



"Stalin's List" of November 22, 1937

Introduction

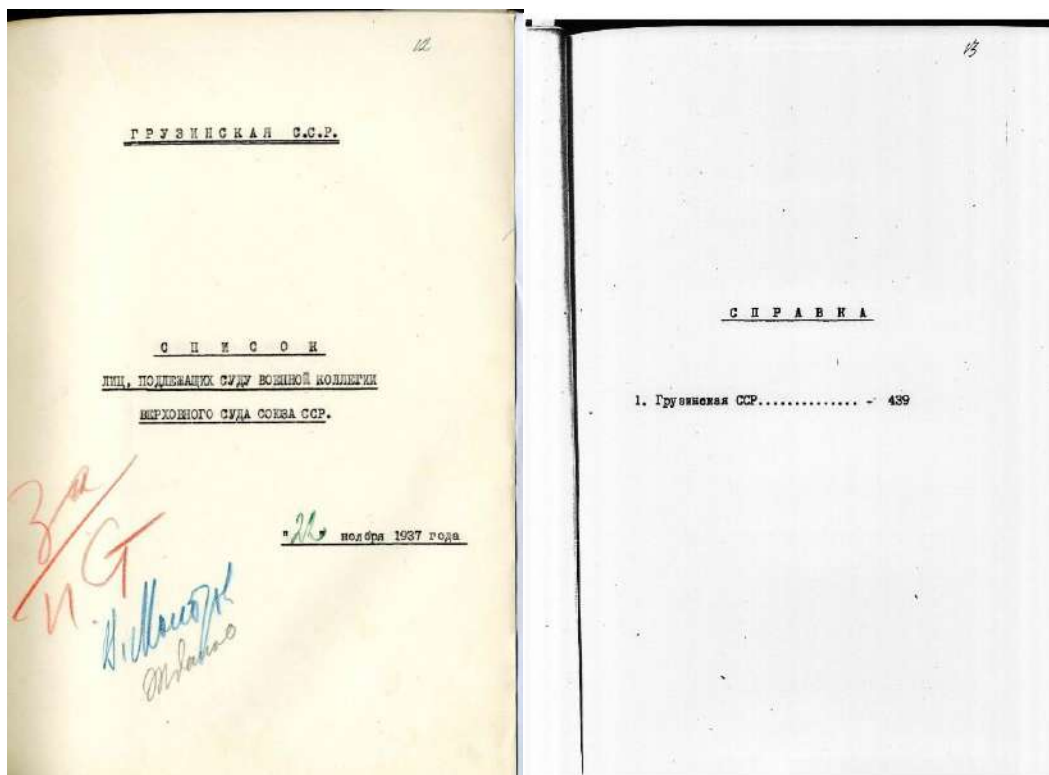
The "Stalin List" of November 22, 1937, is a unique document in the history of the "Great Terror", which was approved for the Georgian SSR. In terms of the number of convicts (439 people), the list of November 22 is only shorter than the list of August 10, 1937, in which 555 people were included. The list includes public figures, high officials, and ordinary people. This article presents a quantitative and content analysis of the list.

In the history of the "Great Terror", the list of Georgia dated November 22, 1937, is the first document on which the Politburo agreed to Lavrentiy Beria's proposal - the cases of convicts in Georgia should be judged by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs' (NKVD) so-called "Special Troika"¹ (Тройка) where the three members were judge and jury and not by an external session of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR², since the arrest and the trial rates were lagging behind each other.

¹ **Special Troika of the NKVD** (Особая тройка НКВД) - republican and regional administrative (non-judicial) bodies, which were created for the purpose of repression against "anti-Soviet elements" and operated in the USSR from August 1937 to November 1938.

² **Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR** (Военная коллегия Верховного суда СССР (ВКВС)) - a body that considered particularly important cases against the highest leadership of the army and navy, as well as those accused of treason and counter-revolution. At the initial stage of the "Great Terror" there was a demonstration, the so-called "The second Moscow trial", about the case of the "United Trotskyist-Zinovievist Center" (G. Pyatakov, K. Radek and others). Soon after, Yezhov and Vyshinsky drafted a note in the name of Stalin, in which the leader was suggested to immediately send external sessions of the military collegium of the Supreme Court around the

Throughout the entire Soviet Union, Georgia was the only exception, where people included in the "Stalin's list" were tried by the Special Troika.



List of 22 November 1937, title page and first page. The resolution - "I agree" (3a) is signed by Stalin (И.Ст), besides him, the list was signed by Molotov and Zhdanov.

