



GEORGIA

*A SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC
PEASANT REPUBLIC*

IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

BY

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(Translated by H. J. Stenning.)

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Preface to the English Edition

THE present book is the result of a visit which I made to Georgia in August 1920. Invited by the Social-Democratic Party of Georgia, I journeyed thence at the same time as the delegation of the Second International, which had been, asked to visit the country by the Georgian Government. Falling ill in Rome, I was only able to reach the country fourteen days after the delegation arrived, in fact, just at the time when the latter was returning. I remained a much longer time in the country, from the end of September until the beginning of January. In view of the state of my health and the unfavourable weather, I was prevented from visiting every part of the country like the delegation. To this must be added my ignorance of the Georgian language. Nevertheless, I was able to enter into direct contact with the people and to acquaint myself with their ideas. Likewise, the native literature relating to the country, both official and private was inaccessible to me because of the language difficulties, so far as I was not aided by translators.

Thus I cannot pose as one who has investigated the country. Nevertheless, I have learned far more of it than an ordinary tourist; everybody most readily gave me information upon all things that I asked about; both the heads of the Government and officials as well as the representatives of the Opposition; proletarians as well as business people and intellectuals.

The Communists kept far away from me. What they had to say could be seen each day in the daily papers which they published in Tiflis, although in Russia no Social-Democratic paper is allowed to appear.

Naturally, this did not prevent the Communists from complaining about the lack of freedom in Georgia at every opportunity.

The freedom of the Press in democratic countries renders it easy for abuses to be brought to light, provided equal freedom is accorded to all sections.

Access to all institutions and undertakings was readily granted to me. As I made it a principle not to announce my visit beforehand, I could be certain that I should not be shown Potemkinian villages.

Thus, in spite of all difficulties, I have collected a large amount of information, and believe I have obtained a correct picture of the characteristics of the country, at least in broad outline.

It is not my intention to write a book of travel – my personal experiences were too slight for this purpose – nor do I propose to give a detailed account of the country and the people. I must leave this to observers who are able to remain a longer period in the country and to see more of it than I did, and who are familiar with the language of the country.

What occupied my attention in Georgia, and what I shall deal with in this book, is not a geographical nor an ethnological, but a social problem, the question whether a real Socialist Government is possible in a country which is economically more backward than its Russian neighbour; how such a Government was able to maintain itself there, without dictatorship or terrorism, using the means and methods of democracy, and what it was able, under these circumstances, to achieve.

Thus I went to Georgia to study an interesting and important social experiment, and to draw from it conclusions which would be generally valid for Socialist practice. What I studied was the antithesis to Bolshevism.

However insignificant it appears, it deserves our attention not less than the Bolshevist experiment, with its many sensational reverberations.

Unfortunately, it has become impossible to follow the practical development of the two experiments side by side to its culminating point. The process of consolidation of the Georgian community was brutally interrupted by the Russian neighbour and competitor.

When, in January of this year, I set out upon my return journey to Europe, I heard that the representative of Soviet Russia spoke to the Georgian Government in tones of warmest sympathy. To-day the representatives of Georgia are in possession of proofs that already in December, 1920, the Russian Government were making their military preparation for the invasion of Georgia, which followed in February. Then the country again became a province of Russia, in the form of an independent Soviet Republic. The small country was hedged in by a Russian Red Army, which numbered 120,000 men, and plundered to the utmost extent. As a subjugated territory, Georgia suffered more severely from the domination of Bolshevism than unhappy Russia itself. The course of its complete ruination, up to the point of absolute starvation, which was completed within the Russian Empire in four years, only occupied a few months.

I described, in the German edition of this work, conditions which I had just seen, but which have been completely superseded by other conditions at the time this English edition appears. Nevertheless, the subject still retains vital interest. For we are still confronted with Russian Bolshevism, the antithesis of the Social-Democratic Republic of Georgia, a knowledge of which is so helpful in enabling us to judge rightly the methods of Soviet Russia.

The dictatorship of the Moscow tyrants cannot become permanent in Georgia, any more than in Russia itself. The Georgian people have survived many barbarous invasions; they will also survive the devastation of the Red Army and the horrors of the Extraordinary Commissions. In Russia, and consequently in Georgia, too, democracy must eventually triumph again.

Then the problems and experiences which I came up against in Georgia and which are set forth in the present book will find added significance beyond the confines of Georgia, for the whole of Russia and its border States.

The immediate future will, no doubt, be terrible for the country both north and south of the Caucasus. And even when every dictatorship, White as well as Red, is replaced by democracy, the economic organisms of those districts will, for a long time, bleed from a thousand wounds, and exist in a state of painful convalescence.

Our tasks in Western Europe at the present time consist in strengthening and unifying the Socialist parties and their international organisation. The more we succeed in this, the sooner shall we be in a position, not only to raise our own working class and our own nations, but also to lend powerful aid to a speedy recovery in the East.

Only for astronomers, but not for Socialists, is the saying valid that light comes from the East. When we Socialists of the West are called upon to bring redeeming light to the world, this does not signify a compliment to us, but a task which imposes on us the most devoted activity for our great ideal of the emancipation of the oppressed.

K. Kautsky

Berlin-Charlottenburg,
September 8th, 1921.

Chapter I

Natural Conditions

WHAT we learn to know when visiting a country are its forms and colours, and the character of its landscape.

At a first glance Georgia is bewitching, and this impression deepens as the endless variety of its pictures disclose themselves to our view. From a sea coast, with sub-tropical vegetation, the Caucasus rises to a height of more than fifteen thousand feet. The German explorer, Merzbacher, relates in his book, "The Caucasian Highlands," that from the summit of Elbrus (18,000 feet), he enjoyed a view which made such a powerful impression that compared with it the peaks of the Central Alps only left a feeble remembrance.

He also declares that the Via Mala, the Tamina, the Liechtenstein Gorge, and other renowned places, were left far behind by the wild, rocky scenery of the Tchehen, or of the Alasan and Korsuf rivers. Neither the Bernese; Oberland nor Engadine, neither Judikarien nor Cortina came near to equalling the Swanetnian landscape in the grandeur of its proportions, in the harmony of its parts, in the wealth of its vegetation, or in the splendour of its colours.

I have quoted the testimony of the classic explorer of the mountains and peoples of the Caucasus, as I was prevented from enjoying its beauties on the spot.

Merzbacher was as well acquainted with the Alps as with the Caucasus, and others, who know both mountain ranges, consider the beauty and dimensions of the Caucasus to be superior to those of the Alps. If the reader will imagine the Bay of Naples to be a

part of Switzerland, he will get an idea of the variety and perfection of nature to be found in Georgia.

Georgia not only combines sub-tropical coasts and glaciers, but also contains a great fulness of vegetation, produced by the tropical heat and great humidity, and close to this are and desert regions. There is also a surprising number of medicinal springs of various kinds, which burst out of the volcanic soil.

Georgia has much to offer to invalids as well as to nature lovers and artists. Before the war, tourists and invalids, both from Russia and from Western Europe, had begun to visit the wonderful country whose attractions were heightened by the fact that, unlike Switzerland and Italy, they were in many respects as yet untried. In the Caucasus there are virgin forests and remote valleys which no stranger has hitherto trodden. An evidence of the primitive character of the country is furnished by the circumstance that large beasts of prey are constantly met with there, as well as other kinds of wild animals. Bear's flesh comes into the market at Tiflis for sale, like beef with us, and at no higher price. On one occasion when, out of curiosity, I bought some bear's flesh, I asked where the bear had been shot, and was informed fifty miles from Tiflis – quite near the capital, and not in some remote Caucasian valley.

But Georgia is not only a veritable paradise for tourists, sportsmen and invalids. Nature, also, felt obliged to please the economists. Natural beauty and richness of soil, which are so seldom, found together, are combined in Georgia to an extraordinary degree. The soil is extremely fruitful and capable of bearing rich harvests of southern and northern products, according to the position of the land. Oranges, figs, olives and tea flourish on the coast of the Black Sea, and cotton is cultivated towards Azerbaijan. Maize, wheat or barley are sown almost everywhere. Georgia is

particularly rich in excellent wine, and seems to be the home of the grape, which grows wild in the woods. Tobacco also thrives very well, and, in quality, seems to be better than that of Trebizond. Nowhere have I seen such abundance of fruit as in Georgia, and in this respect it can only be compared with California. The Georgian mountains, especially the Caucasus, are infinitely rich in valuable woods. In minerals, too, Georgia conceals great treasures, of which the most important is the manganese of Tchiaturi, which ranks as the richest in the world. The three most considerable deposits of manganese are to be found in Brazil, India and Georgia. In 1913 these countries exported:

Brazil	122,000 tons of manganese.
India	772,366
Georgia	1,061,731

Rich seams of coal are found in Georgia in at least two places, and, in addition, iron, copper, lead, zinc, etc.

In antiquity the country was famed for its gold (whence the legend of the Golden Fleece), but no gold mines are worked to-day. In many copper and zinc mines small admixtures of gold are found in the ore.

Chapter II

Historical

Thus Georgia lacks nothing to make her not only one of the most beautiful, but also one of the richest countries in the world. But the material position of the Georgians does not depend merely upon the richness of the land in which they live; it is also determined by the manner in which they have made use of it, and the relations they are obliged to enter into with their neighbours. In other words, it depends not only upon the natural, but also upon the social and economic conditions in which they exist. And during recent decades these conditions have been anything but brilliant in Georgia.

For about a thousand years Georgia was indeed favoured by its geographical position, in that it came into contact with Greece through the Black Sea.

The soil of many Greek States was too stony and sterile to support their growing populations. As seafaring progressed the Greeks, learned to fetch the corn which they needed from Southern Russia. Thus they came into contact with the coasts of the Black Sea. They were also attracted to Georgia by the gold which was then found there. As early as the eighth century B.C. colonies were planted by Greek towns along the Black Sea. The Georgians became acquainted with Greek civilisation at a time when the Germans, or their predecessors, living in primeval woods, stood on no higher plane of civilisation than the savage Indians of North America when they were discovered by Europeans.

Even more than by gold, the Greeks must have been attracted to Georgia because it provided so good a route,

from the West to the East, to the then rich territories of Persia and Central Asia. Eastern and Western civilisation met in Georgia, and stimulated its intellectual development.

But highways to rich countries attract not only the merchant, but also the warrior, whether he be plunderer or conqueror. In the degree in which the connection between West and East, Greece and Central Asia, developed in Georgia, the clashes of Western and Eastern armies became more frequent, and Georgia suffered devastation from being made a theatre of war. But it always recovered speedily, so long as it remained a highway of world commerce.

When, however, the Turks put an end to the Byzantine Empire, conquered not only Asia Minor and Constantinople, but also the Balkan Peninsula, and dominated the Black Sea, Georgia was cut off from Europe.

Henceforth the trade route from West to East was across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. At the same time, Persia and Central Asia fell to pieces. Georgia lost more and more the capacity to make good the consequences of the everlasting state of war. Its civilisation, its prosperity, and even its population rapidly diminished. The only thing that persisted throughout the perpetual feuds on its soil was the feudal exploitation of the masses of peasants by numerous petty princes; an exploitation which became more oppressive in the degree that the peasant became poorer.

The consolidation of Russia brought about a change. The struggle of the West against the robber nomads and conquerors who had penetrated into Europe during the middle ages was first successfully undertaken by Russia.

First the Tartars, and then the Turks, were pressed back by the Moscow Czars who established their own authority over the territory thus vacated. At the end of the eighteenth century they had been driven back as far as the Caucasus.

In 1783, Catherine the Second concluded with the Georgian King, Heraklius II, an agreement under which the latter accepted the protection of the Empress. This protection did not save Georgia from being again plundered by the Persians, but it prepared the way for the complete subjugation of the country by the Russians, who annexed Georgia as a province to their Empire in 1801.

The internal feuds and the hostile invasions now gradually ceased. Still more important was the fact that Georgia was once more able to enter into relations with Europe. But the representatives of European civilisation were practically confined to Russian officials, generals and aristocrats, who brought from Europe what they themselves had assimilated, the external gloss which did not always sufficiently hide Asiatic barbarism. The feudal oppression and exploitation was not lightened, but even made heavier by the military and bureaucratic regime.

Meanwhile the Russian autocracy did not remain completely unchallenged. The economic development created in the Russian Empire revolutionary sections, which eventually became strong enough to give battle to Absolutism, although, at first, only by means of underground warfare.

In many of the Border States, which formerly had known a separate political life, the struggle against Russian Absolutism became especially intensive owing to the fact that it signified not merely the breaking of the fetters of

Absolutism and Feudalism, but also the casting off of the foreign tyranny.

This was the case in Poland and also in Georgia. In these countries all classes felt the pressure of the foreign bureaucracy in the most severe form. In Poland the peasants were played off against the large landowners, and sometimes favoured, but nothing like this happened in Georgia. Those who were not masters of the Russian language were everywhere degraded and excluded from all offices. Even in the factories of Georgia a worker who had not undergone an examination in Russian was liable to be refused employment. The growth of Georgian resistance to the foreign yoke was assisted, for a time, by the practice of the Russian Government in banishing to Georgia, as well as to Siberia, its subversive subjects, such as Poles. This practice did not last long, as Georgia commenced to mutiny in the middle of the last century. It was then the turn of the Georgians themselves to be banished, and they shared this fate in the fullest measure. The struggle against Czardom had to be carried on with the aid of the ideas of the more highly developed West. Not only the officials, the military and the aristocrats, but also the revolutionaries of Russia drew their knowledge and methods of thinking from Western Europe.

This occurred at a time when the revolutionary movement of Russia received such an accession of strength that the Liberals had become Conservative, and only the Socialists represented revolutionary thought. Thus the Russian Revolutionaries became Socialists, in spite of the weakness of the proletariat and its class struggle in the Russian Empire. And just as the capitalists of Russia chose the more

perfected forms of European technique for the industry which they founded, so the Socialists of Russia chose the most perfected form of Socialism, the Marxian.

This also applied to Georgia. There only for a short time the Opposition movement was led by the aristocracy, as in Poland, and possessed a purely nationalist character. At the time when serfdom was abolished in Russia an echo was heard in Georgia in the form of peasant unrest, which was suppressed with bloodshed.

The Opposition movement first became strong and systematic when industrial capital was attracted to Georgia by the building of a railway from Tiflis to Baku (commenced in 1880); by the increasing significance of petroleum production in Baku, and its growing exports of that article. Although capitalism was still in an undeveloped stage, Socialism of the Marxian kind took root in Georgia at this time. In the ten years between 1890 and 1900 the Socialist movement rapidly gained in strength.

Its first champions were the practical organisers and agitators Sylvester Jibladse and N. Tcheidze, with whom was soon associated the publicist and theoretician, Noe Jordania, who did even more for Georgia than Plechanoff did for Russia, as he remained in the country instead of working from a place of exile, and as he united the talents of the practical fighter with the activities of the thinker and publicist.

