

## GIA KHOPERIA

### RUSSIAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY AIMED AT DISRUPTION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ELGUJA TAVBERIDZE'S DOCUMENTARY NOVEL "SNOW IN JULY"

Elguja Tavberidze's novel "Snow in July" narrates the deeds of Tada (Tadeoz) Ashordia, one of the supporters of the Megrelian alphabet, and a fanatic defender of Megrelian as an independent language. Despite little scholarly value of Ashordia's selfless devotion, the Tsarism followers who were committed to educate the local population managed to use him to a certain extent.

They have followed Ashordia's idea throughout Megrelia and, though for a short while, they still managed to drive out the Georgian language from Megrelian schools. These events took place at the turn of the twentieth century. Apart from the schools, the churches were partly affected in terms of the use of the Megrelian language in religious practices.

Some theological and secular books were "translated" into Megrelian. However, Georgian public figures showed great resistance to the above-mentioned processes and the intentions of Ashordia, Yanovsky, Levitsky and Vostorgov never really succeeded. They failed to develop separatism in Megrelia.

The novel "Snow in July" is of documentary nature. It explicitly suggests how damaging the endeavours of Ashordia and his followers could be, having hostile intentions of undermining the national consciousness.