

MOBILIZATION OF THE CIRCASSIANS IN VIEW OF THE 2014 OLYMPIC GAMES

Irina BABICH

*D.Sc. (Hist.), Leading Research Fellow at the Department of the Caucasus,
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS
(Moscow, the Russian Federation)*

Introduction

When in Europe, I am often asked about my occupation at home. My answer, “I study the ethnography of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus,” baffles people; most of them do not know where to look for the Caucasus on the map, however everyone recognizes the word “Chechens,” an echo of the Chechen wars of the 1990s.

At the turn of the 2010s, the world learned about another North Caucasian ethnicity, known abroad as the Circassians; the new ethnic name

came with the decision of the IOC to organize the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, the historical home of the Adighe peoples.

Who are the Adighes or Circassians? The latter term was used by the first European travelers who reached the Caucasus several centuries ago. Ethnographers use the blanket term “Adighes” to refer to several kindred ethnic sub-groups and sub-ethnicities who speak the Adighe languages. They are the Kabardins, who live in Kabardino-Balkaria; the Circassians, who live in

Karachaevo-Cherkessia; and the Western Adighes (known in Soviet times as the Adighes from the name of their autonomous region called Adigey). The Adighes are divided into smaller ethnic groups—Shapsugs, Natukhays, Abadzekhs,

Temirgoys, Bjedugs, etc. Some of the Western Adighes live along the Black Sea coast, in the Lazarevskoe and Tuapse districts of the Krasnodar Territory, between the cities of Sochi and Tuapse.

What is Behind the Mounting Interest in the Past of the Adighes?

The Adighes have lived in the Northern Caucasus for many centuries; their history abounds in squabbles among the Adighe ethnic groups and with other Caucasian ethnicities. By the time the Russians appeared in these lands, some of the local ethnicities (Kabardins) had reached a fairly high level of statehood (radical historians write about the state of Kabarda), while others (Western Adighes) still lingered at the stage of early feudal relations and barely developed statehood.

Early in the 1990s, the academic community and public at large developed a great interest in the history of the Adighes for several reasons:

- *Perestroika freed the academic community from the fetters of the Soviet period; many facts and events in the common history of Russia and the Caucasus were reinterpreted.*

In many respects, Soviet ideological pressure limited historians, and the science of history for that matter: the colonial policy of the Russian Empire was invariably treated as a “civilizational mission.” History as a science has survived, at least partially: some of the aspects existed on the ideological fringes and were thus more or less free from ideological pressure (I have in mind the history of primitive society and feudal relations); there were those who, in defiance of ideological pressure, offered what can be called truthful history.

Early in the 1990s, revision of history reached incredible proportions; historians studying the Caucasus (the present author being no exception) joined the process to shed new light on the history of how the Northern Caucasus became part of the Russian Empire. In 2007, their book was published by Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie Publishers.¹

Many of the events in the common history of Russia and the Caucasus should be revised, yet the frenzy of revision very soon assumed the form of speculations; history became an instrument of political struggle.

- *Use of history as an instrument of political struggle.*

It seems that this spurred the research institutes of the Northern Caucasus into action: *intentionally or unintentionally*, historians allied with different political ideologies and began serving them.

In the early 1990s and during the first half of the 1990s, public movements began mushrooming in the Northern Caucasus; the numerous North Caucasian peoples felt free to express their national feelings. Rejection of Russia, which had allegedly used violence to become entrenched in the Northern Caucasus, and a negative attitude toward “non-kindred” neighbors were the two most prominent feelings. In Chechnia they assumed even sharper forms: the republic wanted independence from the Russian Federation.

¹ See: *Severny Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoy imperii*, Series “Fringes of the Russian Empire” of the Open Society Institute (in co-authorship with V.O. Bobrovnikov and others), NLO, St. Petersburg, 2007.

In the 1990s, a high wave of national movements engulfed all the other North Caucasian republics; organized according to Stalin's principle of "bringing together alien peoples," the republics burst into sharp confrontation: the Ossets could no longer live side by side with the Ingushes in Northern Ossetia; the Circassians and Abazins stood opposed to the Karachays in Karachaevo-Cherkessia; and the same happened to the Kabardins and Balkars in Kabardino-Balkaria.

In the latter case, the public movements of both peoples decided that they needed two states independent from Russia and each other. This was when historians entered the game: they were expected to produce new historical studies the national ideologists could use when building the new independent states.

Very soon the historians of Kabardino-Balkaria found themselves looking at four histories: two histories of Kabarda produced by their Kabardin and Balkarian colleagues and two histories of Balkaria presented by Balkarian and Kabardin historians. This happened in practically all the other North Caucasian republics too.

In 1991, the leaders and supporters of the Balkarian national movement adopted a Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Balkaria and national sovereignty of the Balkarian people. They formulated the Main Provisions of the Conception of National-State Restructuring and Reforms of the Political System of Kabardino-Balkaria.²

In 1992, the leaders of the Kabardinian national movement responded with a resolution On the Restoration of the Kabardinian Republic; they were convinced that "in modern history the statehood of the Kabardinian people was restored in 1921."³

This was when the first period of writing a new history of the Adighes (the 18th-early 20th centuries) began. The results of the Caucasian War were revised; it brought numerous calamities, including *mass evictions of practically all the North Caucasian peoples*, which started in the late 18th century, went on in the 19th century (especially in its second half), and continued in the first decade of the 20th century. The term "genocide" was first used to define these tragic events in Russian history by the Supreme Soviet of Kabardino-Balkaria in 1992 and the Parliament of Adigey in 1994. They referred to the facts of *mass evictions of the Adighe (Circassian) people and kindred peoples (Abazes, Abkhazes, and Ubykhs) during the Caucasian War and after it*.⁴ Soviet historical science used the term "muhajirstvo" to describe the eviction process.