Trial by "lists" in Soviet Georgia

The repressions carried out in 1937-1938, known as the "Stalin Terror" or "Great Terror," occupy a special place in the history of the 20th century. In less than two years, the Bolshevik regime mass-executed and deported over a million Soviet citizens. Within the framework of the "Great Terror," the trials by "Stalin's Lists" hold particular significance. This operation included mainly citizens living in the city, such as members of the Intelligentsia, high-ranking officials, military personnel, and clergy. In contrast to other operations, the number of individuals sentenced to the highest punishment - execution - was much higher.

country to "review the cases of treasonous, subversive, harmful, espionage and terrorist-Trotskyist groups" in some regions. The external session in Georgia worked in September-October 1937 and managed to sentence about 900 people, but later this function was completely taken over by the Special Troika.

In total, more than 3,600 people were tried in Georgia using Stalin's lists, and over 3,100 of them were sentenced to death³.

The mass trial by 'lists' was initiated by the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on December 1, 1934⁴, which established simplified court proceedings. According to this decree, issued on the day of Sergei Kirov's⁵ murder, the investigation of cases involving terrorist organizations and acts of terrorism was to be expedited (within ten days), and the court session was to be conducted without the participation of the parties and witnesses. The law of December 1, 1934, did not permit either cassation appeals or clemency petitions. The decision, essentially a death sentence, was to be executed immediately.

The list was compiled on the spot, in this case, at the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of Georgia (НКВД) and sent to Moscow for approval by Stalin and other members of the Politburo. The list, signed by the members of the Politburo, was then returned, and a formal trial was held in Tbilisi. During this trial, one form of punishment or another was applied to the individuals on the list by an external session of the military collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR from Moscow.

The history of trials by lists in Georgia is remarkable. The military collegium was convened only twice - once in June-July and again in September-October 1937 - during which it considered 910 cases. In a letter to Stalin on October 30, 1937, Beria wrote that 'during the past year, the NKVD of Georgia arrested more than 12,000 people, and the pace of trials was lagging behind.' In this context, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia ЦК КП(б) requested permission to submit the cases of members of the Trotskyist terrorist subversive-espionage organization and the right-wing terrorist-subversive espionage organization, exposed by the NKVD of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia, to the Special Troika for consideration."⁶

On November 14, Beria raised the issue in a more specific manner, requesting approval for a special Troika to consider the list of 439 people whose cases were slated for review by the military collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR. This marked the seventh list forwarded from Georgia for approval. The list of November 22, 1937, bears the signatures of Stalin, Molotov⁷, and Zhdanov⁸, indicating Stalin's agreement with Beria's proposal. On November 25, 1937, Yezhov issued a decree in the name of Goglidze: "Under your personal chairmanship, with the mandatory participation of the prosecutor, initiate the trial through the local Troika, focusing on the 439 cases specified in the list presented on November 14 with No. 77487.

³ see <https://stalin.historyproject.ge/history>

⁴ О внесении изменений в действующие уголовно-процессуальные кодексы союзных республик. Постановление ЦИК и СНК СССР 1 декабря 1934 г. Сборник законодательных и нормативных актов о репрессиях и реабилитации жертв политических репрессий. М., 1993. С. 33-34.

⁵ **Sergei Kirov (1886-1934)** - Soviet statesman and politician. According to researchers, mass repressions in the Soviet Union started precisely because of his murder.

⁶ Archive of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation (АР РФ). Ф.3. Оп. 58. Д.212. Л.137–139.

⁷ **Vyacheslav Molotov (1890-1986)** - Soviet political and party figure. Member of the Politburo during the "Great Terror". Later - Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

⁸ **Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948)** - Soviet political and party figure. Member of the Politburo during the "Great Terror".

Conduct the trial in a separate session, avoiding any amalgamation with the kulak operation cases. Immediately after the sentence is executed, dispatch all cases to Moscow, attaching to each case an extract from the protocol of the Troika session.” Yezhov.⁹”

This situation remained unchanged in the case of Georgia, and until the end of the repressions, the judicial function was completely integrated by the Special Troika of the NKVD.

Statistical Analysis

In total, the names and surnames of 439 people are recorded in the list signed by Stalin on November 22, 1937:

- 434 men
- 5 women

The oldest - 70 years old, the youngest - 22 years old, the average age - 39 years old.

