

# The Separatist Speech of the Abkhazians in 1965 in Connection with Khukhuti Bghazhba's Book

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## **Abstract:**

The well-known Abkhaz public figure and linguist Khukhuti Bghazhba throughout his career did everything for the improvement of Georgian-Abkhaz relations. For this Abkhazian separatists punished him. Based on primary sources found in the press, this scientific article aims to present the historical truth regarding the opinion shared in the Georgian scientific community that the Georgian side did not support Khukhuti Bghazhba. We have found evidence to contradict this opinion and hope to provide a fact-based perspective on the matter. The Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR and the Abkhazia District Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, the Supreme Council of the Abkhazian SSR, and the body of the Council of Ministers of the Abkhazian SSR "Soviet Abkhazia" ("Voice of Abkhazia" in Georgian since 1990) indeed expressed some support to him, but it was not enough.

Our goals and objectives are to show the positive role of Khukhuti Bghazhba in the Georgian-Abkhazian relationship, to determine what support was given to the Georgian SSR by the then central government, and also in the article of the newspaper "Soviet Abkhazia" by linguist Mirian (Mirneli) Tsikolia.

For the first time, we bring new primary sources from "Soviet Abkhazia" into scientific circulation. The mentioned newspaper, regardless of the party-political conjuncture in it, still represents a kind of record of the social-political and cultural life of the autonomous republic. Also, for the first time in Georgian historiography, „Абхазия в советскую эпоху. Абхазские письма (1947-1989). Сборник документов“ (the materials were collected and published by the odious representative of the Abkhazian separatist movement, historian Igor Marikhuba), the new primary source

contained in this collection of documents, which practically describes in detail May 29, 1965, The meeting of Abkhaz separatists held in Sukhumi. Against Bghazhba. Accordingly, we used the methodology of critical study of sources and research of hermeneutics.

**Keywords:** Abkhazia, separatism, press, article, primary source, analysis.

## Introduction

At the beginning of the 1960s, the Soviet dictatorial regime of Nikita Khrushchev increased pressure on Georgia and in Abkhazia tried to make such personnel changes that would further distance Georgia from the Abkhazian region and pursue an anti-Georgian political path as sharply as possible in the Abkhazian SSR.

Since the 1950s, Khrushchev has much more political tools for this purpose. The process of establishing the Abkhaz ethno dictatorship has begun. New contours of the Russification of the Abkhazian SSR have also been carried out: the writing of the Abkhazian language has been returned to the Slavic-Cyrillic alphabet of the Russian language for several years now. The Russian language is given a dominant role in educational and cultural policy.

The reason for the new wave of nationalist hysteria this time was scientific publications, in which, according to the ideological leaders of Abkhazian separatism, the historical past of the Abkhazian people was "incorrectly covered". The first signs of the upcoming "people's uprising" appeared as early as 1965, when the Abkhazians met with hostility the prominent Abkhazian philologist, linguist, and literary scholar Professor Kh. Bghazhba's publication "Бзыбский диалект абхазского языка" (in the book, the origin of individual Abkhazian surnames was allegedly "misinterpreted") (Папаскири, 2010, 284).

## The separatist speech of the Abkhazians in 1965 regarding Khukhuti Bghazhba's book

Khukhuti Bghazhba was always distinguished by his sympathy for the related Georgian people and singled out positive moments from the Georgian-Abkhazian relationship.

As we learn from the newspaper publications of the Abkhazia District Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, the Supreme Council of the Abkhazian SSR, and the Council of Ministers of the Abkhazian SSR, Khukhuti Bghazhba received some support from the Central Government of the Georgian SSR after the mentioned work, and also in connection with the 50th anniversary, candidate of philological sciences M. Tsikolia has published an article in which Kh. Bghazhba is mentioned positively. According to the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR of December 9, 1964, Kh. Bghazhba was awarded with an honorary certificate of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR. "For long-lasting and fruitful scientific and public work, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of D. Gulia, director of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of Abkhazia named after Gulia. Khukhuti Solomonis-dze Bghazhba be awarded with an honorary certificate of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR". The decree is signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR G. Dzotsenidze and Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR Z. Kvatchadze (Soviet Abkhazia, Dec. 13, 1964, 1).

