

Historical aspects of language policy in Abkhazia

The “linguicide,” intentional measures undertaken in order to decrease the vitality (“mortification”) of Caucasian Languages, according to witnesses (A.S. Pushkin, Journey to Erzurum), was determined by the genocide of Caucasian peoples that occurred during the Tsarist war in XIX century. The heaviest blow was carried dealt to Abkhaz-Adyghe ethno-linguistic group.

During the soviet times Russia’s linguistic politics that initially intended some democratization, in reality was transformed to a camouflaged destructive linguistic policy with the ultimate goal to assimilate indigenous peoples and Russify their Arabized alphabets.

For example, under cover of Kulturtrager concern about the Abkhaz language and people some measures were carried out with the aim of programming of negative results in the sphere of public education.

The alphabet remains a conservative phenomenon, serving one or another community during decades. For Abkhaz people 11 alphabets were created from 1862 till 1953.

The creation of 11 alphabets in 91 years for only one nation is a unique historical fact. If we imagine that this occurred in the life of one person (theoretically possible), we can assume that he had to learn a new alphabet every 8 ears, change a new printing base, print all the existing literature using a new alphabet, rewrite a history, prepare documentation etc.

It is to be noted that among 11 Abkhaz alphabets only one is based on Georgian script. 10 Alphabets based on Cyrillic and Latin against one based on Georgian alphabet.

Questionable productivity of Moscow to create numerous Abkhaz alphabets, we can presume that this is not the case when quality is determined by quantity.