Sentence:

- Execution by shooting - 420¹⁰
- 10 years in a labor camp - 7
- 8 years in a labor camp - 4¹¹
- 5 years in a labor camp - 3
- The case was sent with the accused to the State Security Department of the Internal Affairs Committee of Armenia - 2
- Was released - 1
- Unknown - 2¹²

⁹ Central Archive of the Federal Security Service (ЦА ФСБ). Ф.3. Оп. 4. D.2256. L.489;

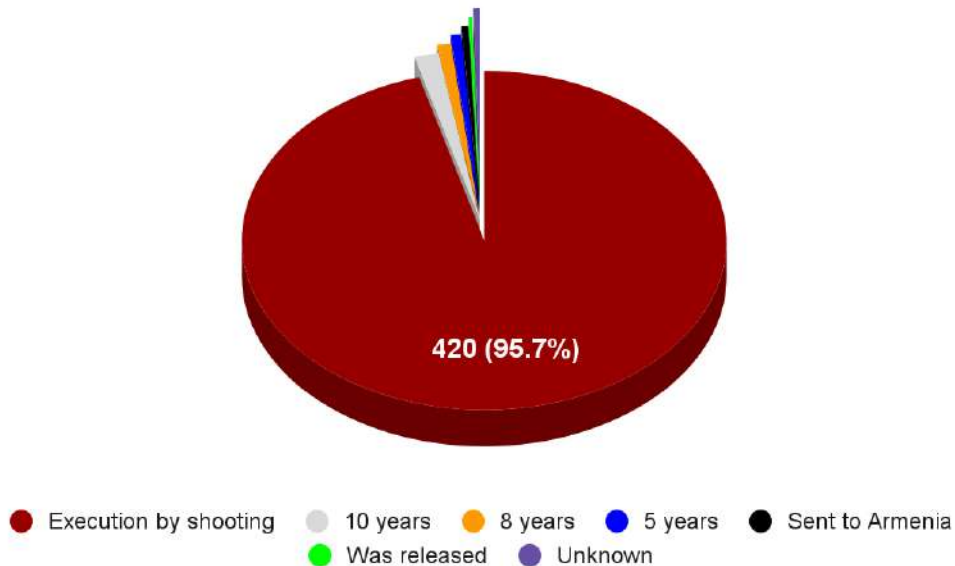
Nikolai Yezhov (1895-1940) - People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR in 1936-1938. The main executor of the "Great Terror". Later, he himself was shot.

¹⁰ 2 persons died in prison before being shot, probably by torture. One of them, **Narses Nersesyan**, died during the investigation, and **Giorgi Chkheidze** was sentenced to be shot by the Special Troika, although the sentence was not executed and the case was sent to the investigative department for re-investigation on 13.04.1939. During the investigation, the accused Chkheidze died in Tbilisi prison hospital on 23.06.1939.

¹¹ **Rza Khalil Imanov**, one of the 2 persons sentenced to 8 years in the labor camp, was released soon, and the other - **Daniel Pochiani** - after 9 months.

¹² The cases of the following individuals were sent to the NKVD of Armenia: **Amayak Galustyan (1900-1938)** - Third Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Armenian SSR. He was shot in Yerevan on September 16, 1938. **Anushavan Arzumanyan (1904-1968)** - economist, later a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. Arzumanyan was released in 1939.

Sentence



A Special Troika session was held from December 2 to 4, 1937, for 291 people on the list. If the Troika worked 24 hours a day, they would take an average of 15 minutes to judge each person. In the case of a normal 8-hour working day, they would spend less than 5 minutes per person. The last sessions were held in February 1938.

The exact date of execution of 356 convicts is known. Most of them - 223 people were shot on December 11, 1937.

