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Greeks in Azerbaijan: epochal look at history and modernity

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In modern political science and social sciences, interest in cross-cultural research in the framework of various scientific methodologies is growing. The article is devoted to the study of one of the most pressing problems of our time, which is of great interest to Azerbaijan and Greece. This article describes in detail the historical situation in which the Greeks were forced to settle in the Caucasus. The article discusses the main reasons for the creation of the first Greek settlements in Azerbaijan. The author in a broad context considers the activities of the Greeks in Azerbaijan. The article analyzes the main reasons for the unification of the Greeks of Azerbaijan, and the creation of the Greek Philanthropic (charity) society. Moreover, the article focuses on the activities of the theater group "Evripidis", operating in this society. It should be noted that the football team "Embros" (Forward) was a source of pride for the Greeks living in Baku. The article also mentions the repression and mass arrests of the "Father of the Nations" against the Greeks. At the same time, it is emphasized that, as a result of Stalin's policy, the Greeks living in Baku were resettled in the deserts of Kazakhstan in difficult conditions. The article analyzes the political motives of the resettlement of Greeks from Azerbaijan. At the same time, a large place in the article is devoted to the recollections of Azerbaijani Greeks forced to resettle in inhuman conditions. Documents and their photographs from the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History and from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History on the resettlement of the Greeks, and according to the NKVD Directive No. 50215 of December 11, 1937, protocols No. 46, 61, 91 of the sentences of the Greeks living in the Azerbaijan SSR were first presented the scientific community of our country. The article also analyzes the integration of the Greeks into Azerbaijani society and their contacts with the multicultural environment of Azerbaijan. The article also discusses the activities of the Greek community "ARGO", created by the Greeks living in the country after the restoration of independence of Azerbaijan.

Keywords: *Greece, dialogue between civilizations, cultural diversity, historical proximity, intercultural communication, ethnocultural values, humanitarian relations, ethnic tolerance, multicultural society, mutual understanding, diaspora activity*

Греки в Азербайджані: епохальний погляд на історію і сучасність

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У сучасній політології та суспільних науках зростає інтерес до кросскультурних досліджень у межах різної наукової методології. Стаття присвячена дослідженню однієї з найактуальніших проблем сучасності, яка представляє великий інтерес для Азербайджану і Греції. У цій статті докладно описується історична ситуація, в якій греки були змушені оселитися на Кавказ. У статті розглядаються основні причини створення перших грецьких поселень в Азербайджані. Автор в широкому контексті розглядає діяльність греків в Азербайджані. У статті аналізується основні причини об'єднання греків Азербайджану і створення Грецького філантропічного (благодійного) суспільства. При цьому в статті особлива увага приділяється діяльності театральної групи «Евріпідіс», що діє при цьому суспільстві. Слід зазначити, що футбольна команда «Емброс» (Уперед) була джерелом гордості греків, які проживають в Баку. У статті також згадується про репресії і масові арешти «Батька народів» проти греків. У той же час підкреслюється, що в результаті сталінської політики греки, що проживають в Баку, були переселені в пустелі Казахстану у важких умовах. У статті аналізуються політичні мотиви переселення греків з Азербайджану. У той же час велике місце в статті відведено спогадам азербайджанських греків, вимушених переселятися в нелюдських умовах. Документи та їх фотографії з Російського державного архіву новітньої історії і з Російського державного архіву

соціально-політичної історії про переселення греків, і відповідно до директиви НКВС СРСР № 50215 від 11 грудня 1937 року протоколи № 46, 61, 91 вироків греків, що проживають в Азербайджанській РСР вперше представлені науковому співтовариству нашої країни. У статті також аналізується інтеграція греків в азербайджанське суспільство й їх контакти з мультикультурної середовищем Азербайджану. У статті також розглядається діяльність грецької громади «АРГО», створеної греками, що проживають в країні після відновлення незалежності Азербайджану.