The book mentioned above (*Severny Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoy imperii* [The Northern Caucasus as Part of the Russian Empire]) (of which I am one of the authors) deals with this process in a special chapter: after all, evictions were one of the key mechanisms of Russia's imperial policy in the Northern Caucasus in general and of the Caucasian War in particular.

Stages of Russia's Migration Policy in the Northern Caucasus in the 18th-Early 20th Centuries

As early as the 16th-17th centuries, the Ottoman Empire brought about the first radical changes in the form of gradual Islamization of the Adighes. The situation became even more complicated when

² See: *Materaily po deiatelnosti Natsionalnogo soveta Balkarskogo naroda. 1994-1998*, Archives of I.L. Babich.

³ *Etnopoliticheskaia situatsia v Kabardino-Balkarii. Sbornik dokumentov natsionalnykh dvizheniy*, in two volumes, Introduced, compiled, and edited by I.L. Babich, Vol. II, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS, Moscow, 1994, p. 13.

⁴ For more detail, see: *Ibid.*, Vols. I, II, 1994.

the Russian Empire appeared in the Northern Caucasus as one of the rivals of the Ottoman Turks: eviction of the Caucasian peoples to the Ottoman Empire was one of the main consequences of the Caucasian War between the two rivals.

By the 18th century, Russia had learned to look at the Northern Caucasus as a target of its geopolitical interests; it concentrated on gradually conquering its territory and subjugating the mountain dwellers. Russia's military leaders preferred the term colonization,⁵ which went on until the downfall of imperial power in Russia in October 1917. Until the early 20th century, Russia's policy remained practically the same; its mechanisms and methods, however, were readjusted.

In the course of the Caucasian War, Russia relied on the use of force: punitive expeditions in the mountain villages (auls), which amounted to physical extermination of the North Caucasian population.

Russia's migration policy acquired some of its later features in the 17th and 18th centuries when the first military fortresses appeared on the approaches to the mountainous parts of the Northern Caucasus. During the hostilities of the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, Russia mastered migration as an instrument of its struggle to gain control over the Northern Caucasus.

In the 18th-first half of the 19th century, the nature of the migration processes in the region largely depended on "political relations" based on the mountain people's voluntary agreement to join Russia or their active (or passive) opposition to this prospect. At that time, only the Ossets and Balkars agreed to join the Russian Empire.

Those peoples who accepted Russian power were less exposed to different forms of migration, while those mountain peoples who violently opposed this prospect bore the brunt of Russia's migration policy.

The late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries were periods of so-called internal migration, during which the mountain people were moved inside the Northern Caucasus.

In the first half of the 19th century, the Russian administration gradually moved the mountain people mainly from the mountains to the valleys and piedmont territories as part of the system of political and military security in the region. This approach was registered in a Special Project for Conquering and Colonizing the Mountainous Lands prepared in 1833 by General Alexey Velyaminov, commander of the troops on the Caucasian Line and in the Black Sea area.

This is clear confirmation that at that times Russia's military command regarded moving the mountain people inside the region as one of the key mechanisms in ultimately conquering the Northern Caucasus.

Resettlement of the mountain people who were taken prisoner during the war was another type of internal forced migration. According to the Rules for Handling Prisoners of War and Volunteer Mountain Dwellers elaborated in 1847 by General-Adjutant Prince Mikhail Vorontsov (in 1844-1854, Caucasian viceroy), Commander of the Separate Caucasian Corps, the mountain prisoners-of-war were moved to the Don or inland gubernias of the Russian Empire.⁶

Internal migration carried out for military purposes helped address purely civilian issues such as setting up a system of administration of the mountain people who recognized the rule of the Russian Empire.

This was when external migration processes emerged.⁷ It seems that throughout the 16th and 18th centuries, the Ottoman Turks remained an important factor in the lives of the North Caucasian mountain peoples.⁸ The Ottoman Empire (and later the Russian Empire for that matter) relied on migration throughout the centuries as one of its main foreign policy instruments.

⁵ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny i vyselene cherkosov v predely Osmanskoy imperii (20-70-e gody XIX v.)*. *Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov*, Compiled by T.Kh. Kумыkov, Nalchik, 2001, p. 206.

⁶ State Archives of the Krasnodar Territory (further GAKK), rec. gr. 389, inv.1, f. 39, sheets 50-51.

⁷ See: *Vdali ot Rodiny. Sbornik dokumentov*, Compiled by Kh.M. Dumanov, Nalchik, 1994, p. 10.

⁸ See: N.A. Sostavov, *Severny Kavkaz v kavkazskoy politike Rossii, Irana i Turtsii v XVIII v.*, Makhachkala, 1989.

We can identify *six main stages in the history of mass migration of the North Caucasian mountain people* between the 1850s and 1910s, which differed in terms of their motivation, nature, and mechanism of implementation:

- I stage—latter half of the 1850s;
- II stage—first half of the 1860s;
- III stage—latter half of the 1860s-early 1870s;
- IV stage—1870s;
- V stage—the 1880s-early 1890s;
- VI stage—latter half of the 1890s-1910s.

Russia's migration policy was slow to take shape; Russian officials back in the capital and in the Caucasus and military leaders put forward different or even opposite opinions. Around the mid-1850s, the supporters and opponents of the use of migration as a political and military instrument for subjugating the Caucasus could no longer agree on the main points. The opposition extended into the post-Caucasian War period.

As could be expected, the military leaders—Chief of Staff of the Caucasian Army A. Kartsov and Chief of Staff of the Troops of the Terek Region I. Zotov—and several civilian officials—Viceroy of the Caucasus Prince A. Baryatinsky and Head of the Kuban Region Count N. Evdokimov—supported the idea of migration. On the other side, there were military and civilian officials of less extreme opinions: military advisor at the Russian Embassy in Constantinople V. Frankini, General Field-Marshal D. Milyutin; Lieutenant General, Commander of the Right Wing G. Filipson; and Commander of the Kabarda District V. Orbeliani.