The first strike in Tiflis took place in the year 1896, and the First of May was celebrated in that town from 1899 onwards.

In the following year, on May 1st, 1900, a workers' festival was arranged, at which about five hundred workers were present. The most hopeful outlook prevailed, and for the first time revolutionary songs were heard in the Georgian language, in the midst of banners with the portraits of Marx, Lassalle and Engels.

In the same year the Socialist organisations of Georgia joined up with the Social-Democratic Party of Russia, which was formed at that time.

The Georgian Socialists did not desire that local particularism should cut them off from the mass of the struggling proletariat of Russia. From the very first they attached importance to the ideal of international solidarity as opposed to Georgian nationalism. Without depreciating the demand of the Georgian nation for self-determination, they believed this would be most effectually promoted within the sphere of the Russian Social-Democracy, which stood for universal self-determination. Unlike the Polish Socialists, they entered the International as Russian Social Democrats.

The International did not include any separate Georgian Social-Democratic Party. By adopting this course, however, the Socialists of Georgia became involved in all the errors and confusions through which Russian Socialism has passed.

In contrast to Georgia, where the Proletarian movement has nearly always remained true to Marxian Social-Democracy, the Socialist movement of Russia has been split into various sections.

On the one hand was the Social-Democracy, with tendencies in line with the thought of Western Europe, and postulating an advanced stage of capitalism as the indispensable preliminary to Socialism; and, on the other hand, was the Social Revolutionary Party with a specific Russian Socialism, which it sought to base rather upon the peasants and the vestiges of village communism than upon the proletariat. These doctrines could scarcely find any support in Georgia, as in that country village communism had completely disappeared.

An antagonism soon arose within the ranks of the Russian Social-Democracy between divergent conceptions of Marxism. The first conception, which may be called that of Western Europe, emphasised the importance of the economic movement, and the other, or Russian conception perceived in force not merely the midwife but the creator of a new society. The first conception involved, in particular, the development of the self-consciousness and the independent activity of the proletariat, and consequently favoured Democracy, which alone formed the groundwork for this development; and the other conception saw in the proletariat merely a tool to be wielded by a small and resolute organisation of Socialists. Those holding the first condition remained true to the Marxian method, which they consistently employed in spite of all the difficulties which arose from the economic and political backwardness of the country; those holding the other conception began by substituting the dictatorship of a conspiracy society for democracy within the party organisation; and from this point they tended to move farther away from the Marxian method towards the pre-Marxian ideas of Blanqui and Weitling. The more the members of this section deviated

from Marxian methods, the more obstinately they clung to Marxian phrases the better to exploit the repute in which the name of Marx was held in Russia, and they expended all their energies upon learning by heart such phrases as suited them, which they interpreted in their own way. In place of Marxian science they set up Marxian scholastics.

In the early days of this split, which occurred in 1903 the Georgian Social Democrats ranged themselves on the side that was dominated by the Marxian and Western European outlook, that is, on the side of the Mensheviks.

They soon became the strongest element in this section, to which they remained absolutely loyal. In Russia, on the other hand, there were constant fluctuations in the relative strength of the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. Yet the general tendency of the Russian proletarian movement showed itself to be very favourable to Bolshevism. Certainly the Bolsheviks were the worst Marxians, but their preponderance was to be explained on Marxist lines by the special conditions in which the class struggle was carried on in Russia. In Georgia, and also in Poland, which stood in national opposition to Russia, the special Russian form of Marxism found no foothold. The Georgian Social-Democrats were the picked troops of Russian Menshevism. Consequently, from the commencement Georgia appeared to Bolshevism as the enemy deserving the most bitter hatred, and to-day it has become the hereditary enemy. After the first Russian Revolution, Georgia was the country which constantly returned the largest Menshevik majority in the Duma Elections since 1906, and which furnished many of the Menshevik martyrs.

Scarcely one of the leading comrades in Tiflis whom I have recently met has not made acquaintance with Siberia.

Georgia also provided the Russian Party with a series of its best leaders and representatives. Jordania, Ramishvily, Tsereteli, Japaridze, Tcheidse, Lomtadze, Gegetchkori, Macharadze and Tchenkeli played in Petrograd a political role not less important than in Tiflis.

The Social-Democratic fraction of the last Russian Duma before the October Revolution chose the same Tcheidse to be its leader. It voted against war credits and adhered to the Zimmerwald Conference. It was Tcheidse who read the Zimmerwaldian manifesto in the Duma. And when the 1917 Revolution created the Workers' Councils, Tcheidse was chosen President of the Petrograd Workers' Council – a product of the confidence reposed in him by the Russian proletariat through his parliamentary activity.

By the side of Tcheidse in the Petrograd Workers' Council was the Georgian Tsereteli, who had hastened there from his Siberian place of exile.

The Menshevists were not able to assert themselves in Russia. They were too weak to carry out their peace policy in opposition to the war policy of the Cadets, in coalition with whom they had formed a ministry, of which Tsereteli was a member; and, they could not decide to support the Bolshevik agitation, which aimed at the dissolution of the Army before the conclusion of peace, and the complete sacrifice of Russia to German, Austrian and Turkish invasion, plundering and conquest.

The middle course which the Menshevists would have pursued was well conceived. But as is so often the case in history when great and irreconcilable oppositions come into conflict, those who worked for the final result which was given by the parallelogram of forces were paralysed by the clash of the antagonisms, and only after the strength of the two extremes had been exhausted was this object of the middle party to be finally attained.

Thus the Menshevists were soon eclipsed in Russia, but not in Georgia. In that country there were no Cadets, and no Bolsheviks of importance. The majority of the Socialists of Georgia, supported by Jordania, had been unfriendly to the Coalition policy, and demanded a purely Socialist ministry. The Revolution brought the Social-Democracy of Georgia, as a compact and resolute party, to a dominant position, which was not seriously contested from any quarter in the country.

But it was a bad heritage into which this party entered. The immediate situation was desperate, in view of the masses of Russian soldiers, filled with Bolshevik hatred against Menshevist Georgia, which in their retreat from the yet more hostile and ferocious Turks, broke up into plundering bands and swarmed into Georgia.

Apart from this, the economic position of the country was grievous in the extreme, and its enduring power was slight. Even before the war it had suffered considerably from the neglect of its agriculture and its industry, and the inadequacy of its means of communication. And to this was now added the devastation of four years of war, and protracted isolation from the industry and civilisation of Europe.

Chapter III

Agriculture

Even to-day the land of Georgia is cultivated in the most primitive fashion. There, as elsewhere, feudal dependence and the prevalence of short leases impeded the development of agriculture. The implements of Georgian agriculture reminded German observers, only a short time ago, of Biblical times.

In 1905, Paul Hoffmann wrote, in his book on *German Colonies in Transcaucasia*, as follows:

“Only in recent times have modern ploughs been widely used in Transcaucasia, and the colonists are still partly assisted by the wooden ploughs of the Georgians.”

If this is the case with the German colonists, who represent a higher type of agriculture, it applies still more to the Georgian peasants themselves. The plough does not penetrate the soil very deep, and requires an uncommonly strong team, five to ten pairs of buffaloes. Merzbacher saw ploughs drawn by twenty-four animals, which needed seven men to guide them. What an expenditure of energy to secure a scanty result. Thrashing is managed with a thrashing sledge, provided with a flint, which appeared to Merzbacher to be a relic of the stone age.

The methods of soil cultivation are as primitive as the implements used. Rotation of crops and artificial manuring are quite unknown. The tillage resembles the system which existed in Germany at the time of Charles the Great. The same crop, whether wheat or barley, is planted year in and year out in the same field, sometimes three years in

succession, until the harvest decreases. Grass is then allowed to grow, and the soil is used as pasture, again for several years in succession, when it is sown once more with crops.

The cattle which is put on the pastures is small and insignificant, at least the horned cattle. The absence of the cultivation of fodder is not only prejudicial to the raising of cattle and to agriculture, but also to afforestation. The sheep and goats ruin the woods, and destroy every after-growth of trees, especially in the eastern and dry regions. We have spoken above of the boundless riches of Georgia in wood, but these are very unevenly distributed. Wood is to be found in the districts of the Black Sea, and in the hardly-accessible and sparsely populated districts of the Caucasus. The drier and more populous districts are in many cases completely woodless.

Thus, for example, not a single tree is to be found on the whole range of mountains which surrounds Tiflis. Nor is there any trace of soil tillage in these desert places, which scarcely yields sustenance for goats.

The growing destruction of the woods increases the dryness of the climate, and therefore the danger of harvest failures. In former times this danger was averted by great irrigation works. As in so many other countries of the East, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Central Asia, there were great territories in Georgia which, with the aid of artificial irrigation gave the richest harvests, without which they would have remained sterile. The laying out of irrigation canals was an important task of the old Oriental Governments.

Since that time these territories have passed under the sway of rulers who sprang from the nomad peoples of the Steppes,

and who had no understanding of the importance of such works. They exhausted all the energies of their lands in warlike undertakings. In the course of recent centuries the irrigation works in these countries have everywhere fallen into decay, and consequently prosperity and civilisation have shrunk.

In the Thirteenth Century the population of Transcaucasia was estimated to be sixteen millions. To-day it amounts to hardly one-third of this number.

But even this third does not find sufficient support in its own country. Georgia required constant imports of corn, which it could easily receive from neighbouring South Russia. These imports were paid for with tobacco and wine, which are produced in abundance in Georgia. The Russian Government encouraged this commerce, which was to the interest of the great wheat growers, who found in Georgia a market close at hand for their surplus corn, and received cheap wine and tobacco in exchange. If not for the cultivation of wheat, the Russian Government has done much to promote the culture of the vine in Georgia, and, in addition, has aided the production of tea. The vine, tea, olives, and almonds are in many parts carefully cultivated. The remarks upon the backwardness of agriculture do not apply to these crops. Nevertheless, owing to the primitive character of its agriculture, an agrarian country like Georgia was not a little dependent upon a foreign market for its sustenance.

War and revolution would, therefore, menace the country in the extreme. Bolshevism has cut off Georgia from the corn granaries of South Russia, and deprived the country of the

markets for its surplus products. At the same time the aftermath of the war has rendered it extremely difficult for Georgia to find new markets in Western Europe, and fresh corn providers in America and Australia. This explains the food difficulties which we find in a country so richly dowered by nature, and in which over eighty per cent of the population live by agriculture.

In addition to the backwardness of the mode of production, another circumstance contributed to diminish the yield of agriculture, by decreasing the amount of labour power which was engaged in it.

This factor is malaria, which in the most fruitful districts is a scourge to the country, and paralyses the strength and energy of numerous inhabitants during the best years of their lives. If the dryness necessitates great irrigation works, in order to increase the fertility of the country, malaria, on the other hand, is best grappled with by draining the swamps which occupy wide stretches of land, especially about the Black Sea. The overcoming of malaria would not merely raise the labour power of the inhabitants, but would also rescue new land for cultivation. Both irrigation and draining works were equally neglected by the Russian Government.

Chapter IV

Industry

We are able to make our sketch of industry shorter than our sketch of agriculture. Not because this sphere is less important, but because no great industry of any consequence exists in Georgia. Very few capitalist undertakings are to be found there, and handicraft on the smallest scale and homework – carpet and cloth weaving – both in the textile and in the metal industries – are predominant. There are numerous handicraftsmen, who are extremely clever and tasteful, and nearly all of whom work only for themselves.

The country produces an abundance of wool and silk cocoons. It also produces some cotton, which grows in large quantities in the neighbouring Aserbaijan and especially in Turkestan. But there exists no large undertaking to work up this raw material. The jealousy of industrial Great Russia did not allow competition of this nature to arise. In the capital of Tiflis women can be seen at any moment walking and carrying in their hands the hand-spindle with which they spin wool. So far as they are concerned, not merely the spinning machine, but even the spinning wheel has not yet been discovered.

The largest industry in the country is the railway works. The railway from the Black Sea to Baku is the artery of the country. In addition, account must be taken of the arsenal and some electrical power stations. The rest of the large undertakings are almost all subsidiary to agriculture, such as

cognac distilleries, oil mills, tanneries, and sawing mills. There are also tobacco factories, tile works, and soap works.

Outside of the special industries there are some large mining undertakings. It is a remarkable fact that only the least significant of the coal deposits are worked, namely, those in Tkivuli, which are connected with the railway. The far better coal of Tvartscheli has not yet been won. Its deposits are quite near the Black Sea, in fact, only forty-five miles distant. It is necessary, however, to construct a railway to this spot, and to make the harbour of Ochemtchiry accessible to large ships. This has not yet been done, and thus a source of great riches for Georgia has remained untapped.

This neglect is explained by the nearness of Baku with its immense petroleum wealth. In a double connection Baku is of economic importance for Georgia.

A system of pipe lines connects the petroleum wells of Baku with Batoum, where a petroleum refinery has been established and numerous ships are collected to pick up the petroleum. Batoum has experienced from this cause a prosperity which is almost American.

On the other hand, the railways and industries of Georgia have discovered in masuth, a by-product of petroleum, a fuel which for cheapness, effectiveness and convenience, is not to be equalled. Coal did not come into vogue.

Since the Revolution this has been altered. The military operations involved in the struggle of the Bolsheviks with the Entente have not only, as we have seen already, prevented the import of corn and the export of wine; they

have also led to Baku being captured by the Bolsheviks who practically stopped the export of petroleum to Georgia. Without petroleum and masuth, thrown back on bad coal, without light and good fuel, the condition of the population of Georgia became desperate. Railway facilities had to be restricted, and travelling was slow and difficult, owing to the new fuel.

These events also did harm to trade, which was always active so long as petroleum was available. Now the industrial products of which Georgia had need were lacking. The disturbances to trade brought about by the war, which persisted so long afterwards, were not overcome by the attractive force which petroleum could have exerted.

The commodity most in demand for export was still manganese, which was not dependent on the Russian market. Of the million tons of ore which Georgia exported in 1913, merely one per cent went to Russia; on the other hand, 38 per cent went to Germany, 22 per cent to England, and 17 per cent to Belgium. From the outbreak of war up to the present time the export of this commodity has suffered considerably from transport difficulties.

These difficulties, which were not created by the democratic regime, formed, together with the backwardness of agriculture, the chief cause of the blight which rested after the revolution upon the Georgian paradise.

Chapter V

The Classes

We have seen that Georgia participated in the March Revolution of 1917 as a part of the Russian Empire. Then came the Bolshevik Dictatorship, which at once began to exercise a repulsive influence on the Russian Border States. This movement spread to Georgia, which declared its independence on May 26th, 1918. Its Government was Socialistic.

But this does not mean that a Socialist mode of production could be introduced into the country. The economic foundation for this transition existed in Georgia less than in Russia, where large-scale production had notably developed, in spite of the agrarian nature of the country.

The Socialistic character of the regime after the revolution in Georgia consisted in the fact that the country was ruled by its industrial proletariat. If one likes, the phrase Dictatorship of the Proletariat can be used in this connection.