Ключові слова: Греція, діалог між цивілізаціями, культурне розмаїття, історична близькість, міжкультурна комунікація, етнокультурні цінності, гуманітарні відносини, етнічна толерантність, мультикультурне суспільство, взаєморозуміння, діяльність діаспори

Греки в Азербайджане: эпохальный взгляд на историю и современность

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В современной политологии и общественных науках возрастает интерес к кросскультурным исследованиям в рамках различной научной методологии. Статья посвящена исследованию одной из самых актуальных проблем современности, которая представляет большой интерес для Азербайджана и Греции. В данной статье подробно описывается историческая ситуация, в которой греки были вынуждены поселиться на Кавказ. В статье рассматриваются основные причины создания первых греческих поселений в Азербайджане. Автор в широком контексте рассматривает деятельность греков в Азербайджане. В статье анализируются основные причины объединения греков Азербайджана, и создания Греческого филантропического (благотворительного) общества. При этом в статье особое внимание уделяется деятельности театральной группы «Эврипидис», действующей при этом обществе. Следует отметить, что футбольная команда «Эмброс» (Вперед) была источником гордости греков, проживающих в Баку. В статье также упоминается о репрессиях и массовых арестах «Отца народов» против греков. В то же время подчеркивается, что в результате сталинской политики греки, проживающие в Баку, были переселены в пустыни Казахстана в тяжелых условиях. В статье анализируются политические мотивы переселения греков из Азербайджана. В то же время большое место в статье отведено воспоминаниям азербайджанских греков, вынужденных переселяться в бесчеловечных условиях. Документы и их фотографии из Российского государственного архива новейшей истории и из Российского государственного архива социально-политической истории о переселении греков, и согласно директивы НКВД СССР № 50215 от 11 декабря 1937 года протоколы № 46, 61, 91 приговоров греков, проживающих в Азербайджанской ССР, впервые представлены научному сообществу нашей страны. В статье также анализируется интеграция греков в азербайджанское общество и их контакты с мультикультурной средой Азербайджана. В статье также рассматривается деятельность греческой общины «АРГО», созданной греками, проживающими в стране после восстановления независимости Азербайджана.

Ключевые слова: Греция, диалог между цивилизациями, культурное разнообразие, историческая близость, межкультурная коммуникация, этнокультурные ценности, гуманитарные отношения, этническая толерантность, мультикультурное общество, взаимопонимание, деятельность диаспоры

The main goal of the research.

In modern times, there is a great need for a thorough study of the relations between Azerbaijan and Greece in the humanitarian sphere. Because humanitarian relations always play a “locomotive” role in the emerging and developing diplomatic, political and economic relations between the countries. The arrival of Greeks in Azerbaijan, their settlement in this area, and then their resettlement under terrible conditions during the repression is a unique event. It should be noted

that the study of the ancient history of the Greeks in Azerbaijan is of particular importance. This article discusses the historical roots and current state of cultural ties between Azerbaijan and Greece. The main objective of the study is to shed new light on the Azerbaijani-Greek relations based on the materials we collected and help to further strengthen existing ties.

The investigated level of the theme.

The history of the Greeks in Azerbaijan was first touched upon by the Greek historian Socratis

Angelidis in his book "Greeks of Azerbaijan". In addition, the book "Greeks in Azerbaijan" by the honorary head of the community of the Greeks in Azerbaijan Ivan Pilidzhev is a very important research work on the Azerbaijani-Greek relations.

The method of the research.

During the study, we used descriptive, comparative and historical methods to solve the problem.

Statement of the main material.

The Caucasus, as the few regions in the world, combines the diversity of cultures with a rich historical past with a variegated ethnic map. For centuries, it has attracted the close attention of Europeans. At the end of the 18th–19th centuries, there was a massive migration to the Caucasus of representatives of European peoples. The region has developed the conditions for rapid social and economic development while maintaining ethnocultural identity, ethnocultural values and ethnographic features. As a result, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, European ethnic communities formed in the Caucasus. The hospitable residents of the Caucasus have opened their doors to all the peoples who are forced to settle here. The Greeks also were among the peoples who took refuge in the Caucasus. The majority of Greeks living in the Caucasus originally came from the southern coast of the Black Sea. But what factors made the Caucasus attractive to Greek settlers? Why did the Greeks choose the Caucasus? Where did the first Greeks who came to Azerbaijan choose to settle? Let's look at the history to answer all these questions. In the VII century BC. the southern coast of the Black Sea was settled by the Greeks. The ancient Greeks called the Black Sea the Scythian,

since in ancient times the Northern Black Sea Coast was settled by Scythians, who had their own harbors in many places on the Black Sea coast. But there was another name – "Axenos Pontos" (ancient greek – Ἀξενος Πόντος), which meant "Inhospitable sea" (Vinogradov, 1958 p. 5). Later, after the successful development of the coast by Greek colonists, the sea became known as "Efxinos Pontos" (ancient greek – Εὔξεινος Πόντος) "Friendly Sea". The importance of this sea in the economic life of the people was great. The city-states of ancient Greece, creating colonies of agricultural and trade directions on the shores of Efxinos Pontos in Asia Minor, pursued both economic and political goals. They mitigated social problems in Greece itself by resettling the poor. Like their better-known mother-cities along Asia Minor's Aegean shores, the Pontic cities produced great philosophers like Diogenes of Sinope, geographers like Strabo, and many other people of learning.

