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THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA (1918–1921)

THE PROCESS OF REBUILDING OF STATEHOOD

The February 1917 revolution established a cause for the breakdown of the Russian Empire, moreover as a result of the First World War not only Russia collapsed but so did the Ottoman, German and Austrian-Hungarian empires. Among the states formed on their ruins was the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

The date of the establishment of the new Georgian state is May 26, 1918. On this day, the National Council elected by the Georgian National Congress, which expressed the will of the Georgian people, adopted the Act of Independence and founded the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

The first government of the newly established state was formed on a coalition principle. An influential Social Democrat, Noe Ramishvili, was appointed head of the government and the minister of internal affairs. The members of the cabinet of ministers were as follows: Grigol Giorgadze (the minister of defense), Akaki Chkhenkeli (the minister of foreign affairs) Noe Khomeriki (the minister of agriculture). All of them were Social Democrats. Giorgi Zhuruli (the minister of finances, trade and industry) – National-Democrat, Giorgi Laskhishvili (the minister of education), Shalva Meskhishvili (the minister of justice) were Social-Federalists, and Ivane Lortkipanidze (the minister of roads) was a Social-Revolutionary.

In June of 1918, a change took place in the government. Noe Zhordania, the leader of the Social-Democratic Party, took the post of the head of the government. Noe Ramishvili retained the post of the minister of internal affairs.¹ Evgeni Gegechkori (a Social Democrat) received the portfolio of the minister of Foreign Affairs slightly later – in November 1918.

¹ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, 1861/2/3, p. 8; Also, Janelidze O., *Noe Ramishvili – First Prime Minister of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2015, p. 73.

This change did not violate the coalition principle of the formation of the executive body of the government.

Self-governing district councils were established on the basis of elections. These were elected district-councils based on the multiparty principle with their own boards of administration. A reform of the city self-government was also carried out and authorised councils of cities and towns with their boards of administration were established. The workers, peasants and soldiers' councils were deprived of the function of governing. This function was to be performed by the regional elective district councils and authorised town councils. Thus, the local self-government within the framework of its competence performed the local government as well. Only a court of law had the right to annul the decisions of the elective district councils and deliberative councils.

Georgia's National Council was given the status of the supreme legislative body of the state. From October of 1918, it was filled with additional members and called Georgia's Parliament. The National Council and Parliament of Georgia were not elected by general elections. That was the reason that preparations to elect a Constituent Assembly, the supreme legislative body expressing the people's will, began as soon as the state independence was declared.

The assembly was to have 130 deputies. All the citizens of the country had the right to vote, women among them, aged 20 and over.

The elections of the Constituent Assembly took place in February 1919. The elections were general, equal, secret, direct, and held on a proportional system. 15 political organisations took part in the election campaign. The electorate consisted of 2,000,000 people. More than 60% of the population who had the right to vote took part in the balloting.

Only the Bolsheviks boycotted the elections, but they were unable to wreck them. The Socialist-Democratic Party won the elections by a wide margin. They obtained 109 mandates. The National-Democratic and Socialist-Federalist Parties each had 8 deputies in the Assembly; the Socialist-Revolutionaries won 5 places (Additional elections, did not change much the distribution of forces in the constituent Assembly).

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia, with its speaker – Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze, began to work on March 12, 1919. At the very first meeting, the Assembly confirmed "The Act of Independence of Georgia" adopted by the National Council on May 26, 1918. This supreme legislative body confirmed the new government of the Republic, which this time consisted only of the members of the victorious party, the Social Democrats. Noe Zhordania retained the post of the head of the government. Noe Ramishvili became the minister of internal affairs, defense and education, E. Gegechkori was appointed the minister of Foreign affairs and justice, K. Kandelaki became the minister of finance, N. Khomeriki was given the portfolio of the minister of agriculture and labour. Later on the ministry of defense (War Ministry) became an independent ministry and the post of the deputy-chairman of the government was established. Grigol Lortkipanidze was appointed to both these posts.

An important event in the process of building a national state was establishing the state symbols of the independent Georgian State. Iakob Nikoladze created the flag of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Ioseb Scharlemahn created the state emblem. In

September of 1918, the National Council confirmed a tricolour (dark-red, black, white) flag as the state flag and White Giorgi with seven suns fighting a dragon as the state emblem. Kote Potskhverashvili's "Dideba" ("Glory") became the state anthem.

Serious attention was given to the legal reform. Revolutionary tribunals and various investigation commissions were abolished. A reorganisation of the institutions of arbitrators and jurors was carried out. Arbitral and district courts were established.² A military court existed separately. In July of 1919, the supreme legal body of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the Senate, was established (Chairman Mikheil Kheltuplishvili).

The Democratic Republic of Georgia was established at the time when World War I was still being fought. The government was obliged to define the country's attitude towards this most significant event. This was reflected in the "Act of Independence" in which Georgia declared permanent neutrality in international warfare.

Neutrality did not seem very real in such a complicated geopolitical region as the Southern Caucasus, but it expressed Georgia's peaceful aspirations.

The declaration of neutrality would not be a sufficient guarantee for the sovereignty of the newly created republic; therefore, the strengthening of the defence potential of the country became one of the main objectives of the government. In a very short time, a legal basis was prepared: laws about the organization of people's guards and a regular army of the Republic were published and the regulations about military service and forming a regular army were confirmed. All male citizens from twenty to forty years of age were to do military service in the regular army. The army that was mustered in the case of expected military danger or war presented a certain reserve.

The reformation of the regular army was established in a hurry due to lack of finances, complications in foreign affairs, and military attacks (the war with Armenia, defending the country from the attacks of Turks and of Denikin, and also the aggression of Soviet Russia). There were some drawbacks too. However, it still became possible to form a 34 to 36,000-man army that was efficient and mobile.³ A military school, founded in Tbilisi, took care of training officers of lower rank.

The greatest importance in the country was attached to the management of the issue of agriculture, which was decided in accordance with the interests of the rural workers, and the land was transferred to private ownership.

Before the country had her own monetary-financial system, the paper money of the Transcaucasian Commissariat remained in circulation. It was printed in Tbilisi. In July 1919, the emission of the republican paper money began by the decree of the Constituent Assembly. The Georgian temporary paper money was unable to be a substitute for hard currency, but enabled the normalisation of the budget, more or less. In December 1919, the State Bank of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was founded with I. Lortkipanidze at its head.

² Bendianisvili A., *Saqartvelos pirveli respublika* (Bendianishvili A., *First Republic of Georgia*), Tbilisi, 2002, p. 112 (In Georgian).

³ Georgia's armed forces consisted of the regular army and public guard. The first was of about 26,000, and the other of 8–10,000 men. see. Силакадзе Дм., *К вопросу о численности вооруженных сил Грузии перед началом войны с Советской Россией в 1921г. Кавказский сборник*, т. 8 (40), М., 2014, ст. 239.

The reformation of the State apparatus of the Republic was completed successfully. Georgia rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat established in Russia. She did not accept the Soviet model and chose a democratic way of development that separated the legislative, executive, and legal power from one another. The political system was based on pluralism and liberal multiparty principles. The citizens' equality before law and other democratic liberties, characteristic of a state governed by law, were established. All this was distinctly reflected in Georgia's constitution, confirmed by the Constituent Assembly in February 1921.