Even more than in Russia, was it the dictatorship of a minority. But quite different from Russia, it has been carried out on the basis of democracy, and without the exercise of any terrorism, as all classes have assented to it.

There was grumbling from all classes, even from those who ruled. This is not to be surprised at in view of the already indicated lack, on the one hand, of bread, and on the other, of industrial products, clothes, and tools; and as we shall see, of houses. But no party has arisen which professes to be

able to cope with this condition of scarcity more effectively than the party till February last in power.

Thus the discontent had nowhere assumed the shape of an attempt to overturn the democratic government. What did appear in this guise emanated not from the country itself, but was fed by foreign money, and, in spite of the most lavish subsidies to the Communist Press and to Communist branches, gained no influence.

What is the explanation of the extraordinary phenomenon of a dictatorship of the proletariat on a democratic basis in an agrarian country without any industry worthy of the name?

The basis of all politics is the struggle of classes. Not every class, however, is able to maintain an independent policy. The three great leading classes in modern society, each of which follows its special class policy, are the receivers of ground rents, profits on capital, and the wages of labour. They form the three great fundamental parties, which we find in every modern country; that of the large, land-owners, or Conservatives, that of the Capitalists or Liberals, and that of the Proletariat or Socialists.

Between these three classes there are intermediate sections, which are not capable of following any class policy; partly because the conditions of work isolate their members too much from each other and from the seat of politics, which is especially the case with the peasants; partly because their intermediate position touches various class interests at the same time, as is the case with the small handicraftsmen and likewise with the peasants. They live from the labour of their hands, like the wage workers, and yet receive an income from their property, like the capitalist or the landowner.

They are neither mere workers nor mere capitalists or landowners, and at times they feed with the one class and at other times with the other classes.

As the third of these intermediate sections, we have to mention the Intellectuals, composed of such diverse elements that at the most they can only feel professional interests, such as those of doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers, but never a common class interest. Apart from their professional interests, they always become the champions of the interests of another class, which appear to them to be synonymous with general social progress. Some attach themselves to the landowners, others to the capitalists, and again others to the Proletariat. And it is the same with the peasants and lower middle-class. The attempt to create special parties of the peasants or the small middle-class have always ended by such parties becoming subservient to alien class interests.

Now in Georgia we find the peculiar phenomenon that of the three great leading classes only one exists. After the Agrarian Reform of 1918 there were no large landowners in the country. There is also no capitalist class of any importance. The nucleus of an energetic and independent capitalist class has always been bound up with industrial capital. This condition has almost completely been wanting in Georgia. Money and trading capital is found to be represented there more strongly, but this is mostly in the hands of foreigners, and cannot therefore enter directly into the struggle of parties.

Thus the proletariat remains as the only class which is capable of conducting an independent and leading policy.

But this capability is not possessed by the entire proletariat of Georgia. We find in Georgia two sharply separated kinds of the Proletariat, an oriental and a modern. In the Georgian proletariat we perceive distinctly that here we stand on the boundaries of two very different worlds.

The oriental proletariat deserves in reality the name of a vagabond proletariat. It lives from hand to mouth in the greatest poverty, but by no means only from begging and stealing. The number of beggars is great. Yet among the oriental type of the proletariat there are many who live from the labour of their hands. Being possessed of no implements of production, and often without any technical training, they earn their scanty bread mostly as carriers. Corn, wood, vegetables, and other products of the country are transported to the towns in oxen-spanned wagons and on the backs of asses. Within the town the means of transport are mostly the backs of men. In Tiflis a furniture van is unknown. When a family changes its dwelling 60 to 80 muschas (carriers) are hired, who carry the furniture from house to house, piece by piece. Even pianos are removed in this manner.

This class of proletarians is not organised, and is politically indifferent. They are proletarians of the same kind as we find in antiquity, for example, in Rome. They are without the capacity to engage in independent politics.

In sharp contrast to them is the proletariat composed of the wage-workers of the large undertakings. The important difference between the two kinds of the Proletariat, of which we have hitherto only read in books, can be seen in Tiflis.

The wage-workers in the large undertakings are quite steeped in modern ideas; above all, the railway workers, who are the proletarian elite in economically backward countries, where Capitalism has commenced to penetrate. The railway is responsible for carrying the modes of thought and the struggles of the modern proletariat to the farthest corners of the earth.

I also remarked scarcely any difference from their prototypes in the West among the other members of this class of the proletariat whom I learned to know, such as printers, metal workers, employees in the electricity works, tobacco factories, and commercial clerks. They were well disciplined and had learned to think socialistically, but also on economic lines, so that Socialism does not appear to them as a mere question of power, but also, one of economic conditions.

They are organised in Trade Unions as well as in the Social-Democratic Party. Of course, such Trade Unions are very young. During the first Revolution numerous unions were formed in Georgia, as in Russia, but in the reactionary period they were mercilessly suppressed, more so than in Russia itself, as Georgia always returned Social-Democratic deputies to the Duma. Only after the March Revolution of 1917 was it possible for Trade Unions to be formed again in Georgia.

The printers were the first to make use of this opportunity. They were followed by the commercial employees. Forty-one Trade Unions, with 29,000 members, were represented at the first Trade Union Congress in Tiflis at the end of December 1917. At the next Congress in April 1919 there

were 85 Trade Unions, and at the end of 1920 there were 113, with 64,000 members. The great majority of the wage workers of Georgia, numbering about 100,000, of whom 73,000 are employed in large undertakings, are consequently organised in Trade Unions. The Trade Unions are neutral, but 95 per cent of their members belong to the Social-Democratic Party. This party itself has a higher membership (80,000) than the Trade Unions, an unusual circumstance, as, in addition to the Trade Unionists, peasants and intellectuals are represented. The Party controlled four daily papers, five weekly papers and two monthly reviews; the Trade Unions controlled two general Trade Union organs, and the railwaymen had also two special papers. Most of them appeared in both the Georgian and the Russian languages.

The Trade Unions are organised on an industrial basis, and not on vocational lines. Yet this principle is not rigidly applied. In Tiflis they own their own premises, and a theatre and meeting place, the Plechanoff House, which the workers have lately built for themselves, at great sacrifice. The railwaymen own a special building for their union. The tendencies and institutions of the Trade Unions are quite those of Western Europe, but they seemed to me to suffer somewhat from divisions. But a movement which is only three years old would not be perfect. It is perhaps due to the youth of the organisation that the spirit which prevails in it is in no way narrow and professional, but is concerned with the interests of the whole, not merely of the workers, but of society.

This is exhibited, for example, in the attitude of the Trade Unions towards the strike. They regard the strike as the sharpest weapon in the proletarian class struggle. How highly they esteem it is shown by the fact that they demand

the establishment of the right to strike in the Constitution. But they are quite clear on the point that this formidable weapon is only to be used in case of direst need.

The present condition of general economic exhaustion appears to them as singularly unsuitable for a strike, which is not urgently called for. It would disturb production, diminish the number of products, and thus increase the suffering of the proletariat. To increase production is the most urgent need. Under these circumstances, the Trade Unions consider piecework and the system of bonuses to be permissible. On their proposal, a Board of Wages was formed as part of the Ministry of Labour, to which workers and masters each nominate ten members. The President of this Board is the Minister of Labour, last winter, M. Eradse. This Board of Wages has to follow the movement of the cost of living and of the wages of labour; to investigate the grievances of workers; to discuss collective agreements and carry them through to a conclusion, and finally to act as mediator in disputes between workers and masters.

This office has hitherto succeeded in averting the outbreak of any open conflict. Since it began to function in May, 1919 the Trade Unions of Georgia have not found it necessary to declare a single strike, although they were hindered from doing so by no prohibition, as in the case of Bolshevist Russia. In this respect Georgia is unique.

The avoidance of strikes was made easier, apart from the exertions of the Board of Wages, and such Labour protection as the eight hours day, by the Government's care for the sustenance of the worker. Vital necessities such as bread and salt, at low prices, were provided for every worker, and every member of a family receives a certain quantity. The difference between the price paid by the Government and the price at which the goods are sold was made up by the employer with whom the worker was engaged.

This peculiar system of a sliding-scale of wages which varies with the changes in the prices of the necessaries of life has been found to work quite well.

The wage workers are the only organised and resolute class in Georgia. They know exactly what they want. They know not only their special interests, but also the common interests of the community, which they allow to guide them.

This enables them to exercise an influence on the best sections of the numerous intellectuals, such as teachers, doctor, engineers, artists – Tiflis is a very artistic town – lawyers, etc. The revolutionary section of the intellectuals was inclined to Socialism during the struggle against Czarism.

Among the one hundred and two members of the Social-Democratic Party in the Constituent Assembly are thirty-two workers, the rest being intellectuals; twenty teachers, fourteen journalists, thirteen lawyers, seven doctors, three engineers and thirteen officials.

Nearly all of them are elected by peasants, who form over eighty per cent of the population. The Social-Democratic deputies are nearly eighty per cent (one hundred and two out of one hundred and thirty) of the whole house.

In the February 1919 elections to the Constituent Assembly the Social-Democrats received eighty-two per cent of all votes cast in the country, on a total poll of seventy-six per cent.

In the towns they received seventy-two per cent on a total poll of only fifty-two per cent. The heavy peasant vote for the Social-Democrats is partly explained by the system of small holdings which prevails in Georgia. Most of the peasants cannot live from agriculture alone; many of them must seek to supplement their scanty income by casual labour. It was not difficult to accustom this class to proletarian modes of

thought. Add to this the fact that the Social-Democracy carried on a powerful agitation for the expropriation of the large estates. Thus the industrial wage earners have shown themselves the best champions of the small peasants.

The Socialists would not have gained their dominating influence over the minds of the revolutionary peasantry if they had been divided. They were only able to prevail by means of democracy, and without terrorism, because they were united, and formed an overwhelming Menshevik majority. In this respect Georgia was fundamentally different from Russia.

Even the Russian Socialists could have dominated the minds of the peasants and governed by means of democracy, if they had been united, or if the Bolsheviks could have resolved to form a coalition government, with the Mensheviks and the entire party of the Social Revolutionaries.

It was not to hold down the capitalists that they needed to abrogate all the democratic rights of the masses of the people, but to hold down the other Socialists. In order to hide the real state of affairs, the Bolsheviks have promptly labelled the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries of the right as lackeys of the bourgeoisie and counter-revolutionists.

Thus the Bolshevik regime has been based on a lie from the commencement, and that has become decisive in determining the direction of its further policy.

Quite different conditions and quite another policy in Georgia have permitted the small minority of the industrial wage workers, on the basis of democracy, and without exercising any terrorism, to capture the political power of the country, and successfully to maintain their government without any serious internal opposition until February of this year.

Chapter VI

The Social Revolution

The most important task of the new government consisted of clearing away the remains of feudalism. The abolition of serfdom and the creation of a free peasantry happened in Georgia between 1864 and 1871, somewhat later than in Russia.

As in Russia this reform was carried out in such a way that the peasant lost land. He only received, in the capacity of proprietor, a small portion of the land to which he was attached as serf. The largest and best part remained with the feudal lords, from whom the peasant was obliged to lease the land, if he wanted to live. In this way the system of small holdings arose, similar to what exists in Ireland and South Italy, which makes any rational agriculture impossible, and yields a scanty living to the countryman.

It was left for the revolution to take the land from the feudal nobles, to provide the poor peasant with land, and to change the leaseholder into a freeholder. This was no socialistic but a middle-class revolution, but the conditions rendered it necessary, and it took place. We Marxians are distinguished from utopian socialists by the fact that we recognise that Socialism is only possible under specific circumstances. What it is incumbent on us to do is always suggested by the circumstances which arise.

The Agrarian Revolution was rendered necessary by a set of circumstances similar to those existing in Russia.

It came to the same end under democracy as under dictatorship. But under democracy the revolution was carried out more peacefully, systematically and consciously, in a less chaotic and disturbing manner, and less to the special advantage of favoured or reckless sections of the peasantry.

The Agrarian Reform was introduced by a decree of the 16th December 1917 of the first provisional government in Transcaucasia (Georgia, Aserbaijan and Armenia) which was formed after its separation from Russia. The Social-Democratic Party of the Transcaucasian Parliament, which met in February, 1918, introduced an Agrarian law which was passed on the 7th March. This was valid for the whole of Transcaucasia. But it was only carried out in Georgia, which soon separated from Aserbaijan and Armenia. The law expropriated every large landowner. No compensation was paid to him, but he was allowed to retain as much land as he could till, with his family, that is a medium-sized peasant holding. The maximum extent of land which a single family could own might not exceed seven dessjatinen (one dessjatin equals two and a half acres) of gardens or vineyards, fifteen dessjatinen of arable land, or forty dessjatinen of pasture land. All estates which exceeded these dimensions are taken into the possession of the State, and form a land reserve.

Well conducted, intensive large-scale cultivation is maintained as far as possible, and is either carried on under the auspices of the State, or devolved upon the local assemblies. The remainder, consisting of gardens and arable land, is used to increase the holdings of poor peasants.

The peasant, who was formerly a tenant, obtains possession of the land which he cultivates. Pasture land is chiefly given up to common usage.

The Act passed on the 7th March, 1918 prescribed that poor peasants needing land could only lease portions of the land reserve from the State. But a new Act, passed on the 29th January, 1919, specified that they could purchase the State land at a moderate price. This is certainly not a Socialistic step, but it was rendered unavoidable by the pressure of the peasants. It was also expected that the peasant, when he became the owner of his land, would more readily make improvements and adopt a rational system of cultivation than when he was a mere tenant. Bolshevism must likewise compound with this settlement. Both Georgia and Russia are now in the same economic stage as was France in the beginning of the Great Revolution. Peasant proprietorship is not, however, completely free in Georgia. In every sale of land, the State has the first right of purchase. In this manner about two million dessjatinen of gardens, and arable land, pastures and woods have been acquired, of which the cultivated land amounts to about half a million dessjatinen. Pasture land is almost one million dessjatinen. In addition, the woods and domains of the old Russian State and of the Czarist families have reverted to the Georgian State, which has thus become possessed of an enormous extent of land. Including woods which formerly belonged to the Russian State or Czarist families, the whole of the forests of Georgia comprises two million dessiatinen), or one-third of the exploitable land of the country, and this land remains in the hands of, and is managed by the Georgian State.

In addition, there are great model undertakings which are either managed by the State or by the local councils, and numerous mineral springs, some of which are equipped with adequate technical apparatus. These also have passed into the possession of the State, which has likewise sequestered all water power. The latter will become a source of immense wealth in the future. Its average mechanical power is estimated at two million and a quarter horse power, of which only three thousand four hundred are actually exploited. All harbour sites belong to the State, and last, but not least, the revolution has made the State the master of all mineral wealth.