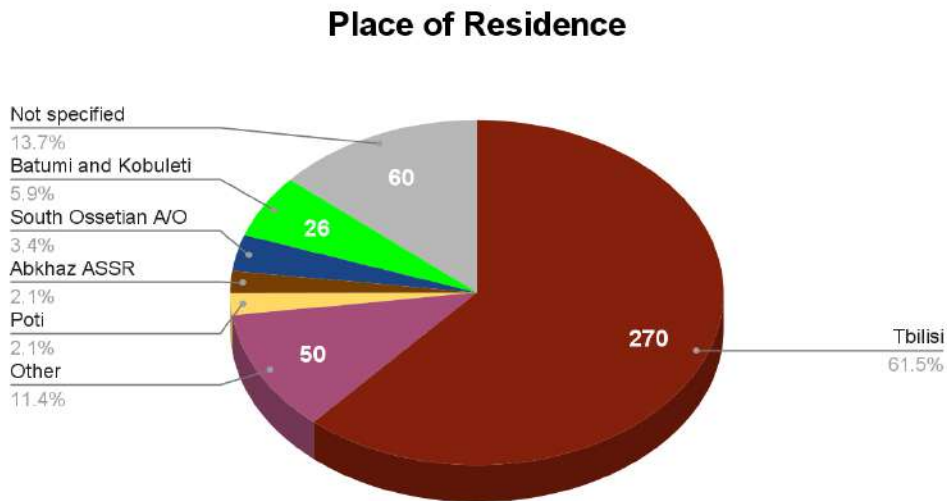
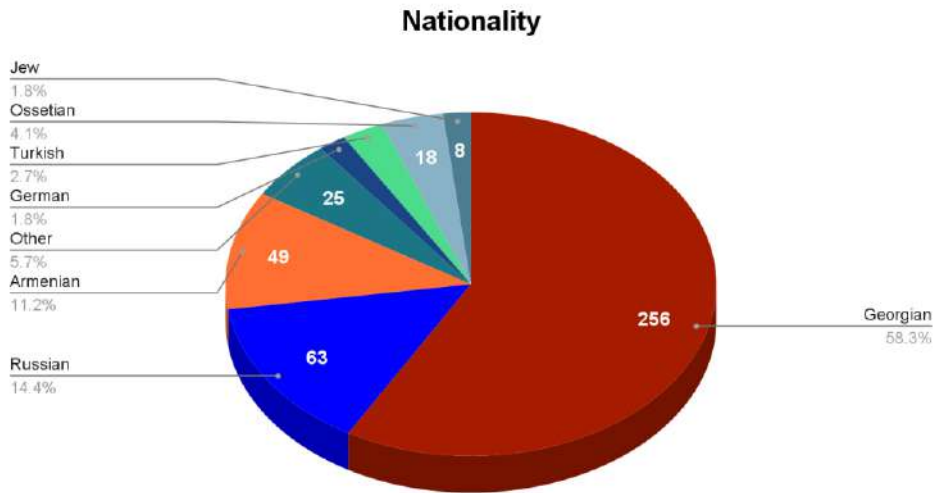
In 432 cases, the Special Troika responsible for judgments comprised Sergo Goglidze¹³, Shalva Tsereteli¹⁴, and Ilarion Talakhadze¹⁵. In several instances, Tsereteli or Talakhadze were excluded from the Special Troika, as their signatures were absent from the protocols. Of the remaining 7 cases: the personal files of 2 individuals were sent to the NKVD of Armenia, 1 person died in prison, 1 was released, 1 had their case transferred to the military collegium, and in the case of 1 person, the documents do not specify the composition of the Special Troika. In the case of Professor **Vakhtang Kotetishvili**, the Troika

¹³ **Sergo Goglidze (1901-1953)** - The People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR from January 1, 1937, to November 14, 1938. He was a member of the Special Troika of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and played a pivotal role in the 'Great Terror' conducted in Georgia. Following Stalin's death, Goglidze was arrested and executed on December 23, 1953, the same day Lavrentiy Beria met a similar fate.

¹⁴ **Shalva Tsereteli (1894-1955)** - The head of the Georgian SSR Workers' and Peasants' Militia Division from 1932 to 1938. During 1937-1938, he was a member of the Special Troika of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. From 1939 onwards, he held various positions, including the head of the Transcaucasian border troops, the first deputy of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR, and later as the deputy minister of state security of the Georgian SSR. In 1955, Shalva Tsereteli was arrested and executed.

