

MESKHETINSKY TURKS UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE MODERN ETHNIC PROCESSES IN THE USSR

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The history of the USSR under the period of the Stalin regime today is connected first of all with the anti-lawful acts of mass repressions. Historians and politologists apply to these acts of lawlessness that brought about a guiltless condemnation and the destruction of millions of peoples. From the viewpoint of the ethnographic science a special attention should be given to the existing-in-those-years policy of compulsory migration that resulted in the fact that entire peoples, ethnic and ethnographic groups were moved by force off the historical places of their dwelling to other regions of the country.

According to the governmental decisions by the beginning of 1935 there had been deported the Germans, Crimean Tatars, Karachaevtsy, Balkartsy, Chechentesy, Germans, Crimean tatars, Karachaevtsy, Balkartsy, Chechentsy, Ingushy, Greeks, Armenians, Lithuanians, Letts, Estonians, Kurds, Kalmyks, Kabardintsy, Iranians, Khemshily, Poles and Rumanians.

Among the deported peoples there appeared to the Meskhetinsky Turks who had been deported from South Georgia to Middle Asia according to the special decision of the State Defence Committee of November 14th, 1944 "for the purpose of the frontier security". Migrated was the Turkish population of the Akhaltsikhsky, Adigensky, Aspindzsky, Akhalakalasky and Bogdanovsky regions of Georgia; its total number made 115,5 thousand people. In addition 40 thousand of them were at the front¹.

The main portion of the Turkish-Meskhetinsky migrants was dispersed among various regions and provinces of the Uzbek SSR; they had no right to leave the pale. Another portion of the migrants entitled as

¹ The archive of the Leningrad Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Ethnography F.-K-1, op., 2, N 1480, 1481 (1966), 1988 - no number.

"special migrants" by the same way was moved to Kazakhstan and Kirghizia².

The changes in the fate of the deported peoples took place after the 20th Party Congress (1956) that had censured the cult of personality and its consequences. But these changes did not concern all the deported peoples. A certain portion was repatriated, as to the others abolished was a regime of special surveillance and the pale. In this connection there rightfully arises a question why under the new political trend which unconditionally had condemned the policy of the personality cult only a portion of the deported peoples was repatriated and what the principle of the given selective repatriation was.

It looks like that the similar step is a political action of the State machinery possessing the power and directed at the authoritative regime. Probably in the interests of this State machinery that somehow or other had taken part in the anti-lawful repressions, the departations included, the rehabilitation and the subsequent repatriation of the peoples who had been subjected to the compulsory migration were not general and unconditional. The State machinery found it acute necessary to create such a situation under which it would be possible to acknowledge their mistakes only partially having declined all responsibility for the committed acts of lawlessness. So, all the deported people were artificially divided into two blocks of the "deservedly" and "erroneously" punished that served as the only guarantee against the arising of the general movement of the deported peoples in the future. One can only suppose what the main principles of the selective repatriation were. Probably the following was taken into account: the number of the deported peoples, the availability of autonomy at the moment of deportation, the ethnic status (nation, ethnic group), the degree of the traditional military activity, the traditions of the liberation movement the historic-cultural relations etc. In quite a definite mode there was taken into consideration a specific territorial belonging to exclude the appearance of the general regional trend directed at the return to the motherland. The latter circumstance had played a substantial part in the fact that among these peoples a united movement did not spring up. Such a movement was arising separately among each of these peoples but it was seriously complicated owing to the dispersion of the settling apart as a result of the compulsory migration. In spite of that the notional

² A. Khurshut. *The Turks (Literary Kirghizstan)* N 12, 1988, p. 102-111.

movements were becoming stronger and stronger; the separate regional groups were uniting into a general directional movement.

The above mentioned circumstances are very important if we take into account the fact that a considerable portion of the deported peoples was of the Caucasus origin (the Karachaevtsy, Balkartsy, Chechentsy, Ingushy, Kabardintsy, Greeks, Kurds, Turks, Khemshily, Iranians). A certain fact draws our attention -the deportation of the overwhelming part of the Caucasus migrants somehow or other was connected with Georgia. Checheno-Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria are directly conterminous with the territory of the Georgian SSR. According to the information submitted by the eye-witnesses of the acts of the compulsory migration of the peoples of these autonomies the population of the borderline settlements was being deported during one night, the settlements were given Georgian names and were being settled by the Georgians by force. By the same manner the compulsory migration of the Meskhetinsky Turks was accomplished; instead of the latter the Georgians mainly from the western regions of Georgia were settled by force and without the right of leaving the place³.