Hitherto the State has not been able to secure the needful staff and machinery to work the mines to advantage itself, but the coalfields of Tkivuli are directly exploited by the State. Other mines are leased, such as the manganese deposits of Tschiaturi and the copper mines of Allaverdi to a French company, and others in the district of Batoum to a German company (Shuckert).

Nationalisation has not been undertaken so energetically and consciously in the manufacturing industries, as in the mining and agricultural branches. Their present stage of development is little suited to State management. Only isolated undertakings among them have been nationalised, not because of the principle, but for special reasons.

Generally speaking, it may be said that all that can be nationalised under existing conditions has been nationalised, and no further progress can be made.

According to statistics of the Ministry of Labour, there were 73,486 workers engaged in large industrial undertakings in

Georgia in 1920. Of these 38,743 (52.7 per cent) were occupied in State undertakings; 20,592 (28 per cent) in municipal, co-operative and local undertakings, and only 14,151 (19.3 per cent) in private undertakings. This will show how insignificant private industry is in Georgia at the present time.

In regard to commerce some export monopolies have been introduced, such as manganese, tobacco, silk, and wool. These are fiscal rather than Socialistic measures, and it remains to be seen how they succeed. For export trade, a State bureaucracy is as unsuitable an agent as is possible; the Georgian bureaucrats are very inexperienced, and the traditions left behind by their predecessors, the Czarist bureaucracy, are the worst possible. The world market is at present, as difficult to survey as ever it was.

To enable Georgia to thrive, it is necessary to open up many new branches in trade as well as in industry. In the state in which the country finds itself, private capital cannot be dispensed with in the establishment of such new branches.

In this economic reconstruction a great part may be played by county councils, communes and co-operative societies, the administrations of which are more flexible and capable of a greater initiative than the lumbering, economic machinery of the State.

The revolution has brought complete self-government to the counties and municipalities of Georgia. This self-government had to be created *de novo* in place of the centralised, bureaucratic tutelage from above. All experience was lacking, and sometimes the necessary resources. In spite of this, the young institutions have developed a vigorous life,

and we have already seen that some large agricultural undertakings have been transferred to the municipalities. The provincial assemblies have also established their own dispensaries, and mills, spinhouses and other undertakings for working-up and completing the raw products of the province. In addition, draining and irrigation works have been taken in hand by them. Likewise, the regulation of the medical service. The twenty-one assemblies are combined in a union, which holds congresses for the exchange of experiences, and the collection of information. The Union has appointed a committee of experts which overlook the individual undertakings of the municipality, and tender advice.

These institutions are too new to allow a decisive judgment to be passed on them, but a healthy life pulses through them, and the course they have followed is already full of promise.

The above applies equally to the co-operative societies. They are depreciated by many Socialists, owing to the fact that they are represented by the advocates of harmony as a panacea to cure the evils of Capitalism. This is nonsense. The great capitalist monopolies can be dealt with only by the power of the State when it is directed by the proletariat. In those spheres where the monopolistic character of capital has scarcely made itself felt, the production carried on by organisations of consumers can create socialistic conditions of production, if these consumers' organisations are dominated by the socialist outlook, and thus are in the hands of proletarians conscious of their part in the class struggle.

In this sense the consumers' co-operative societies may become of special importance in countries where industry is as yet undeveloped, but where a class-conscious proletariat already exists. In such places the co-operative societies may take in the peasantry, which has not yet become consciously antagonistic to the proletariat, as in Western Europe, and make its purchasing power of service in building up the co-operative industry which will arise in competition with the capitalist industry, and tends to restrict and moderate the influence of the latter over workers and consumers.

In such a country as Russia the co-operative societies may assume unsuspected importance for the proletarian class-struggle, and the establishment of Socialism. This also holds good for Georgia. Its co-operative organisations were first formed in the Czarist period, but only since the revolution have they been able to develop freely, and they have expanded rapidly.

Already in May 1916 the consumers' societies of Transcaucasia (Georgia, Aserbaijan, and Armenia), to the number of 126, united to form a wholesale buying agency. 565 societies were attached to this union in 1917, and in 1919, in Georgia alone, there were 989 societies, with about 300,000 members.

The Union of Co-operative Societies began to produce on its own account in 1919. A silk factory is established, a sausage factory, engineering works, which turn out agricultural implements; then vegetable and fruit preserving factories, and finally a printing-press.

None of these undertakings works at a loss, and most of them yield a surplus.

It is all to the good that the co-operative societies have proceeded slowly and cautiously in laying the foundations of their productive activities. The stormy movement, which corresponds to the revolutionary temperament and is in place when hostile positions are to be captured, is not advantageous in the founding of economic organisations.

In this case it is necessary to make careful preparation to be sure of the ground before advancing, and not to go farther than is allowed by the available resources. In economics it is not the same as in war, where a vigorous offensive often obtains the best result, but not in every case. The Bolshevist outlook, which envisages the socialistic reorganisation of the processes of production as a problem in military tactics, is generally doomed to failure. In the economic domain over-hasty procedure always leads to disasters, which may sometimes jeopardise the whole movement, and entails the buying of experience very dearly.

The Georgian methods of socialisation are, with all their energy, quite free from over-haste and the danger of reaction. Thanks to the fact that they are based on democracy, they have kept clear of that species of State and Barrack Socialism, which imagines that social production can be introduced by rigid centralisation of the entire productive forces, and their subjection to the dictatorship of a small committee, excluding all self-government.

Our Georgian comrades know that many roads lead to Socialism as well as to Rome. The problem of social production may be attacked from many sides, and State control forms only one of those starting points. Finally, socialistic production is impossible without the fullest

development of the capabilities of the workers, which can be attained only by the complete liberty of political parties, trade unions, co-operative societies, the municipalities, and provinces. The stretching of all these institutions upon the Procrustean bed of an all-oppressive and all-reaching centralised dictatorship means death to that kind of Socialism which signifies the emancipation of the proletariat. The latter Socialism is what we should aim at.

Democracy, and that alone, can provide for the complete liberty and possibilities of development of the workers, individually and as a class.

The Communists think that they are uttering deep wisdom when they speak of "formal democracy." They teach us that the equality of citizens under democracy is but a formal equality, as economic inequality is not thereby removed. That the mere casting of a vote is an empty form, as the economic relations of power are not thereby disturbed. We knew all this: quite well at a time when the present Communists were still in their cradles, but it has not prevented us from agitating for democracy. For it spells freedom of investigation, of discussion, of propaganda; the freedom of public meeting, and of organisation; the fullest participation in the self-government of municipalities and provinces, in the legislation of the State, and in the control and determination of the Government.

Only a fool can assert that all these liberties and possibilities are of a merely formal nature, and make no difference to the position, the capacities, and strength of the proletariat, and the labouring masses.

In lucid moments the Communists themselves recognise the importance of democracy and believe it will be of use to them, as they say that the proletariat needs democracy – which in their eyes is an instrument of capitalist domination – only so long as the capitalist class rules. So soon, however, as the proletariat has captured the power, democracy ceases, according to Communist doctrines, to be a means for the development of proletarian strength and capacity. Then it becomes a danger for the proletariat; henceforth the proletariat must renounce all independence, and submit itself blindly to the absolute domination of the Government which it has placed in power. According to this conception, the proletariat needs democracy only when it is in the fighting stage, but when it is successful it requires an Absolutism, which is different from Czardom only by its communist enlightenment. It may well be wondered how such a doctrine could find disciples outside Russia. But it should not be forgotten that the enlightened Absolutism of Russia in former times understood how to arouse enthusiasm for its social institutions and actions among naive spirits in Western Europe, and especially in France.

If a Diderot and a Voltaire could be inspired by Catherine the Second, why should not the far less witty Cachin and Lorient perceive in the dictatorship of the Moscow party leaders – over Europe the way to the emancipation of the proletariat and the progress of mankind.

Chapter VII

The Difficulties of the Government

However favoured Georgia may be by nature, and however rational the democratic methods of its socialist government, its situation was anything but brilliant.

We have already described the chief causes of its distress. They consist in the dependence of the economic life of Georgia upon foreign countries. Without the importation of corn, as well as of industrial products, and a corresponding exportation of its own products, such as manganese, copper, tobacco, wool, silk, and wine, the country cannot exist. The old trade connections were destroyed by the war, which still continues on the borders of Georgia, and renders difficult any relations with other countries. This is doubly unfortunate at a time when world commerce is impeded by various measures arising out of the after-effects of the war and the general lack of confidence, which would be merely ridiculous if they did not involve the ruin of the people.

The Georgian Government is not in a position to change these disastrous international conditions, and thus the people of Georgia, like so many other peoples, must suffer from their effects.

The inhabitants of the capital of Tiflis were hit the hardest. Until the revolution Tiflis was the political centre of the whole of the Caucasus, a territory with about ten million people. To-day it forms the capital of little Georgia, with three million inhabitants. This country by itself must sustain

the 400,000 inhabitants of Tiflis. This would not have been a simple matter in a state of uninterrupted world trade, but the task assumes fearful proportions in the conditions of restricted trade. Add to this that Tiflis, instead of losing its inhabitants, revealed a large increase of population.

For with all its distress it was a paradise when compared with its neighbours, Armenia, Aserbaijan, and Russia, where Bolshevism reigns, not only with hunger and misery, but also with sullen silence and everlasting fear, with the lack of all freedom of speech and of the Press, with denunciations, arbitrary imprisonments and shootings, with brutality and cruelty. Those who can flee from this hell – the counter-revolutionaries to Europe; the workers from the towns to the villages, many democratic and social-democratic intellectuals, and qualified workers fled to Tiflis. Even Bolsheviks sometimes sought a refuge there, in order to recover from Communism. Through this immigration the intellectual life of the town was variously stimulated. Eminent men of learning, and artists from Russia met together here. But the house famine was made ten times worse.

After high prices the housing shortage is the most generally diffused after-effect of the war. It is to be found even in New York. The war has used up so much capital, and so much of the productive forces, that with what is left one is only able to live laboriously from hand to mouth. There is neither capital nor resources for undertakings which will repay the outlay on them only after many years. Above all, not for buildings. All building activity is paralysed. In addition, numerous dwelling-places situated on the various theatres of war have been destroyed, and the inhabitants driven into

countries which were spared by the war. In those counties the accommodation, not having been increased, suffices no longer.

Again, in those countries which did not take part in the war the population has been increased by the normal processes, which still more accentuates the housing difficulty.

Although the shortage is by no means confined to Tiflis, together with the lack of food, it has been ascribed by the Communist propaganda there to the Social-Democratic Government. This propaganda is addressed to the simple folk who do not know that in Russia not merely dearth, but the most desperate hunger prevails. The housing shortage is certainly abating in many of its towns. In Petrograd thousands of houses are empty, as of the population of that city one-third has either starved, or frozen, or fallen victims to pestilence or the Extraordinary Commission. Another third has fled to the villages, and the remaining third still prolongs an anxious existence in the town.

As is the case everywhere else in the world, the building of new houses in Georgia is much impeded by the absence of long credits. This is connected with the general lack of capital, but also with the wretched state of the exchange.

This constituted the weakest point in the economic life of social-democratic Georgia. The Georgian rouble was last year worth less in gold than was formerly worth a kopeck, although its value remained considerably higher than that of a rouble of the Russian Soviet Republic.

As is the case with other countries, the principal cause of the fall in the value of the Georgian rouble is to be looked for in the inflation of the currency, and the excessive output of paper money. One immediate result of the revolution was to reduce considerably the revenue of the State. The old State constitution, being corrupt and inimical to the people, had to be radically reformed, which was not a simple matter in view of the lack of native experience. The new State machinery did not always work well. It takes time to accustom the emancipated peasant to pay taxes, and the revenue from duties was very slight in consequence of the paralysis of trade. The State possessions alone will suffice to cover the national expenses, when once they are properly exploited, and all taxation would be rendered unnecessary. The Budget of 1919-1920 estimated the income of the State at 749 millions of roubles, of which 576 millions, or 76 per cent, would represent revenue from, the national properties. But the war has thrown the State undertakings into a condition of confusion, and lowered the revenue from them. The large estates, which were taken over from the old regime, yield a surplus, it is true, but this is not very large. Before the war the railway was one of the few Russian Static lines which earned a net profit. On account of the lack of masuth, and the great exhaustion of material by the war, and lately by reason of the cessation of trade, the services had been so restricted that they barely covered the running costs of the undertaking. Repairs can only be effected out of State resources, and many repairs are necessary.

Generally speaking, the exploitation of the national properties of Georgia, such as the forests and mines, has not yet been undertaken. Before they can be set working large outlays are needed for roads and railways.

Thus a great portion of the State possessions yield no immediate revenue, but entail expenditure.

Simultaneously, other branches of State expenditure have grown enormously. It is not merely a question of repairing the immense damage wrought by the war, but special demands are made on the Government because of its socialistic character.

A Socialist Government is not only expected to prepare the way for the development of socialistic production, which, measured by our impatience, is a protracted task. It must also put an immediate end to all the poverty which it finds in existence. If the kind of poverty which Capitalism creates is to be found in Georgia in no small degree, all the more abundant is the poverty which has been accumulated by the cheek to capitalist development – poverty which has arisen from Feudalism, Absolutism and War.

To make an immediate end of this poverty, with the scanty and impoverished resources of the State, is a task which no government could achieve unless it were possessed of magical powers. And our comrades, who have been placed in power by the revolution were not only no wizards, but Menshevists, who neither believe themselves nor seek to persuade the outside world that a dictatorship endows them with magical powers.

However much the Government might strive to keep the tasks which it set itself within the bounds of economic possibilities, the everlasting demands which were pressed upon it surpassed so much the extent of the available income of the State that the printing press was the only resource

which was left. Consequently, there was a constant fall in the value of the rouble, and a continual increase in prices.

The evil was still more accentuated by the adverse trade balance. Trade with Russia, which formerly constituted the chief part of the export of tobacco, wine, mineral waters, etc., has been destroyed to a large extent. This rendered maritime trade with Europe, via the Black Sea, all the more important, but this trade had been restricted for a long time owing to the lack of shipping space. Georgia imported from Europe highly valuable industrial products, which occupied little space. In exchange it had to offer only raw material, which, in relation to its value, occupied much shipping space. No wonder the value of imports exceeded the value of exports. In the year 1919 Georgia imported from Western Europe, Turkey, and America, goods to the value of 397 millions of roubles and exported goods to the value of only 9,3 millions. In the year 1920 the trade balance considerably improved. On the other hand, the inflation still continued.

All this tended to depress the exchange to the lowest point. Still worse than the falling of the rate of exchange, and the dearness which it caused, was the constant fluctuations in the exchange, which occur in all countries with a system of paper money. This makes all business uncommonly difficult. Under these circumstances, long period credits are not to be looked for, and short credits are available only under oppressive conditions. As no one knows what prices and money values will be in the future, there is a preference for cash payments. Credit is the most potent means to vivify the mass of capital which exists in society. Without credit the scope of a given mass of capital is notably restricted. The

effect is especially paralysing at a period when the mass of capital is greatly reduced by the ravages of war.