In 1860, after prolonged discussions, a Vladikavkaz meeting of the top military commanders stationed in the Caucasus adopted a plan for a more active migration policy in the Northern Caucasus submitted by Nikolai Evdokimov. It envisaged gradually moving the mountain people from the mountainous and piedmont areas to the open water-logged valleys or to the Ottoman Empire; it was planned to move Cossacks into the vacated territories, where they would protect the interests of Russia.

Nikolai Evdokimov supplied his plan with a detailed mechanism for its implementation, the so-called dual standards policy under which the Russian administrators were instructed to condemn migration of the mountain people to the Ottoman Empire and express their peaceable disposition toward them while openly and covertly promoting migration. In one of his secret instructions Nikolai Evdokimov wrote: "When allowing the mountain people to migrate you should pretend that you are doing this contrary to the wishes of the superiors and only because the mountain people asked you to do this."⁹

At the second stage (first half of the 1860s), the Russian administration encouraged migration inside the Northern Caucasus and considerably enlarged the territories earmarked for the new settlers: they stretched not only to the lowland parts of the mountain people's villages, but also to the piedmont and highland areas. This meant that internal migration was used as one of the main instruments at the second stage of conquering the Northern Caucasus.

In the 1860s, the highland and piedmont areas became a strategic object destined to play an important role in setting up a security system along the Russian borders. At this stage, the tactics of internal and external migration of the mountain communities typical of Russia's imperial colonial policy as formulated by Count Evdokimov were fully implemented.

In the first half of the 1860s, migration to the Ottoman Empire increased, the process being initiated solely by the imperial center and the local Russian administrations. This was when several

⁹ *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 103.

documents related to migration were adopted, On Resettlement of the Mountain People (1862) being one of them.

Money was the main problem; until the early 1860s financial support of migration of the mountain dwellers to the Ottoman Empire had been irregular; in 1862, however, it became clear that all stages of external migration should be funded by the state.

Russia used different methods to encourage migration to the Ottoman Empire, the main one being declaring an ultimatum. People were forced to choose among a number of resettlement alternatives; other methods included:

- (a) latent support of promoting resettlement in an Islamic state conducted throughout the 19th century by the Ottoman leaders;
- (b) promotion of these ideas by local mountain dwellers who served in the Russian army;
- (c) exploitation of the Caucasian traditions (particularly respect for the older generation). The Russian administrators expected that if they convinced the elders, other members of kindred communities would follow their example.

There is any number of archival documents revealing the mechanisms of Russia's migration policy of that period. Here are some of them: the Report of the Commission for Deportation to Turkey (15 February, 1865, Tiflis); the Report by Count Evdokimov on Military Actions in the Kuban Region between 1 July, 1863 and 1 July, 1864; the Survey of Colonization for the Year 1864; the File of the Chancellery of the Head of the Terek Region of the Secret Department on Deportation of the Autochthonous Population of the Terek Region to Turkey (1863-1865); and the File of the Chancellery of the Terek Region and Ad Hoc Commission on the Deportation of the Autochthonous Population of the Terek Region to Turkey (1865-1866).¹⁰

At the third stage (latter half of the 1860s-first half of the 1870s), Russia launched social, land, administrative, judicial, etc. reforms in the Northern Caucasus, which altered its migration policy. By that time, external migration was no longer an instrument of subjugation, since the Caucasian War had ended. On the other hand, a large group of local people had emerged who, irritated by the reforms (particularly the social and land reforms), wanted to move to the Ottoman Empire of their own free will.

During the fourth stage (the 1870s), the imperial center continued its active internal migration efforts (which had been going on unabated during the third period as well). The vacated lands were distributed among Russian peasants; external voluntary migration to the Ottoman Empire was encouraged; the idea of large-scale deportation to the East was revived.

Head of the Terek Region Count Mikhail Loris-Melikov (1863-1873) was dead set against another round of forced evictions to Turkey; he had never supported the idea of so-called voluntary migration outside the empire and believed that the related propaganda (at that time especially active in Chechnia and the Kuban Region) should be discouraged.

He personally did his best to trim it in the Terek Region, particularly in Kabarda.¹¹

He suggested that the desire to move outside the empire should be corrected in two ways:

- first, those who wanted to move to the Ottoman Empire should be moved to Russia's inland gubernias instead.¹²
- Second, those mountain people who had left together with the main wave of migration but returned in the 1870s to lure others should be deported.¹³

¹⁰ See: T.Kh. Kумыков, *Vyselenie Adygov v Turtsiyu—posledstvie Kavkazskoy voyny*, Nalchik, 1994, pp. 21, 47, 76.

¹¹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 438.

¹² See: *Ibid.*, p. 440.

¹³ See: *Tragicheskie posledstviia Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 231.

In 1876, the Russian administration summed up the discussions on the migration issue in the Draft Rules for Deportation of the Mountain People to Turkey, which permitted voluntary external migration on a limited scale. The document consisted of thirteen points according to which the Russian authorities resumed deportation of the mountain people to the Ottoman Empire under several fairly pinching conditions.¹⁴

At the fifth stage (the 1880s-early 1890s), the Russian administration concentrated on two aspects of internal migration and its organization:

- (1) mountain dwellers were moved down to the valleys; and
- (2) peasant colonization became even more active.

At this time, another wave of external migration of the North Caucasian mountain people spurred on by anti-Russian protests gained momentum. By that time Russia had acquired several new laws relating to the military service, including a law on general conscription. As subjects of the Russian Empire, the North Caucasian mountain people feared that the newly adopted laws would apply to them. From that time on, the Islamic factor came to the fore as one of the main causes of voluntary migration.