Later on, after the rehabilitation the deported peoples of the stated republics were repatriated to their historic motherland, but the frontiers were kept partially changed and the settlements appeared to be within the limits of Georgia. This tendency will become more evident if one takes into account the fact that the action of the deportation of a number of the peoples of Daghestan was being prepared but it was not realized completely: in 1944 the peoples of the Didoi subgroup (The Tsezy, Beshtintsy, Khvarshiny) who had been living directly on the border-line with Georgia were deported to Chechnia by force.

As to all without exception peoples deported directly from Georgia (the Turks, Kurds, Greeks, Chemshily, Iranians) the problem of their repatriation was solved negatively. Only in the 70s abolished was an anti-lawful act that concerned the Greek population. Mention should be made that among all the peoples who had been subjected to the deportation only the Greeks were Christians. The problem of the other Moslem peoples deported from Georgia is still unsolved at present.

³ M. Salykova, S. Janorsky. Land, where is your son? "Ogonjek" N 50, 1989, p. 35.

One should pay attention to the fact that out of a number of the deported peoples the Meskhetinsky Turks make the most numerous ethnic group. This just explains the reason for arising a pure Turkish-Meskhetinsky problem. But in this connection it is necessary to stress that the problem itself should not be treated as an exclusively Turkish-Meskhetinsky one. The latter includes the problem of all the moslem peoples deported from Georgia.

The end of the 60s is characterized with some positive changes in the fate of the deported peoples: abolished was the regime of "special migrants", they were allowed to leave the limits of Middle Asia⁴. In spite of some positive changes a half-way policy has brought about a further dispersion of these sociums and accordingly the loss of the majority of their ethno-cultural values. Nevertheless it did not weaken the national movement, though to a considerable extent it complicated its organizing.

Dispite the latter circumstance from 1962 to 1989 ten congresses of the Meskhetinsky Turks were held. The main purpose of these congresses was to discuss and elaborate the strategy and tactics of the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement aimed at the coming back to the motherland. The congresses also sent various delegations to the highest management organs of the USSR and the Georgian SSR. Within the postwar period sent were 205 such delegations to the Georgian government and 148 - to the highest organs of the country⁵. All the delegations were sent in connection with the problem of returning the Soviet Turks to their historic motherland, to Georgia. But not a single delegation could achieve a positive solution of the repatriation problem. And as it is well known that the problem of the Meskhetinsky Turks is still at a dead lock.

Out of a number of congresses held within the frames of the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement one can single out some of them that are landmarks of this movement. One should mention the 1st Constituent congress held in 1962., the 8th congress of 1976, the 9th congress of 1988 and the 10th congress of 1984.

Under the conditions of maximum secrecy the 1st Constituent congress of the Turks-Mesktintsy was held in 1962 in the Bukinsky region of the Tashkent province, Uzbekistan. At this congress present were del-

⁴ F. Kessidy. Aristotel from a remote place. / *Izvestia*, 15.9.89.

⁵ Records presented by Ju. Sarvarov, member of the Commission on the problems of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population at the USSR Supreme Soviet.

egates practically from all the Turko-Meskhetinsky communities from all the places of their dwelling. At the congress discussed was a problem on the national movement aimed at the coming back to the motherland. To make the movement more efficient there was adopted a decision on making up a united central organ of the movement and its corresponding regional subsidiaries. So the 1st congress of the Turks-Meskhetintsy elected the Provisional organizing committee (POC) for the returning to the motherland; elected also were some permanently acting commissions out of a number of the regional leaders of the movement present at the congress. Due to the efforts of these commissions realized was the activity of POC among the Turko-Meskhetinsky population in all the regions of their dwelling. On the other hand a similar structure provided a feedback because all the information entered the centre via the existing commissions.

Beginning with the 1st congress we may consider the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks finally formed. The six congresses to follow were mainly of organizing significance. There was being developed a structure of the movement, peculiarities and details of interacting the POC commissions, there were being elaborated communication channels, and its most efficient realization, the financial problems were being solved.

By the 70s the experience of the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks had achieved such a level that it permitted to elaborate its definite tactics. An important factor that brought about a necessity for elaborating this specific tactics was the fact that by that time there had appeared a certain motif of denying the Meskhetinsky Turks' coming back to their motherland. If during the first years of functioning the movement the refusal had been of an unconventional character, later on there appeared a dominating motif which meaning was explained mainly by the economic difficulties. First of all as an argument adduced was a difficulty of migrating such a large number of peoples to the desolate lands that would require great state grants to revivify the region and to satisfy the socio-cultural needs of the re-emigrants as well as a changed demographic situation that has made the solving of the economic aspect of the problem more difficult.