The main law of the Democratic Republic of Georgia followed the model of Western states. This constitution did not act for a long time, but it was still of great historical significance. This legal document was clearly of the same level as the constitutions of its contemporary advanced countries; it showed a high legal and political culture of its compilers and revealed the democratic character of the Georgian state.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The Democratic Republic of Georgia received a bad demographic heritage from the tsarist government. Georgia's social-democratic government chose the policy of tolerance concerning the non-Georgian population. The national minorities were given a possibility of leading a harmonious life together with Georgians and of free social-economic and cultural development in the newly created state. It was emphasised in "The Act of Independence" that Georgia guaranteed the civil and political rights of all her citizens and that she would create conditions of free development for all the nations living on her territory.

Each ethnic minority living in Georgia had their own national council to supervise their national affairs. Ethnic political organisations or unions (e.g. Armenian Dashnaktsiutun, the Muslims' group, the Hellenic Democratic group, etc.) worked without restriction. 80 Armenian, 60 Russian, 31 Tatar schools were funded from the State budget. A German gymnasium was founded in Tbilisi; foundations were laid for elementary education in the Abkhazian and Ossetian languages (for instance, at the end of 1918, an Ossetian gymnasium was established in Tskhinvali, funded by the Ministry of Education).⁴

The representatives of minorities were members of Georgia's National Council. Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, Greek, German, Abkhazian and Ossetian citizens had deputy mandates of the Social-Democratic party in Georgia's Supreme Legislative Body, the Constituent Assembly,⁵ etc.

⁴ Дзидзоев В., Дзугаев К., *Южная Осетия в ретроспективе грузино-осетинских отношений*, Цхинвал, 2007, ст. 80.

⁵ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, 1834/2/17; also, *Sakartvelos damfudznebeli kreba* (*The Constituent Assembly of Georgia*. 1919), Tb., 2016, p. 41 (In Georgian).

Despite the deliberate policy of the government, the process of integration of the non-Georgian population in the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not develop smoothly and was not carried out to its end.

THE ABKHAZIAN QUESTION

After the fall of the autocracy, in the socio-political movement of Abkhazia,⁶ several trends emerged. One was of pro-Ottoman orientation, another sympathised with the Union of Mountain Peoples, and the third was in sympathy with Bolshevik slogans. There was also a group that wanted Abkhazia to be an independent state. As for the whole Samurazakano, part of Gudauta peasantry and Sukhumi workers demanded integration with Georgia.

Georgian politicians had planned to give Abkhazia wide self-government even before Georgia's state independence was declared.

On February 9, 1918, between the Georgian National Council Executive Committee and the People's Council of Abkhazia there was achieved an agreement on the autonomy of Abkhazia.

In 1918, the situation in Abkhazia became extremely strained. Initiated and supported by Soviet Russia, Bolshevik detachments occupied Sukhumi, dispersed the Abkhazian People's Council, established military revolutionary committees and seized power in the whole of Abkhazia and Samurazakano. The Abkhazian People's Council was unable to resist the Bolsheviks' raids with their own forces and turned to Georgia's National Council and the Parliament of Transcaucasia for help. The pro-Ottoman group of the Council tried to end the Bolshevik violence with the help of Turkey.

The government of Transcaucasia sent military detachments under the command of the head of People's Guards V. Jugeli and Colonel A. Koniashvili to restore order in Abkhazia. Abkhazia was cleared of Bolsheviks within a month's time.

After the independence of Georgia was restored, in June 1918 negotiations between the delegation of the Abkhazian People's Council and Georgia's Government began. They ended on June 11. At these negotiations, an agreement was concluded.⁷ According to this document, Abkhazia remained a component part of Georgia and it was given complete internal autonomy.

Soon the situation in Abkhazia again became unstable. The Bolsheviks strove to take Abkhazia from Georgia and make it part of Soviet Russia. At the repeated request of the Abkhazian People's Council and according to the agreement of June 11, 1918, Georgia's military force, commanded by General G. Mazniashvili, was sent to Sukhumi. G. Mazniashvili was appointed General-Governor and commander of the Sukhumi gar-

⁶ At this time, it was called the Sokhumi district and was included in the Kutaisi province.

⁷ The Abkhaz People's Council was not a full legitimate institution, but it was the main decision-making body in Sokhumi district. By 1918 the Abkhazians were slightly more than one fifth of the district population and made 38121 people (21, 4%). Ачугба Т., *Этническая история абхазов XIX–XX вв. Этнополитические и миграционные аспекты*, Сухум, 2010, ст. 141.

risson. The Georgian detachments together with a hurriedly formed 300-man Abkhazian cavalry unit drove the insurgent Bolsheviks away from Abkhazia.

The same fate was shared by the 1,000-man Turkish force landed from Batumi in the environs of the River Kodori.⁸ The civilian population, damaged during the military actions, received compensation from the Georgian Government.

With the purpose of coordinating activities, a representative of Georgia's Democratic Republic worked in Sukhumi, and the Minister of Abkhazian affairs worked with the government of Georgia⁹.

The whole population of Abkhazia did not support the Abkhazian People's Council, for it expressed only the wish of the Abkhazian people and did not take into consideration the other people's living there.

In August 1918, due to internal tension the People's Council disbanded.

In October 1918, the Georgian Government stopped an attempted political coup in Sukhumi. Its objective was to take Abkhazia away from Georgia.

The Abkhazian People's Council was dismissed. In return, in February of the next year, the People's Council of Abkhazia was formed through democratic elections, which was multi-party and multinational.

A. Emkhvari was elected chairman of the People's Council of Abkhazia. He very soon became head of Abkhazia's Commissariat (government). V. Shervashidze, the former chairman, became chairman of the Council.

On March 20, 1919 the People's Council with an absolute majority of votes adopted "The Act of Abkhazia's Autonomy".¹⁰ Its first article declared, "Abkhazia is part of the Democratic Republic of Georgia as its autonomous unit".

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia approved the Act. By the end of 1920, the constitutional commission of Georgia's supreme legislative body devised "the project of the regulations of governing the Abkhazian Autonomy", confirmed by the Constituent Assembly together with Georgia's constitution on February 21, 1921. It is emphasised in the regulations that "Abkhazia from the River Mekhadiri to the River Enguri, from the Black Sea littoral to the Caucasian Range is considered to be the indivisible part of the Republic of Georgia and it autonomously governs its internal affairs within these borders".

As for the Constitution, it legalised the following: The indivisible part of the Republic of Georgia, Abkhazia (Sukhumi Region), is given the right of the autonomous governing of local affairs.¹¹

⁸ In this case, a certain role was played by the German military and political mission in Georgia, led by General Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein. See: Fridrich Kress Freiherr von Kressenstein, *Meine mission im Kaukasus, Herausgegeben und mit einer Einleitung versehen von David Paitschadse*, Tbilisi, 2001, s. 31–32. Hovannisian R., *Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918*, Los Angeles, 1969, pp. 188–189.

