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Abkhaz Issue in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia

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Abstract- By the time the autocracy fell (February 1917), Abkhazia, called the Sukhumi district, was part of the Kutaisi province. Even before the restoration of Georgia's state independence, among the Georgian political parties and society, there was an unshakable conviction that Abkhazia is an integral part of Georgia and it will have `full internal independence, that is, broad autonomy'.[1]The research was carried out within the framework of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia Grant Project "Consistuent Assembly of Georgia: Experience of Georgian Parliamentarism". Grant Code: FR-18-20157 It was on this basis that the relations of the Republic of Georgia with Abkhazia in 1918-1921 began to be built.

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Otar Janelidze

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According to an official agreement on June 11, 1918, formalized between the Abkhaz National Council and the government of the Georgian Democratic Republic, Abkhazia was declared an integral part of Georgia and autonomous rights were recognized for it. The government of Georgia undertook obligations to provide military and economic assistance to Abkhazia. To coordinate actions, an authorized representative of the Georgian republic was in Sukhumi, and the minister for Abkhaz affairs worked under the Georgian government.

In February 1919, the supreme legislative body of the Democratic Republic, the Constituent Assembly, was created in Georgia based on equal, direct, and universal suffrage. Elections to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia in Abkhazia did not take place not in February 1919 or during the first by-elections in August of the same year. Voting in the Sukhumi district was only possible in April 1920 with the second by-election.

Abkhazian issues, political and economic issues related to the region were often on the agenda of the Assembly.

On March 20, 1919, the People's Council of Abkhazia adopted the `Act on the Autonomy of Abkhazia' by which, "Abkhazia is part of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, as its autonomous unit'.

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia discussed this document and approved it. By the end of 1920, the constitutional commission developed a draft regulation on the autonomous government of Abkhazia, which, together with the Constitution of Georgia, was approved on February 21, 1921. The Constitution of Georgia has legalized: an integral part of the Republic of Georgia - Abkhazia (Sukhumi District) in local affairs is given an autonomous right of government.

Keywords: georgian democratic republic, constituent assembly, abkhazia, autonomy, constitution.

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I. Introduction

Abkhazia is a historical corner of Georgia. For centuries it was part of the Georgian feudal monarchy. After the collapse of united Georgia (the end of the 15th century), an independent principality of Abkhazia was formed, formally part of the Imeretian kingdom in Western Georgia. In the 16th century, Turkey conquered Sukhumi, and from the 19th century, together with the rest of Georgia, Abkhazia was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

On May 26, 1918, after the restoration of the state independence of Georgia and the formation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Abkhazia became an autonomous unit of this republic.

It would seem that the issue under consideration has already been developed and studied, but unfortunately, this is not the case. Neither in Georgian nor Abkhazian historiography there are monographic studies based on primary sources that could unbiasedly illuminate the entire depth of the issue under consideration. For example, there is no reason to assert that the attitude of the political parties included in the Constituent Assembly towards Abkhazia has been sufficiently studied; The question remains open as to what impact the reforms of the social-democratic government of Georgia had on the socio-economic, social and political processes in Abkhazia. There is also a difference of opinion regarding the political status of Abkhazia in the Democratic Republic of Georgia before the adoption of the Constitution of 1921, although materials exist. The National Archives of Georgia contains many, still unpublished materials that could bring greater clarity to the controversial issues of the history of Georgian-Abkhaz relations. We also have a very significant source in the form of verbatim records of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, which were published in 1919-1920 and the last period were re-published (7 volumes).

From the materials, it becomes obvious that the Abkhazian problems, political and economic issues related to the region, were often on the agenda of the Assembly. For example, the issue of Abkhazia was first raised on March 21, 1919, in a government declaration; in May 1919, at an extraordinary meeting of the Constituent Assembly, the issue of the current situation in the country in connection with the danger posed by Denikin was discussed and the issue of the situation in

[1] The research was carried out within the framework of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia Grant Project "Consistuent Assembly of Georgia: Experience of Georgian Parliamentarism". Grant Code: FR-18-20157

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Abkhazia was naturally discussed; In July of the same year, the parliamentary faction of the National Democratic Party addressed the Georgian government with a question concerning Abkhazia; In July 1919, the Constituent Assembly considered and approved a decree on the allocation of a loan to the Sukhumi District to combat an infectious disease, etc.