All these facts predetermined the contents of the 8th congress held on the 16th of June, 1976 in the settlement of Erokko, the Kabardino-Balkarskaya ASSR. The program elaborated by the group full of initiative

was considered at the congress; this program was to serve as a counterargument in solving the problem on the repatriation of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population. Being conscious of the fact that the migration of the considerable mass of peoples cannot but involve certain difficulties and great financial expences a certain plan of a step-by-step migration was submitted to the congress; this plan practically did not require any state grants; this plan included the constructing of dwelling blocks, social and industrial complexes with the help of specialized youth brigades; there was even mentioned that they would deny any compensation for the loss of their immovable property in the regions of residing the Meskhetinsky Turks for that moment. The fact itself of raising such a program for that period was rather perspective in case of the positive decision of the problem of the Soviet Turks' repatriation. But even under the negativ treatment of solving the Turkish problem this fact played a certain positive part since it deprived of the grounds for the motif of the previous refusals.

So, by means of the tactics adopted by the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement it has become able to suggest real alternatives to any more or less real arguments that could be raised as a motif for the refusal. As a consequence of this the Georgian part raised though unofficially a condition that the Meskhetinsky Turks should recognize their historic Georgian origin and the change of their surnames. Taking into account a strongly marked and stable ethic selfconsciousness of this group and the developed cultural Islamic traditions the essence of this condition in contradistinction to all the previous ones was in its absolute unacceptability, and, consequently, unreatlity. The transfer of considering the Turko-Meskhetinsky problem from a real sphere into an unreal one has ledd the national movement to a blind alley. So, to a considerable degree blocked was the outer trend of the national movements of the Turks and artificially there was created a situation disposing to its inner split. Practically the after-effects of this were directly reflected on the movement as well as on the whole on those processes that were taking place in the Turko-Meskhetinsky society. Since that time the process of partial destruction of selfconsciousness of this ethnic group began.

Under the conditions of the seeming irreparable problem and the formed political situation a certain (small) portion of the Meskhetinsky Turks found it possible to become Turkishized Georgians to provide in such a way the return to the motherland. The formed situation was sti-

mulated by the fact that Georgia began to adopt for permanent dwelling some families of the Soviet Turks out of a number of the representatives of the stated above group into various regions of the republic (to prevent a national concentration)⁶.

It should be pointed out that this group is characterized with a situative selfconsciousness that under the condition of the continuity of proceeding this process could have had a tendency for stabilization. But the overwhelming portion of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population continues to realize themselves as Turks and insists on acknowledging their Turkish origin.

The split beginning to show in the national movement of the Soviet Turks in due course has turned in essence into the struggle between two "fractions" with the leaders at the head of each one. These fractions that can be called as the "Georgian" and "Turkish" ones revealed accordingly principally different view-points on the ways of re-emigration that by itself threatened the existence of the united national movement. In this connection the 9th congress called as a "stage" one and held on the 28th of July, 1968 not far from the settlement of Isynod, the Kabardino-Balkarskaia ASSR was of special significance for the development of the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks.

At the congress that was a kind of gathering present were 276 delegates from various regional subunits. In essence it was a kind of struggle between the two abovementioned fractions. In the course of the prolonged and strenuous discussion in which the majority of the leaders of the movement participated, the "Georgian opposition" suffered a defeat. The congress unanimously blamed the supporters of the Georgian trend having acknowledged their activity to be erroneous and treacherous with respect to the national interests and it made the leaders of this opposition acknowledge the insolvency of their convictions. As a result the congress adopted a decision aimed at the coming back to the motherland under an indispensable condition of acknowledging their Turkish nationality and this congress was proclaimed as the congress of Unity. The characteristic feature of this congress lies in the fact that it gave an extremely positive appraisal of the political transformations and reconstruction processes tak-

⁶ E. KH. Panesh, L.B. Ermolov. The Meskhetinsky Turks. Historic-ethnographic analysis of the problem. "Soviet Ethnographia" N 1, 1990.

ing place in the country and giving hope solving many problems including those of the Soviet Turks.

It should be stressed here that just by this time there has been created on the whole a favourable situation for the further development of any forms of the national movement. But stating the favourable political climate promoting the growth of these movements, it is quite evident that this positive process is being accompanied by the pronounced negative tendencies. The latter are revealed most in such places where the interests of the national movements come into conflict in any specific region. The most extreme degrees of aggressiveness arise when minor national movements contract a strong national movement, i.e. when a strong movement meets resistance it begins to reveal the predisposition to the dictate and aggression in the form of the national violence.