⁹ Anderseni E., *Afrazeti da sowi. konfliqtis fesvebi* (Andersen E., *Abkhazia and the Roots of Sochi Conflict*. 1918–192, Tb., 2017, p. 65 (In Georgian).

¹⁰ Гамахария Дж., Гогия Б., *Абхазия – историческая область Грузии*, Тб., 1997, ст. 105–106.

¹¹ *Saqartvelos demokratiuli respublikis konstituzia* (Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Georgia), Batumi, 1921 (In Georgian).

THE OSSETIAN ISSUE

The Ossetians, living compactly on the territory of Georgia, had expressed their aspiration to self-determination as early as in the period of the government of the Transcaucasia commissariat, and entrusted the Ossetians' National Council with fulfilling the task. The Ossetians decided to establish a separate elective administrative-territorial unit at first. Later they demanded that the political autonomy of South Ossetia be established within the borders of Georgia. These claims were unrealistic. They had their motherland in the Northern Caucasus; therefore, nobody would legalise their new state inside the Georgian State.

The Georgian government offered a cultural autonomy to loyally disposed Ossetians. In 1919, the question of the formation of Ossetian villages into one administrative unit and establishing an elective self-government for the Ossetians was discussed. The Java District and not the South Ossetian Region was chosen for it with the centre in Tskhinvali as the Ossetians' National council wished.¹²

A more radical group, with much more aggressive objectives existed among the Ossetians' movement besides the National Council. They tried to realise their objectives by using violence. The Ossetian Bolsheviks with separatist objectives and groups of rebels connected with them, together with the Georgian Communist leaders, fought to separate "South Ossetia" from Georgia and incorporate it into Soviet Russia. They arranged three armed insurrections in Georgia under the leadership and with the assistance of Russia's Bolshevik leaders in 1918–1920.

The 1920 Ossetian rebellion had negative results. The RCP (B) regional committee of the Caucasus was organised and led this rebellion. The rebels slaughtered soldiers of the People's Guards, killed representatives of the local administration and government, robbed and sacked many Georgian family households.

An Ossetian guerilla detachment set out from the Northern Caucasus to join the rebels. They crossed the Roki and Mamison Passes and occupied Tskhinvali after a fight. A specially formed South Ossetian Revolutionary Committee seized power. They declared the establishment of the Soviet power from Oni to Dusheti on June 8. The Revolutionary Committee telegraphed the Kremlin about the victory informing them of the wish of South Ossetian workers to be incorporated into Russia.

The government charged several detachments of the People's Guards and Regular Army with the task of stabilising the situation. The rebellion was suppressed. Georgia's jurisdiction in the region was fully restored. The sources say that the Commander of the Guards displayed too much cruelty, but he did not perpetrate the Ossetian people's genocide. The rebels were punished for their anti-state, criminal actions and not because they belonged to the Ossetian ethnic group.¹³

¹² The appearance of the term "South Ossetia" is connected with the period of Russia's domination in Georgia, but it did not denote any ethno-political or ethno-historical unit and was used only to designate the Ossetian communities living on the southern slopes of the Caucasian Range.

¹³ Джanelidze О., *Осетинский вопрос в Демократической Республике Грузии (1918–1921)*, в книге – *Некоторые вопросы истории осетин иида картли*, Тб., 2010, ст. 380.

It is true, that part of the Ossetian population, mainly the members of armed units, migrated to North Ossetia, but those Ossetians who had not taken part in the rebellion and were loyal to the state did not suffer any punishment. They remained the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, enjoying equal and full rights, though the question of their autonomy and local self-government was removed from the agenda.

THE QUESTION OF MOSLEM TERRITORIES OF GEORGIA AND ZAKATALA DISTRICT

The name of Moslem Georgia was given to the southwestern regions and provinces of historic Georgia that had been seized by the Ottoman Empire at one time or another. The indigenous Christian population living on these territories was forced to embrace Islam.

The National Council of Georgia and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia had taken into consideration the religious alienation of the indigenous population of Georgia torn away from the country for a long time, the socio-economic and cultural development peculiarities, accepting the recognition of the autonomous governance of the Batumi District, which was a guarantee to bring it back to Georgia painlessly. Realisation of this officially declared idea was not easy. Since the end of 1918, the British Military Command controlled Batumi and the region on behalf of the Supreme Council of the Alliance.

In January 1919, the so-called republic of southern-western Caucasus or the Kars Republic was founded whose provisional government was led by Ibrahim Bey. One of the leaders of this republic, Server-Beg, organised an uprising. The rebels occupied Akhaltsikhe on February 11, dispersed the Georgian administration, and seized power.

The army of the Democratic Republic of Georgia managed to liberate Akhaltsikhe and despite the resistance of the British, occupied Potskhovi and Artaani after combat. British generals were forced in April 1919 to dissolve the Kars-Majlis, arrested members of the government and sent them to the island of Malta.

Georgian society was dissatisfied with this information. Protest rallies were arranged in many cities and towns.

In February 1920, the Allied Supreme Council discussed the issue of declaring Batumi as an international porto-franco under the mandate of the League of Nations.¹⁴ Protest rallies were arranged in many cities and towns. People demanded that Georgia's government take vigorous measures to recover Batumi.

Pro-Georgian forces in the south-west of Georgia rallied the Committee for the Liberation of Muslim Georgia, established in May 1918 under the chairmanship of Memed Abashidze.

¹⁴ John D. Rose, Batum as Domino, "1919–1920: The Defence of India in Transcaucasia", *The International History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Apr., 1980), pp. 266–287.

The congress of the representatives of the Georgian Moslems, convened in Batumi on August 31, 1919, under the leadership of the committee, was of a special importance. This congress passed a resolution of “eternal incorporation” of this region into Georgia.¹⁵

The British troops left Batumi in July 1920. The jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was restored in Batumi and its region.

In February 1921, Moslem Georgia was given autonomy by Georgia’s constitution. The plenary powers of the centre and autonomy were to be determined by a special law, but it was not adopted, due to certain circumstances.

Also very painful was the situation with another peripheral province of Georgia, Saingilo (Char-Bellakan) in 1918–1921. This land, lying to the northeast of Kakheti historically was a Georgian province. Russia, having conquered this part of the country, incorporated Saingilo into Tbilisi province first under the name of Char-Belakani Region, and then in 1860 it was given the name of Zakatala Okrug. In the middle of the nineteenth century, thousands of Inguilos returned to the Christian faith.¹⁶

As soon as Georgia’s state independence was declared, the Inguilos asked that the Zakatala Region be incorporated into the Georgian state. The Georgian state was ready to accept their demand.¹⁷ However, Azerbaijan and the mountain republics of the Caucasus also had claims on this territory. In the summer of 1918, the Islamic Caucasian army of Ottoman Turkey occupied Zakatala. Military detachments of the Azerbaijani Republic were part of this army. It is true that the Mudross Treaty rooted out the presence of Ottomans in the Southern Caucasus, but Saingilo was not given to the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

It in reality remained part of Azerbaijan, for after the Turks had left the region the territory was controlled by military detachments of Azerbaijan.