Another circumstance is not less harmful. Under existing conditions there is little incentive to invest capital in undertakings, which do not turn over their capital rapidly. Consequently there is the strongest motive to employ capital in money – speculations and usury instead of in industry. So long as a capitalist mode of production exists, it is in the interest not only of the whole of society, but also of the workers, that the available capital be embarked upon productive industrial undertakings giving employment to workers and increasing the sum of commodities. It should not parasitically be employed in speculations and usury, which employ no workers, yield no products, and only increase prices.

The system of paper money not only threatens the State with complete bankruptcy, and with absolute worthlessness of the money which it issues; it has brought growing confusion and paralysis into the whole economic machinery.

This condition can only be dealt with by placing the State finances upon a sound basis by balancing income and expenditure, so that the activities of the printing press may be stopped. But how is the State to obtain the revenue it needs so long as trade and commerce are suspended? Thus we find ourselves in a vicious circle, out of which there seems to be no way; economy cannot become healthy without sound finances, and these cannot become sound unless economy becomes healthy.

A considerable improvement could be effected if normal peaceful conditions were established among Georgia's neighbours, if the civil war and campaign of conquest ceased

in Russia, Aserbaijan, Armenia, and Anatolia, and Georgia could find there a market for its own products, and could also resume in full measure its function as a trade channel connecting East with West.

This general condition of peace would alone lead to a marked change in the economic position of Georgia.

It is also most desirable to remove the restrictions which hamper the traffic of steamers through the Dardanelles, and which are the result of the state of war still prevailing in that quarter. Then, the postal communications between Georgia and the outside world must be made more prompt and secure. The present state of these communications is deplorable, which naturally prejudices all business relations, with Europe.

Even when all these improvements have been introduced, the overcoming of the financial crisis of the country will remain a very difficult problem. It is hardly conceivable that the crisis can be completely mastered without a foreign loan, which would cover the deficit of the Exchequer for one or two years, and thus grant the State a breathing space during which it can function without using the printing press. If this respite were wisely and energetically used, it should be sufficient to develop so far the economic resources of Georgia that the finances could be placed on a stable foundation without requiring further assistance from outside.

In this respect attention would naturally be paid first to an increased exploitation of the national possessions, which involves the building of railways, such as a line to the coal fields of Tkvartschedi, and roads to open the great forests.

With all this is closely connected the encouragement of agriculture. The drainage of 50,000 hectares of swamps at Poti, the irrigation of 150,000 hectares in the east – for

these improvements the preliminary work of survey has already been done – would suffice to render Georgia independent of outside help for its sustenance.

An improvement of agriculture may already be expected from the transformation of the peasant from, a leaseholder into a freeholder. This process can be accelerated by the giving of instruction in agriculture. It is true that the small extent of the holdings is an obstacle to a rational system of agriculture which is to yield a substantial surplus. And this surplus is all-important.

It is recognised even by many supporters of small holdings in agriculture that large-scale production yields a larger net profit than small undertakings, but of the latter it is asserted that the gross yield is greater. But even if this is the case, it would not dispose us more favourably to small holdings. The mass of mankind who live in society outside of agriculture depend upon its net profits. We speak of society and not of the State, because an individual State can find a way out by importing the means of subsistence. Without a large surplus from agriculture, there can be no large population of those engaged in intellectual and industrial pursuits, no high level of civilisation, and therefore no technical progress in agriculture itself. The transformation of a rational system of large-scale agricultural production into small holdings signifies a decrease in the surplus yielded by agriculture. It means an increase in the amount of labour-power required for agriculture, and a decrease in the non-agricultural population, and thus a set-back to civilisation. Militarists, who look to the peasants for numerous recruits, might well be enthusiastic for small holdings. Modern Socialists, who have at heart, not the strength of the armies, but the level of civilisation, must support large-scale agriculture.

With the exception of the undertakings of the State and municipalities, few opportunities existed for large-scale

agriculture in Georgia after the agrarian reforms. Large estates worked by private capital are scarcely likely to arise.

Perhaps the transition stage to rational methods of agriculture may give rise to the development of the communal direction of husbandry. This is already the case with pasture land. Communal agriculture would be large-scale cultivation.

There are many reasons why communal agriculture should be adopted in Georgia. We have seen above that the old type of plough requires ten to twenty animals to draw it, with four and more men, of course, these resources are not at the disposal of an individual small peasant. This difficulty is overcome by several peasants joining together for ploughing their fields. Such co-operation is, constantly found convenient for other purposes than ploughing. As many as fifty small peasants combine together in order to perform the same work in common on one of their fields after another, and thereby enjoy the benefits of this co-operation. This practice is called by a special name, Nadi, and the songs which are sung during work in common to give to it the appropriate rhythm are called Naduri. This system of combined labour would be more successful if the many small fields were not separated, but thrown together and worked according to a common plan. This should be made considerably easier after the partition of the land has equalised the size of the separate holdings.

This process should also be aided by the introduction of modern agricultural machines, which the individual peasant is too poor to acquire, and which can be employed with success only over a large extent of ground.

It is therefore probable that in Georgia a system of cultivation by village communes will grow up, which, although not socialistic in the sense that it produces for the

market, yet will be a nearer approach to Socialism, and a better organisation of labour-power than agriculture which is based on small holdings.

Meanwhile, the domain of agriculture is not the only sphere in which it is needful to make good as quickly as possible the effects of the neglect and obstacles due to Feudalism and Absolutism. The general level of civilisation must also be raised by an improvement in education. In this province significant progress has been made by the Socialist Government, in spite of its lack of resources.

Finally, it is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of Georgia so to develop its industry that as far as possible the raw materials are made use of in the place where they are produced. Paper factories and furniture factories to realise the wealth in the form of wood, factories for preserving fruit and vegetables, spinning and weaving sheds for wool, silk and cotton are above all necessary. Next to them are wanted factories for the production of implements and simple machinery for agriculture.

We have seen that the municipalities and the co-operative societies have already commenced to work on these lines. But we have also pointed out that they can only proceed very slowly, if they are to maintain a secure footing and avoid mistakes. Moreover, they suffer from want of capital.

Here there must also be some assistance from abroad if the development is to be rapid and energetic. Only the Western Powers and America have the resources and experience available to permit large undertakings of this kind to be established and properly directed – But capitalism still prevails in those countries. For the present, help can only take the form of the investment of foreign capital in Georgian industrial undertakings.

Foreign loans to stabilise the State finances, to build railways and construct irrigation and drainage works, and foreign capital to establish factories are urgently necessary in the interests of the Georgian people, and of the Georgian proletariat as well. Where capitalist economy is still the order of the day, the worker thrives best with a rapidly growing industrial capital. A suspension of capitalist growth bits him the hardest.

The Georgian Socialist Government found itself in the paradoxical situation of being obliged to create conditions which will attract capital – that is, by promising a profit and giving the necessary guarantee that one fine day it will not be expropriated without compensation.

This was not an easy problem for a Socialist Government to solve. But as this Government was composed of Menshevists, it was aware of the economic necessities and would do voluntarily what the Bolshevists are now compelled to do by circumstances, after they have pursued the opposite policy for several years past, in the doing of which they have fearfully devastated and ruined the whole of Russia.

Chapter VIII

Capitalism and Socialism

However difficult it may be for a Socialist Government supported by the political power of the proletariat to be obliged to encourage capitalist industry, this is a problem which sooner or later confronts the Socialists in every European country. In the most important States the proletariat is already so strong and so matured in self-consciousness that it will not be long before it attains to political power, not in spite of democracy, but precisely because its strength is nourished by democracy.

A world revolution in the Bolshevik sense is, of course, not to be reckoned with. Such a revolution signifies the dictatorship of a Communist party, which assumes power because it alone controls all armed forces and disarms all the non-proletarian classes and the sections of the proletariat which are not Communist. This situation arose after the military collapse, first in Russia, and then, in Hungary. It will not be repeated in any country, least of all in the victorious States.

In these countries the proletariat cannot gain the upper hand by means of a monopoly of arms, but only as a majority by means of its preponderance among the democracy.

At the moment the democratic prospects of Social Democracy are, in point of fact not favourable. The period of disillusionment and tension which follows upon every revolution has once more set in. Instead of a world revolution we stand on the threshold of a general reaction.

But in no part of civilised Europe has Socialism, to-day suffered such a crushing defeat as was experienced by the middle-class revolution of 1849, and the Paris Commune of 1871. After these defeats the reaction lasted barely a dozen years, and this time it will be much shorter, perhaps only a matter of two or three years. It can be terminated in no other way than by the victory of Social Democracy in all civilised States, a Social Democracy which will not only be far stronger than it is to-day, but also, far more intelligent and experienced, thanks to the lessons of the present revolution, and thanks to the possibilities of a richer development of the capacity of the proletariat through shorter working hours, workers' councils and other achievements which even the reaction will be obliged to leave intact. In a few years' time Social Democracy will find a far better economic foundation for its activities than to-day, as by that time the worst effects of the war may have been overcome.

But then all the Social-Democratic Governments will be faced by the same difficulties as confronted the Georgian Government. Because of what the revolution has taught them, they will know that capitalism cannot be abolished at one stroke. Socialistic production can only be introduced gradually, and after careful preparation. If the wheels of production are not to come to a standstill, and thereby plunge the whole of society, and especially the proletariat, into the direst poverty, capitalistic production must be maintained in those branches of industry which are not yet to be socialised, and in some branches of production it may survive for generations.

We may therefore expect to see everywhere Socialist governments which will have to allow, and even encourage,

capitalist production, in a whole series of branches of industry.

How is the rule of the proletariat to be expressed under these circumstances?

The desire for profit or the extraction of surplus value from the labour-power that is purchased is not the only cause of the class antagonism between capital and labour. This antagonism is also nourished by the power over labour which is invested in capital by its monopoly of the means of production. Every kind of social co-operation requires to be directed. But the capitalist becomes a captain of industry because he owns the means of production, and not because the workers and consumers have any confidence in his capacity or experience. In capitalist undertakings the master was originally an autocrat, who not merely managed the business, but dominated it personally, and gave it a code of rules. The worker was the object, not the subject of this legislation.

The struggle of the worker against capital is not merely directed against exploitation; that is, against the creation of surplus value, but also against the omnipotence of the captain of industry, against the attitude of "master in the house".

Both parts of the class struggle are inseparable and closely connected with each other. In the one case, the restriction of the omnipotence of capital, visible progress is achieved during the lifetime of capitalism, but not in the other case, the struggle against the exploitation of the workers. In the latter case, progress is only made through increasing encroachments upon the domain of capitalistic production,

and the extension of socialisation. As regards the first-named aspect of the class struggle, progress commenced to be made one hundred years ago, but in respect of the second aspect, it has scarcely begun as yet. The power of the master in industry tends to be restricted by the growing force of Labour organisations and of the State, “the organised power of society.”

But this does not cause a diminution in the exploitation of labour, which often shows a tendency to increase. Every labour protection law, every factory inspector, every successful strike, every trade union which asserts itself, lessens the power of the captain of industry. The revolution has considerably multiplied these restrictions, and added to them a new one in the shape of works councils.

Thus, while during the course of the last century the factory has been transformed from an autocracy into a constitutional monarchy, the rate of surplus value has grown in the same period so that the tendency in the rate of profit to fall has been always impeded.

This is not an accident. The great historical task of industrial capitalism consists in increasing the productive power of Labour to an enormous extent. This fact enables it to win easy triumphs in competition with pre-capitalistic modes of production.

Only such restrictions as do not impair the productivity of labour can be imposed and maintained. The measures and institutions which we now have in mind have the effect of raising instead of lowering the productivity of labour. They increase the capacity and intelligence of the worker, and give him an interest in the work and in the prosperity of the

undertaking and branch of industry to which he belongs. Their educational influence is not confined to the worker, but also extends to the employer. Nothing is more convenient or more simple than dictatorial power which does not need to exercise the mind in order to overcome all opposition. The dictum of Cavour that any fool could govern in a state of siege is quoted with approval by people who are enthusiastic for the dictatorship that is only another name for a state of siege. Where the employer can act and rule as dictator, he can pass on all the consequences of incapacity, carelessness and niggardliness in the conduct of the business to the workers, who are obliged to pay the penalty for obsolete methods and improper conduct of a business, and for the lack of requisite materials. The stronger the workers and the State become in comparison with the employer, the greater their demands upon him, and their powers of resisting him, the more careful and intelligent the conduct of the business must be, the more the employer must endeavour to make use of the most productive appliances and methods, the more of the extracted surplus value must be accumulated by the capitalist to permit the introduction of improvements.

In this way each step of progress made by the proletariat against capital, which is inspired by economic foresight, and therefore does not aim at the destruction of machinery and similar things, results in creating a strong incentive to increase the productive power of labour, which also involves the tendency to the growth of surplus value and exploitation.

However paradoxical it may appear, the growth of the power of the working class over capital does not at the same time

exclude the progression of the exploitation of that class, but may even provoke it.

This explains why such growth does not impede the progress and development of production, but promotes it. So long as capitalistic production subsists, capital must extract a profit from industry, or else mark time, which harms the worker even more than the capitalist, as the former is dependent on the uninterrupted sale of his labour power. Crises and unemployment are the worst enemies of the worker, and nothing is greater than the folly of those “revolutionaries” who seek to save the proletariat by clogging the wheels of production, and increasing the gravity of the crisis. The workers’ councils will become effective and make themselves a definite power in the process of production, when they succeed in the same way as labour protection and Trade Unions have succeeded, in raising the productivity of labour. If they should aim at decreasing it and permanently impeding the process of production, they would be soon played out. The necessities of production are the most irresistible of the needs of society. They show themselves to be more potent than the bloodiest terrorism.

As long as capitalist production lasts, it will involve the necessity of a certain rate of profit, and the tendency to the growth of exploitation.

It will be possible to remove these necessities and these tendencies when Socialist production is substituted for capitalist production, and social property is established in place of private property. The possibilities of this transition first arise in an advanced stage of capitalism, but not for all branches of industry at the same time. Railways, mines, and

forests are by their nature suited to become social possessions, but most luxury trades will remain in private hands until a later period. The abolition of exploitation by means of socialisation can therefore only proceed gradually, and the whole of industry cannot be liberated at one stroke. On the other hand, many restrictions of the power of the employer, such as the eight-hour day or workers' councils, may be imposed upon the whole extent of industry at once.

The mass of surplus value in society, which is appropriated by the capitalist class instead of falling to the workers or being used in the general interests of society, will not be diminished as a result of the increased power in the process of production which the working class secures, but will be decreased in the degree that the scope of the capitalist is narrowed by the socialisation of single branches of industry. It is quite impossible to cut away profit from those branches of industry, constantly diminishing in number, where capitalist production still exists, and may continue to exist for the present, before the private character of the ownership of such means of production is altered.