Land, one of the reasons for migration during the previous stage, remained one of the main factors stimulating the outflow of the North Caucasian mountain people to the Ottoman Empire.

During the sixth stage (latter half of the 1890s-1910s), internal migration (Cossack and especially peasant colonization) acquired even greater dimensions; mountain dwellers were still forced to move inside the region albeit on a smaller scale.

According to archival materials, the Western Adighes moved to lands unsuitable for agriculture preferred to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire. In 1863, in particular, Assistant to Head of the Natukhay District Lieutenant-Colonel D. Manyati pointed out that the Natukhays (by that time there were about 40 thousand of them) had been instructed to settle in swamp territory. He reported: "To facilitate the choice I did my best to encourage those who wanted to go to Turkey by promising certain advantages and even some money to the poorest."¹⁵

It should be said that Nikolai Evdokimov was very stern when it came to migration. In his order to the head of the Natukhay District he insisted that the mountain people be given an ultimatum; those who refused to vacate their lands and move of their free will elsewhere should immediately be sent to Turkey.¹⁶

In 1862, this ultimatum also applied to the Bjedugs, Upper Abadzekhs, Temirgoys, and Khatukays; all those who lived high in the mountains were to move down to the territories allocated to them (mainly on the left bank of the Kuban) or move to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷

A large number of the Western Adighes chose emigration to the Ottoman Empire; however, during the period of mass external migration (in 1862 and 1863), some of them preferred to remain in their homeland and, pressed by the Russian administration, moved to the poor lands allocated to them.¹⁸

Archival documents confirm that internal and external migration was actively used in the Russian Empire. T. Kумыkov, for example, relies on documents found in the Central State Archives of Georgia which reveal the nature of the deportation of the mountain people from the Kuban region to the Ottoman Empire and to the lands allocated to them in this region carried out in the early 1860s.¹⁹

¹⁴ See: *Tragicheskie posledstviia Kavkazskoy voyny...*, pp. 235-237.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

¹⁶ See: *Ibid.*, p. 205; Russian State Military-Historical Archives (further RGVIA), rec. gr. VUA, f. 6696, sheet 271.

¹⁷ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 200.

¹⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁹ See: T.Kh. Kумыkov, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

It should be said that the mountain people were actively removed from the Northern Caucasus at the second stage of mass migration. The Main Staff of the Caucasian Army was entrusted with resettling the North Caucasian mountain people; for this purpose the top officials maintained direct contacts with the Ottoman government.²⁰ At the lower level, resettlement was the task of head of the Kuban (N. Evdokimov) and Terek regions, as well as of the Kabarda and Natukhay districts (V. Orbeliani and Major-General P. Babych, respectively), who obeyed their military superiors. To organize resettlement they cooperated with the heads of the Cossack villages and the Odessa Administration of the Russian Steamship Society, as well as with the mayors of Taman and Kerch.²¹ All disagreements were referred to the Main Staff.

Let's have a look at what certain mountain people were doing to increase the number of immigrants.

Colonel F. Abdrakhmanov (a Kabardin), who in the late 1830s-1840s served in a unit of Caucasian Mountain people and later filled the post of a law-enforcement officer among several local peoples, was an active supporter of the idea of emigration to the Ottoman Empire.²²

P. Mogukorov, an Adighe, a staff officer in the Kuban Army (he rose as high as major-general), did a lot to move the mountain people from their homeland in 1861-1863.

In 1863-1864, Lieutenant-General T. Shipshev, a Kabardin, who served in the Russian army (later he was promoted to the head of the Shapsug District), actively promoted the idea of emigration to the Ottoman Empire among the Shapsugs; as a result some 60 thousand of his compatriots moved to Turkey allegedly of their own free will.²³

In 1865, Kabardin mullah Zh. Varitlov personally assisted in moving 900 Kabardins.

Local Islamic leaders Khut, Chanakhokha, Chelyagashuka, and petty official T. Kuyso promoted external migration ideas among the Bjedugs.²⁴

The Central Caucasian mountain people, likewise, did a lot to encourage external migration; this was done in particular by Shapsug mullah Iskhak and Karachay qadi M. Khubiev.

There was a fairly popular opinion among the North Caucasian mountain people (the most active supporters were Natukhay Konstank-efendi (Kushtano) and Abadzekh Karabatyrbey (Hajji Batyrbey) that mass external migration to the Ottoman Empire was a mistake because, they argued, the West would soon resume its war with Russia and the mountain people would regain their lands.²⁵

In the first half of the 1860s, Kabardins and Western Adighes moved to the Ottoman Empire: in 1860, 450 Kabardin families moved there, followed by 442 families. Nearly half of the population of Great Kabarda moved away, led by Prince P. Zhambotov.²⁶ In 1862-1863, external migration of the Western Adighes began; in 1864-1865, the movement took on mass proportions. In the same years, Ubykhs and Natukhays joined them.

In 1865, external migration of Kabardins was resumed—families of Anzorovs, Kudenetovs, and Kudaberdokovs, as well as Ossets of Little Kabarda—left the Northern Caucasus.²⁷

It should be said that the Turkic-speaking Balkars and Karachays who lived in the Northwestern and Central Caucasus refused to emigrate; according to archival sources, however about 100 Karachay families moved to Turkey.²⁸

²⁰ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 105.

²¹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²² RGVIA, rec. gr. 14257, inv. 3, f. 528, sheets 1-6.

²³ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 187.

²⁴ See: *Tragicheskie posledstviya Kavkazskoy voyny...*, pp. 204, 207-208.

²⁵ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, pp. 197, 204, 219, 229.