From the 6th to the 15th century AD, when Pont became one of the seven parts of the Byzantine Empire, the Greeks living in this territory, in particular, in the northeast of Asia Minor (Samsun, Kerasunt, Trapezund, Sinop with the adjacent settlements), became known as "romeas", i.e. Roman subjects, and the Pontic dialect became the official language. The language of the descendants of the Greeks of Asia Minor who migrated in the 19th and early 20th centuries mainly in the Caucasus, Pontus or romeas dialect of the Greek language and differs significantly from Hellenic, modern Greek, the official language of modern Greece. A smaller part of the Pontus are the Urums who speak a special dialect of the Turkish language. The Greeks are Orthodox Christians.

Photo 1. A rough outline of the Pontus region. Source: (University of Texas Libraries, 1983)

The first Greeks, who appeared in Azerbaijan in the 40s and 50s of the 19th century, were miners (Αγγριλίδης, 2006, p. 26). The first immigrants in the Caucasus, mainly in the territory of Georgia, appeared after the Russian-Turkish wars. In Azerbaijan, the first Greeks settled in the village of Mehmana (Karabakh), where, "at the request of the parishioners", the Karabakh commandant, maj. Kalachevsky, on May 23, 1830, petitioned the Exarch of Georgia to appoint the "Urum Greek", established in the Karabakh province, a priest, "because their priests they died and there was no one to celebrate the demands of the peasants, to marry, and this could affect the moral level of those who moved" (Pilidzhev, 2015, p. 4). The request was completed, and Archpriest Vasily Andrianov was sent to the Greek settlers in the village of Mehmana (Chitlov, 2000, p. 334). In the middle of the XIX

century, a number of Greek miners was noted in the area of Ordubad and Dashkesan. Many Greeks were builders – bricklayers, carpenters, working on seasonal jobs as "migrant workers". There are references to the Greek builders of Orthodox churches in the middle of the XIX century. So "in Baku in 1850–57. the construction of the St. Nicholas Cathedral for 400 worshipers, inside the fortress at the Shamakhi Gate near the guardhouse, was executed under the contract by the Greeks of Trapezont, Semyon Gitera and Charalampy Palistov" (Yunitskiy, 1906, p. 16). The cathedral was 20 sagene high (43 meters). "The Greeks Murad Kharlamov, Dmitry Ilyev and Vasily Egorov living in the town of Shamakhi expressed a desire to build churches in the village of Alty-Agach according to the plan they presented" (Yunitskiy, 1906, p. 96). The stone temple was built in 1854-55 and was

Photo 2. Descendants of the first settlers. Mehmana village (Karabakh) Source: (Pilidzhev, 2015, p. 6)

consecrated in the name of St. Nicholas. According to the census conducted in 1897 in the native language, we see that 558 Greeks lived in the Elizavetpol province and only 2 in Zakatala district. The 1897 census in the definition of ethnicity was based on the data of the native language, i.e. only Greek-speaking romeas were counted. An interesting fact is that in the 1897 census in the Baku province it was noted from various peoples of the European communities, but there was no single Greek (Zeynalova, 2013, p. 169). The main part of the Greeks who migrated to Azerbaijan fell at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. When relocating often for the convenience of pronunciation, the surnames changed to Russian. Later, mainly in the city of Baku, which had experienced an industrial boom, the Greeks of Trapezunta, Kars and the villages surrounding them, as well as migrants from Georgia, the North Caucasus, Elisavetpolsky province and Greece

began to move in search of work and a better share. They found their home in the hospitable and international land of Azerbaijan. Among them were bricklayers, handicraftsmen, artisans and small traders, intellectuals (doctors, teachers). Many Greeks were bakers and had their own bakery. To solve internal problems, there was a need to unite, and at the first meeting of the Greeks of Baku it was decided to create a Greek Philanthropic (Charity) Society. "In the petition filed on December 7, 1907 to the mayor's office to obtain permission, it was noted that there are approximately 800 Greeks in Baku, most of whom, having moved from Asia Minor, do not know Russian and cannot send church services. For this reason, the newly created society asked the local authorities to allow the Greeks to open the Greek Church, and also, according to the Charter filed with the request, to allow poor members of the community to help, open a school, etc. Forgiveness was signed by the chairman of the