The abolition or even the visible restriction of profit in this sphere would clog production generally. Matters would only become worse if an attempt were made to restart businesses by means of a policy of terrorism. Where the employer is superfluous, industry should be socialised. Where he is still necessary, he cannot be compelled by force to manage his business in a reasonable and conscientious manner, just as the war worker cannot be coerced into doing good work. Not compulsion, but interest in the result secures the best quality work, on the part of employers as on the part of wage workers.

All this may not sound very revolutionary, but Marx would not have devoted the best years of his life to the writing of *Capital*, and this would not have been greeted as the “Bible of the working classes,” if the mere possession of power had sufficed for the emancipation of the working class, and a knowledge of the laws of capitalist economy had been superfluous.

A Socialist Government must take these laws into consideration. As regards this point, the distinction between a socialist and a non-socialist government is of the following description. The problem of the socialisation of a branch of industry has two sides, one, the degree of its economic development, particularly the concentration of its capital and resources, the nature of its direction (whether by employer or by managers), and the conditions of the market for its goods. The other aspect, which is most important, is the power of the classes which are interested in socialisation. A number of branches of trade and industry have long been ripe for socialisation, and urgently require it, in the general social interest as well as for the benefit of the proletariat. But the principle of socialisation remains unapplied, because its champions are weak. On the other hand, there is a whole category of restrictions which could be imposed upon the power of capital without lessening the productivity of labour, which they would even raise, and which are not yet put into force because the proletariat lacks the requisite power to do so.

When the Proletariat is strong enough to put a Socialist Government in power, this step will enable it to enforce all necessary measures of socialisation, and to impose all reasonable restrictions upon the will of the employer. But

every care must be taken to avoid over-estimating the efficacy of mere power, and thinking that its possession alone is sufficient to ensure the fulfilment of the desires and the satisfaction of the wants of the proletariat at one stroke.

A Socialist Government must always keep steadily in mind that its activities are restricted by the economic necessities and possibilities, and it may not overstep these limitations without jeopardising society and the progress of the workers to better conditions of living. With every measure of socialisation, it must verify exactly the condition of the branch of industry, and the capabilities and resources which are at its disposal. With every limitation which it sets upon the will of the employer, it must consider whether the productivity of labour will not thereby be lessened. It must ceaselessly strive to develop the productive forces of the country, and, in so far as this is not yet possible by socialist means and methods, capitalist measures to further this object must be permitted, and under circumstances even encouraged.

The Social-Democratic Government of Georgia has been guided by these principles, and in this have shown themselves to be intelligent pupils of our great Masters, Marx and Engels. Whenever a Social-Democratic Government may come into power, it will be obliged to act on the same principles, and the benefit of the Georgian experience will be at its disposal.

The idea that the only task of a Socialist Government is to put Socialism into practice is not a Marxist one, but pre-Marxist and utopian. It conceives of Socialism as an ideal picture of a complete society. Like ideal conceptions

generally, its nature is very simple. Once it has been thought out, only the necessary power is required to realise this ideal everywhere and under all circumstances. When this result does not immediately follow on the possession of power, it is due either to treachery or to cowardice. A Socialist Government has no other task than the putting into practice of the ideal Socialist State. The more absolute its power, the more effectually it will be able to do this.

This conception of the task of Socialism was completely upset by Marxism. The starting point of Marxism was the class struggle, which is waged under the conditions of capitalist production by the proletariat, itself the product of industrial capitalism. The task of Social Democracy is to raise the physical, intellectual, moral and organising powers of the proletariat, as well as to bring plan, and method into the isolated proletarian struggles. This implies that the proletariat must be taught what is the social and economic objective which can alone satisfy it, and put an end to its struggles. This objective is the emancipation of the working class, which from being the mere tool will become the master of production. Among the working class must be counted not only the industrial proletariat, but likewise, peasants, hand-workers, and intellectuals. But the proletariat forms the strongest and most dependable factor in this development.

This objective is the goal of the Socialist movement. Its realisation, may come about in various ways, which will depend upon the prevailing modes of production, the relative strength of classes, the degree of their organisation, intelligence and discipline, and so forth. The forms of Socialism may vary considerably in different countries, at

different times, and in different branches of industry. They must everywhere be related to the existing forms of production, and permit their further development.

The common element of all of them will be the common ownership of the means of production and management by social institutions, with the object of satisfying the common need whether that be the need of the State, the Municipality, or Co-operative Societies, instead of private ownership of the means of production and private production for the market to secure private profit. Production will not be the realisation of an ideal conception of a complete society which has been previously thought out, but the result of a fluctuating process of development, a result which in no way excludes or renders unnecessary further development, but which forms merely the starting point of a new order of social development.

The endeavour can and should be made to-day to visualise the picture of the coming Socialist mode of production, but it must also be remembered that the reality will be far different from any mental picture, and that the most thorough investigations at the present time will never succeed in revealing all of the agents that will enter into the development of the future, and in estimating how great a significance every one of these agents will assume. The better we are able to investigate the present, the deeper will be our insight into the future. But the forms of the future society will always be more manifold than is possible for us to foresee, and new momenta will constantly arise which are inconceivable to us to-day.

We may expect great surprises before us in this sphere.

Nevertheless the Socialist goal has a great significance for us. Champions of the Labour cause will the more readily avoid the contradictions and waste of strength in their daily political and economic policies, and effect the improvement and liberation of the working people the more speedily, the more they estimate how far each one of their demands and measures will subserve or prejudice the ultimate objective.

As we have already observed, the development of the productivity of labour is closely connected with the objective of the transformation of the property basis of the means of production and with the establishment of the widest self-government and freedom, of expression and organisation of the labouring masses.

From the standpoint of this conception, the task of Socialists in relation to Socialism assumes a shape very different from the standpoint of pre-Marxian Socialism. The creation of a system of Socialist production is now neither the sole nor the first task of Socialists. Such a system is rather to be considered as the end of their endeavour, the result of their total activity. Their duty is, under all circumstances, the elevation and strengthening of the proletariat, the giving it a keener insight into the economic process, and its destiny and the extension of the productivity of labour.

This is the task of every Socialist party. From this point of view, Socialist parties will become possible and necessary everywhere, even in countries where the pre-requisites of Socialist production do not yet exist, provided that they contain an industrial proletariat.

The position will be in no way modified when a Socialist party gains political power, which permits it to set up a

Socialist Government. The immediate task of such a government would likewise be to increase the strength and insight of the proletariat, to subject the capitalist to the control of the State, and to develop the productivity of labour, but not under all circumstances immediately to abolish capitalism in its entirety, and put Socialism into practice. To how great an extent Socialism can be introduced must depend upon the degree of ripeness which the country has reached.

If the tasks of a Socialist Government are conceived in this wise, it will be clear that the existence of such a government in an economically backward country is compatible with the Marxist theory, according to which the pre-requisites of Socialism, are only to be found in a highly developed capitalism. A socialist regime is thus possible under economically backward conditions, if the State is democratic, and the industrial proletariat is superior in intelligence and organisation to the other classes which express their strength by and through democracy. Provided also that the Socialist government remains always conscious of the limits of its power and does not attempt more than it can achieve with the strength and resources at its disposal, and if, finally, it is anxious to develop the productive forces and to strengthen the proletariat. From being the champion of the special interests of the proletariat it will become the representative of the general social interests. In this capacity it will be enabled to marshal behind it the majority of the nation and maintain their allegiance.

Such a Government must be guided by the principle that by limitation the master reveals himself. A Socialist Government which does not restrict its endeavours to the economic necessities and possibilities, but allows itself to be influenced only by the needs of the proletarians and the eagerness for power of many party friends, so that it plunges

into an immoderate policy of extravagant radicalism, a Socialist Government of this kind will never accomplish a lasting liberation of the proletariat, and an increase in the productive forces, but it is sure to end in a new servitude by completely destroying the productive forces, which will mean an indefinite postponement of its hopes.

The Government of Georgia has chosen the method of masterly limitation, and the country and the proletariat have felt the benefit of it.

It is true that an economically backward country can never become a pioneer in the development of Socialist forms. So far, Marxism requires no modification. Only such advanced industrial countries as England and Germany can develop models of socially worked undertakings, which, owing to the abject lesson they will teach, will find speedy recognition and imitation in backward countries.

If highly developed countries should soon come under a Socialist regime, this fact will determine whether their assistance will cause the further development of the productive forces in backward countries to assume socialist forms and prevent the widening of the scope of capitalist production.

It is within the realm of possibility that such a regime will appear in Germany and England in the course of a few years after the present reaction has been overcome.

This will provide a Socialist Government in Georgia with a new support. Thus the possibility existed that this Government would be able to maintain itself in power without resistance. The immediate danger was not from within but from without.

Chapter IX

The Permanence of the Social Democratic Party

No Government of the day was more firmly established than the Georgian Government. We have seen how unusually large was the majority of the Social Democratic Party in the Georgian Parliament. None of the Opposition parties dreamed of overturning the Government or altering its policy.

In addition to the overwhelming majority in the Parliament, the Government was supported by the overwhelming majority of the population.

The modern section of the proletariat, which is the politically decisive class in present-day Georgia, stood fast behind the Government, which maintained a close association with it.

The Communist Party did indeed exist, and enjoyed the fullest liberty in all its movements which were not directed to raising an armed rebellion there was no obstacle in the way of its open propaganda and legal organised activity and the latter ends were eagerly pursued by the side of an equally energetic underground movement. The Party operated with the most lavish resources which emanated from Soviet Russia, but in spite of all this, it did not succeed in gaining a following of any importance.

In contrast to the rest of Europe, Bolshevism has been familiar in Georgia from the commencement, and there it

deceives nobody. In spite of boundary divisions, the Georgians are too closely connected with Russia not to know exactly how things are there, and, in comparison with the hell which Soviet Russia represents, Georgia appeared as a paradise. The workers also know exactly the fearsome oppression which weighs upon the working class of Russia, and the complete loss of rights and impotence of all sections of the proletariat which do not cower in servile obedience before the Dictatorship, they perceive clearly that the Dictatorship, which is supposed to be a dictatorship of the proletariat, has led and must lead to the dictatorship over the entire population, including the proletariat, as dictatorship, by its essence, means that even the ranks of the nominal ruling class are subjected to the despotism of the Government. The workers of Georgia regard the Soviet regime with peculiar bitterness, as its faithlessness towards its small neighbour becomes more obvious every day.

The Communists boasted from time to time that they were recruiting their ranks from the Georgian proletariat. But whenever an opportunity arose it revealed their insignificance. Thus they commenced a great agitation amongst the railwaymen. A brilliant result was to be achieved. Just as I was departing, a Congress of Railwaymen was held in Tiflis which was going to demonstrate that the confidence of the railway workers in the Government had been completely shattered. The Communists expected to dominate the conference.

Behold, when the delegates were counted, one single Communist was found among them. All the others, and there were over eighty, were Social-Democrats.

I had a similar experience with all the Labour conferences at which I had the opportunity to be present.

In Europe to-day, we frequently meet with an intermediate form of Socialism, which dazzled by the apparent results of Bolshevism, declares in theory for the dictatorship of the Soviets, but contrives to keep on firm ground, so that, in practice, it declares for democracy and applies the methods of democracy. This method is quite unknown in Georgia; neither from the Left nor the Right was any considerable opposition forthcoming to the Social-Democratic Government.

One might, at least, have expected some resistance from the large landowners who have been expropriated. In reality they have acquiesced in their fate, which overtook them with all the force of a natural catastrophe; they know they are played out, and that any attempt to re-establish the old order would raise against them the entire nation. Not a few of them were giving faithful and intelligent service to the Republic.

The aristocrats of the great French Revolution, likewise those of the present Russian Revolution, would have accepted their fate as an inescapable dispensation, had they not found allies abroad to arouse in them hopes of a restoration. The Georgian princes have not enough friends abroad who would seek to intervene in their favour. The only power whose interference in the internal affairs of Georgia was to be feared was the Russian Soviet Republic, and should they do so, the late landlords would fall out of the frying-pan into the fire. The Social-Democratic regime has, indeed, taken the land from them without compensation,

except for the peasant-holding which enables them to live by the labour of their hands; but it has not mishandled their persons. It has respected their humanity. It shared the view of Marx that we are not fighting the capitalists as persons, but are attacking their functions. So far as the functions of capitalists are indispensable, we propose they should be changed from private functions to social functions; so far as their functions are superfluous or harmful, we shall abolish them in an economic organisation in which there will be no place for them. The Bolshevist regime has not merely undertaken the campaign against the functions, but also against the persons of the capitalists and landowners, even after they have ceased to be exploiters and have become proletarians in reality, as well as against those who are not willing or able to offer resistance to the new regime. And Bolshevism was not satisfied to render these persons merely harmless, it had also degraded them and trodden them under foot, and inflicted infinite torture upon them, and has aroused against them the lowest instincts of the proletariat. In Georgia, the expropriators, as well as the expropriated, have been spared this mutual degradation. The expropriated have likewise refrained from any attempt to resist their fate. The alternative which confronted them – the Bolshevist regime – was too terrible.

Feudal lords belong to the past. The capitalist constitutes the exploiting power of the present. We have already seen why their political power in Georgia was negligible. Only a few of them are engaged in industry, and most of them represent the parasitic forms of capitalism – as usurers, profiteers, – and landlords in towns. Among them, Armenians preponderate, and they are not loved by the Georgian people. The cause of this antagonism is described differently

by each side, but the underlying facts remain the same. Interpretations of the facts differ. The one side despises the Armenians as dirty, unscrupulous traders and usurers; the other side declares the Armenians are thrifty and industrious. The Georgians, on the other hand, have retained too much feudal carelessness and love of enjoyment. Therefore, the Armenians maintain over them an economic advantage.

Besides Armenians, there are Germans, Russians, Italians and Jews (who are considered a special nationality in Georgia) and members of other foreign nations among the capitalists, but few members of the Georgian nation.

The result of all this is that the frequent great dissatisfaction of the capitalists with the present regime finds no echo among the population, which, on the contrary, rejoices when they are severely treated.

In capitalist circles, complaint was made that unreasonable measures were often adopted, so that not merely were the parasitic activities of capital restricted, but obstacles were set up to its functioning in cases where it promotes the development of the productive forces. So far as I was able to investigate such complaints, I could not become convinced of their justification.

But it is possible, and even probable, that many mistakes of this order were committed in the excitement of a revolutionary period, among the difficulties of an economic system which had suffered destruction and confusion through the war, and in view of the lack of resources essential to the needs of capitalist production, which it is not the business of any capitalist interest to provide. In the

difficult task of harmonising the interests of the proletariat with the development of the productive forces under capitalist conditions, occasional mistakes on one side or the other could scarcely be avoided.

All the complaints and all the discontent in capitalist circles did not, however, crystallise in any important movement of political opposition. From this side, the Social-Democratic Government had not the least to fear. The only chance of democratic opposition was that the capitalists might succeed in winning over the peasants to their side. But this is unthinkable.