Georgian society could not be reconciled with the occupation of Zakatala District. The government of Georgia tried to restore historic justice by diplomatic means, aspiring to recover its own lands and spread its jurisdiction over them.

It was important that Soviet Russia also recognised it as the property of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It was reflected in the Russo-Georgian peace treaty, concluded in Moscow on May 7, 1920.¹⁸

The Constitution of Georgia approved in February 1921 granted Zakatala District, as an integral part of the country, autonomous governance in local affairs, but after the first Republic of Georgia fell, its jurisdiction did not extend to this part of the country.

¹⁵ Meschia E., *Brzola saqartvelos ertianobisatvis* (Meskhia E., *Struggle for the Unity of Georgia (1918–1920)*, Batumi, 2004, p. 66, 81 (In Georgian).

¹⁶ The Georgians that had recently adopted Islam were given the name of Inguilo.

¹⁷ Newspaper “Saqartvelo”, 1918, 31 October (In Georgian).

¹⁸ By additional agreement of the ceasefire, the issue of belonging of Zakatala district was to be decided by arbitration by the Georgian-Azerbaijan Mixed Commission chaired by the representative of the Soviet Russia.

GEORGIA AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING CAUCASIAN STATES AND TURKEY

Georgia and Azerbaijan

The independence of Azerbaijan and Armenia has been declared in Tbilisi after the collapse of the Transcaucasian Parliament. Both of them were in power in the Georgian capital for some time.¹⁹ The Azeri government, after some time, settled in Baku²⁰, later the Armenian government moved to Yerevan.²¹

The neighbouring states recognised de facto sovereignty of each other. N. Kartsivadze was appointed the official representative of Georgia in Azerbaijan.²² (M. Japarov was a diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Tbilisi, while A. Jamalian represented Armenia).

Russia's colonial heritage had a huge influence apart from external factors in the nature of relations with the neighbouring South Caucasian countries (World War and consequences), namely, unregulated boundaries,²³ that became the source of confrontation and conflicts.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia followed the course of close cooperation, economic and defence unity with Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Republic of the Mountain Peoples.²⁴

Geostrategic interests and economic needs led all of them to mutual close partnership, but the differentiation of political orientation and distrust of each other made this process difficult.

The cooperation of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the sphere of defence was extremely important. It ended in concluding a military agreement of these countries in June 1919.²⁵

The treaty was to be in force for three years. The signatories undertook to defend the state independence or territorial integrity of both republics with joint military forces in the event of danger and aggression of foreign countries. There was a special paragraph

¹⁹ Janelidze O., "Three States in One City, Pro Georgia". *Journal of Kartvelological Studies*, Warsaw, 2017, 27, p. 239–240.

²⁰ Векилов Р.А. *История возникновения Азербайджанской Республики*, Баку, 1998, ст. 18, 22.

²¹ Мархулия Г., *Армяно-грузинские взаимоотношения в 1918–1920 годах*, Тб., 2007, с. 7–8.

²² *Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии*, Тифлис, 1919, стр. 96. He was replaced first by G. Makharadze, then by G. Alshibaya in the position of the plenipotentiary ambassador.

²³ Azerbaijan's government was based on religious principles on the matters of borders' demarcation and disputed populated by Muslims of the Zakatala district of Georgia, Borchalo and Akhaltsikhe. Armenia's ruling circles demanded territorial separation by the principle of ethnic and real population. Armenia was demanding the Lore-Borchalo, Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalak districts. It also claimed Tbilisi, Gori, Batumi and the Batumi region. See *Армянский вопрос. Энциклопедия*, Ереван, 1991, с. 275–280.

²⁴ The Democratic Republic of Georgia paid special attention to the Republic of the Mountain peoples, which acted as a buffer between Russia and Georgia. Georgia helped the people of North Caucasus to repel both Denikin and the Bolshevik aggression, but the Republic of the Mountain People could not retain independence for a long time. See baxtaze m., mamulia g., masalebi saqartvelosa da crdiioet kavkasiis urtiertobis istoriidan, (Bakhtadze M., Mamulia G., *Materials from the History of Georgia and the North Caucasus*), Tbilisi, 2005, p. 47–50 (In Georgian).

²⁵ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, 1833/1/96, p. 2.

in the treaty that enabled the third Transcaucasian republic to join the defensive alliance of Georgia and Azerbaijan, but Armenia did not join it.

On the initiative of Georgia's government, a conference of the Caucasian republics was convened twice in April of 1919 and 1920. Apart from territorial problems, economic questions and questions of coordinated foreign policy, etc. were discussed. It is noteworthy, that official delegations of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Azerbaijan, sent to the Paris peace conference, found a common language, managed to cooperate, published joint addresses, announcements, and other documents.²⁶

The situation between Georgia and Azerbaijan became strained, especially after the Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan at the end of April of 1920. The Bolsheviks became masters of the whole country. The government of the republic did not put up great resistance to the intervention of Russia's Red Army. An absolute majority of the members of the Azerbaijani Parliament supported giving power to the Bolshevik party.²⁷

The Democratic Republic of Georgia did not have to carry out the obligations undertaken by the defensive treaty with Azerbaijan. Georgia's government did not send the Georgian military detachments to Azerbaijan. Tbilisi gave political refuge to the representatives of the overthrown government of Azerbaijan.

At the beginning of May 1920, Russian military detachments tried to invade Georgia from the Azerbaijani borders. The Georgian Democratic Republic managed to defend itself and repulse the aggressor. In spite of the fact that this fight meant military opposition between Georgia and Russia, after they concluded a peace treaty. A peace treaty was also concluded between the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic and the Democratic Republic of Georgia on June 12, 1920 in Agstafa.²⁸ The Agstafa Agreement made the borders between Azerbaijan and Georgia more definite. The frontier was marked on the administrative line, dividing the Tbilisi and Ganja provinces in the times of Tsarism, but the parties could not reach an agreement, concerning the Zakatala Region. The arbitration committee would decide this question.

Georgia and Armenia

The Republic of Armenia decided to solve the issue of disputed borders with Georgia by means of war. On December 9, 1918, regular detachments of Armenia invaded Borchalo and in a few days occupied several important strategic locations. They also attacked the villages of Akhalkalaki district.

Georgia's government ordered mobilisation on December 18 and the detachments of the people's guards and the army headed for the front line. The detachments of volunteers began to form; the Azerbaijani population of the Borchalo District also joined these detachments alongside the Georgian population.

²⁶ Авалов З., *Независимость Грузии в международной политике 1918–1921 гг.* Париж, 1924, с. 195.

²⁷ *Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика (Документы и материалы)*, Баку, 1998, ст. 537.

²⁸ Asatiani N., Janelidze O., *History of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2009, p. 318.

Soon Georgians' priority on the front became clear. In the decisive battle near Shulaveri the adversaries left their positions and retreated.

The command of the allies undertook the function of mediators. Due to them, combat ceased on December 31, 1918. The war was over, but the relations of Georgia and Armenia were as bad as before. War was not able to solve the problems of the neighbouring countries. The question of frontiers remained unsolved. There was hope that the Paris Peace Conference would decide it.