society A.N. Afanasiadi and his deputy, L.A. Elefterov. The founders of the society were Macharidis F.I., Avramidis F.N., Zanetos N.G., Papadopoulos I.I. and Mikhailidis D.D. The answer to the request was received in the affirmative (Kavkazskiy calendar, 1911, p. 524). Since then, the Greek Philanthropic Society began its charitable activities, the purpose of which was to preserve the ethnos, language, age-old customs and traditions; assisting the poor through the distribution of money from auctions, charitable performances and contributions from the wealthy Greeks, among whom M. Moisiadi, A. Gennadi, who left for Greece in 1917, J. Lipiridi (repressed in 1937), and others were distinguished (Pilidzhev, 2019). In 1923, according to statistics, 1,168 Greeks lived in Azerbaijan only among the urban population, and 58 in the village of Mehmana (Angelidis). The Greeks also lived in Ganja, Sabirabad, Nakhichevan and other cities. But the main part – 914 Greeks, of whom 230 were Greek-subjects, lived in Baku. There is evidence that 734 of them considered Greek as their first language of communication, and most of them were literate (Itogi Vsesoyuznoy gorodskoy perepisi 1923 g., 1927, p. 46). There was at that time and the Greek Consulate, located opposite the current theater of Russian Drama, on the street Molokanskaya (Khagani). The reason for the large number of Greek nationals was that part of the Asia Minor Greeks retained Greek citizenship, hoping to eventually move to Greece. The other part is the Greeks, who moved to Baku from Greece before the revolution. Most of the Greeks of Baku lived in the center – next to the current Baku State Circus, on Basin Street (Fuzuli), Torgovaya (Nizami), Shamakhinka. The philanthropic society was located in a two-story building at 22 Millionnaya Street, opposite the current Baku hotel. In the courtyard system on two floors there is a governing body, a club, a Greek theater, a school, a library and a church. The school hall at the time of study was divided by partitions, which were filmed during concert and theatrical performances. Adjacent to this room is a room of 15 square meters. served as a church (closed in 1928) According to the population census in Baku in 1926, there were 700 Greeks (Volkova, 1968, p. 48). According to the memoirs of the former Baku citizen, 86-year-old professor of musicology N.F. Tiftikidi, now living in Moscow, "clearly, in the established rhythm, the church, school, club and board of society functioned. Priest Ioann Damianidi (repressed in 1937 along with two sons) served in the church in Greek on Saturdays,

Sundays and public holidays. In the 92nd Greek four-year school, as of 1921, there were 89 pupils (43 boys and 46 girls). At school (I studied there for four years – from 1928 to 1932), classes were taught in Greek by the teacher E. Pavlidi (repressed in 1937), E. Fulidi and others. Since 1924, the head of the school and the chairman of the board has been a highly cultured, impressive, extremely strict and demanding Evstafy Anastasiadi (repressed in 1937). Together with his deputy governing board P. Khaldoyanidi (repressed in 1937), he performed a complex of important and useful things: he was responsible for performances, evenings of rest, exhibitions, meetings, auctions, lotteries. The spirit of brotherhood, friendship and goodwill to each other always reigned in his small office. From the affairs at the club, as if from a stone thrown into the water, there were waves of good mood and good feelings, which for a long time charged everyone with positive emotions. Everything that happened in the club was experienced over and over again in the following days, everything was certainly discussed hotly and everywhere – at work, at school, in families, receiving one or another grade. What was happening there? In my moral, aesthetic value and educational role, I would put the theater in the first place" (Tiftikidi, 2015, p. 26). The theater in society was unprofessional. His acting basis was made up of teachers and students of the Greek school. Representatives of other professions who are attracted to Melpomene were also attracted. They were united in the theatrical society "Evripidis". The most active performers were G. Macharidi, K. Sevastopulo (repressed in 1937), Panaila Macharidi, as well as schoolchildren O. Anastasiadi, I. Lipiridi, P. Kaykhanidi and A. Khaldoyanidi. The performances were staged by professional directors E. Fulidi and her husband F. Onufriadi, who arrived in Baku from Batumi. They made a lot of productions on themes from Greek mythology, ancient legends and tales. For their reasons, the performances "Beautiful Elena", "The Adventures of Odyssey", "The Trojan War" were staged. The spectacles were performed in modern Greek and less often in Pontic. Thus, Pontics, "not burdened" with education (and there were most of them), discovered for themselves new worlds: the boundless world of the sublime and beautiful, the richest world of ideas and feelings of their great ancestors, who for centuries admired people. The repertoire of the theater also included performances in Russian and scenes from contemporary life. The latter were performed by a group called "live newspaper" – a form of political