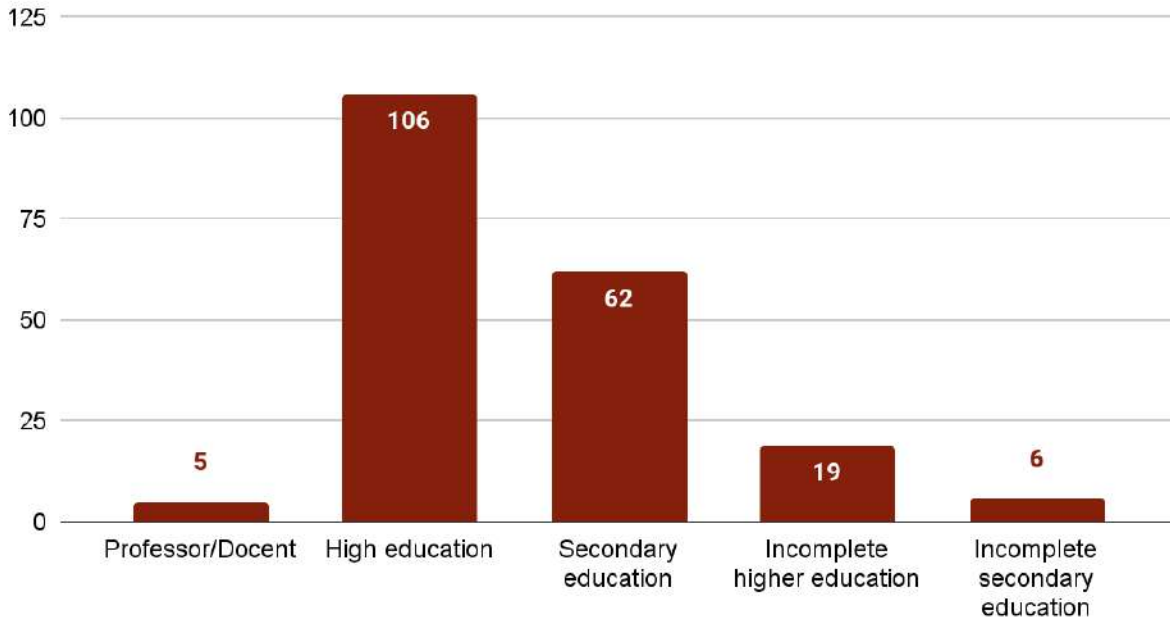
¹⁵ **Ilarion Talakhadze (1894-1974)** - The Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (1921-1924), Deputy People's Commissar of Justice (1926-1928), Chairman of the Supreme Court (1928), Dean of the Law Faculty at Tbilisi State University (1933-1936), and Prosecutor of the Georgian SSR (1936-1946).

was chaired by **Bogdan Kobulov**, one of the main executioners of that era, known for his brutal interrogation methods¹⁶.

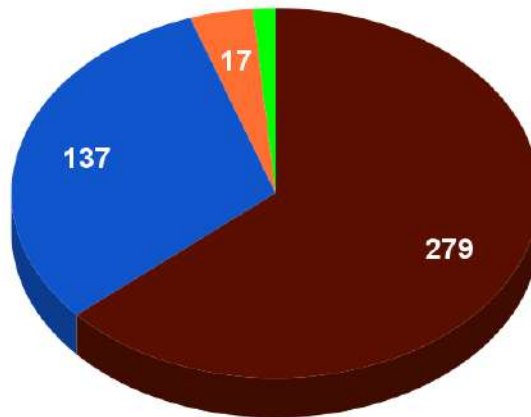


¹⁶ Никита Петров, Палачи: они выполняли заказы Сталина, *Новая Газета*, 2011, стр. 109-125.

Education

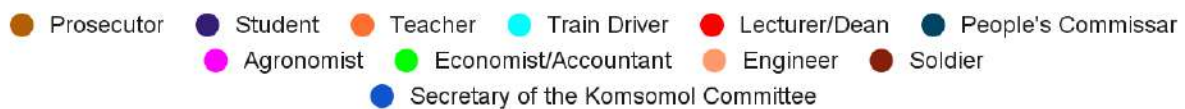
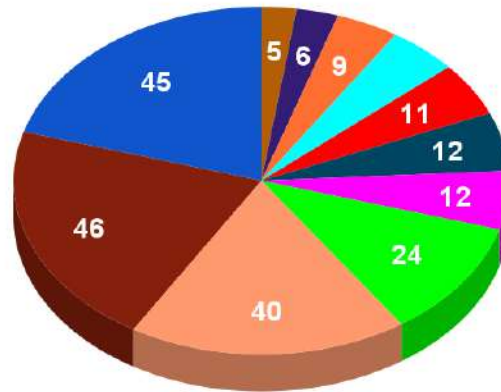


Party Affiliation



- Former or current member/candidate of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR or the Soviet Union.
- Non-partisan
- Former or active member of Komsomol
- Party affiliation is not recorded

Profession



In the list dated November 22, 1937, there were 12 People's Commissars, equivalent to modern ministers. This included deputies and ministers from autonomous republics, along with high-ranking officials from the Georgian SSR. Notable figures in the list were **Valerian Metonidze**, People's Commissar of Justice of the Georgian SSR; **Varlam Beridze** and **Tevdore Korsaveli**, former and current People's Commissioners of Agriculture; **Alexander Vasilyev**, People's Commissar of Timber Industry; **Nikoloz Pantskhava**, People's Commissar of Internal Trade; **Parmen Tsulukidze**, People's Commissar of Communal Farming; and **Vasil Antidze**, People's Commissar of Local Industry.