Studying the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks one should point out that it is becoming more extensive and developing not only in the frames of the ethnic group but it oversteps the limits of the Turko-Meskhetinsky Society. First publications on the problem of the Soviet Turks begin to appear⁷; this problem is becoming the subject of attention of various social organizations. But just at this most favourable moment for developing the movement and further positive solution of the problem, the national and political situation in Georgia becomes sharply aggravated. The situation formed in the region calls the principal possibility of the positive solution of the Turko-Meskhetinsky problem in question.

As we know the recent events in Georgia are directly connected with the national movement and on the whole with the aggravation of the international relations in the GSSR. The aggravation of the situation and the events taking place here could not but have an effect on the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement since the final purposes of this movement are connected with just this region. The accentuated interest and attention on the part of the Turko-Meskhetinsky Society to the events in Georgia promoted a sharp growth of its social-political activity that had considerably increased lately. Practically it was expressed in the attempts to pass their candidacy to the Peoples' Deputies Congress in the hope of

⁷ A. Khurshut. The stated work. B. Reznik, T. Chanturia. To come with hope, to adopt with good / "Izvestia", 30.1.89 and others.

further promoting the positive solution of the problem of the Soviet Turks. Due to the fact that the main mass of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population for this moment has become localized in Uzbekistan the most active pre-election campaign was being carried out in this republic. But the territorial-and-district principle of the elections and the dispersed settling of the Turks in various regions of the republic made it impossible to put forward their candidate in spite of the fact that the number of this ethnic group gave this opportunity to it.

The marked activity of the Turkish national movement has resulted into the fact that this group begins to be distinguished out of the common mass of the non-indigenous population of the region. This fact appears to be very important for understanding the essence of the further development of the events that took place in Uzbekistan in June, 1989.

The Ferghana events of 1989 affected greatly the national movement of the Soviet Turks. But before we go on to the analysis of these events it is necessary to reveal the essence of the Ferghana conflict and to observe its connection with the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement.

Our press gives us various explanations of the reasons of the Ferghana tragedy. There exists a viewpoint that these were spontaneous disturbances that brought about the antilawful actions. Another position connects these events with the social-economic difficulties in the region, shadow economics, corruption and development of the ethnocentric ideas. The rank and file keep to the opinion that the conflict is directly connected with the disproportion in the economic state of the main mass of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population with respect to the indigenous one etc. Really studying the Ferghana events one cannot but acknowledge that the majority of these opinions has a real, pronounced, obvious basis. But each one of the enumerated reasons taken separately cannot lie in the basis of the ethnic conflict. And what is more it is unlikely that even under the condition all these reasons will act in total.

The basis of the ethnic conflicts is first of all made up by the ethnic contradictions; the latter can adopt different forms. At the same time these contradictions may become stronger with respect to the regional specifics. The latter, as a rule, to a considerable degree is determined by the historical background accompanying the interacting ethnoses in the course of the definite period of time and in connection with that, it is defined by the potential possibility of the socium as to the ethnic and social

adaptation in the new (especially under the artificially made conditions) ethno-contact zones.

Turning directly to the consideration of the essence of the Uzbek-Turkish conflict one should stress that the authors of the article "The Glow of Ferghana" K. Mialo, sociologist and V. Goncharov, economist have approached it nearest. Studying the reasons of the ethnic conflicts on the example of Ferghana they have come to the conclusion on the dominant of the development of the ethnocratic ideas in combination with the socio-economic reasons. Alongside with that in their interpretation the authors took the consequence for the reason because the development of the ethnocratic idea itself without shadow of doubt is the consequence. Really the ethnocratic idea can develop only there where an ethnic alternative exists. The latter should be substantial enough both in the qualitative and cultural historical respect. It goes without saying that the appearance of the ethnocratic idea cannot take shape under the condition of the natural isolators or under that of the ethnic homogeneity of the society (I mean the inner process and do not touch the principles of the development of the ethnocratic ideas in their outer trend, for instance, under the conditions of expansion).

Developing the thesis on the ethnic alternative one should point out that in those cases when the dominating ethnos does not have real alternative as a big ethnos, it often perceives such one in the national minorities. The latter, in their turn, feeling upon themselves the pressing of the development of the ethnocratic ideas on the part of the ethnos dominating in the region, as a rule, make up a united bloc that under the modern conditions adopts the character of internationality fronts. Quite often the inter-nationally front of national minorities enters also the bloc of bigger ethnic units that by themselves can make up the ethnic alternative to the dominating ethnos; the given tendency being extrapolated over the large ethno-cultural zones.