propaganda work of the Bolsheviks that was very common in the 1920s. Theatrical performances were confined, as a rule, to revolutionary and religious holidays. Visiting performances was paid. The interest in theatrical productions was immense, the hall was always crowded. It is difficult to describe the atmosphere prevailing in the hall. The usual rumble before the start of the performance, when visitors, welcoming their acquaintances, asked the traditional question "pos iste?", Gave way to a blessed silence when the curtain was lifted, broken depending on the content of the play with explosions of laughter from the audience, sighing sympathy for the heroes of the play, then applause, which peaked at the end of the performance, when the admiring audience tried their best to thank the artists for the

joy of communicating with the beautiful. It is impossible to overestimate the enormous aesthetic, moral, and educational role of the performances for the audience, among which were a lot of yesterday's hereditary peasants who were unaware of the existence of such a miracle from miracles as stage art. For many of them, the performances turned into a "school" for the study of modern Greek. A different range of feelings, other emotions gave rise to what happened at the club after the end of the performance. Almost every theatrical performance had its continuation, which everyone eagerly awaited, especially the youth. In the hall, instantly and eagerly converted by her (all the chairs parted along the walls in such a way that a large space was freed), a new mass-action of the Pontic dances began, in

First row from left to right

Damianidi Georgiy Ivanovic
Ioannidi Dmitry Fomich
Simforov Dionis

number 2
number 1
number 12

Second row

Ioannidi Dmitry Fedorovich
Kokinos Jura
Papandopulo Georgiy Dmitrievich

number 5
number 9
number 13

Third row

Macharidis Georgiy Kiryakovich
Mavromatidi Ivan Fedorovich
Ivanov Georgiy Mikhailovich
Ivanov Leonid Mikhailovich
Damianidi Konstantin Ivanovich
Beglyarov Alec
Christodoulidi Nikos Antonovich
Kogstantinidi Konstantin Ivanovich

team captain
number 7
number 11
number 8
number 3
number 10
number 6
number 4

Photo 3. Football team "Embros" season 1928-1929, Baku. Source: (Pilidzhev, 2015)

which almost everyone was present: the artists who played the show and former spectators (except for the old people – they watched what was happening) (Tiftikidi, 2015, p. 26–29).

The pride of the Baku Greeks was the sports society and the Embros football team ("Forward"), which included the brothers G. and K. Damianidi, G. Papandopulo, G. Macharidi, D. Simforov, J. Kokinos, I. Mavromatidi, N. Christodulidi and others.

In 1937, the Pontic culture center in Baku was closed. Everything that united and united people

for three decades was lost. Dark years have begun for many nationalities of international Azerbaijan, and first of all for the indigenous nation. Mass repressions have begun that swept the whole country. The beginning of the repressions was laid down by Directive No. 50215 of December 11, 1937, signed by the People's Commissar of the Interior of the USSR N. Yezhov. She reported that the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (PCIA) authorities had exposed and must immediately eliminate a wide network of Greek nationalist, espionage, sabotage, insurgent, wrecking organizations whose ultimate

goal is the elimination of Soviet power in the densely populated Greeks in the territory of the Soviet Union and the establishment of a bourgeois fascist state. The Commission of the PCIA of the USSR and the Procurator of the USSR ("supreme deuce" consisting of the people's commissar of internal affairs N.Ezhov and the procurator of the USSR A.Vyshinsky) reviewed the lists received along the "Greek line" as part of the operation against the Greeks from various regions of the Soviet Union. In 90–95 % of cases, the death sentence was imposed on those arrested. A special meeting of the PCIA of the USSR and the Prosecutor of the USSR (in the same composition as the Commission) sentenced to imprisonment in labor camps (Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyi arhiv noveyshey istorii (RGANI)). Directive No. 50215 was declassified on April 12, 2006 at the personal request of Ivan Juha and President of the Association of Greek Public Associations of the Russian Federation Ivan Savvidy by the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service Russian Federation. According to the documents provided by the central archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, it can be seen that, in the Azerbaijan SSR, the order of the PCIA directive No. 50215 of December 11, 1937 contained three protocols. In accordance with Protocol No. 46 (dated February 7, 1938), were sentenced to death, and to correctional labor camps 9, under Protocol No. 61 (of February 15, 1938) 10, under Protocol No. 91 (of March 22, 1938) 12 Greeks (Protokoly Komissii NKVD SSSR i Prokurora Soyuzo SSR po grecheskoy linii).

