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PLACE NAME CHANGES IN ABKHAZIA AND ACHARA (ADJARIA) DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

Tribes and countries seeking for the seaside territory possessions often expressed their military ambitions for Abkhazia and Achara, the important provinces of Georgia on the Black Sea coast. The present paper discusses new period, 20th century, and changes of place names in the region as a means of Russian imperialistic policy carried in the region.

According to the present available data (*'Administrative and Territorial Division of Georgia'* during the years 1949, 1961, 1966, 1977, and 1978) from the year 1925 to 1987 in the two region of Georgia settled areas: villages, small towns, towns had undergone 204 changes. Among them the shift of place names in Abkhazia was 183 in Achara 21. This statistics gives the vivid picture that Abkhazia was the principal target of Russia's language policy where the existence of multitude of ethnic and lingual groups could be used for the arousal of conflicts on language grounds.

The change of place names marked with various intensities in different periods. Most noteworthy seem the years 1948, 1952 and 1954. For instance, in 1948 in both regions 96 place names changed; 39 in 1952; 34 in 1955. In September 3, 1948 94 names changed in both regions, among them 75 in Abkhazia, and 19 in Adjara.

Compared to the official data Z.Tskhovrebova in her brochure "Toponimya Yuzhnoy Ossetii v pismenikh istochnikakh"(in Russian), published in 1979 refers to the data that in the Ossetia Autonomous Region out of the 558 settlement place names 352, i.e. 63%, had been changed or corrected to some degrees.

Such massive shift of place names took on entire territory of Georgia about which the official materials of the administrative and territorial arrangement of Georgia remains silent.