Proceeding from the above said it becomes quite clear that neither the Turks-Meskhetintsy nor the Crimean Tatars, Germans, Korean or any other separately taken non-indigenous ethnic group could not have become a serious alternative in the region under study. And in this respect the perception of the Uzbek-Turkish conflict as a direct one is not correct from the very beginning. On the other hand the enumerated peoples failed to make up the inter-nationality bloc that could have become the alternative to the ethnocratic idea of the dominating ethnos. It is connect-

ed in many respects with the fact that these peoples are deported ones and a portion of them, for example, such as the Germans and Crimean Tatars have already left the limits of Middle Asia (masses of Germans have emigrated to f.R.G., the Crimean Tatars have started to leave for the Crimea, the Koreans have begun to migrate). As to the rest and first of all the Meskhetinsky Turks while analyzing the Uzbek-Turkish conflict one should point out that the Turko-Meskhetinsky national movement was always also directed at the re-emigration that in principle excluded the possibility of its involving into those specific ethnic processes that were going on in Uzbekistan. Just by this we can explain that the attempt on the part of the Uzbek national movement to attract the Turko-Meskhetinsky population to their part proceeding from the common-turkic unity (not mentioning the unity of confession) had no success.

A question springs up what reason of the specific ethnic conflict and directly of the Ferghana events was in reality.

Basing upon the abovementioned one can draw a conclusion that the only real alternative in this region could become only the Tajik-speaking population. According to the opinion of the researches who have been working in this region recently there had been formed long ago an acute internationality situation that manifests itself first of all in the Tajik-Uzbek contradictions⁸. Their essence is expressed in the mutual claims connected with including a number of the indigenous Tajik territories (Bukhara and Samarkand) into the Uzbek SSR. In spite of the fact that the history of these contradictions is protracted enough they have become most acute under the conditions of the general growth of the national movements in the country. The intensification of the Uzbek-Tajik contradictions without any doubt provoked the aggressiveness of the nationalistic movement that was creating a conflict-dangerous background for the interethnic interaction in the region.

The development of the ethnic conflict in reality reveals the aspiration for confirming the power in this case the ethnic one and is a form of realizing the idea of ethnocracy. One of the methods of confirming this power and the demonstration of the resoluteness of its confirmation is an ethnic

⁸ R. Rakhimov. Ivan Ivanovich Zarubin (1887-1864) S. Enc. N 1, 1989, SS. 116-119. E. Zeimal. Nationalities and their languages under socialism. "Communist" N 10, 1988, p. 88.

massacre that is accompanied by the extreme forms of violence. It is what A.M. Ontsesberger defined "as a special prerogative of the power - "the right for blood"⁹. The latter committed by means of the ethnic massacre can be realized both with respect to the direct immediate ethnic alternative and with respect to the conventional one. As a rule as an object of the conventional ethnic alternative there act representatives of the non-indigenous population of the zone of spreading the conflict. In those cases when the non-indigenous population exists as small ethnic groups it is often perceived by the dominating ethnos as a united ethnic alternative on the whole. If the ethnic groups of the non-indigenous population are more numerous than as a conventional object out of their number chosen is such a group that most of all concentrates in itself the conflict-significant oppositions at the level of the ordinary consciousness. So, one should comprehend that the conventional trend of the conflict does not mean fortunity while selecting a specific object. Just the opposite in this case there begins to act a whole complex of different factors of cultural-historic, social-economic, ethno-political and other character every one of which is divided into a number of the oppositional contradictions that in reality are microelements of the structural model of the conflict. The specific sum of the latter determines in the end the conventional trend of the conflict.

Under the present political situation the Meskhetinsky Turks were selected as an object for demonstrating the resoluteness of realizing the ethnocratic idea addressed in essence to the really existing ethnic alternative, i.e. to the Tajik-speaking population having a claim on his indigenous territories. We find it necessary to stress that originally and long before the Ferghana events had taken place undertaken was an unsuccessful attempt of unleashing the Uzbek-Turkish conflict in the Istikhansky and Laishsky region of the Samarkand movince which in this zegion is a zone of the most acute Uzbek-Tajik contradictions¹⁰.

The specific trend of the Uzbek nationalistic extremism bears a conventional character since the Turks have appeared to be a more suitable "object" for the violence as a nonindigenous population having not joined

⁹ Cit. from K. Mialo, V. Goncharov "The Glow of Ferghana". / "New Times", N 37, 1989, p. 33.