II. Method

The article examines how the issue of Abkhazia and its autonomy stood and was solved in 1918-1921. in the democratic republic of Georgia.

The research is based on the method of historical-comparative, retrospective, and content analysis, as well as critical comprehension and generalization of empirical material, presenting the issue from different angles.

III. Discussions

The Constituent Assembly was the supreme legislative body of the Georgian Democratic Republic, formed based on a general election in February 1919. It determined the political image of the country, adopted dozens of laws, decrees, and other legal acts, developed and adopted the Constitution. Before the Constituent Assembly, the function of the legislative body was performed by the National Council of Georgia, which in October 1918 was transformed into the Parliament.

Even before the restoration of state independence, political parties and the National Council were firmly convinced that Abkhazia was an integral part of Georgia, and it would be endowed with full internal independence, that is, broad autonomous rights. In this regard, the speech of a member of the National Council of Georgia David Suliashvili at the congress of peasants of the Sukhumi region in March 1918 is noteworthy. According to him, Abkhazia will be a single integral autonomy, organized according to the national-territorial principle. The Georgian National Council will welcome such a decision of its fellows and is always ready to lend a helping hand to them (Ertoba, 1918 March 22).

From the very beginning, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Georgia took a course towards the recognition of Abkhazian autonomy, which has been declared more than once. One of the government decrees noted: `To publish an appeal of the government, which should indicate that Abkhazia is granted the right of popular representation and internal structure based on autonomy' (Gamakharia, 1991, p. 73). It was on this basis that relations with Abkhazia began to develop in 1918-1921.

Perhaps the question will arise: Could Abkhazia get real autonomy in the Democratic Republic of Georgia, which was formed in the form of a unitary state? Of course, she could, as evidenced by the constitution adopted in 1921. However, there is another experience in the world. For example, in centralized, unitary Finland, the Aland Islands with a Swedish-speaking population have autonomy rights. A different type of autonomy exists in other European countries (Hepburn), For example, there are more than ten autonomous entities in unitary Spain (Aragon, Asturias, Galicia, Catalonia, Navarre, etc.); The constituent parts and administrative divisions of Great Britain are Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wells. Autonomous rights are enjoyed by: The Faroe Islands and Greenland in the Kingdom of Denmark, the Azores in Portugal, Corsica in France, etc.

Before the formation of the Constituent Assembly, a formal agreement was drawn up between the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the Abkhaz National Council (June 11, 1918), under which Abkhazia recognized itself as an integral part of Georgia and was granted autonomy rights. The Georgian authorities pledged to provide military and economic assistance to Abkhazia, the question of the political structure of which shortly on a democratic basis was to be resolved at a congress of the entire population of the autonomy.

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia at the very first meeting held on March 12, 1919, approved the Act on State Independence of Georgia adopted by the National Council. Among those who signed the act were deputies of the Constituent Assembly from Abkhazia: Dmitry Emhuari, Varlam Sharvashidze, Vasil Gurdzhua, Ivane Pashalidi, and Dmitry Zakharov, who entered the highest legislative body on the list of the winning Social Democratic Party.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia in Abkhazia took place during the second additional vote in May 1920. As evidenced by archival materials, the electorate was determined to be 22 354 people, among them 21019 voters exercised the right to vote (National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archives, fund 1834, op. 2, case 17).

It turns out that the problems of Abkhazia, political and economic issues of the region were often on the agenda of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia. For example, the first word in connection with Abkhazia was said at the second meeting of the meeting on March 21, 1919, in a government declaration, which was presented to the meeting by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yevgeny Gegechkori. It noted: `The government pays special attention to Abkhazia and Muslim Georgia. Our goal is to ensure special development in these parts of Georgia, to ensure internal management at the expense of local government bodies with a conscious connection with the Mother - Homeland. Thanks to the convocation of the People's Council, the basis for the settlement of the internal affairs of Abkhazia was created ... The government is confident that the annexation of these