The precursor of the upcoming arrests of the

Greeks in Baku was the sudden disappearance of the famous pianist Yannis Karayanidi in the city of posters. N.F. Tiftikidi recalls: "I remember well that until December 1937, the streets of Baku were full of posters announcing the upcoming concerts of Y. Karayanidi. I also remember that these posters suddenly disappeared. This happened because Yannis was repressed and spent 18 years in a concentration camp. In December 1937, in Baku, the bodies of violence in one night arrested the father, the father-in-law, the husband and brother-in-law of the artist of the Greek theater Agapi Khaldoyanidi. None of them returned, all disappeared, like a needle in a haystack" (Tiftikidi, 1996). How did the country react to these developments? Well, of course, not all, but at least those cities where the mass arrests of the Greeks could not go unnoticed. In Baku, the day after the arrest of the Khaldoyanidi family, three hundred thousand residents took to the streets. Alas, not to express solidarity with A. Khaldoyanidi. The country rejoiced on the occasion of the brilliant victory of the bloc of communists and non-partisans in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. According to official figures, for the first week (from December 15 to December 21, 1937), 5175 Greeks were arrested throughout the country. In Azerbaijan, 36 Greeks were arrested (Dzhuha, 2006). From archival documents it can be seen that "only from 11 to 25 December, out of 904 Greeks living in Azerbaijan, 35 people were arrested. And the "operation" itself lasted until April 15, 1938, and these months were considered the most "shooting". Most of those arrested were prosecuted on false charges of belonging to an "underground sabotage

Photo 4. Directive of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 50215. December 11, 1937. Source: Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI).

and rebel organization" (Tiftikidi, 2003). However, even knowledge of the Greek language or the desire to learn it was considered a crime. In 1939, some families who remained in Greek citizenship managed to leave for Greece by steamboats from Batumi and Odessa. This resettlement was facilitated by the Greek Embassy in the USSR.

In 1942, the first expulsion of the Greeks, including the Greeks of Azerbaijan, to a special settlement in Northern Kazakhstan and Siberia was carried out. The second mass expulsion came in peacetime. In 1949, tens of thousands of Greeks, mostly from the Caucasus, were sent to South Kazakhstan. In Baku, this happened on the night of June 13–14, when hundreds of Greeks were given only one hour to gather. And further they were waited by a long terrible way in freight cars in the steppe

of Kazakhstan. In the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) adopted in May 1949, the deportation of the Greeks was explained by "the aims of cleaning the Black Sea coast and the Caucasus from politically unreliable elements". Here is what Dmitry Simforidi writes in his memoirs: "They brought us to the cattle platform in Keshla, where cattle are usually unloaded. Filed a car for unloading to one of the freight cars standing for loading. We had to unload and plunge into the railway carriage, where even without us it was already crowded. What nightmare, in the rush of his zeal, of over-fulfillment of his plans came to be seen, at least from what was brought and laid in the middle of the carriage of one dying old man. After a comparative long stop, we

Photo 5. Strictly secret. (From the Special Folder) The decision of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks "On the eviction of Greek citizens, former Greek citizens, who are not currently citizenship, and former Greek citizens who were admitted to Soviet citizenship". Minutes No.69 Meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of May 17, 1949 Source: (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)

were taken to Alyat, where the same covered wagons with displaced people from Georgia and Armenia were waiting. In Alyat, Greek carriages were allocated, made up one echelon, and we moved north - accompanied by armed soldiers" (Dzhuha, 2006, 61–62).