¹⁰ Expedition report by L.B. Ermolov on the work in Uzbekistan in summer 1989. The Archive of the Leningrad Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Ethnography. F-no number.

the Uzbek movement. One should take into account that the Turks were settled in a rather compact way, they were politically undefended and juridically unequal in rights as the deported ones.

Our attention is drawn by the fact that in accordance with the theory of the conflict (if we take the Ferghana events for the Uzbek-Turkish conflict) a pre-conflict situation of the tragedy under study did not precede. During all the years of residing the Turks-Meskhetintsy in Uzbekistan there did not take place any clashes between them and the indigenous population. Even proceeding from this we cannot define these events as a conflict. There is a direct evidence of one-sided action in the form of the ethnic massacre. And it is just what explains the scale of the Ferghana tragedy. On the other hand we should also bear in mind that in contradistinction to the traditional Middle-Asiatic societies a developed military organization is not typical for the traditional society of the Meskhetinsky Turks. Its reason lies in a number of objective historic factors defining the peculiarities of the ethno-cultural aspect of the Meskhetinsky Turks¹¹. It becomes clear why in the course of spreading the ethnic massacre over various regions of the Ferghana province the extremists failed to meet an adequate resistance. The scale of the Ferghana tragedy in addition to the enumerated above reasons in many respects is a consequence of the so called "Tbilissi syndrome".

The ethnic massacre in Ferghana greatly increased the migration of the non-indigenous population of the republic beyond its limits. Tough the taken-place demonstration of resoluteness aimed at asserting the ethnocentric idea reached its goal, side by side with that it has brought the real ethnic alternative in the person of the Tajik-speaking population to the full comprehension of the reality of the threat of the global Uzbek-Tajik conflict. The Tajik-speaking population understood that the conflict could not be avoided and this fact has brought them to the state of active confrontation. In quite a number of the Uzbekistan settlements there began open local conflicts between the Uzbek and Tajik population. This tendency supposes a further development of the events with respect to the regional Uzbek-Tajik ethnic conflict. Taking into consideration the common frontier of both republics and the administrative belonging of Samarkand and Bukhara it is quite easy to observe that the situation here is

¹¹ E.Kh. Panesh, L.B. Ermolov. "The Meskhetinsky Turks" Historic-ethnographic review. "The World of Culture", Nalchik, 1990.

practically identical to that connected with Karabakhsky conflict and that's why we can foresee the scale of the possible events.

Considering the Ferghana tragedy in conformity with the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks one can conclude definitely that it had different consequences for the movement. First of all lost were considerable numbers of people. In addition, a new wave of migration beyond the limits of Middle Asia connected to a considerable extent with the non-stopping threats in the address of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population¹² caused losses to the movement having still more dispersed a considerable compact massif of the Soviet Turks over various provinces of the country. One should especially single out a heavy moral-psychological stress that strengthened many times a strained consciousness of the deported population.

On the other hand it is just the Ferghana events that raised the Turko-Meskhetinsky problem to the crest of the wave. One should acknowledge that only the tragic events in Ferghana were able to make a breach in the official press, and not only the whole country but the whole world learnt about the existence of this ethnic group.

The Ferghana events did not only reveal the Turko-Meskhetinsky problem but they again drew peoples' attention to Georgia that in addition to this had been an object of the acute attention for some time past. The reason is the following: first of all the Soviet Turks were deported in 1944 to Middle Asia from Georgia. Secondly, in spite of the fact that in the wide press there were mentioned reasons which prevented from repatriating the Turko-Meskhetinsky population to their historic motherland to Georgia, this question is arising lawfully in the public consciousness. The decision of the government on the removal of refugee to a number of the provinces of the RSFSR did not only arouse bewilderment but the subsequent negative reaction both on the part of the Soviet Turks having adopted it as the next compulsory migration as well as on the part of the local population who perceived with restraint the idea of this migration since the nation-wide discussion of the Stalin policy of repressions and deportations had presupposed the return of this group to South Georgia. In addition, such informal organizations as "The Memory" taking advantage of the state of the social-economic crisis in the country promoted the crea-

¹² Expedition report by L.B. Ermolov... .

tion of the marked negative attitude to the refugees as to "the next burden over the neck of the longsuffering Russian people".