“Cleansing” operations were also conducted in higher education institutions. **Germane Dolidze**, the director of Tbilisi Pedagogical Institute, and his deputy **Irodion Obolashvili** were executed. **Ivane Metreveli**, the Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the State University of Georgia, faced a similar fate. Other victims included **Ioseb (Boris) Orlov**, the Director of Tbilisi Forestry-Technical Institute; **Tamar Akhundova-Agrba**, the Director of Sokhumi Medical Technical College; and **Arsen Mamaishvili**, a lecturer at the State University and a propaganda instructor of the Central Committee of the Komsomol of Georgia.

Among the individuals listed, 295 have their professions specified in the questionnaire. However, many others, whose professions are not specified, held significant positions in state structures,¹⁷ such as

¹⁷ Among them are individuals such as **Dimitri Alania**, Chairman of the State Plan of the Abkhazian SSR; **Themistocles Amiridi**, head of the Batumi tea office; **Methodius Sugak**, Director of Chakvi Tea Factory; Petre Gepner, director of 'Sakkvebmshen'; **Felix Sprinkvel**, former head of the Port of Poti; **Platon Shishniashvili**,

chairmen of various district executive committees, collective farm directors, district committee instructors, and senior officials at various levels. Additionally, the list includes individuals from diverse professions such as vet doctors, gardeners, locksmiths, translators, carpenters, brewers, and more.

Famous People

Famous people related to the field of art were included in the list of November 22:

Titsian Tabidze (1893-1937), a poet, faced accusations of being an active member of the National-Fascist Organization of Georgia, harming the arts and culture, and spying for the French intelligence.

Evgeni Mikeladze (1903-1937), was a Georgian conductor and the artistic director of the Tbilisi State Theater of Opera and Ballet. He was alleged to be a member of an anti-Soviet right-wing organization, implicated in malicious activities within the opera theater as per the organization's instructions. Additionally, he was accused of being an ally of **Mamia Orakhelashvili**, the center of the anti-Soviet right-wing organization in Georgia, considered an enemy of the people. Simultaneously, Mikeladze was accused of being a member of a counter-revolutionary espionage organization, actively involved in obtaining espionage information and sending it to Orakhelashvili in Moscow.

In addition to **Evgeni Mikeladze**, the Stalin list of November 22, 1937, included four other prominent figures from the field of art who held significant positions: **Giorgi Gugunava (1901-1937)**, the director of the Rustaveli Theater; **Sergo Amaglobeli (1899-1938)**, the artistic director of the Moscow Small Theater; **Ambrosi Titberidze (1901-1937)**, the Director of the Georgian State Film Industry; and **Tigran Tarumov (1895-1937)**, the Director of the State Theater Philharmonic Variety Group.

chairman of the Central Union of Consumer Cooperatives of Georgia; and **Abraham Linetsky**, head of the Detention Places Department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the SSR of Georgia.



Evgeni Mikeladze (1903-1937) and Titsian Tabidze (1893-1937)

The photos are preserved in the collection of the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia "National Photographic Record"

Vakhtang Kotetishvili (1893-1937), a key figure in the founding of Georgian folkloristics, held various prestigious positions including Professor at Tbilisi State University and Kutaisi Pedagogical Institute, as well as the Rector of the Academy of Arts from 1930 to 1932.

According to the trial protocol, Kotetishvili was accused of being an active member of a counter-revolutionary, nationalist, and rebellious organization of social-federalists. The organization aimed to overthrow the Soviet government, separate Georgia from the USSR, and establish a bourgeois-democratic order. In 1930, he was allegedly recruited by **Kristefore Rachvelishvili**, a member of the main illegal counter-revolutionary organization of Social-Federalists. Kotetishvili was accused of having direct contact with the main counter-revolutionary committee of the Social-Federalists, and of direct communication with individuals who were in contact abroad. Additionally, he was accused of having connections with ex-leaders of Social-Federalists who had emigrated.

