

GVANTSA GVANTSELADZE, TEIMURAZ GVANTSELADZE

MAIN ASPECTS OF TOPONYMICAL WAR IN ABKHAZIA AND TSKHINVALI PROVINCE

As a result of occupation and annexation of Georgia by Russia in 1921 current politics were copied and sometimes modified throw-out the whole territory of the empire. Toponymical wars were inseparable part of language politics of Russia; and Georgia was not an exception:

- Geographical names which represented religious beliefs and other social and political systems were banned. For example, comonyms of Georgian, Russian and Azeri religious semantics: Geo. *Mart'vili, Senak'i, Monast'eri...*; Rus. *Troytskoe, Spasskoe...*; Azeri *Karakilisa*, etc. were changed into toponyms related to names of royal dynasty and aristocracy of Russia: *Alekseevka, Olginskoe, Ermolovsk, Evdokimovka...*
- Artificial toponyms were created stressed with communistic ideology, and was made up from words like *freedom, progress, proletariat, labor, dawn, 1st of May, October* or from last names and pseudonyms of persons who made important contribution into introduction of communistic ideology: Geo.: *Leninisi, Leningori, Stalinisi, Luksemburgi, Ordjonikidze, Tskhakaia, Gegetchkori, Tsulukidze...*; Armen.: *Zhdanovakan, Eliavakan, Martuni, Shaumyan...*; Abkhaz.: *Lakoba*; Osset.: *Stalinir* "Stalin – Ossetia", Azeri: *Birlik* "unity"...
- Ethnic groups different from country's titular ethnic ones are presented in those regions where toponyms of one of the languages was being abolished and replaced by another toponym or created using Russian language. Such kind of provocations often happened in Autonomous Region of South Ossetia and Autonomous Soviet Socialistic Republic of Abkhazia previously formed by communists.
- With the goal in mind to keep the tension between two ethnos, representatives of one of the ethnos groups were given the right to act by cart blanches in rotation from time to time. False feeling of freedom gave encouragement to some persons, they were not limited to create and spread undocumented pseudo-scientific viewpoints, and at the same time another side was restrained from the right to speak the truth which automatically aggravated the inter-ethnic relationships.

- Special commissions were created four times in Abkhazia (1925, 1935, 1978, 1988) with the aim to define toponyms of those areas. In 1934 Institute of the Study of Local History of the Autonomous Region of South Ossetia published the brochure on *“New names of settlements, rivers and mountains of South Ossetia”* which included the issue of fully or partly changing the 63.1% of comonyms of the region. References of Abkhaz and Ossetian scientists show that in case of all five issues it was planned long before to erase Georgian toponyms of both parties from geographical maps or to completely change their phonetics and morphology. Such kind of attempt tensed relationships between Abkhazians and Georgian people. Moreover, Russian, German and Turkish toponymical groups created between 1938-1953 during Tsar period in Abkhazia were replaced by non-historic Georgian toponyms: *Shroma* “Labor”, *Tavisuphleba* “Freedom”, *Leselidze*—surname Georgian general. *Salkhino* “place of feast”... despite of the fact that Abkhazian toponyms took some place during this latest action of changing Russian, German and Turkish geographical names and practically no homonyms of Abkhaz etymology were prohibited. Although part of Abkhaz people considered that Georgians humiliated ethnic rights of Abkhaz people.