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territories and their cultural revival is a prerequisite not only for the normal development of the republic but even for its existence' (Constituent Assembly, volume I, 2019, p. 74). The government's appeal was also supported by the Socialist-Federalist faction. According to her statement, if we in Abkhazia and Muslim Georgia do not implement the declared self-government, this will lead to complications and we will not be able to unite the scattered parts of the country around us (Constituent Assembly, volume I, 2019, p. 86). The Social Revolutionaries limited themselves to a general declaration that `the settlement of the issues of the outlying areas, the satisfaction of their national and cultural requirements will be the main concern of the faction of social revolutionaries' (Constituent Assembly, volume I, 2019, p. 96), and the leader of the National Democratic Party Spiridon Kedia admitted that the past policy of the authorities with respect to the outlying areas, including Abkhazia, it was characterized by compromise, `based on the position of the class struggle and sowed an ideology of non-reconciliation in society' (Constituent Assembly, volume I, 2019, p. 87-88).

At the same meeting, the deputies got acquainted with the `Act on the autonomy of Abkhazia' sent by telegram by the chairman of the People's Council of Abkhazia Arzakan Emkhvari. The document, adopted by the People's Council of Abkhazia on March 20, 1919, signed by an absolute majority, read: `Abkhazia is part of the Democratic Republic of Georgia as its autonomous unit'. By the `Act', the constitution of Abkhazia was to be developed by a mixed parity commission of members of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia and the People's Council of Abkhazia. The document came into force after its approval by both bodies (Constituent Assembly, volume I, 2019, p. 64; Magazine `Literary Georgia', 1989, No. 11, pp. 155-156).

The `Act on the Autonomy of Abkhazia' meant the self-determination of the region. Abkhazia, by the will of the majority of its population, recognized its presence in Georgia (Essays, 2007, p. 328). The `Act' was recognized by the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, which from the day of its foundation stood on the position of not interfering in the internal affairs of Abkhazia. Abkhazian historiography does not take this circumstance into account and believes that the `Act' remained on paper and `this whole game of autonomy' was an illusion of self-government (Bgazhba, Lakoba, 2006, p. 150; Lakoba, 1990, p. 75).

However, an indicator of the real autonomy of Abkhazia was the fact that under the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia the post of Minister for Abkhazia was established, which, on the recommendation of the People's Council, was occupied by Colonel Rafiel Chkhotua. At the same time, to coordinate actions, an authorized representative of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was appointed in Sukhumi, and this responsible post was taken by one of the most famous Social Democrats, Isidor Ramishvili.

Quite a few facts can be cited to illustrate the autonomy of the People's Council of Abkhazia, among them: The Council, without agreement with Tbilisi, elected and approved the local executive power - the commissariat; by decision of the Council, the Sukhumi region became known as Abkhazia, the language of state institutions was temporarily preserved in Russian (Gamakharia, 1991, p. 82); The People's Council refused to hold the second by-elections to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia in Abkhazia (August 1919) (National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archives, fund 1834, op. 1, case 76, l. 7-9).

It was this circumstance that served as the basis for the statement of the Minister of Internal Affairs Noe Ramishvili from the rostrum of the Constituent Assembly: `The People's Council operating in Abkhazia has legislative functions, therefore our government and our representative have no right to interfere in its affairs. The same idea, but more clearly expressed by representatives of the opposition parties: `The Abkhaz Council considers itself a sovereign body. It slows down and hinders our influence and state activity in Abkhazia' (S. Kedia, National Democrat); `In the person of the People's Council, Abkhazia has a Supreme legislative body, has a government, that is, all elements of an independent state' (L. Shengelaya - Socialist-Revolutionary) (Constituent Assembly, volume III, 2019, p. 120; 153).

At the same time, it should be noted that, based on the current situation, the Georgian authorities repeatedly violated the rights of the region (without agreement with the local Council, the appointment of General Georgy Mazniashvili to the post of Governor-General of Abkhazia, the direction of Benia Chkhikvishvili as Extraordinary Commissioner to Sukhumi).

Communist and modern Abkhaz historiography presents the entry of Georgian troops into Abkhazia as its occupation and believes that "after the overthrow of Soviet power, the Mensheviks established a military dictatorship in Abkhazia." The fact that the Georgian military contingent entered here at the request of the Abkhaz People's Council and saved the region from Bolshevik violence is not taken into account.