On December 13, 1964, in the newspaper Soviet Abkhazia, candidate of philological sciences M. Tsikolia,<sup>1</sup> Kh. In the published article related to Bghazhba's 50th anniversary, "Famous scientist and public figure Kh. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bghazhba's birth", along with other works, Kh. Bghazhba's resonant publication "Бзыбский диалект Абхазского языка" is also highlighted by Kh. Bghazhba's substantiation of the relationship of the languages of the Iberian-

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<sup>1</sup> Mikheil (nickname Mirnel) Tsikolia was a well-known Georgian linguist in Abkhazia, an employee of "Aibga" for many years.

Caucasian family to Georgian and Abkhazian and the merits of the mentioned author in the development of Georgian-Abkhaz socio-political and cultural relations.

"It has been 50 years since the birth of the prominent Abkhaz scientist, literary critic, and public figure Khukhuti Solomonis-dze Bghazhba. Kh. Bghazhba was born in 1914 in the village of Gufi, Ochamchiri district. In 1933, after graduating from secondary school in Sukhumi, he entered V. i. He graduated from the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute named after Lenin in 1937. In 1941, he defended his thesis to obtain the scientific degree of candidate of philological sciences. From 1937-1938, he worked as the chairman of the board of the Writers' Union of Abkhazia. From January 1942 Kh. Bghazhba works at the Institute of Abkhazian Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the SSR of Georgia - first as a senior scientific employee and head of the language and literature department, then as a deputy director in the scientific department, and then from 1953 until now, he is the director of the institute. Kh. About 50 published works belong to Bghazhba's pen, in which current issues of the Abkhazian language, literature, and folklore are covered. More important among them are the monographs "The Bzif Dialect of the Abkhazian Language", "Environmental particles in the Abkhazian Verb", "Lexical Encounters of the Abkhazian Language with the Georgian Languages", research: "On issues of Ethnonyms and Toponymy of Abkhazia", "From the history of Abkhazian writing", "Abkhazian literature" (critical Essays), "Dimitri Gulia" (critical-biographical essay), "About the Abkhazian heroic epic", issues of Abkhazian orthography" and others. In the capital work "Bzif dialect of the Abkhazian language (research and texts), published by academician Arn. With Chikobava's edition, the author raised several important issues about the Abkhazian language and its dialects, determined the role of the Bzifuri dialect in the development of the Abkhazian literary language, emphasized its importance in the Iberian-Caucasian language family. In the light of the historical-comparative study of the issues, the author reveals the peculiarities of the Bzif dialect, which are of essential importance in solving several problems of the phonetic system, grammatical structure, and lexical composition of the modern Abkhazian language.

It is worth noting that Kh. Bghazhba's second work - "From the History of Abkhaz Writing", here the author aims to give us a more or less complete picture of the history of writing in Abkhazia. In this regard, Kh. This study of Bghazhba represents the first attempt in the scientific literature. In the article "Common Roots (Stems) in Abkhazian and Georgian Languages" Kh. Bghazhba raises the issue of the relationship between the Abkhazian language with the Georgian language. Kh. Bghazhba's pen also includes other linguistic works, for example, "On the relative relationship of Abkhazian and Kartvelian languages", Bzifuri texts, etc. Kh. Bghazhba contributed to the study of the ethnography of Abkhazia. Among the specialists, the research on "Issues of Ethnography and Toponymy of Abkhazia", which was published in the "Proceedings" of the Institute of Abkhazia, was highly appreciated. Kh. Bghazhba taught A. for several years. M. Abkhazian language and literature, folklore, introduction to linguistics, etc. in Gorki Pedagogical Institute. It is what D. of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR of Georgia. i. Director of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of Abkhazia named after Gulia, Kh. Bghazhba successfully directs the scientific research work and shows constant care in the training of scientists. Kh. Bghazhba takes an active part in public and party work. He was elected as a deputy of the Supreme Council of the Abkhaz SSR of the first, second, third, and fourth convocations, and in 1959 and 1963 as a deputy of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR. Kh. Bghazhba is the deputy chairman of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR, K. of Georgia. P. Member of the District Committee of Abkhazia, deputy chairman of the Abkhazia branch of the Society of the Georgian SSR "Knowledge", member of the Bureau of the Board of the Union of Writers of the Abkhazian SSR. Kh. Bghazhba was awarded with the Order of Honor and the medal "1941-1945". For brave work in the Great Patriotic War", he is an honored figure of the science of the Abkhazian SSR" (Soviet Abkhazia, Dec. 13, 1964, 4).