On January 9–17, 1919, an Armenia–Georgia conference was held in Tbilisi. Representatives of allied countries also took part in its work. According to the agreement reached, the debatable territory of the Borchalo District was declared to be the Neutral Zone of Lore, and the borders were established.

Between Georgia and Armenia on November 3, 1919, two treaties were concluded in Tbilisi. According to the first document, the parties were to solve all debatable questions by mutual agreement or arbitration, as for the second, it envisaged free transit between the neighbouring republics for three years.²⁹

On November 23, 1919, on the initiative of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, an agreement was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan to solve the debatable issues by arbitration. A course of peaceful co-existence in the relations of the Caucasian states gradually became noticeable. This was doubtlessly justified and suited the interests of each of them.

The hope that the international organisations would solve the question of Armenia's territorial claims to the Democratic Republic of Georgia proved to be futile. Armenia remained separated from the neighbouring countries. Moreover, after Georgia, it had a military conflict with Azerbaijan. (Spring of 1920).³⁰ That is why when the army of Mustafa Kemal invaded Kars and Aleksandropol in November 1920, nobody interceded for her. Neither Georgia nor Azerbaijan did anything to help their neighbour in her difficulties. Armenia was "assisted" only by Bolshevik Russia. Moscow managed to stop the Turkish aggression, but put an end to the state independence of Armenia and turned this country into a puppet soviet socialist republic.

Though due to incompatibility of the geostrategic interests of the Caucasian republics, the unrestrained situation, battle for the influence of the great states in the region, etc the "Caucasian Unity" of 1918–1921 did not work, but it still did not fail.

Georgia and Ottoman Turkey

On June 4, 1918, authorised representatives of Georgia and Turkey signed in Batumi a so called "Treaty of Peace and Friendship." This was not an agreement of equal parties.

The frontiers between the two countries were marked according to the Russo-Turkish frontiers before the 1829 Adrianopolis treaty. Alongside the main treaty an additional

²⁹ *Saqartvelos damfuznebeli kreba (The Constituent Assembly of Georgia. 1919 Stenographic Report of November 14, p. 4–20 (In Georgian).*

³⁰ *История Азербайджана, Баку, 1995 г. ст. 372.*

one was also drawn up, which also presented unequal conditions for the Georgian side³¹ (Georgia was to demobilise her navy, to hand over the railway for the transportation of the Turkish army detachments, etc.).

The National Council of Georgia protested against the discriminative treaty and demanded its revision with the participation of central states. Germany shared the idea of revising the Batumi Treaty and persuaded Turkey to hold a special conference. The conference was to be held in Constantinople, but owing to the defeat of the alliance of four states in World War I, the conference no was held.

The Batumi Treaty required ratification during a month, but it was not implemented and was never enforced. The only positive significance of the treaty for Georgia was that Turkey formally recognised the newly-created Georgian Democratic Republic. Official Istanbul appointed Abdullah Karem Pasha in Tbilisi as its representative. Representation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was entrusted to Grigol Rtskhiladze in the Ottoman Republic.³²

The armistice, concluded between Turkey and England on October 30, 1918, considerably changed the situation for Georgia as well. Turkey was to withdraw her military detachments from the occupied Samtskhe-Javakheti.³³

Soon Ottoman Turkey found herself in trouble. The powerful Porte began to disintegrate. The control of victorious allies was established over many of its domains. The famous Sevres Treaty of August 10, 1920 even made its sovereignty fictional. The Sultan preserved his throne, but the power was taken by the government of the great national meeting, formed in Angora (Ankara), headed by Mustafa Kemal. Kemal started to build a new Turkey on the old Ottoman ruins.³⁴

Since April 1920, the Ankara government established a partnership relationship with Soviet Russia. Mustafa Kemal was greatly assigned to Moscow because he was involved in the struggle with the Entente and received important arms and finances.³⁵

The first official contacts between the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Ankara date back to mid-November 1920, due to the new reality created in the region. Namely: Kemal, who made friends with the Soviet Russia, attacked Armenia in the autumn of 1920, and considerably oppressed the Ararat Republic. The danger of the Turkish invasion of Georgia appeared. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia announced urgent mobilisation and began preparing for defence.

To discharge the situation and to win the favour of Georgia, the government of Turkey sent an official delegation to Tbilisi. The danger of Georgia's occupation disappeared. Diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. S. Mdivani was appointed ambassador in Ankara. The Diplomatic representative of Turkey in Georgia was Kiazim Bey.

³¹ *Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии*, Тифлис, 1919, стр. 343–349.

³² *Saqartvelos damfuznebeli kreba (The Constituent Assembly of Georgia)*. 1919), Тб., 2016, p. 350 (In Georgian).

³³ Рейфилд Д., *Грузия. Перекресток империй. История длиной в три тысячи лет*, М., 2017, с. 274.

³⁴ Kazemzade F., *Brzola Amierkavkasisatvis (Kazemzade F., Fight for the Transcaucasia. 1917–1921)*, Тб., 2016, p. 356 (In Georgian).

³⁵ *Документы внешней политики СССР*, т. 3, М., 1959, с. 18.

On February 25, 1921, the Red Army units took over Tbilisi and announced the victory of the Soviet government in Georgia. The Ankara government promised the assistance to the Georgian government to repel Bolshevik aggression, in exchange for Ardagan and Artvin districts. This request was made in an ultimatum form.³⁶

On March 11, 1921, the Turkish military detachments entered the Batumi Region. Turkish askers appeared in Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki districts as well, but with no intention to assist the Georgians. The Turks occupied Batumi. Kiazim Bey was appointed governor of the Batumi Region, and according to the decision of the Great National meeting, Muslim Georgia was declared part of Turkey.³⁷

The situation became complicated. The danger of occupation by Turks in Batumi and its district was so real that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia considered making peace with the Bolsheviks better and thus saving Batumi.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia left the country on March 17, 1921. The day before that, on March 16, “an agreement of brotherhood and friendship” had been concluded in Moscow between Russia and Turkey.³⁸ According to it, Batumi was left to Georgia, and Artvin and Artaani districts became the property of Turkey.

Despite the agreement, the Turks were not in a hurry to leave Batumi. It took several days’ fighting to free it. The Georgian army led by General G. Mazniashvili drove the occupant’s away and preserved Batumi for Georgia.

RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES

Georgia and Germany

Imperial Germany was the first state with which the Democratic Republic of Georgia established international relations. It was Germany that saved Georgia from the danger of the Turkish occupation and enabled the Georgian people to restore the national independence abolished 117 years ago. On May 28, 1918, a German–Georgian agreement was signed in Poti. Proceeding from the situation of the current war, this agreement addressed the military, financial, and trade problems between the two countries.

Two Bavarian battalions entered Georgia by the consent of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and in Tbilisi the German military-diplomatic mission, led by General von Kress,³⁹ was established. Soon Georgia’s official delegation, headed by the minister of foreign affairs, A. Chkhenkeli, arrived in Berlin. “A friendly, economic and legal agreement” between Germany and Georgia was prepared. According to

³⁶ Кемаль М., *Путь новой Турции*, т. III, М., 1934, с. 119; David Marshall Lang (excerpt from the book “A Modern History of Georgia”/NY/1962) http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Georgia/Lang_9a.htm

³⁷ National Archives of Georgia, Historical Central Archive, 1872/1/, p. 6.