The further development of the events showed that the latter position appeared to be attractive enough for quite a number of regions. After the massacre of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population in the Ferghana province the Turkish national movement undertook a new measure on organizing and migrating the refugees from Middle Asia. The leaders of the Turko-Meskhetinsky movement made a request for the authorities of the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, Karachaevo-Ingushia, to the governments of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Azerbaijan to adopt and settle the refugees from Middle Asia. But they were refused in the overwhelming majority of the stated regions. For instance, in the Krasnodar territory the local authorities organized quite a campaign aimed at the creating of artificial obstacles to the settling of the Turko-Meskhetinsky refugees. In this connection "some groups of the Turks declared their readiness to commit the acts of self-burning as a token of protest against the outrages of the authorities in the Krasnodar territory."¹³

All together with that it should be recognized that the mentioned region appeared to be in a rather complicated situation due to the fact in Uzbekistan "premeditatedly there were being created conditions for leaving the Turko-Meskhetintsy for other regions of the country and in particular for the Krasnodar territory. The authorities of the republic had failed to inform in advance those to whom the refugees were being moved in special groups."¹⁴ This circumstance drove not only the authorities of the Krasnodar territory into a complicated position but first of all it aggravated the position of the Meskhetinsky Turks themselves.

It is interesting to stress the fact that the leaders of the Crimean-Tatar national movement applied to the Crimean Tatar population of the Krasnodar territory to render all kind of assistance to the Meskhetinsky Turks (with money, sugar, soap, clothes etc.). Due to the fact that the Turks buy houses mainly from the Tatars leaving for the Crimea there was also proclaimed a special apply to the Crimean-Tatar population calling them not to raise the price for the houses they are going to sell to the

¹³ M. Djemilev. "On the position of the Turks-Meskhetintsy in the Krasnodar territory" Express-news items. N 35 (108), 27.8.89.

¹⁴ G. Shipitko "The Commission is at Work" / "Izvestia", 1.7.89. Expedition report by L.B. Ermolov ...

Turks. It is not required to make any comment on the position of the Crimean Tatar population that is being repatriated relative to the deported Turks. The position of the Checheno-Ingushia should be attributed the same way - in spite of its limited possibilities it proposed to settle a portion of the refugees from Uzbekistan directly in the families.

The address of the Meskhetinsky Turks to the different regions of the country with a request to adopt the refugees was met most willingly on the part of Azerbaijan. In spite of the fact that after the events in the Nagorny Karabakh and the subsequent excalation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in the republic the problem of the Azerbaijan refugees from Armenia is very acute. Azerbaijan has agreed to adopt all the Meskhetinsky Turks who wished to settle over its territory and provided them with the lands to choose at their option in the Muganskaia steppe and in that of Djeirai-choi out of which the Turks preferred the latter.

As a result of the Ferghana events there appeared a principal decision on summoning a special commission in the Chamber of Nationality of the USSR Supremen Soviet aimed at "studying the possibilities of satisfying the wishes of the Turko-Meskhetinsky population on the return to their historic motherland from where this small peoples was deported without any grounds"¹⁵.

On the whole the events of 1989 affected considerably the national movement of the Meskhetinsky Turks having given to in the new qualities. The problem having become so acute against the background of the ethnic massacre and new migration has brought this movement to a more severe position on the repatriation problem. This topic sounded with a new force at the X-th congress of the Soviet Turks that was held on the 2nd of September, 1989 on the collective farm of Adigiun of the Saatlinsky region of the Azerbaijan SSR. The number of the congress participants made 5727. In contradistinction to all the preceding ones this congress bore a declarative character that was formulated in the lawful requirements of the Meskhetinsky Turks as to their return to their historic motherland to Georgia. The mood of the main mass of the ethnic group of the 70-80s affected the congress; at the period of the congress being held they were inclined to leave for Turkey if their requirements on the repatriation to Georgia were not satisfied¹⁶.

¹⁵ "To help the people in his trouble" TASS "Izvestia", 15.6.89.

¹⁶ Records presented by the member of the commission ... Ju. Sarvarov.

If in 1986 we could speak only about the possible perspective of such a situation, at present a possible emigration of the Soviet Turks exists in reality. It is quite obvious that if in the nearest future the specific steps on the decision of the Turko-Meskhetinsky problems are not adopted then the further development of the events may become uncontrollable even on the part of the national movement of the Turks-Meskhetintsy themselves.

Summing up a short review of the national movement of the Soviet Turks under the conditions of the modern ethnic processes in the USSR and taking into account the fact that this problem is connected at present first of all with the Caucasian region it would be expedient to designate the possible perspectives and some tendencies of the national-political processes in this zone of the country.