²⁶ See: *Ibid.*, p. 101; *Tragicheskie posledstviya Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 316.

²⁷ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, pp. 360-370.

²⁸ Central State Archives of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, rec. gr. 454, inv. 2, f. 341, sheets 10-11 rev.

The Balkars were less enthusiastic when it came to external migration; some of them, however, left their homeland. The Turkic-speaking peoples who, as distinct from the other Adighe groups, accepted Russian power were considered to be “peaceful.” The Russian administration never urged them to move; these people were actively involved in internal migration: they willingly came down from the mountains to the valley.

The Russian and Turkish statistics on external migration of the North Caucasian mountain people are unreliable and limited. According to Chairman of the Caucasian Archeographic Commission A. Berge, in 1858-1865 only 439,194 mountain people left the Northern Caucasus; these figures look too low to many researchers. A. Kasumov, in turn, quotes a figure of 900 thousand, 57.4% of which were Adighes and 15.5% Ubykhs. The correlation among the Adighes sub-ethnicities was as follows: 33.5% were Shapsugs; 9.1%, Natukhais; 5.54%, Abadzekhs; and 3.4%, Kabardins.

According to a report of the Russian Commission on External Migration of Mountain People to Turkey dated 18 February, 1865, in 1863-1864, 470,703 people from different regions of the Northern Caucasus moved to the Ottoman Empire. The same commission reported that between 1858 and 1865, 494,633 departed for Turkey from the eastern Black Sea ports; there were 169 thousand Shapsugs among them; 67 thousand Natukhais; 43 thousand Abadzekhs; 74,567 Ubykhs; 11,873 Jigets; 10,500 Bjedugs; 30 thousand Abazins; 4 thousand Besleneevs; 15 thousand Temirgoys, Egerukays and Makhoshevs; 30,500 Kuban Nogais; and 17 thousand Kabardins.

At that time, external migration was fairly moderate and limited to the Western Adighes, Kabardins, and Turkic-speaking Karachais and Balkars who moved to the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ In 1895, 1 thousand families of Kuban mountain people moved³⁰; in 1902, 2,601 Kabardins and 781 Balkars emigrated to the Ottoman Empire; in 1905, 115 Kabardin and 13 Balkar families left for Turkey on the initiative of two Kabardin princes.³¹

In the 1880s-1900s, 15,756 Karachais left the Northern Caucasus for the Ottoman Empire; there were 700 families from Mary and Teberda; 500 families from the Duut and Zhazlyk villages among them, etc. Members of the following families moved out: Gazevs, Eneevs, Gemuevs, Sozaevs, Zhabelovs, Tokhaevs, Goguevs, Salpararovs, Batchaevs, Appaevs, Kipkeevs, Tekeevs, Bayramukovs, Khachirovs, Kochkarovs, Abaevs, Abaykhanovs, Barasbievs, Sunshevs, Shakmanovs, Teppeevs, Dottuevs, Malkonduevs, and others.³²

During the same period, some of the North Caucasian mountain people actively promoted the idea of external migration among the Ossets. Major-General of the Russian army M. Kundukhov, who was a Muslim Osset, was one of those who in 1864 encouraged external migration of about 5 thousand Chechen families.

Some of the Muslim Ossets left, while the larger part of the Ossets who stayed behind “automatically” became Orthodox Christians. According to the figures quoted for 1897, in the Vladikavkaz District there were 70,317 Orthodox Christians and 19,512 Muslims. In the city of Vladikavkaz, there were 31,435 Orthodox Christians and 2,268 Muslims.

According to the list of settlements of the Terek Region, in 1990, 18% of the Ossets were Muslims and 82% were Orthodox Christians. At that time, only the villages of Elkhotovo, Chikola, Karjin, Lesken, Khaznidon, Zilgi, Zamankul, Beslan, Brut, Nogkau, Dashkovo (Komsomolskoe) and Razdzog remained Muslim. There were villages (Dzuarikau, Lamardon, etc.) with mixed Orthodox and Muslim populations.

In the 1880s-1900s, Ossets continued settling in the valleys; this was when peasant colonization also began. In the latter half of the 19th century, at the insistent request of those Ossets who wanted

²⁹ See: *Problemy Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 402.

³⁰ See: *Ibid.*, p. 374.

³¹ See: A.K. Kasumov, *Raznye sudby*, Nalchik, 1967, p. 26.

³² See: *Tragicheskie posledstviya Kavkazskoy voyny...*, p. 335.

to move down from the mountains, the Russian administration invigorated its efforts to create new settlements in the valley of Vladikavkaz. It should be said that Ossetia was the only place in the Northern Caucasus where mountain people willingly went down to the valley in great numbers. In Balkaria, on the other hand, only a few new villages were set up in the valley: Gundelen, Chizhok-Kabak (Lower Chegem), Kashkatau, Tyshly-Tala (Temirkhanovsky), and Khabaz.

New Osset villages appeared in the Ossetian plain and near Mozdok: Novaya Saniba, Novy Uruk, Veseloe, Razbun, and others.

Before the revolution in the Northeastern Caucasus (particularly in Daghestan) there was no enthusiasm about mass migration, although muhajirstvo was not completely unknown there. The term itself appeared in Daghestan during the Caucasian War to describe the supporters of the imamat who found refuge in its territory.

In his memoirs, A. Kazikumukhsky, Shamil's son-in-law, offered the following explanation: "Muhajirun is an Arabic word applied to those who move from dar al-harb—the area of war (from the lands fighting against the Muslims)—to dar al-islam—the adobe of Islam (the territory under Islamic rule). The Prophet Muhammad, peace be with him, was the first to move from Mecca to Medina. Later the word was applied to its (Muslim) community and is realized on the conditions specified by Islamic books."