³⁸ *Сборник действующих договоров, соглашений и конвенций, заключенных СССР*, вып. III, М., 1922.

³⁹ Later German contingent, which consisted almost entirely of Bavarian troops, increased to about 19,000 fighters. See Astamadze G., *Georgian-German Relations between 1918 and 1921* <http://german-georgian.archive.ge/ka/blog/5>.

this agreement, Germany recognised and acknowledged Georgia's state independence.⁴⁰ This decision was not opposed in Germany's Reichstag either. The basis for partnership was built on the acceptable and favourable principles of the two countries.

It is true that Wilhelm II had substantial strategic, economic and political interests concerning Georgia, but these interests were not against Georgia's sovereignty and the Georgian people's national aspirations.

The Germans did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. They undertook to be the guarantor of Georgia's independence and were true to their word. When in June 1918, Turks invaded Georgia's south, German soldiers, fighting side by side with Georgians, gave their lives for Georgia's sovereignty and preserving and defending its territorial integrity.

The head of diplomatic representatives of Germany in Georgia was Count Friedrich-Werner Graf von der Schulenburg. Later on Dr. Rauscher took this post. V. Akhmetelashvili was sent to Germany as a plenipotentiary ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Georgia

The defeat of the central states in World War I and the revolution that took place in Germany in November 1918 caused certain corrections both in the international arena and in the relations of Germany and Georgia. Germany was compelled to remove her military contingent from Georgia.

The Georgians did their best to help the German troops who had done so much good for Georgia to leave the country safely. Georgia's government saw off the German echelons leaving Tbilisi with proper honour. Many German soldiers and officers were awarded the order of Queen Tamar for their participation in defending Georgia's independence.

Georgia and Great Britain

Great Britain did not officially recognise the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its attitude to the other republics of the Caucasus was not transparent enough for a long time. Because of this, the Allied military representation in the region⁴¹ did not consider the Georgian government properly and sometimes opposed the state's national interests. This circumstance caused a negative reaction from the Georgian political spectrum and Georgian public opinion.

The English aspired to draw Georgia into the anti-Bolshevik front and to bring it closer to the army of volunteers. This was not easy to achieve. Georgia would not give up her independence, and the army of volunteers was trying to make Georgia part of this empire again.

⁴⁰ The sovereignty of Georgia Germany recognised de jure in September 1920.

⁴¹ During the military presence of the British in Georgia in the South Caucasus, the three Commanders-Forstay-Walker, Thomson and Cory-succeeded each other. See Zuxisvili R., *Ingliss-saqartvelos urtiertoba 1918-1921 ww.* (Tsukhishvili R., *English-Georgian Relations between 1918 and 1921*), Tb., 1995, p. 36 (In Georgian).

When it became clear that the Bolsheviks were going to win the civil war, the attitude of England towards the countries of the Southern Caucasus, among them towards Georgia, changed.

The government of Great Britain decided to withdraw their troops from Georgia as early as in April of 1919 and carried out this decision in August.⁴² Alongside it, London strengthened its diplomatic representatives in Georgia. A diplomatic mission was sent to Tbilisi, headed by John Oliver Wardrop, a friend of the Georgian people.⁴³

In January 1920, the Allied Supreme Council recognized the Democratic Republic of Georgia de-facto on Lord Curzon's initiative. The abased prestige of the British in Georgia began gradually to restore. A prospect of improving the British-Georgian relations appeared too. However, after the British troops were withdrawn from the Caucasus Georgia lost its vital importance for the British policy in the Near East.

Great Britain did not wish to leave Batumi, other countries of the Entente also had their interests in this city being of the most important ports of the Black Sea. They could not reconcile themselves with the British domination there and aspired to enhance their rights too. In February 1920, they discussed the issue of declaration of Batumi as an international porto-franco.⁴⁴

The British Government had different opinions about the evacuation of troops from Batumi. There prevailed Lloyd George's perspective and in July 1920, the British military contingent was withdrawn from Batumi. The Batumi region was returned to its rightful owner, Georgia.

Inclusion of Batumi and its region in the Georgian Democratic Republic was recognised as a great success in Georgia. This was a really important fact, but the departure of the British from Georgia also meant the withdrawal of Europe from the region and rejection in the Caucasus.⁴⁵

In January 1921, Great Britain and the Allied states recognised the sovereignty of Georgia de-jure, but, shortly before, in December 1920, it did not support Georgia's acceptance in the League of Nations.

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

Georgia and White Guard Russia

One of the main forces opposing the Bolshevik regime was the army of volunteers. This White Guard military unit was especially strengthened under General A. Denikin's command and established influence over the whole of southern Russia.

The first contact of the Georgian Democratic Republic with the army of volunteers took place when her army drove out the Bolshevik detachments that had invaded

⁴² The military units of the British army remained only in the Batumi Region.

⁴³ Kobaxize B., "Ucnobi: Oliver Uordropi" (Kobakhidze B., "Unknown: Oliver Wardrop"), Journal "History", Tb., 2013, 5 (29), p. 39–46 (In Georgian).

⁴⁴ Авалов З., *Независимость Грузии в международной политике 1918–1921 гг.* Париж, 1924, с. 317.

⁴⁵ Asatiani N., Janelidze O., *History of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2009, p. 325.

Abkhazia. While pursuing them the Georgian army occupied Tuapse and Sochi in July 1918.

Denikin demanded the ceding of the Gagra district from the Georgian authorities. In September 1918, the issue of borders remained unresolved during the negotiations. Regulation of relations between the army of the volunteers and Georgia was undertaken by the British military mission having arrived in the Caucasus. Nevertheless, in February 1919, the Army of the volunteers invaded Abkhazia and tried to seize it.

In this situation the government of Georgia made a bold step, in 1919 they sent their army against Denikin, liberated Gagra, and occupied the positions on the left bank of the River Mekhadiri.⁴⁶ This act of the government was approved by the Constituent Assembly. The whole of Georgian society viewed the achieved success with great enthusiasm, but the threat from Denikin still remained real.⁴⁷

Denikin then destroyed the Republic of the Mountain Peoples, approached Azerbaijan, and was about to invade Abkhazia. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia took necessary measures in both military matters and diplomatic questions.

According to the decision of the allies, a demarcation line was established between the opposed parties.

The White Guard was unable to carry out their intention of conquering Georgia. Denikin, defeated by Soviet Russia, became more loyal towards the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

On February 11, 1920, the volunteer army recognised the de facto sovereignty of the South Caucasus republics, including Georgia.

Georgia and Soviet Russia

The attitude of Soviet Russia towards the Democratic Republic of Georgia was negative from the very start. The Kremlin considered the newly created Georgian state to be a hostile country, but was unable to act against it vigorously because of the civil war. The detrimental factor to Russian aggression was the presence of German and then allied military units on the territory of Georgia.