The future of the Socialist regime, on the basis of democracy, depends upon the peasantry. This is the case not alone in Georgia, but in all States, where the proletariat does not form the majority of the population.

If democracy should be unfavourable to the proletariat, this is not due to the capitalists, whose numbers are relatively small, but to the peasants. If the peasants form the majority of the population, and are hostile to the proletariat, the latter cannot hope to establish its rule under democratic conditions. This fact is certainly unpalatable. It is in no way altered by the Soviet system, which is also obliged to make terms with the peasants, and grant them Peasants' Councils.

The division into Workers' and Peasants' Councils makes the workers the masters of the towns and the peasants the masters of the countryside. Both classes may work together, quite well so long as one does not interfere with the other, and each is permitted freedom to act in its own sphere. But, unfortunately, in the long run, neither class may exist for

itself alone; the towns have to rely upon the country, and vice versa.

Once a common economic organism has been established, the mere form of the Soviet Constitution offers to the town proletariat no greater superiority over the country people than the system of democracy, assuming that each class is equally represented.

The fact that the proletariat in Russia has become the preponderating force was not due to the Soviet Constitution. The collapse and dissolution of the Russian Army took place under conditions which left the Communist Party and its soldiers the only armed force in the State, and, in addition, the Russian peasants lacked all political discipline and were without a comprehensive political organisation.

Where the proletariat, or the proletarian party, belonging to an agrarian State does not control the armed forces, it can only maintain itself in power with the support of the peasantry. This support cannot even be dispensed with in cases where the proletariat is backed by arms. For we know as Marxists that in the last resort State policy is decided not by machine guns, but by economic necessities. Upon this we base our belief in the effect of a mass strike. Upon this, too, is based the power of the peasantry in the kind of State we have been considering. The industrial proletariat is able to coerce the peasants as little as the peasants can coerce it. They must both learn to settle their differences peacefully, which is more likely to be done in a democracy than in a state of permanent separation of one class from the other.

The problem is not an easy one to solve. The antagonisms are very great.

The proletarians must aim at the common ownership and social management of the means of production, but the peasant is the most tenacious and fanatical champion of private property in the means of production.

If we should decide upon the policy of immediate and complete socialisation, then this antagonism would inevitably develop into an implacable struggle between the proletariat and the peasants. But even the Bolsheviks have not adopted this attitude, or else they would not have surrendered the countryside to the peasants.

So long as the mode of peasant production remains in existence, its socialisation is out of the question. Such a measure can only be adopted on the basis of large-scale management.

The socialisation of the great monopolistic undertakings starting, with the mines and forests, is as much in the interests of the peasant as of the working-class, when it is carried out in a manner which will lead to increased productivity.

The peasant is certainly sceptical and unsympathetic towards theoretical Socialism. He is disposed to be friendly towards practical Socialism; when it requires no sacrifice on his part, and achieves what we Socialists expect of it.

In all events, the antagonism of the peasant as the seller and the proletariat as the buyer of the means of subsistence will persist. But it is not a class antagonism in this manner, the peasants are confronted by the entire population of buyers of the means of subsistence, not only all the town dwellers, but also many village hand-workers and land-workers.

In this matter, democracy, in contrast to the Soviet system, would increase the number of those who would combine with the proletariat against the producers of the means of subsistence.

The vital part of any proletarian regime will not be the relation to the capitalist class, but the connection with the peasants. The capitalists can soon be disposed of, provided the economic conditions permit, and the peasants accord their support.

If the capitalist class, should know how to secure the determined and energetic support of the peasantry, the issue would be doubtful, especially in countries in which the peasants formed the largest class of the population.

In this respect the conditions in Georgia are very favourable. We have seen that here the Social-Democrats have been the leaders and executors of the agrarian revolution which liberated the peasants from all the vestiges of feudalism.

It is true a similar relation exists also in Russia between the Bolsheviks and the peasants, and it existed in France in 1789 until the close of the Revolution between the majority of the peasants and the Paris revolutionaries. In these countries the peasants everywhere backed the Revolution so long as the reactionary powers threatened a restoration of feudal conditions. But as soon as the danger was over, the peasants went over as one man into the ranks of the counter-revolution. In places they had already rebelled against the Revolution, as we may recall La Vendée and the latest peasant revolts in Russia.

We have hitherto seen nothing like this in Georgia, nor any indication that a change will occur within a measurable time. What is the reason for the difference?

One of the causes which, during the French Revolution, led to peasant revolts lay in the diversity of the peasants' conditions within the separate provinces of the country. There were some backward districts in which the feudal lord and the Church functioned as protectors and advisers, and not as exploiters, of the peasants. When revolutionary France plunged into war, and required sacrifices from the peasants, especially in the form of recruits, the feudal lords had no difficulty in provoking the peasants to rebellion in many of these backward provinces.

What remains of the Russian Empire as Soviet Russia is better placed in this respect. It was far more of a unity after it lost its Border States than was the old French monarchy. Had Russia retained its pre-war territory, Poland would easily have become far more dangerous than was La Vendée in 1793.

On the other hand, another circumstance has influenced the peasant counter-revolution in Russia to a greater degree than in France. In my book on *Terrorism and Communism* I have already pointed out that the French peasant was relieved by the Revolution from the necessity of selling corn, as, in addition to getting rid of the feudal burdens, he was exempted from paying taxes. This aggravated the task of feeding Paris, especially after the commencement of the war, when large armies became necessary, requiring great quantities of food.

In their need, the townspeople frequently endeavoured to assist themselves by imposing forcible requisitions on the peasants, which the latter answered, where they could, by forcible resistance. But this state of affairs did not last long, as the revolutionary armies soon pressed victoriously over the country's borders, and were in a position to feed themselves as the expense of the national enemies.

This advantage is lacking in the case of Russia. Its agriculture is so backward that only a slight surplus is yielded. If even before the Revolution the peasant sold a great deal of corn, he did so because he and his family were obliged to go hungry. As in France, heavy tributes were imposed on him by the State and the landowner in order to pay these he was compelled to sell a considerable portion of his harvest to the towns and to foreign countries. Now that the tributes of the State and the landowner have been abolished, the peasant no longer needs to sell. He sowed his ground more negligently, worked less and ate sufficient, which he could never do formerly.

But hunger invades the towns.

The plight of Soviet Russia is all the worse because it has lost the most fertile districts, which yielded the most abundant harvests. Its armies have been numerous enough to lay waste large tracts of land, but not sufficiently victorious to conquer new territory beyond the borders from which to provision themselves.

The Red Armies can only extend in the direction of the south, towards the Caspian Sea, Baku, North Persia and Turkestan. They appear in these Mohammedan countries as allies of Pan-Islamism, as liberators from the yoke of

European Imperialism, and as such are welcomed. But performance assumes a different shape from the promises. The peasantry of every district are plundered to the utmost. Latterly, Bolshevist sympathies have greatly cooled in the Mohammedan world.

The peasant in Russia proper cannot be dealt with so recklessly as in these "liberated" territories. The requisitions made on him are less heavy, although more than he wants to give, and often more than he can. The Dictatorship is acquainted with only one method of solving every problem – brute force. The tribute required is forcibly collected from the recalcitrant peasant.

With the exception of peasant revolts and the devastation of villages, this method has only achieved one thing – the complete suspension of all efforts on the part of the peasant to make their industry yield a surplus. The cultivation of the land deteriorates. Lack of bread and hunger grow.

Once more an appeal was made to force. A demand was being put forward in Soviet Russia that the peasant should be compelled to raise more crops. Such compulsory tillage was doomed, just as all previous forcible measures of Bolshevism have failed which have not been aimed at the destruction of what is existing but at the construction of a new economy.

The protagonists of compulsory tillage have not properly considered what a gigantic apparatus is necessary to compel four-fifths of the population to do work.

The present population of the towns is not sufficient to supply the necessary controlling and police force.

But even if the measure could be successful, which is out of the question, it would be nothing more than an immense revival of the old serf labour, which, next to slavery, is the least productive kind of labour. It would completely seal the economic downfall of Soviet Russia.

One permanent result of all these experiments, if they are continued longer, or perchance multiplied, would be an increasing bitterness of the peasants towards the town proletariat. They would immediately transform the peasants into a reactionary anti-Socialist mass as soon as the Entente abandoned its foolish policy of trying to establish a new landlord regime in Russia. Once this danger to the Russian peasants disappeared, the reaction would have full scope. It is possible that the parallel to odd France might extend to the emerging of a new peasant emperor from the ranks of the revolutionaries. In the short period of its existence, the men of the Dictatorship have undergone so many changes that the last-named role would not be difficult for many of them to assume.

Even this would find enthusiastic support among those who admire only the success of the moment.

Quite different from Russia have been the lines of development in Georgia.

Instead of Dictatorship, that country was ruled by democracy, and the Government could not simply dictate what it liked, and shoot at its pleasure those who did not obey its instructions. The menace to the food supply of the industrial population, caused by the liberation of the peasants, exists there as well as in Russia the problem is

common to all Eastern States which have passed through an agrarian revolution as a result of the war.

The use of force against the peasants cannot be thought of in Georgia. How, then, can the peasant be induced to produce a surplus and supply it to the towns?

In considering this question, we should not forget that more than one hundred years have elapsed since the French Revolution. This has modified to some extent the problem which arose at that time. Then the village produced almost everything needed by agriculture – the village hand-worker supplied the peasants with what the latter did not produce himself. They had scarcely any need of the towns.

To-day the peasant is dependent on large-scale industry, which manufactures his implements and often his manure, when it is of an artificial nature. It supplies him with his clothes, as well as furniture like iron bedsteads. The peasant is anxious to have the products of industry, and in exchange for them, is prepared to produce a surplus. The greater the variety of goods that industry can furnish to him, the more intensively will he work his land, and the more he will be able to produce.

The development of native industries and of foreign trade, to stimulate the importation of foreign products, is essential if the peasant is to be induced to yield a surplus for the towns. The problem is not solved by the mere manufacture of paper money. The peasant whistles at this money if it does not enable him to buy industrial products.

At bottom, the Bolshevists know this. But their attempt to apply the policy of immediate socialisation has killed native

industries, and their foreign propaganda in favour of the World Revolution has not achieved the latter, but brought them the blockade.

The extension of native industries and of foreign trade is the first condition for an augmented voluntary supply of food to the towns. The second is the raising of the productivity of agriculture itself. This is particularly necessary in countries where primitive agricultural methods obtain.

The Georgian Government had realised these facts. Alongside of their endeavours to extend industry and trade, efforts were made to educate the peasants by means of model agricultural undertakings and schools, and to improve the means of communication and to construct drainage works, with which we have already dealt.

Of course, such a programme as this cannot be carried out without the aid of large capital resources, which means heavy taxation, not only of the capitalists, but of the peasants as well. An Income Tax had already been introduced, specially applicable to these two classes, and further taxes were bound to follow.

The decisions on this point were likely to be vital for the Social-Democratic Republic. If the peasants exhibited a willingness to bear this taxation, it would have been possible to give better guarantees for the feeding of the towns than before to permanently stabilise the exchange, and thereby give a rapid impulse to the growth of industry and trade, and the improvement of agriculture itself. Georgia would then have surmounted the crisis which followed in the wake of the war more easily and quickly than most of the European States and gained a secure economic basis. No great

extension of agriculture is needed for the country to become self-supporting. Before the war it produced five to six millions cwts. of wheat. In addition to this, about one million cwts. were imported, but half a million cwts. of maize were exported. Its deficit in bread stuffs, therefore, amounted to only half a million cwts. There was hardly a deficit in the case of other food stuffs, with the exception of sugar. The difference between now and, formerly lies in the fact that then great abundance prevailed, and to-day there is scarcity and dearness rather than gross shortage.

The antagonism, between workers and peasants, which would otherwise be so sharp, is softened by the circumstances just described. Even the imposition of new taxes need not harden this opposition.

A Government emanating from the towns, hostile to the peasants, and not subject to his control, which demands from him contributions for purely urban purposes, is quite a different thing from a Government which is partly elected by the peasant through universal suffrage, is controlled by deputies elected by himself, and aims at promoting his own welfare together with that of the town population.

Only under democratic conditions, and not under a Dictatorship, is it possible to enlist the interest of the peasants in a State that is ruled by the proletariat.

In Georgia, the relation between the proletariat and the peasants is the best possible. They worked together cordially in the building up of a new economy. The peasants were inspired by the greatest confidence in the proletarian leadership, and the latter did all that is possible to further the interests of the country alongside with its own class

interests. This end is achieved by keeping in the foreground the necessity for increasing the productive forces of the country in which both classes are equally interested.

The co-operation of the classes was assisted by the fact that they are often brought together in personal association. Many industrial workers possess small plots of land, and many peasants are still obliged to perform temporary wage-labour. The co-operation of the two classes is not less rendered easier by the consumers' co-operative, societies, which unite town workers and peasants, than by the fact that the priests as well as the monks have lost all influence over the peasantry. The historical moment, the tradition, which plays such a big part with the conservative peasant, is in Georgia associated with the Social-Democracy, as it was the latter which, from the commencement led the struggle for the peasants' emancipation from the Russian bureaucracy and Absolutism, and from native serfdom. Add to this a further motive. As soon as the peasant emerges from his revolutionary period and becomes the undisputed owner of his land, he supports the readiest that government which not only respects his property, but also protects it from devastation through foreign invasion and civil war. This explains the support given by the French peasants to the victorious Napoleonic Empire, and their hostility to the urban revolutionaries as soon as the latter appeared to be the instigators of civil war.

The Social-Democratic Government of Georgia has not only liberated the peasants from the feudal burdens, but its foreign policy, as we shall presently see, in spite of stupendous difficulties, had till February 1920 saved the country from foreign invasion. Its internal policy of

democratic tolerance and liberty, which did not, however, signify apathy or weakness, but was coupled with energy and conscious initiative, has averted an internal catastrophe. Within recent years, when rebellions have broken out almost everywhere from the Rhine to the Pacific Ocean, Georgia was the only country, with the exception of German Austria, that has escaped violence. A few attempts at rebellion in outlying districts in the south and the north are hardly worth mentioning.

This peace and security have commended the Social-Democratic regime to the peasants.

Perhaps in no other country at the present time are the conditions for friendly relations between the peasantry and the proletariat, and for the sympathetic neutrality of the former towards industrial socialisation, so favourable as in Georgia.

Thus we find that in this period of revolution the Government *which was* most firmly supported at home was the Georgian Government.

It is true the external situation was of quite a different cast.