Numerous researchers have pointed out that as early as the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, several waves of Daghestani migrants reached the Ottoman Empire. S. Alibekov dates the first wave of Lezghian migration to the 1730s and the second to 1837-1850s.³³

The migration of the Caucasian War period hit the Vaynakh peoples more than others. In 1817, most of the Ingushes of the Sunzha District were moved from the piedmont to Nazran (to make room for the Sunzha line of fortifications).

The heads of the Northeastern Caucasian District rejected the plan of Russian colonization of the lands acquired between 1858 and 1868 by General Evdokimov in the Kuban Region. In Daghestan, Russian colonization was limited to the valleys; the process was slow. Unlike elsewhere, in these places the mountain dwellers were not driven to the plains in great numbers; those villages that were moved down by way of punishment were later returned to their old places. It was only in Chechnia and Ingushetia that some of the mountain people were moved to Central and Northwestern Caucasus.

Muhajirstvo was most pronounced in Chechnia and Northern Daghestan, but it never reached the scope it achieved in the Northwestern Caucasus.

People were driven to the Ottoman Empire by numerous and at times fantastic rumors and fears which reached the Muslim mountain people after the war. People feared being baptized by force, recruited into the army, or being forced to join the Cossacks. The Russian military authorities tried to calm down their recent Muslim subjects.

In 1860, Caucasian Viceroy Prince Baryatinsky published a Proclamation to the Chechen People, but the Chechens preferred to trust the letters they received from the Ottoman Empire in which their relatives tried to convince them that persecution of the Muslims in the Russian Empire was not far off. The Turks, in turn, promised that they would transfer the lands vacated by the Armenians who had moved to Russia to the new settlers from the Northern Caucasus; they also promised tax benefits and financial grants. Russian and Ottoman sources contain ample information about the role of rumors in the emergence of the muhajir movement, however the problem remains inadequately studied.

On 10 May, 1862, the Caucasian Committee published its decision On Resettlement of the Mountain People; this is the official date of the beginning of the muhajir movement (in fact it began

³³ See: S.F. Alibekov, "Lezghinskaia diaspora v Turtsii," in: *Emigratsiia severokavkazkikh narodov v Osmanskuiu imperiiu (vtoraia polovina XIX-nachalo XX vv.)*, Collection of articles compiled by S.F. Alibekov, Makhachkala, 2000, p. 115.

after the Crimean War of 1853-1856). A Commission on Deportation of the North Caucasian Mountain People to Turkey was set up to organize migration, distribute money, and talk to the owners of the transport ships needed to move the emigrants.

Chronologically, migration to Turkey from the Northeastern and Northwestern Caucasus more or less coincided, although there was a time gap between them. In the Northeastern Caucasus, the muhajir movement began in 1859 when the hostilities there had finally ended; the number of migrants, direction of migration and, most importantly, the migration policy itself varied. As distinct from the Northwestern and Central Caucasus, the outflow from the Northeastern Caucasus reached its peak in the 1870s, rather than the first half of the 1860s.

In the Northern Caucasus, the number of muhajiruns increased dramatically after the defeat of the 1877 uprising when repressions against the insurgents started on a grand scale.

During the first period (1856-1865), the czarist authorities, in violation of the 1860 agreement, encouraged emigration and prohibited those who went to Turkey from coming back.

During the second period (1865-1877), the scope of forced migration was trimmed, but the potential emigrants used all sorts of tricks to circumvent the law, the trick of "pilgrimage to Mecca" (hajj) being the most popular of them. The muhajir movement continued, albeit with varying intensity, until the mid-1920s.

Its numerical strength is hard to establish: the official Russian pre-revolutionary statistics and the figures supplied by the Ottoman authorities are incomplete. The relevant figures found in the Ottoman archives have not yet been properly studied and, therefore, remain outside academic circulation.

According to the official data supplied by the czarist authorities, between 1858-1865 493,194 people emigrated from the Northern Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire; 440,350 of them belonged to the Adighe peoples of the Northwestern Caucasus (Shapsugs, Ubykhs, Abadzekhs, etc.) and to the linguistically and culturally kindred Abkhazians. Between 1856 and 1925, about 40 thousand Chechens and Ingushes, 39,660 Nogais (including those who lived in the Kuban Region), 8-10 thousand Ossets, and 20-25 thousand Daghestanis left the Northeastern Caucasus.

The migration dynamics can be traced in the annual Reports on the State of Affairs in the Daghestan Region: between 1859 and 1861, 702 people moved; in 1863-1869 the figure was 1,603; in 1872, 120 families, while the following year, 179 families emigrated. An average family consisted of five members, which means that in two years (1872 and 1873) Daghestan lost at least 1,500 people.

Descendants of the North Caucasian muhajiruns supply their own (probably overstated) figures: in the last third of the 19th century, the Circassian diaspora in the Middle East was at least 1.5 million strong.

History of the Adighes as a Political Instrument of Our Days

Practically all the North Caucasian peoples suffered for many years when the Northern Caucasus became part of the Russian Empire, their suffering being mainly caused by the forced resettlement of those peoples who rejected Russian rule and by the political methods Russia applied in the region.

It has been established beyond a doubt that in the 18th-early 20th centuries there was no voluntary migration to the Ottoman Empire. It should be said that during the previous centuries there were several cases of migration of North Caucasian peoples to the Ottoman Empire, mainly because it ruled

the region (at least partly) or because the people were exposed to Ottoman ideological (religious) pressure. It is an established fact that mass migration was caused by Russia's Caucasian policy.

Why did historians (in the 1990s) prefer to move beyond registering the fact and a very clear and substantiated description of this period of migration to join a new social-national movement for the recognition of what they called the genocide of Adighes?