There was no unanimity in the People's Council of Abkhazia regarding the Georgian Democratic Republic. Party representatives had different positions. The factions of the `Independent Socialists' and `Internationalists did not hide their anti-Georgian sentiments. Despite this, the socio-political processes in Abkhazia had a free development, the Sukhumi City Duma, city and rural self-governments (zemstvos) functioned, political organizations, trade unions of various institutions functioned, the first print edition was

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published in the Abkhaz language, the newspaper `Apsny', several dozens of schools, including an agricultural school (the Sakartvelos Republic, 1920 3 September), etc.

Another discussion of the current situation in Abkhazia took place in the Constituent Assembly on May 10, 1919. It was associated with the invasion of Abkhazia by the commander of the volunteer army, General A. Denikin (Denikin, 2002, p. 283). According to the Abkhazian historian: `At the beginning of 1919, the volunteer army launched an offensive in the Gagra region to push back the Georgian troops over the river. Bzyb and will declare the Sukhumi district (Abkhazia) a neutral territory' (Bgazhba, Lakoba, 2006, p. 148).

In response, the Georgian government sent troops to Abkhazia, which occupied Gagra. In connection with this fact, the command of the allied forces, which at that time played the role of international arbiter in the South Caucasus, expressed dissatisfaction.

The People's Council of Abkhazia condemned the aggressive actions of the `volunteer army, which brought with them `enslavement and tsarism' (Ertoba, 1919 April 18). The newspaper `Nashe Slovo', published in Sukhumi under the editorship of Dmitry Gulia, called Alexander Sharvashidze the `traitor' and `Judas of Abkhazia', who initiated the invitation of Denikin's troops to Abkhazia (Essays., 2007, p. 329).

The Georgian authorities clarified the allied command, stating that it is vital for the country's interests to take a strategically important line, `which is historically ours and in relation to which the National Council of Abkhazia has decided that this line is the border of Abkhazia, which is part of Georgia as its autonomous unit' (Constituent Assembly, Volume I, p. 415).

According to Noe Zhordania, `The Gagra region is the gateway of Georgia and we consider it a strategic border ... For centuries the Gagra gate was the border of Georgia and we cannot yield them'.

The Constituent Assembly fully shared this position and declared that the occupation of Gagra by Georgia was self-defense and `the fulfillment of a sacred duty.

On July 4, 1919, the parliamentary faction of the National Democratic Party in writing addressed a question to the government of the country. The government took time to answer and the discussion of the issue took place only on August 2. Minister of Internal Affairs Noe Ramishvili spoke about the problem that had arisen. The entire political spectrum of the Constituent Assembly took part in the consideration of the issue. Spiridon Kedia criticized the government for failing to take into account `the specific details of the borderlands of Georgia and their distinctive features from the center'. He also pointed out the errors of the agrarian reform in Abkhazia, where each peasant and nobleman owned from 10 to 25 dessiatines, and the rest of the land was mainly rented by Turkish citizens, Armenians, and Greeks (there were also small Georgian /Megrelian tenants). The reform did not take into account the fact that `this land is the property of the Abkhaz people, and they consider it as such. If the Abkhaz could still come to terms with the fact that part of the land went to the Georgians, he could not come to terms with the fact that his property would be transferred to the subjects of Turkey, the Armenians, and Greeks. ... In this regard, we hear a lot of complaints and reproaches in Abkhazia' (Constituent Assembly, Volume III, p. 122; 161).

According to Leo Shengelaia, `From the outset, the government did not show the necessary tact and ability to streamline affairs in the outlying regions. ... With its special solicitude, it should have contributed to the appearance of a feeling of love among the inhabitants of the outlying regions for our Republic, by deeds to show their orientation. The authorities were systematically late in carrying out various reforms in the outlying regions, sending talentless propagandists and rude administrators there. ... Independent Abkhazia is absurd, independent Abkhazia will join Denikin on the very second day. ... Abkhazia must be granted broad autonomy' (Constituent Assembly, Volume III, p. 151-153).

The speech of Vasily Gurdzhua, a member of the Constituent Assembly and the People's Council of Abkhazia, was important. He said that the assertion that we would have taken the path of secession and strive for independence is not true. `We understand very well that the interests of Abkhazia are closely linked with Georgia and consider ourselves not stepchildren in this republic, but equal citizens, its own children. ... Abkhazia as an autonomous unit, but a part of ... Georgia, only in its internal affairs will be independent' (Constituent Assembly, Volume III, p. 142).