On May 29, 1965, St. A meeting of Abkhaz "workers" was held in Sukhumi, which was attended by more than 1,000 people. The chairman of the meeting was the representative of Abkhazian workers,

the candidate of biological sciences, the senior scientist-collaborator of the Sukhumi experimental station of the Union Plant Production Institute K. Vardania. The secretary of the meeting was M. Teacher of the Abkhaz language and literature department of Sukhumi State Pedagogical Institute named after Gorki, a member of the Communist Party A. sitting M. gave a speech at the meeting, Student-youth<sup>2</sup> section of the Gorky Pedagogical Institute of Sukhumi. 1. Kolya Gunba from the village of Abgarkhiku, Gudauti district, a 60-year-old collective farmer of the "Apsni" collective farm made a speech at the meeting. 2. Iason Tharba from Gudauti region, farmer of "Durifshi" collective farm. 3. Ermolai Ajinjali, 35 years old, a miner from Tkvarcheli. 4. Sergey Tsushba, Kolmeurne of Abgarkhiku village. 5. Jinjua, originally from the Ochamchir district, second-year student at Sukhumi State Pedagogical Institute. 6. Khajarat Ladaria, a village from Abgarkhiku. 7. N. Agrba, a teacher at Gudauti district boarding school with 27 years of experience. 8. Ioseb Khagushi, Kolmeurne of Zvandrifshi village, Gudauti district. 9. Mirod Gozhba, Kolmeurne of Khuapi village, Gudauti region. 10. Kinish Ladaria, 70-year-old Kolmeurne from the village of Abgarkhiku. 11. Bocha Ajinjala, a 5th-year student from Ochamchiri district. 12. V. Chanba, from Ochamchiri district. 13. Vladimir Smiri, an employee of the trade union of Abkhazia. At the meeting, the representatives of the Abkhaz community made a critical speech. against Bhazhba and his book was condemned (Abkhaziya v sovetskuyu epokhu, 1994, 138-143).

It seems that despite the support expressed by the Georgian side and the awarding of an honorary certificate by the central government of the Georgian SSR, the support of the scientist was not enough. D. of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR of Georgia replaced Kh. Bghazhba. The post of director of Abkhazian language, literature, and history was named after Gulia (Папаскири, 2010, 284).

## Conclusion

As a result of our discovery of new primary sources of the press, the opinion shared in Georgian historiography regarding the fact that the Georgian side did not show any support for Khukhuti Bghazhba was rejected. We can only partially share Levan Izoria's point of view {Izoria, 2015, 48}. We cannot fully share this point of view because, as the new primary sources identified by us in Georgian historiography, the press materials show that the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR, after its high-profile publication, Kh. Baghazhba was awarded with a certificate of honor and an article supporting him was published in the newspaper Sovjeti Abkhazeti. However, it seems that the aggressive reaction and pressure of part of the intelligentsia of his nationality was of such a large scale, and provoked by the Kremlin, that they had to punish him and remove him from the post he held.

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<sup>2</sup> It was specially made to show the confrontation of Abkhazian youth against the professor.

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