Furthermore, Kotetishvili faced allegations of involvement in the preparation of uprisings and engaging in disruptive and harmful activities within Tbilisi State University and the Writers' Union of Georgia. He was said to have created and led the counter-revolutionary nationalist organization of Social-Federalists at Tbilisi State University, consisting of two counter-revolutionary groups. The main group included professors and young individuals.



Vakhtang Kotetishvili (1893-1937)

The photo is preserved in the collection of the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia "National Photographic Record"

Konstantine Iashvili (1900-1937), brother of poet **Paolo Iashvili**, who committed suicide before the repressions, on July 22, 1937. Chief accountant in the city department of the State Bank's Georgia office faced accusations of being recruited into the counter-revolutionary fascist espionage-terrorist and subversive-malicious organization "White Giorgi" in 1934.



Konstantine Iashvili (1900-1937)

The photo is preserved in the collection of the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia "National Photographic Record"

Davit Demetradze (1904-1937) - responsible secretary of the Union of Writers. A few months before he was shot, he assessed Paolo Iashvili's suicide as a "provocative act", but the system did not spare him. Notably, in addition to Davit Demetradze, his twin brother **Konstantine Demetradze (1904-1937)**, the head of the school department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR, was included in the November 22 list. The twin brothers were both executed on December 11.

Other convicts:

Sarkis (Sergo) Kasyan (1876-1937) - Armenian Soviet publicist and the Communist Party figure. He played a crucial role as the founder of the Bolshevik Armenian printing house during the 1905-1907 revolution. In the years 1912-1914, he led the Tbilisi party organization. From 1917 onward, Kasyan served as the editor of Armenian Bolshevik newspapers. In 1919, he became the secretary of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee. Taking on a key educational role, he became the rector of the Transcaucasian Communist University of the '26 Baku Commissars' in 1924. Later, from 1927 to 1931, he served as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federal Republic.

Ermile (Erik) Bedia (1901-1937), the editor of the "Communist" newspaper, was one of the actual authors of the book published under the name of **Lavrenti Beria** - "The Issue of the Development of Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia". Many people faced repressions and were accused of being members of "Bedia's group", including him. These people were accused of participating in the preparation of a terrorist attack against Beria. Guram Soselia, the chairman of the "Georgian Memorial"

society, whose father, **Grigol Soselia (1906-1937)**, was on the same list, recalls¹⁸ that Bedia and the group members openly discussed in private conversations that the book was not written by Beria but by them. He connects this revelation with the subsequent shooting of his father and other members of Bedia's group.



Ermile Bedia (1901-1937)

The photo is preserved in the collection of the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia "National Photographic Record"

Andria (Andrey) Loskutov (1892-1937) was a member of the Constituent Assembly of the First Republic of Georgia. Of Russian nationality and Malakan by religion, he was elected on March 12, 1919, as a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Georgia from the list of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Georgia. Loskutov served as a member of the Labor Commission. Following the occupation of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921, he chose to remain in Georgia and continued his work in state institutions.

Memed Kaikatsishvili (1898-1937), a judge and member of the High Court of Adjara, faced accusations of being a member of a counter-revolutionary rebel-espionage organization. The organization aimed to overthrow the Soviet government through an armed uprising and unite Adjara with Turkey. Ironically, his father, **Gulo Kaikatsishvili (1840-1923)**, whom a Georgian public figure, journalist, publisher, writer,

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0QQ-mOog4>

and poet who spearheaded the revival of Georgian nationalism during the second half of the 19th century, **Ilia Chavchavadze** referred to as “the heart of Adjara”,¹⁹ dedicated his life to advocating for the integration of Adjara with Georgia. He championed the protection of the Georgian language in the Kobuleti area, opposing the so-called 'Muhajirstvo' during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. Gulo Kaikatsishvili even established the first Georgian school on his family estate in Kobuleti.

Anushevan Arzmanyman (1904-1965) - an economist who later became a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. His case was transferred to the State Security Department of the Internal Affairs Committee of Armenia. Reportedly, he was subjected to physical pressure and torture. Ultimately, he was released in 1939²⁰. It is noteworthy that Arzumanyan's brother-in-law was the renowned Soviet party figure and Politburo member, Anastas Mikoyan

Repressed women:

Tamar Akhundova-Agrba (1909-1937) - Director of the Sokhumi Medical Technical College. She was accused of having connections with the leaders of the right-wing anti-Soviet organization, carrying out subversive activities, and being aware of the preparations for terrorist acts against the leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

Barbare Gabunia (1899-1937) - A history teacher at the 53rd school. She was arrested by the Georgian Cheka in 1921 for her counter-revolutionary activities. She was accused of being recruited by an intelligence resident to work for Polish intelligence in 1935. From 1935 to 1937, she was alleged to have collected and transmitted espionage messages, initially through the intelligence resident and later, from 1936, personally to the Polish consul.