Georgia tried to timely improve relations with the northern neighbour, but Bolshevik Russia avoided this. It refused to acknowledge the Georgian State, prohibited the existence of Georgia's diplomatic representatives in Moscow, and arrested Ambassador G. Khundadze and put him to prison.⁴⁸

At the beginning of 1920, Lenin proposed that Georgia enter a military union against the army of volunteers.⁴⁹ If Georgia accepted this proposal, she would be involved in Russia's civil war, violating the neutrality principle adopted by her and would cause new complications for the republic. Noe Zhordania refused the proposal.

⁴⁶ Newspaper "Ertoba", 1919, 24 April (In Georgian).

⁴⁷ Деникин А., *Очерки Русской Смуты*, Берлин, 1925, с. 171.

⁴⁸ Хундадзе Г., *Отчет о деятельности Грузинской дипломатической миссии в России за 1918–1919 гг.* Тб., 1999, с. 103.

⁴⁹ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, 1867/1/19, p. 16; also Ленин В.И., *Полн. собр. соч.*, т. 40, с. 98.

At the end of April 1920, after the Eleventh Army had entered Baku without problems and established Soviet power in Azerbaijan, S. Orjonikidze, the leader of the Bolsheviks, moved the units of the Red army towards the frontiers of Georgia. However, the change of the political situation at home and abroad made him abandon his intention.⁵⁰

On its part, the Democratic Republic of Georgia managed to defend its territory and made the units of Soviet Russia, which had come from Azerbaijan, retreat.⁵¹ The Kremlin was compelled to establish peaceful relations with Georgia for the time being. Lenin agreed to the initiative of the Georgian party to start negotiations.

A peace treaty between Russia's Soviet Socialist and Georgia's Democratic Republics was concluded in Moscow on May 7, 1920. The document was signed by the member of Georgia's Constituent Assembly G. Uratadze and the Assistant Commissar of Russia's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, L. Karakhan. Both of them were given the necessary plenary rights by their governments.⁵²

According to the agreement, Russia unconditionally recognised Georgia's independence; it would not interfere in its internal affairs and renounced its former rights on the territory of Georgia and over its people. Soviet Russia acknowledged all the districts of Tbilisi and Kutaisi provinces that had been part of the Caucasian viceroyalty to be an indubitable and indivisible part of Georgia together with Batumi, Sukhumi and the Zakatala Regions.

Alongside articles confirming sovereignty, the agreement contained points violating Georgia's state interests (the neutralisation of the Caucasian passes, bestowing the right to the communist party of acting legally, the restriction of free relations with other states) which turned out to be fateful for the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

Based on the agreement diplomatic relations were established between Georgia and Russia. Ambassadors were exchanged. S. Kirov, a well-known Bolshevik, was appointed plenipotentiary representative of RSFR in Georgia (later on his place was held by A. Sheinman), and the government of Georgia sent to Moscow G. Makharadze, a member of the Constituent Assembly, a Social Democrat, as an ambassador.

A trade-transit agreement was concluded in Tbilisi in November 1920.⁵³ Russia and Georgia allowed free transit to each other; the forms of cooperation of the two countries in other spheres were also noticeable.

Georgia carried out the obligations envisaged by the agreement (the legalisation of Communist organisations, changing places to the posts on the passes, etc.) but peaceful relations with Soviet Russia did not last long. In February 1921, Russia broke the Moscow peace treaty unilaterally, invaded the borders of the sovereign neighbour state with an army and put an end to the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

⁵⁰ In those very days Bolshevik Russia was attacked by Pilsudski from Poland, who occupied Kiev. At the same time, Wrangell landed his forces in Kuban from the Crimea. It was followed by the demand of the minister of foreign affairs of Great Britain, Curzon, that Moscow cease military operations in the Crimea and the Caucasus.

⁵¹ Квинитадзе Г., *Мои воспоминания в годы независимости Грузии 1917–1921*, Париж, 1985, с. 189–190.

⁵² National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Harvard University Foundation, Microfilms, case №753.

⁵³ Newspaper „Saqartvelos respublika“, 1920, 16 November (In Georgian).

THE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

For the newly emerged Georgian state, recognition of its sovereignty internationally had a vital importance. The best opportunity for this was the peace conference in Paris from January 1919 to December 1920.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia selected a solid delegation composed of politicians, diplomats, scientists and experts, led by the chairman of the Constituent Assembly Nikoloz (Carlo) Chkheidze.⁵⁴

On March 14, 1919, Georgia's delegation presented a memorandum to the conference. The necessity of Georgia's state independence was substantiated in the document. Alongside the memorandum, the conference was given the map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, compiled in French, on which Georgia's territory and frontiers were distinctly outlined.

Georgia as a separate state should have been interesting for the West with her economic resources (forests, ore, and water energy), Batumi and Poti ports, and its quite important transit function.

The allied states considered Georgia's problem from the point of view of international politics, taking into account the real interests of Russia in the region and the balance of forces. They were worried by the unstable situation in the Caucasian countries because of disagreements about the frontiers, etc.

The heads of the leading countries of the conference revealed a special interest in Russia. It was the Russian question that mainly determined the situation of the whole Caucasus. If the favourite of the allied forces (Kolchak and the army of volunteers) won, the recognition of Georgia's independence was doubtful. This question practically had not even been raised at the conference before the movement of the White Guard showed signs of downfall.

In case the Paris conference refused to acknowledge Georgia's sovereignty, N. Chkheidze had been instructed by the head of the government N. Zhordania to obtain the protection of Great Britain or France on condition that they would not interfere in the internal affairs of Georgia.

As Britain has already made a decision to withdraw its troops from the Caucasus, Lloyd George offered Italy to take a mandate for Georgia. The Italian government started preparations for sending the expedition corps to Georgia, but in June 1919, due to a government change in the country, the issue of the expedition was removed from the agenda.

The mandate of Italy on Georgia did not take place.

The visit of the delegation of the European Socialists to Tbilisi in September of 1920 was of a certain importance for the recognition of Georgia's independence.⁵⁵ The

⁵⁴ All the members of the delegation were unable to go to Europe. Only N. Chkheidze, I. Tsereteli and Z. Avashvili were allowed to take part in the work of the conference. The other members of the delegation returned from Constantinople.

⁵⁵ The delegation consisted of the leaders of the 2nd International and prominent representatives, viz. Karl Kautsky, Emil Wanderwelde, Ramsey MacDonald, Pierre Renodel, etc.

European Socialists demanded legal recognition of the Georgian Democratic Republic before the governments and parliaments of their countries.

On 10 January 1921, the Supreme Council of Allied States made a decision to recognise the independence of Georgia *de jure*. Among those who acknowledged the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Georgia were: France, England, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Poland,⁵⁶ Austria, Romania, Luxembourg, Haiti, Libya, Mexico and others.