At first, the migration and further concentration of the Meskhetinsky Turks to Azerbaijan do not remove the problem of the repatriation of this ethnic group. Secondly, the stream of the Turko-Meskhetinsky and Azerbaijan refugees to Azerbaijan involves a whole complex of social-economic problems inevitably connected with the problem of the mass migrations. Due to that in the perspective there can arise a problem either on the priority of the Azerbaijan refugees and the necessity of solving the problem on the repatriation of the Turks-Meskhetintsy to their historic motherland to Georgia or in general on the priority of the Turkic-speaking Moslem population as compared to the other ethnic groups in the republic. The latter first of all threatens not only the Armenian population but the Armenian-speaking one¹⁶ in connection with the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict as well as with other non-Moslem non-Turkic-speaking groups.

Thirdly, taking into consideration on the one hand the position of Georgia in the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict and on the other hand the position of Georgia relative to the Turks-Meskhetintsy it is easy to draw a conclusion on the perspective of the complication of the relations between these two republics. And fourthly, bearing in mind that the position of Georgia relative to the Turks-Meskhetintsy in reality reflects in general its position concerning all national minorities living on its territory it has become evident that it concerns a number of neighbouring North-Caucasian peoples.

As a result the perspective of arising a united North-Caucasian national movement directed against the national policy of Georgia appears to be real one. In case the further complication of the inter-nationality

relations in the region takes place the confrontation at the level of the national movement of the Caucasus united also within the frames of various confessions may have rather serious consequences.

Considering the probable perspectives of the development of the national-political processes within the limits of the Caucasion region on the whole and in conformity with Georgia in particular for today, it is evident that as a result of the directional national policy Georgia has appeared to be at a dead lock that in the most serious way threatens the republic with a national isolation in the region. So, under the condition of arising the united North-Caucasian national movement that is opposed to Georgia at first sight it seems inavoidable the formation of its political (and confession) bloc with Armenia that under the present situation is the only possible form of carrying out the adopted course of the national policy. But to create such a bloc Georgia by all means should take the side of Armenia in the Karabakh problem (and informally) and unambiguously acknowledge the justice of the requirements of the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh on the NKD leaving the Azerbaijan SSR. In addition to that the given tsep is politically unacceptable for Georgia since such a position in the Karabakh problem enters into contradiction with domestic national policy of Georgia relative to Abkhazskaia and South-Ossetinskaia national autonomies as well as to any other national minorities of the republic. This in its turn threatens the Georgian-Armenian relations (simultaneously supposing the possibility of the Georgian-Azerbaijan alliance) that besides their principal differency concerning the Karabakh problem may be complicated by the two trends. First of all it is the complication of the Georgian-Armenian relations in the zone of the Abkhoskoe sea coast of the Black Sea since the Armenian population of this zone of the Black Sea since the Armenian population of this zone quite consecutively adopted the side of the Abkhazy in the Gorgian-Abkhazsky conflict. Secondly, in the zone of the South-West of Georgia directly in the Akhaltsikhsky region (i.e. in one of the regions of the historic residing of the Meskhetinsky Turks) where a rather high percent of the indigenous Armenian population had settled there historicaly. One should point out that the mentioned conflict zone has historic roots and from the newest history of the Caucasus it is known that in this region registered were "bloody battles" between the Armenians and Georgians for the right of possessing the province of Akhalzikh before and straight after the Revolution of 1918¹⁷.

¹⁷ It is known that in the course of the new complication of the ethno-politic suituation in Azerbaijan in January 1990 made were threats in the address of the Armenian-speaking Christian population - the Udins.

Proceeding from the above it has become clear why in Georgia today the problem of separating and leaving the USSR is so acute. Probably some national politicians think of this measure as the only possibility of solving the inner republican state problems in the sphere of the national policy and coming out of the dead lock by this manner¹⁸.

However it is necessary to mention that this viewpoint is doubtful enough since by means of the similar steps created is a real threat for Georgia to find itself not only in the regional Caucasian or even wide-nation isolation but in the world political one. It would be conceptual for the republic to change the course of the national policy of the republic from the position of the one-sided strong policy to the many-sided flexible one that would take into account without any discrimination the interests of all the national minorities living on its territory. And as one of the first steps in this respect we should designate the immediate positive decision of the Turko-Meskhetynsky problem because even the fact of such a decision will turn many national problems existing today in the republic from the course of confrontation to that of dialogue.

¹⁸ M.Ibragimbekov "It will be late tomorrow" (The 1st session of the Council on the inter-nationality relations) "The Peoples' Friendship" N 11, 1989, p. 210.