This happened because at a certain stage the social-national movements were determined to achieve consolidation of their peoples to finally create a contemporary ethnic and political identity. The "history of suffering" of the Adighes proved to be the perfect instrument of national cohesion.

Were there other ideas that could have been used to achieve the same goal? The answer is No: by the early 1990s, the driving force behind the ethnic processes in the Northern Caucasus had been exhausted, while the national cultures of the North Caucasian peoples exposed for many years to the pressure of Soviet ideology had lost much of their previous vitality. Cultural globalization started in the 1990s contributed to the progressing crumbling of the people's national foundation.

Two facts confirm the way the tragic developments in the history of the Adighes were exploited:

- (1) *The Balkars and Kabardins brought together in the same republic by Stalin's whim had very different past histories.* The former kept away from the Caucasian War and never sided with the fighters for independence and, therefore, they were not forced to emigrate. They managed to exploit the Russian presence in the Northern Caucasus to enlarge their settlements and the lands they could use. There was a great shortage of land high in the mountains where they lived; Russian authorities allowed them to move into parts of the landed possessions vacated by the evicted Kabardins.³⁴

Early in the 1990s, the Balkars, likewise, were seeking national consolidation; having nothing to do with the "Adighe history" of external migration to the east, they had to use the fact that Balkars were evicted during Stalin's repressions.

This means that in these cases two different historical facts were exploited in a more or less similar way. First, in both cases, public movements were brought together by the fact that their corresponding peoples had been victimized in the past; second, it was not the historical fact but rather its potential usefulness that was tapped to set up an ideological foundation of the state "nation-building."

- (2) *The nature of evolution of the Adighe national movements in the latter half of the 1990s-first half of the 2000s.* In the mid-1990s, all the national movements that relied on the tragic past of the North Caucasian peoples gradually began losing their impact and were replaced by religious, mainly Islamic, movements.

Freedom of consciousness in Russia encouraged the spread of Islam; by the mid-1990s, the religious community had been gradually replacing the national community.

Why had the ideas of "genocide" of the Adighes lost much of their impact by the latter half of the 1990s?

It seems that the public movements unfolding in the Northern Caucasus in the last twenty years can be divided into two types with different ideologies and different leaders. They had one thing in common: powerful anti-Russian sentiments as part of an ideology of the national and Islamic (mainly radical) movements.

The anti-Russian feelings among the North Caucasian peoples rest on several fundamental causes: social dissatisfaction with the standard of living and rejection of Russia as a conqueror and a metropolitan country, etc.

³⁴ See: I.L. Babich, V.V. Stepanov, *Istoricheskaia dinamika etnicheskoy karty Kabardino-Balkarii*, Institute of Ethnology, RAS, Moscow, 2009.

This pushed the Islamic factor to the forefront; as a result the national movements were replaced with Islamic movements and anti-Russian sentiments survived, although with different ideological foundations. The Muslim leaders worked toward a common foundation for all nations, while the idea of the genocide of the Adighes did not extend to the Turkic-speaking peoples (who suffered during the Soviet repressions). The Muslim leaders exploited the idea that free religious feelings and services were impossible in a Russian state that was secular in form and Orthodox in nature.³⁵

Significantly, the Muslim ideologists, likewise, relied on history, although on slightly different aspects. They urged the academic community to prove to the people that in the past Islam had been widely popular among the Adighes, which is not true. Islam, which began trickling into Adighe communities in the 15th century, was not widely popular at the time the Russians appeared in the region.

Islamic Movements in the Northern Caucasus Today

In the mid-1990s, the local leaders started looking for new political instruments to confront the local power elites; it appears they selected Islam and Islamic renaissance as one of its forms. This was when the concept of political Islam emerged.

The idea of an Islamic state was an important step forward in the Muslims' political activities; the most radical among them were convinced that proliferation of Islam inevitably includes fighting for political leadership as one of its dimensions. It will lead to a new constitutional law and a new order (loyal to Islam and the Muslim law). The ideas about an Islamic state in some of the republics or in the Northern Caucasus as a whole were promoted by the ideas of a restored Arabian Caliphate that were actively spread around in the 1990s and early 2000s; Chechnia was expected to play the main role in the new state.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Northern Caucasus acquired new national and religious leaders. Still, on 13-14 October, 2005, the young Islamic leaders and a huge army of their supporters in Kabardino-Balkaria moved toward open confrontation. The new, "post-October" sociopolitical and ideological situation in Kabardino-Balkaria exhibited two fundamental trends. One of them was related to the pressure the Federal Security Service put on the young Islamic movement (it loses about 100 of its supporters every year). The second stems from the first: the Islamic and national movements (the Adighe movements in particular) are losing momentum.

In the mid-2000s, the national movements began gathering more popularity than the Islamic movements. Today, those youth leaders who supported the Islamic movements are now fighting Russia (I have in mind the national movements of the latter half of the 2000s-early 2010s). In Kabardino-Balkaria, the revived national movements turned once more to the past in which the Adighes were "victims."

It seems that *two circumstances played the key roles in the current revival*:

- (1) The ill-advised idea of the central government in 2007 to celebrate "voluntary unification of Russia and the peoples of the Northern Caucasus" on a great scale. The lavishly funded event caused a lot of well-justified displeasure in the region because the truth was flagrantly violated. The Russian government demonstrated that it refused to treat the Caucasian War and mass resettlement which followed as evidence of the use of force by which the Northern

³⁵ For more detail, see: I.L. Babich, *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie v Kabardino-Balkarii*, Moscow, 2003.

Caucasus had been joined to the Russian Empire, events which stirred up the independence struggle and caused tragedies for many North Caucasian peoples.

- (2) The decision of the IOC passed in 2007 to hold the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, because this stretch of the Black Sea coast had been the homeland of the Adighes and kindred people before the Russians arrived in the region. I have demonstrated above that the Western Adighes suffered more than the other Caucasian ethnicities.