As a result of the deportation, hundreds of Greeks in Azerbaijan lost their small homeland, lost their apartments, decades of accumulated property. There were also human losses in the unbearable conditions of transfer, which lasted more than two weeks. In his article "The Shooting of the Greek Cultural Center in Baku" N. Tiftiki writes: "In the 1930s, the "heart" of the Pontic culture center of Baku ceased to beat, which possessed tremendous magical attractiveness primarily because there everything: schooling, church service, meetings, performances, concerts and evenings of rest were marvelous the musicality and magnificence of the Greek language. Everything that united people was lost: Greek, joint singing in the church choir, group Pontic dances, for the performance of which it was necessary to hold hands. That which united all Greeks, children and old people, men and women, poor and rich, educated and illiterate, ceased to exist. It was this unification of people that was not part of the plans of the Bolshevik Mafia and its leader, who perfectly assimilated and realized the main principle of tyrants of all times – "divide and rule". He severed all those who "joined hands" in order to make it easier to deal with them one by one. And he achieved tremendous, unprecedented success in defeating the Pontic culture, which had been created for centuries, in all the regions of the Greeks' compact residence. This was done very quickly and easily, since the script and direction of the rout were in the same hands, in the hands of the executioner Stalin. And there came a long grave silence, and paralysis of human feelings began among an entire people, distinguished by an inexhaustible vitality. So the path of all the Greek diasporas ended tragically in the USSR. Thus the great light

and heat-rich hearth was extinguished; near which warmed all the Greeks of Baku. Thus, the wonderful Greek center of culture in the capital of Azerbaijan was "shot" (Tiftikidi, 2015, 32–33). After the liberation of the Greeks from the special settlement regime in Central Asia, Kazakhstan and other places of the USSR, they began to look for a permanent place of residence. There were moods of departure to Greece (Keshanidi, 2013). In 1990-1992, during the times of political instability and economic recession, more than 100 Greeks left Baku and Sumgait, mainly to Greece, and almost all, with the exception of 2–3 old people, left the village of Mehmana. In the future, after H. Aliyev came to power, the situation stabilized. In independent Azerbaijan, in the conditions of a democratized society, the Diasporas of national minorities became more active, and the opportunity to create communities appeared. The Embassy of Greece was opened in Azerbaijan in 1993, and in July 1994 the Baku Diaspora was no longer divided, but on the initiative of the Ambassador of Greece to Azerbaijan P. Caracasis, the Greek Cultural Center was opened, which after several decades united the Greeks of Azerbaijan again. In the beginning there were difficulties with the search for Greek families of old-timers and their descendants, since almost six decades of separation have made themselves felt. In 1997, the center had about 100 families and was transformed into the Greek society "Argo". The community, together with the embassy workers, celebrates the national and religious holidays of Greece, and again, after a long break, is reborn (Pilidzhaev, 2009, p. 103) Today, according to community statistics (far from complete), the diaspora – 535 people, i.e. 176 families, mainly living in Baku (there are families in Sumgait, Khachmaz, Quba, Kakh, Ganja), differs from the pre-war, representing an almost uniform community since mixed marriages among the Greeks at that time were rare. Today's Greek diaspora in Azerbaijan is a small part of the descendants of the pre-

war period, as well as immigrants from the post-war decades – from Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and other republics. As a result of natural assimilation, many of them are half and a quarter Greeks, often with non-Greek surnames and names. Almost completely lost Pontic language. But each of the representatives of the community is proud of their belonging to the Greek nation, at the same time being a patriot of Azerbaijan. This is evidenced by this fact that in recent years, emigration has almost stopped - only a small number of Greeks left Azerbaijan, unlike the situation in neighboring republics. This is facilitated by a stable situation and the goodwill of the Azerbaijani people. A favorable international atmosphere at one time contributed to the integration of the Greeks and the manifestation of their natural inclinations - a craving for knowledge, hard work. Over a century-long history of the Diaspora, many of them have made a worthy contribution to the formation of Azerbaijan.

Conclusions.

This article conducted research in the historical, political and humanitarian spheres on Azerbaijani-Greek relations and determined new scientific results. Thus, summing up some of the results, it can be said that the Greeks living in Azerbaijan for centuries have not passed an easy way, but they currently constitute a kind of bridge between Greece and Azerbaijan.

Presidents of the Hellenic Republic Konstantinos Stephanopoulos and Karolos Papoulias, who have been on an official visit to Azerbaijan at various times, met with the Greek community in Baku. The conclusion reached as a result of the meetings was that the Greeks living in Azerbaijan are easily integrated into the multicultural society of Azerbaijan and contribute to the development of the state. It was also added that Greeks, who are citizens of Azerbaijan, play an active role in the development of friendly relations between Azerbaijan and Greece.

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