¹⁹ Dzidzaria N. "Ilia called him "the heart of Adjara", newspaper "Adjara", 2011, July 16.

²⁰ Арзуманян Анушаван Агафонович // Большая советская энциклопедия: [в 30 т.] / под ред. А. М. Прохоров — 3-е изд. — М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1969.



Barbare Gabunia (on the right) (1899-1937)

The photo is preserved in the family collection of Barbare Gabunia's grandson, Shalva Gabunia

Raisa Dalakishvili (1904-1937) - An instructor of the Orjonikidze district committee and former secretary of the Orjonikidze district committee of the territorial branch of the Komsomol of Georgia was accused of conducting harmful and subversive activities within the Komsomol organizations of Orjonikidze district, specifically at the state university and medical institute. The charges included disrupting political training in 1936-1937, recruiting new members to the counter-revolutionary organization, and having knowledge of all the activities of the said organization.

Anna Pantsirnaya (1906-1937) - An instructor of the Tbilisi Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. She was accused of being a member of a right-wing counter-revolutionary organization and engaging in counter-revolutionary activities.

Lidia Starshova (1913-1937) - an employee of the 4th department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of Georgia, typist. She was accused of having connections with Sultanishvili, a participant in the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. During her tenure as an employee of the NKVD, it was alleged that she consistently provided him with information about all the materials available in the NKVD related to the members of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy.

All five women were sentenced to the highest penalty, to be shot.

Conclusion

The list of November 22, 1937, serves as a clear example of the term coined by Hannah Arendt — “the banality of evil”. The accusations against the individuals on the list are infused with “agentomania”, the fervent desire to search for and expose spies and collaborators in all sectors. This pursuit was unrealistic in Soviet Georgia due to closed borders and limited means of information transmission.

Among the real goals of the “Great Terror” of 1937-1938, experts single out the consolidation of the government, the complete neutralization of the alleged political opposition and old Bolsheviks, the silencing of opponents of industrialization and collectivization, and the establishment of ideological uniformity, among other reasons. If we judge directly by the examples of “Stalin lists”, we can add to this list the introduction of fear, terror, and general mistrust, the breaking of authorities, and the final solution to the process of the formation of the “Soviet man”. Stalin achieved all these goals through mass repressions.

Even after an era of intense repression, a legacy of fear and mistrust persisted in Soviet society. The trauma caused by repression has affected individuals and society for generations. Repressive policies shaped the political culture of the Soviet Union, fostering an environment of conformity and obedience to “authority” that had a lasting impact on the development of civil society and democratic values in the post-Soviet era.

Finding a correlation between the professions and accusations of some individuals included in the list of November 22, 1937, is challenging. For example, **Dimitri Ghambashidze**, a legal consultant of the medical and sanitary department, was accused of being an agent of the American and English intelligence services. The accountant **Kharazov** faced accusations of being a member of the American intelligence agency. **Toma Tsertsvadze**, the secretary of the party committee of the pasta factory and the manager of the canteen, was accused of being a Gestapo agent and an agitator of fascism. Even the brewer, **Christopher Forer**, was accused of being a Gestapo agent. Dozens of people were convicted of preparing a terrorist act against Stalin and Beria.

...and some additional statistical information: Out of the 439 people, 62 were charged based on someone else's testimony. Among them, 46 were accused of preparing a terrorist attack against Lavrentiy Beria, and two, **Vasil Zhuzhunava** and **Ivan Volkovsky (Fomichev)**²¹, were accused of plotting against the leader himself, Stalin. Three individuals were repressed for spying for Japan...

²¹ The accusations against the mentioned two individuals, the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Abkhazian SSR and his deputy, are likely related to an incident that occurred on September 23, 1933. During Stalin's walk along the Black Sea, a warning shot was fired from the beach checkpoint. Although the incident was promptly discovered and resolved, six years later, many repressed individuals were unjustly blamed for the episode. **Nestor Lakoba** (1893-1936) was singled out as an enemy of the people in connection with this incident. see: Большой террор в Абхазии (Абхазская АССР): 1937-1938 гг., Том II, 2017.