Social Democrat Benya Chkhikvishvili, the extraordinary commissar of Abkhazia, said that in Abkhazia, where representatives of many nationalities live, the psychology of people is poisoned by enmity and mistrust, in such a situation great care is needed so that this enmity does not intensify. We could not achieve the impossible, we did what we could do, but this is not enough. All democracy of Abkhazia, regardless of nationality, stands on one platform and it is `autonomous Abkhazia, but an integral part of the Georgian Democratic Republic' (Constituent Assembly, Volume III, p. 146; 149).

Interior Minister Noe Ramishvili admitted that `some steps taken by representatives of various circles do not correspond at all to our interests, or, in particular, to the interests of Abkhazia. And in this case, the government always tries to find the common line that is necessary for the settlement of relations. " In the end, he remarked: "In the current situation, the government's

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policy must be sober, without any haste' (Constituent Assembly, Volume III, p. 138, 141).

On January 14, 1920, an extraordinary solemn meeting of the Constituent Assembly took place, which was dedicated to the de facto recognition of the Democratic Republic of Georgia by the large European states. In connection with this fact, the People's Council of Abkhazia sent a congratulatory telegram to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia.

The government of the Georgian Democratic Republic has declared a monopoly on some strategic raw materials, including tobacco leaf. It took into account the establishment of firm purchase prices and the creation of an appropriate link that would deal with this matter. Apparently, the work in this area took place with certain errors, which was due to the fact that on January 27, 1920, the leader of the National Party Grigol Veshapeli introduced a parliamentary proposal to the Constituent Assembly: `The monopoly on tobacco in Abkhazia is carried out abnormally, which causes great discontent both in production and among entrepreneurs. What measures is the government taking in this regard?' To this question, a government representative three days later gave the following explanation: `if it turns out that the law is being violated and there is a riot, we will take strict measures and report the results" (Constituent Assembly, Volume V, 2019, p. 90-93).

On February 13 of the same year, Deputy Minister for Procurement Chavchanidze in the Constituent Assembly spoke in detail about the tobacco monopoly and cited evidence that local planters and tobacco producers are satisfied with the monopoly and that the planters at their congress clearly expressed a positive position. According to him, the monopoly turned out to be unacceptable for the so-called. buyers are speculators and they are trying to slow down its implementation. An analysis of the verbatim report gives grounds to say that the opposition deputy exaggerated the shortcomings, and the government representative did not perceive them as a serious violation, and the truth was somewhere in between (Constituent Assembly, Volume V, 2019, pp. 199-200).

The Constituent Assembly again returned to the problem of the tobacco monopoly on July 22, 1920. The debate was attended by: V. Tevzaya (social-dem.), Al. Asatiani (NDP), I. Lordkipanidze (Social Revolutionary), Assistant Minister for Provision of Chavchanidze (Constituent Assembly, volume VII, 2019, pp. 70-90).

The Constituent Assembly several times adopted a decree on the allocation of finance to Abkhazia for various purposes, including the `Decree on the transfer of credit for the fight against an infectious disease in the Sukhumi district' (July 1919); to allocate one million rubles a month to the Abkhazian Commissariat, etc. (April 6, 1920) (Constituent Assembly, volume VI, 2919, p. 177; 193).

Serious attention was paid to the budget of the Republic of Abkhazia. It is noteworthy that the salary of a member of the People's Council of Abkhazia was 10 thousand rubles, and the monthly salary of a deputy of the Constituent Assembly was 7,600 rubles (Constituent Assembly, Volume VII, p. 100). The next task of the Constituent Assembly was to develop the constitution of Abkhazia.

The People's Council formed a constitutional commission, which unanimously adopted the main provision of the future constitution: `Abkhazia is part of Democratic Georgia as its autonomous unit'. As for other issues, due to the difference of opinions, the commission was divided into two subcommittees and developed two different projects. The third - a conciliatory project was coordinated by the Abkhazian Commissariat (Menteshashvili, 1998, p. 80-94).