This raised another wave of national movements for recognition of the genocide of the Adighes, radical groups and the parliament of Georgia joined in the drive to insist on restoration of historical justice. After the 2008 war with Russia in South Ossetia, Georgia became more actively involved in its relations with the North Caucasian peoples and recognized the “genocide” of the Adighes.

Georgian historians and parliamentarians recognized the actions of the Russian authorities as “ethnic cleansing and military punitive expeditions”; this purely political approach cannot be described as a scientifically substantiated definition. The Russian academic community confirms, to an extent, this tragic fact, however it will hardly become “politically accepted.”

The Problem of Preserving the Adighe Culture

Engrossed in the political dimensions of the national movement of the Adighes, their leaders are paying practically no attention to what is happening to their culture.

The way the Adighe language is taught in Shapsug schools on the Black Sea coast can serve as a pertinent example. I have already supplied details of the Shapsugs’ everyday life in my *Problema sokhraneniia identichnosti shapsugov Prichenomoria v XXI veke* (The Problem of Preserving the Identity of the Shapsugs of the Black Sea Coast in the 21st Century).³⁶ In the 2000s, I organized several ethnographic expeditions to the Shapsug region.³⁷

Today, the Black Sea Shapsugs are one of the numerically smallest Caucasian peoples (there are no more than 8 to 10 thousand of them), who live in the Tuapse and Lazarevskoe regions of the Krasnodar Territory.³⁸ The economy of a seaside resort has negatively affected the everyday life and traditions of the Shapsugs, but today it is their only means of survival.

In the 1990s, the Shapsugs of the Black Sea coast became actively involved in social and political activities. There is a public organization called Adyghe Khase (Public Parliament) headed by A. Chachukh set up to protect the interests of the Shapsugs-Adighes of the Black Sea coast.

In 1988-1989, the native Adighe language and Adighe literature were introduced into the school curriculum in the Lazarevskoe District thanks to the efforts of N. Bogus, who headed a group of teachers of Adighe in the district. She also organized hobby groups for people interested in traditional Adighe handicrafts and wishing to learn wood carving, sewing, knitting, and how to make folk ornaments.

So far, only a couple of lessons in Adighe are given a week; it is taught as an elective. A 30-year-old Shapsug and director of a village club told me that he had been one of the few boys who stayed on

³⁶ See: I.L. Babich, *Problema sokhraneniia identichnosti shapsugov Prichenomoria v XXI veke*, Moscow, 2008.

³⁷ See: Field ethnographic materials gathered by I.L. Babich in the Lazarevskoe and Tuapse districts, Krasnodar Territory, Russia, 2002, 2007.

³⁸ They live in the mountain villages (auls) of Makopse, Golovinka, Psebe, Shkhafit, Akhintam, Bolshoy Kichmai, Maly Kichmai, Khajiko, Tkhagapsh, Bolshoe Pseushkho, Maloe Pseushkho, Tsipka, Aguy-Shapsug, as well in Lazarevskoe, a large settlement of the urban type, and the cities of Tuapse and Sochi.

at school to attend the Adighe lessons, while the others went home for lunch, and admitted that he would have willingly avoided the lessons.

All sorts of regular events for schoolchildren are organized in Shapsugia with the aim of popularizing the native language. In 1993, Tuapse hosted the first contest of Shapsug schoolchildren who demonstrated their knowledge of the language, culture, and traditions of the Adighes. It was attended by well-known writers, composers, and musicians, including People's Writer of Adigey and Kabardino-Balkaria I. Mashbash. This is an annual event.

N. Bogus is convinced that teaching of the native language leaves much to be desired. In 2000-2001 she drew up a document "On the State of Teaching of the Adighe Language in Shapsugia" to inform the local authorities of the true state of affairs in this sphere.

She has compiled another documents addressed to A. Chachukh, Chairman of the Shapsug Adyghe Khase, and to the head of the Department of Education of the Tuapse District, in which she wrote: "School administrations are doing nothing to preserve and develop the language; they complain of the packed school curriculum, unwillingness of some children or their parents to study the native language, and the absence of teachers of Adighe... In view of the fact that the Shapsugs are a small ethnicity and that their extinction is brought closer because they are losing their language, one of the vehicles of communication, traditions, culture and ethnic specifics, I ask you to:

- "Include the native (Adighe) language on the list of required subjects;
- "Address the problem of the shortage of teachers by involving teachers with higher special education;
- "Introduce 5 hours a week of Adighe language in primary school (1st-4th grade); 3 hours a week for 5th-9th grade; and 2 hours a week for 10th-11th grade."

Early in the 1990s, the Shapsug language became a required subject for all grades 1 through 9; very soon, however, it became an elective. Today, the language is taught twice a week in 7th and 8th grade; as a rule the young children love these lessons, while teenagers are less enthusiastic.

There are several reasons for this:

- (1) there are mixed families in which mother is Russian while father is Shapsug; in such families Russian is used;
- (2) there is a linguistic contradiction—at home people use everyday language while at school children are taught its literary variant;
- (3) the literary language is no longer used in economic and social life, so the children see no reason to study it;
- (4) teenagers prefer dances and sports to lessons in their native language;
- (5) since it is taught as an elective, teachers cannot give grades (which is an important tool of stimulation).

In Lieu of a Conclusion

It seems that the efforts to build a modern ethnic identity on the foundation of "being a victim" and victimization are counterproductive. This approach does not create the new space very much needed for the development of any society; the North Caucasian people acquire nothing and lose the chance of further ethnic development.

While concentrating on “recognition of the genocide of the Adighes,” the leaders are ignoring the present state of culture, which is leading to loss of those national elements that can still be saved and strengthened.
