of 1989, already 315 357 Ossetians inhabited Tskhinvali, while only 6 905 Georgians lived there [3, 8].

Where did the term „South Ossetia“ come from? As for the term “South Ossetia”, till the end of the 19th century there was no reference to that term. Along with Georgian sources foreign reports believed in the existence of one Ossetia and that it was situated in the Caucasus. In the 60-ies of the 19th century, supporters of Russian colonial policy, purposefully invented and introduced that non-existent term. Until that time, high-ranking officials of Imperial Russia such as Military Minister Chernyshyov and Vice Governor General Paskevich, referred to so-called “South Ossetia” as Northern Kartli and a couple of Ossetians living there the Ossetians of Northern Kartli [3]. Consequently, even at that time Imperial Russia used the correct and historically right term. In order to accomplish this colonial policy, Imperial Russia labeled Georgia’s Northern segment (where Ossetians used to live as compact settlements) as “Ossetia”. In 1843, they created Ossetian “Okrug” in Tbilisi Province. The mentioned “Okrug” had

been divided as Java, the Little Liakhvi and Nari (historic Dvaleti) areas. In 1859, they detached Nari area from Tbilisi Province and attached it to the newly created Ossetian Military "Okrug". Later on, formation of an "Ossetian Okrug" in Tbilisi Province, and creation of Ossetian Military "Okrug" in the North Caucasus, generated employment of especially invented names – "North Ossetia" and "South Ossetia" [3].

Official governmental structures of Russia make groundless and irresponsible statements that whole Ossetia, including "South Ossetia", voluntarily joined Russia in 1774. Naturally, that presumption looks funny because that kind of division did not exist at that time. Actually, in 1774 whole of the North Caucasian Ossetia did not accede to Russia but its part did: only Ossetian tribes of Alagir, Kurtat, Tagaur and Digor had joined Russia. Moreover, those emigrations did not concern the Ossetians, who lived in Georgia.

Was the conflict in the so-called "South Ossetia" well-grounded? Here, similarly to Abkhazian situation, we would like to give an answer to the question: Was the conflict in so-called "South Ossetia" well-grounded? Official statistics indicates that demographic records in so-called "South Ossetia" were even better than in the rest of Georgia. For example, as per the data of the survey

of 1989, overall coefficient of birth rate in the whole of Georgia and so-called "South Ossetia" was equal to 16.7 per thousand; for instance, in Tbilisi it was lower – 14.4 per thousand. Death rate in 1989 was the same in "South Ossetia" as in whole Georgia – 8.7 per thousand, while Tbilisi had poorer figures; natural growth of population in Tbilisi was worse than in so-called "South Ossetia". Apart from Tbilisi, Many Georgian regions had worse demographic development data than "South Ossetia". Generally, before the conflict ensued, Ossetians, inhabiting "South Ossetia" as well as entire Georgia, lived under better conditions [8] than the residents of any allied Republic of the USSR. This information was confirmed by the official statistic material, periodically published by Moscow. Therefore, we can conclude that neither in "South Ossetia" nor in Abkhazia, conflicts had no ethno-demographic grounds. These are not ethno-conflicts. They are premeditated and well-organized military-political conflicts. Likewise, so-called "South Ossetian" falsification of Ossetian history is used to disguise political substance of the conflict.

Georgia and Georgian people have greatest and longest history. It often was rather complicated and tragic. And we shall not forgive its purposeful and insolent offense.

დემოგრაფია

საქართველოში აფხაზებისა და ოსების დემოგრაფიული განვითარების საკითხები

ვ. ლორთქიფანიძე

აკადემიის წევრი, საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა ეროვნული აკადემია, ივანე ჯავახიშვილის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

საქართველოს ისტორიულ, ორგანულ და განუყოფელ შემადგენელ ნაწილს, აფხაზეთს, დემოგრაფიული განვითარების ისტორია ისეთივე მდიდარი და საინტერესო აქვს, როგორც დანარჩენ საქართველოს. ისტორიული აფხაზეთის ტერიტორიაზე მოსახლეობის ეთნოგენეზისა და განვითარების შესახებ ცნობები უხვად მოიპოვება როგორც ქართულ, ასევე მრავალ უცხოურ წყაროებში. ეს საშუალებას იძლევა ნათელი წარმოდგენა გვქონდეს, თუ როგორი იყო ათასწლეულების განმავლობაში აფხაზეთის მოსახლეობის რაოდენობა და ეროვნული შემადგენლობა. განსაკუთრებით ზუსტი სტატისტიკური მონაცემები მოიპოვება XIX და XX საუკუნეებში, მას შემდეგ, რაც შედარებით სისტემატურად იწყება ოფიციალური სტატისტიკური მონაცემების გამოქვეყნება. მიუხედავად ამისა, განსაკუთრებით ბოლო ათწლეულებში, გახშირდა აფხაზეთის, როგორც მთლიანად ისტორიის, ასევე მისი დემოგრაფიული განვითარების ისტორიის უხეშად გაყალბების მცდელობები. ეს ემსახურება ერთ მკაფიოდ გამოკვეთილ რუსეთის იმპერიულ პოლიტიკურ მიზნებს. ასევე, ეს არის უსუსური მცდელობა გაამართლონ საქართველოს ტერიტორიის 20%-ის ოკუპაცია. რეალური ისტორია და ვითარება კი სულ სხვაა. ისტორიული ფაქტები და კონკრეტული სტატისტიკური მასალა ადვილად ხდის ფარდას პოლიტიკურ ინსინუაციებს. ასეთივე უხეში გაყალბება ხდება საქართველოში ოსების დემოგრაფიულ განვითარებასთან დაკავშირებით. სრულიად უსაფუძვლოდ, ხელოვნურად გამოგონილი ტერმინი „სამხრეთი ოსეთი“ გამოყენებულია, როგორც ოკუპაციის პროცესის ინსტრუმენტი. ყოფილი ე. წ. „სამხრეთი ოსეთის“ ტერიტორია ისტორიულად ყოველთვის ქართული ტერიტორია იყო და არის. ის ჩრდილოეთ ქართლის მთიანეთს წარმოადგენს და ისტორიულად იქ მხოლოდ ქართველები სახლობდნენ. იქ ოსების მეტ-ნაკლებად კომპაქტურად ჩამოსახლება მხოლოდ XIX საუკუნის 60-იანი წლებიდან იწყება. ამდენად, საუბარი შეიძლება მხოლოდ საქართველოში ოსების დემოგრაფიულ განვითარებაზე და არავითარ შემთხვევაში „სამხრეთ ოსეთზე“. ისტორიული, დემოგრაფიული, ეკონომიკური, სოციალური და პოლიტიკური ფაქტები და მოვლენები ნათლად აჩვენებს, რომ კონფლიქტს აფხაზეთსა და ე. წ. „სამხრეთ ოსეთში“, არავითარი ეთნოდემოგრაფიული საფუძველი არ გააჩნია და ეს კარგად ორგანიზებული პოლიტიკური და სამხედრო კონფლიქტებია.

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