The Presidium of the Constituent Assembly assigned a group of five people to work with representatives of the People's Council on the draft constitution of Abkhazia. At various times, several delegations of the People's Council arrived in Tbilisi from Sukhumi (National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archives, f. 1861, d. 73, fol. 1-2; Mayilyan, 2009, p. 39), among them were separatist-minded deputies.

According to one of them, M. Turnava, in negotiations with the Georgian government on issues of autonomy and constitution, they tried to disrupt the agreement. `Acting in this way, we were simultaneously looking for opportunities for relations with the RSFSR and joining it' (Toidze, 1996, p. 6).

The Georgian government listened to the views of each of the parties. A draft agreement was drawn up on the main provisions of management. It actually reflected the already established relations between the republic and the autonomy.

In February 1920 in Sukhumi, during his speech at the People's Council of Abkhazia, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Noe Ramishvili, reiterated that `the only basis for social and political construction in Georgia is the strengthening of the autonomous rights of Abkhazia' (Gamakharia, Gogia, 1997, pp. 101-102).

The historians of Abkhazia do not speak about the constitution of Abkhazia and about the document entitled "on the state of governance of Abkhazia", which was adopted by the People's Council of Abkhazia and were confirmed in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia in December 1920. The adoption of the Constitution of Abkhazia was delayed. Tbilisi was in no hurry to approve these documents until it brought into action the country's fundamental law, which was being worked on intensively.

In September 1920, the delegates of the People's Council of Abkhazia with a written statement turned to the Presidium of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, in which they expressed a desire for the

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following issues to be discussed at the upcoming session: 1) On the recognition of autonomous Abkhazia as a part of Georgia. 2) That in matters falling within the competence of the legislative body of Abkhazia, the action of the body would be completely independent. 3) Consider the Government of Autonomous Abkhazia as the local executive power.

The Constitutional Commission of the Constituent Assembly discussed the statement and decided: 1) The provision on the autonomy of individual parts follows from the general constitution of the state. Recognition of the autonomy of Abkhazia, that is, partial recognition of this or that principle, is impossible until the adoption of the Constitution as a whole, 2) The inclusion in the agenda of the Constituent Assembly of the issues included in the statement of the delegates of the People's Council is not allowed by the current parliamentary regulations. The principle of autonomy adopted in the draft constitution is fully ensured. 4) The provision on autonomy will be introduced and considered at the upcoming session of the Constituent Assembly (the Sakartvelos Republic, 1920 September 9).

By the fall of 1920, it became possible to reach an agreement on the draft Constitution. On October 16, after its detailed consideration and making certain adjustments, the People's Council adopted its own version of the draft constitution of Abkhazia. This document formed the basis of the project on the state of governance of Abkhazia (Central State Archives of Abkhazia, fund 39, op. 1, case 18, fol. 260-270. Chitaia, 2006). On December 21 of the same year, it was first approved by the small constitutional commission of the Constituent Assembly, and then by the Constituent Assembly itself. The `regulation' emphasizes that `Abkhazia, from the Mehadiri River to the Inguri River, from the Black Sea coast to the Caucasus, is considered an integral part of the Republic of Georgia and autonomously manages its internal affairs within these borders'.

On February 21, 1921, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of Georgia, which legalized: `Autonomous administration shall be granted to the inseparable part of the Republic of Georgia - Abkhazia (Sukhumi region) in internal affairs.

IV. Conclusions

The study confirmed that during the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) Abkhazia was an integral part of Georgia. Even though there were political and social groups with different interests in the region, and some of them were not satisfied with the status of Abkhazia in an independent Georgian state, the democratically elected Multi-Party and Multinational People's Council of Abkhazia adopted the Abkhaz Autonomy Act on March 20, 1919, which stated: `Abkhazia is part of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. as its autonomous subdivision'. `The Act' was approved by the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, which from the day of its creation defended the position of non-interference in the internal affairs of Abkhazia.

True, the adoption of the Constitution of Abkhazia was delayed, but a draft Regulation on the governance of Abkhazia was prepared, which was first approved by the Small Constitutional Commission of the Constituent Assembly, and then by the Constituent Assembly.

On February 21, 1921, the Constitution of Georgia, adopted by the Constituent Assembly, legalized the autonomous government of `an integral part of the Republic of Georgia - Abkhazia (Sukhumi region)'.

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