At the very same time, the interests of the United States of America in the Southern Caucasus also became obvious. President W. Wilson was ready to take a mandate on Armenia. He sent several missions to the region with this purpose (among them were the rector of Chicago University, Professor Judson, Captain B. Moore, General J. Harbord, etc.).⁵⁷

America's assistance was seen differently in Georgia, they considered it to be financial and diplomatic support. The government of Georgia did not ask the USA to establish a mandate on their own country. N. Zhordania in the mandate saw an encroachment on the state independence of the country, but expected that the adoption of the mandate of America to Armenia would be good for Georgia. This expectation also proved to be void, as the US Senate rejected Wilson's plan.

The government of the USA distrusted Georgia's aspiration to freedom. This was clearly expressed in a note by US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby on August 10, 1920, which stated: "The United States does not approve the decision of the Supreme Council of Paris, on the recognition of so called republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan".

In April 1919, at the initiative of US President W. Wilson, the League of Nations was created. Georgia expressed its desire to join this universal organisation, considering it a reliable guarantor of strengthening its independence. The basis for this illusion was the tenth article of the rules of the League. It provided for the protection of any member state in the case of aggression from another country. Unfortunately, this article, which seemed to be a security anchor for Georgia, prevented her from joining the League.

In considering the issue, the majority of the 24 participating States in the League of Nations stated that the League would not be able to defend Georgia from offence as it was situated in the remote complicated region of Europe. The Democratic Republic of Georgia found only 10 supporters, which was not enough and it could not become a full member of the international community.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

The whole history of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia lasted about three years. There were both achievements and mistakes on the way to building

⁵⁶ Diplomatic missions were exchanged between the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Poland. The sides established business and partnership relationships based on mutual interests.

⁵⁷ James G. Harbord, *Conditions in the Near East: Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia*. Washington Government Printing Office, 1920.

the state during this short period. Despite the critical international situation, permanent aggression of neighbouring countries, economic or financial problems, Georgia became a state. It is also important that this state was democratic in its nature and established liberal values.

The first republic of Georgia was obviously facing a war, ruin of old economic ties, and an economic crisis caused by all these difficulties, but did not lose its stand: It was a victim of an enemy's attack, a victim of the aggression of a foreign country. Soviet Russia was the aggressor and the oppressor.

Having won a victory in the civil war and repulsed the foreign intervention, the Bolsheviks (Moscow) turned their aggression towards the Southern Caucasus.

Russia prepared the attack on Georgia from the diplomatic angle as well as from military and political ones. Having restored the commercial and economic relations with England, Moscow obtained permission from this country to act as she liked in the Southern Caucasus, and by ceding a certain territory of the region to Kemal, she acquired Turkey's consent to neutrality.

On February 11, 1921, in a neutral district of Lore there started a mock protest action⁵⁸ started. A few days later the Red Army crossed Georgia's frontiers from Azerbaijan. The commander of the army had received an instruction from Lenin himself to seize Tbilisi. Soon Russia's Eighth and Ninth Armies started for Georgia via the Dariali and Mamissoni Passes, and another, the Thirteenth Army was moving towards Tbilisi from the Abkhazian coastal line.

February 16, 1921, the revolutionary committee of Georgia was created in Shulaveri for the 'revolt' led by Makharadze.

Georgia's government, somewhat late, still took special steps, declared mobilisation, regrouped the military detachments and put a new commander in chief, General Giorgi Kvinitadze, at the head of the army.

On February 18, Georgian military forces defeated the adversary at the approaches to Tbilisi, made it retreat and took more than a thousand Red Army men prisoner. The Georgian detachments got the upper hand over the enemy once more in the fight near the village of Kojori on February 20th. The junkers of the Tbilisi military school distinguished themselves in the fighting particularly.⁵⁹ The soldiers of the people's guards and Georgian army fought bravely side by side with the cadets. They put up a valiant resistance to the hordes of additional forces of the enemy till February 24th. On February 24th the decision of leaving Tbilisi, retreating towards Mtskheta was taken. The government of Georgia moved to Western Georgia.

On February 25th, 1921 the Eleventh Red Army occupied Tbilisi. S. Orjonikidze who was in Baku at that time sent a telegram to the Kremlin, informing them that the red banner of the Soviet power was flying over Tbilisi. After leaving the capital, the defense

⁵⁸ The Bolsheviks called this operation „the revolt of the workers of Georgia” and referred to it as such in Soviet historiography.

⁵⁹ Baxtaze M., 1921 *wlis ruset-saqartvelos omis sabrzolo moqmedebis istoriidan* (Bakhtadze M., *History of the 1921 Russian-Georgian War Activities*, Tb., 2013, p. 46, 57) (In Georgian).

system of the country was cracked. In the subsequent battles the Soviets Army could not being stopped, although the resistance lasted for more than two weeks.⁶⁰

Turkey also created a hopeless situation for Georgia. Instead of helping Georgia, her military detachments expressed a wish to occupy Adjara and Batumi. In such a situation, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia chose peace with the Bolsheviks, neither signing the capitulation nor recognizing the legitimacy of the Soviet government. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia preferred emigration to surrender and would continue fighting for the liberation of the country abroad. The Constituent Assembly of Georgia gave a corresponding mandate to the government emigrating.

The persecuted government of the Republic of Georgia left their mother country on March 17, 1921, and emigrated. The detachments of the Georgian army drove the Turks out of the country without the Bolsheviks' help.⁶¹ It was the last victory won under the banner of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

On March 18, 1921 Soviet troops entered Batumi, and Red Army completed the occupation of Georgia. The Soviet regime was established in the whole country. In reality it meant Russia's return to Georgia.

KEYWORDS

Democratic Republic of Georgia, Abkhazian question, Ossetian issue, Georgia and the outside world, Georgia and Soviet Russia

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⁶⁰ Janelidze O., *The Bolshevik Aggression of 1921 and the Russian Embassy in Georgia, Certain Aspects of Georgian-Russian Relations in Modern Historiography*, New York, 2014, Nova Publishers, p. 103–106.

⁶¹ Lortqifanize G., *Fiqrebi saqartveloze* (Lortkipanidze G., *Thinking about Georgia*), Tb., 1995, p. 222.

Demokratyczna Republika Gruzji (1918–1921)

Artykuł omawia podstawowe zagadnienia z historii Demokratycznej Republiki Gruzji w latach 1918–1921. Ówczesny ustrój polityczny opierał się na liberalnych zasadach pluralizmu i systemu wielopartyjnego. Funkcjonowały w nim organy ustawodawcze, wykonawcze i sędowe oraz obowiązywała równość obywateli wobec prawa, a mniejszości narodowe miały zagwarantowane prawo do swobodnego rozwoju społecznego, ekonomicznego i kulturalnego, nadane im przez konstytucję Gruzji przyjętą przez Zgromadzenie Konstytucyjne w lutym 1921 r.

W artykule zostały omówione relacje między Demokratyczną Republiką Gruzji a sąsiednimi państwami kaukaskimi i resztą świata (m.in. z Turcją, Niemcami, Wielką Brytanią i Rosją). Przedstawiono również proces uznawania Gruzji na arenie międzynarodowej, a także historię upadku niepodległego państwa gruzińskiego w wyniku agresji sowieckiej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Demokratyczna Republika Gruzji, kwestia Abchazji, sprawa Osetii, Gruzja i reszta świata, Gruzja i Rosja Sowiecka