Chapter X

The Foreign Policy of the Republic

We have seen that the Social-Democratic Party of Georgia, unlike that of Poland, functioned not as an independent party, but as a part of the Social-Democracy of Russia, as a citadel of Russian Menshevism. But it stood for the self-determination of the Georgian as of every other nationality. To achieve this object, the Party did not consider it to be necessary to separate from the Russian State. It would have been quite satisfied if Georgia had become one of the States of an allied republic of the United States of Russia. Not as Georgians, but as Menshevists, it took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917. In the interest of the whole of Russia, Tsereteli defended the rights of the Assembly on its opening against the threatened coup d'état of the Bolsheviks. He pointed out that the dissolution of the Assembly spelt nothing less than the ruin of industry, eternal civil war, and the disruption of the Empire. His arguments were answered by the Bolsheviks by means of the force of Lettish infantry and Cronstadt sailors. This has not prevented the attitude of Tsereteli being right in the light of history.

The first consequence of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was the disruption of the Empire. The centrifugal tendencies obtained the upper hand in the eastern provinces, in the Ukraine, on the Don, and in Kuban, in Siberia, and in the Caucasus.

The defection of Transcaucasia took place, not at once, but gradually.

The Transcaucasian deputies, who had been elected to the Constituent Assembly, were increased in number immediately after the elections, by such unsuccessful candidates as had received the next largest number of votes joining to form a Transcaucasian Parliament. Previously, the revolutionary organisations of the district had appointed an executive for its administration, namely, the Transcaucasian Commissariat, which assumed the character of a local government. Both these institutions quickly achieved independence of Russia, not because they repudiated the central power, but because the latter deserted the country and left it to itself. The retreating masses of the Russian Army opened all roads to the pursuing Turks.

If Transcaucasia was not to be overwhelmed by the murderous and destroying Turk, it was obliged to help itself. Its "Commissariat" entered into negotiations with the Turks and their German allies for an armistice and peace. It felt that it had been sold and betrayed by the Bolshevik Government, and therefore declined to participate in the peace negotiations of Brest-Litovsk. It believed that it could better serve the interests of the country if it pursued its own policy, independent of Russia, and in this has been justified by the event.

After the capitulation of Russia at Brest-Litovsk, the complete separation of Transcaucasia was a question of only a few weeks. On April 22nd, 1918, the Transcaucasian Republic declared its independence.

This new combination was to remain in existence only for five weeks. Its constituent parts were too diverse.

Georgia represented the leading element but, from the commencement, it had great difficulty in holding together the other national members of the confederation, the Armenians who chiefly dwell in Armenia, and the Tartars, who for the most part live in Azerbaijan.

The Armenians have no greater enemies than the Turks, and the Kurds who are related to them, who are chiefly Mohammedans. On the other hand, the people of Azerbaijan are mostly Mohammedans. They incline towards the Turks, whereas the Armenians are disposed towards any regime which shows itself ready to free them from the Turkish danger, whether it be Czarism or the Entente. Now the Georgians demanded complete neutrality, both towards the Turks and Russia, and complete independence of both. For some time the Georgians were able to recommend this policy to the two other great races of Transcaucasia. But the Armenian-Tartar antagonism was too strong. It broke up the Transcaucasian Republic in the exciting days which followed the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

When the Turks presented an ultimatum to Transcaucasia on May 26th, 1918, the Parliament dissolved and declared the Republic to be ended. On the same day Georgia proclaimed its independence.

Its foreign policy remained the same as it was during the Transcaucasian partnership. In the declaration of independence of May 26th, it is stated

The National Council declares

(1) Henceforth the people of Georgia exercise sovereign rights over themselves.

(2) The political constitution of independent Georgia is that of a democratic republic.

(3) Georgia will maintain an attitude of constant neutrality in any international conflicts that might arise.

Hitherto Georgia has adhered steadfastly to this policy, however difficult it has been, in view of the great struggles which have been waged on its borders, and the constant temptation on the part of one or the other of the great military powers to win or compel the allied co-operation of the Republic.

The first difficulty arose immediately after the Declaration of Independence. The Turkish ultimatum placed Georgia in a desperate position. By itself it was impotent to resist the Turkish invasion. To protect itself from this invasion, it was obliged to choose the lesser of two evils. It opened the door to the German occupation, under the agreement reached in Poti, on the 28th May, between von Lossow and Tchenkeli. [*Memoires on the relation between the Transcaucasian and Georgian Republic and Turkey and Germany*, p.21]

The German troops came to Tiflis as protectors from the Turks, and were, therefore, cordially welcomed.

The country was important to the Germans, as a highway to the petroleum wealth of Baku, and to Persia. They came to Georgia not as plunderers but as organisers of its productive forces, as they needed the Georgian products, especially manganese, and also its railways. Thus they brought to Georgia precisely what was most lacking in the country, and

what it could only obtain speedily by foreign assistance, namely economic organisation.

The Germans have been popular in Georgia for a long time, thanks to the Wurtemberg colonists who settled there a hundred years ago as peasants and retained their nationality until to-day, earning for themselves a good reputation. The German occupation was further raised by the achievement of troops in occupation. Georgia is one of the few countries in this war where the German Armies have done propaganda work for Germany. Nevertheless, the Georgian Government decisively rejected the overtures of the Germans to enter into an alliance with them against Soviet Russia or the Entente.

The Germans did not succeed in persuading Georgia to form an alliance with the Central Powers. The attempts of German diplomacy to involve Georgia in the Russian Civil War were equally unsuccessful.

When in the autumn of 1918 a group of Russian reactionaries attempted to form an 'Astrakhan Army' the German Command proposed to the Georgian Government to permit the enrolment of volunteers for this army in its territory.

The Government of the Republic answered with a categorical refusal. [Woytinsky. *Una vera democrazia*]

The policy of Georgia underwent no change when after the collapse of the German Army and its Allies, the Entente invaded Transcaucasia. Now it was the Entente which sought to entangle Georgia in the Russian Civil War, and to draw it into an alliance with Denikin against the Bolshevists. These overtures too were definitely rejected by the Georgian Government, which continued to maintain the strictest

neutrality. That was not easy, as the conflicting classes in Russia adopted the attitude of who is not for us is against us.

The democratic country, which had expropriated the ground landlords, was a thorn in the side of the Generals of the counter revolution. The Republic seemed to be not less inconvenient to the men of the Soviet Republic, if for other reasons. They hated Georgian Menshevism right heartily.

Both the dictator's who aimed at restoring Czardom, and the People's Commissaries could not bear to think that within their orbit was a free and independent community, which would not obey the dictates of Moscow. A great part of the fighting between the Bolsheviks and the white troops took place on the northern borders of Georgia. Sometimes the one and sometimes the other side, whichever happened to be victorious, attempted to subdue the free mountain peoples of the Caucasus, and occasionally invaded Georgia, in order either to set up the re-action, or to provoke a Communist rebellion which would lead to submission to the Moscow regime.

At first it was the Bolsheviks who, without any declaration of war, invaded the coastline of Georgia, in the autumn of 1918 and captured Sukhum. Georgian forces pressed them back. The Bolsheviks were soon followed by Denikin's forces, who seized the territory which had been wrested from Georgia by the former Georgia endeavoured to negotiate, but Denikin was not disposed to do so. He advanced, but was at length thrown back, like the Bolsheviks. The intervention of the English succeeded in restoring peace.

In the following year the white troops tried to subdue the mountain peoples in the northern Caucasus, who had won their independence. Georgia remained neutral, but its sympathies lay with those who had been attacked and were struggling for their freedom. It protested repeatedly against the violence of the counter-revolutionaries, and numerous Georgian volunteers fought in the ranks of the Caucasians.

A rapprochement between the Soviet Republic and Georgia began to take place at the commencement of 1920. The People's Commissaries proposed to the Georgian Republic an alliance for common action against the white volunteer army. This alliance was refused, albeit the Georgian Government considered that any foreign intervention in Russia and any participation of a foreign power in the Russian Civil War to be wrong and disastrous.

The Government of the Georgian Republic remained true to this attitude, and whenever an opportunity arose, opposition was offered to foreign intervention.

Although an alliance for military purposes was refused, a friendly approach to Russia was welcomed. Eventually a definite treaty of peace was made with Soviet Russia (7th May 1920) whereby both powers mutually recognised each other, and promised to live in peace and harmony.

Georgia has faithfully observed this peace, but not so the Soviet Republic. Scarcely had the latter concluded peace than its troops invaded Georgia from the side of Azerbaijan, which Soviet Russia had seized shortly before by a coup d'état. Once more the Georgians succeeded in throwing back the invading enemy, and again offered peace as soon as the beaten foe was ready for it. Scarcely had peaceful conditions

been re-established than the Bolsheviks organised new military invasions from the north, in order to provoke insurrections in northern Georgia. Almost at the same time (July) a Communist conspiracy was discovered in Abkhasia, having relations with the Russian Military Command, and implicating two officials belonging to the Russian Mission in Tiflis.

But all these deceits and treacheries had attained no success worthy of mention till February of 1921. This fact demonstrated the firmness as well as the circumspection and energy of the Georgian Government. It also showed the shamelessness of the Communists who were never tired of waxing indignant over the terrorism in Georgia, because a few Communist conspirators had sometimes been arrested and condemned to imprisonment, or some Communist newspaper which spread false news had been suspended for a few days.

In the few months prior to February of this year, a new storm broke over the small, but undaunted Republic. At the end of September 1920 the Turkish Nationalists invaded Armenia.

Soon Russian troops from Azerbaijan proceeded to Armenia, in order to seize the country and transform it into a vassal of Russia. Both in Armenia and Azerbaijan Russian troops assembled in a threatening guise, on the borders of Georgia. This fact compelled the latter to mobilise also.

The language of the Russian Representative in Tiflis became increasingly threatening. In the middle of December, a conspiracy was discovered in Tiflis, the object of which was to provoke street-fighting in that town, which would furnish

a pretext for the invasion of Georgia by the Russian troops watching on the border, 60 kilometres from Tiflis. Among the conspirators, officials of the Russian Embassy were again discovered.

This would have justified the Georgian Government in giving Herr Scheimann, the Russian ambassador in Tiflis, his passports, but it contented itself with asking Lenin to recall Scheimann and replace him by another person, because his activities disturbed the good relations between the two States.

But Scheimann remained.

Thus at the beginning of January, the situation of the small Republic had become very troubled.

The Bolshevik invasion which threatened in the spring if the Moscow Dictators had not themselves been checked, has now come sooner than was expected. The fate of Georgia only depended on the strength of her arms.

Chapter XI

The Armed Forces of Georgia

The Social-Democrats of Georgia are pacifists in the sense that they abhor war and avoid it as much as possible, but not in the sense that they refuse to meet force with force and deliver themselves unarmed into the hands of their opponents, merely seeking to influence them by words. Where it is threatened by force, Democracy also requires to defend itself by force.

Thus, when the Social Democracy of Georgia became a power, it was obliged to provide itself with weapons. In the Revolution of 1905, the Georgian Social-Democrats urged the arming of the proletariat, but events taught them greater wisdom. The possession of arms by the proletariat causes some of them to have the feelings of bandits, and leads them to individual acts of violence and crime. The question once again became acute in the Revolution of 1917.

When the delirious joy which marked the beginning was followed by a soberness, many comrades, even in Georgia, discussed the question of how the Revolution could be defended against a threatened armed attack from the counter revolution. It thus appeared to be necessary to arm the working class, but not all workers without distinction.

Only tried and disciplined comrades should receive arms.

The workers' guard was founded on the 5th September, 1917.

At the beginning it was of slight account, as it lacked arms. In December the necessity and likewise the possibility of

arming a larger body of men arose out of a conflict between the workers of Tiflis and the soldiers' council there.

In Tiflis, like everywhere else in Russia, a workers' council had been formed, and Noe Jordania, afterwards President of the Republic, chosen as president.

The whole power in Tiflis devolved on the workers' council, when, after the Bolshevist coup d'état, the Russian armies dissolved, and came swarming over the Turkish border. Georgia, whose language they did not understand, appeared to the Russian soldiers as a foreign country. Naturally inclined to plunder, as is every army whose discipline has disappeared, they were all the more eager for plunder in a district where they felt they were foreigners. Moreover, as the soldiers were dominated by the spirit of Bolshevism, which at that time meant the complete surrender of the country to the hostile armies, they were not favourably disposed towards the Georgian Menshevists, who did not consider the senseless retreat from the by no means victorious Turks to be necessary, however much they were convinced of the need for an immediate armistice and peace. As a matter of fact, the Menshevist Transcaucasian Commissariat succeeded in concluding an armistice with the Turks on the 18th December.

At the beginning of December the disorganised masses of returning soldiers threatened the security of the population of Tiflis to the utmost. In order to protect the population, the Tiflis Workers' Council demanded arms for the workers' guard. The arms could be obtained only from the Arsenal, which was in the hands of the returned soldiers. The Menshevist Workers' Council requested of the Bolshevist

Soldiers' Council the delivery of weapons for arming the workers' guard. This the Soldiers' Council refused.

Thereupon, the Workers' Council decided to help themselves and to capture the Arsenal. It was a hazardous enterprise. Only 225 armed men were at its disposal, whereas the Tiflis garrison numbered 20,000 men. Nevertheless, the stroke was successful. In the early morning of the 12th December they attacked the Arsenal and captured it after a short struggle, in which only one soldier fell. This success revealed the great war weariness, apathy and demoralisation which had overtaken the Russian Army, as well as the fearlessness and defensive capacity of the Georgian proletariat. We have already noted that all sections of the population of Georgia are characterised by the economic carelessness and love of enjoyment which is a heritage of Feudalism. To this heritage must also be added a striking valour in the best sense of the word.

After the 26th May, the date of the Declaration of Independence, the 12th December is celebrated in Georgia as a national holiday. On that day the Georgian Social-Democracy captured the arms to defend itself against subsequent attacks.

The Workers' Guards now disposed of sufficient arms, and were able to organise themselves in battalions. Their name varied; first they called themselves the revolutionary militia, then the Red Guard, and finally the People's Guard.

From Tiflis they spread themselves over the whole of Georgia. They constituted a volunteer army of tried Socialists and numbered about 30,000 men.

Only a part of them were armed in time of peace, the majority being on furlough and following their callings. If the Republic had been in danger, they would have been called up by the General Staff, supplied with arms, and allotted to their places.

The constitution of the Guard was democratic. Its affairs were decided by Congresses, to which every 200 men sent a delegate. The Guard belonging to a district selected its officers. Likewise, the General Staff is chosen for one year. Its Supreme Commander was Valike Jugeli, who was the leader in the bold stroke of the 12th December 1917.

The Guard was not under the control of the War Minister, but of the President of the Republic.

The military training of the Guard was zealously fostered, but the troops did not develop a military spirit. The people's Guards in the barracks remained the same Social-Democratic proletarians as they were outside it, and their interest was occupied, not by military, but by social questions.

The General Staff has formed two sections; one for education, and one for agriculture. The former takes care of the continued education of the guards, the increase both of their civil knowledge and of their technical capabilities. The other section pursues agricultural activities, upon some large estates, which are put at its disposal.

The Austrian Popular Militia also contains, an educational section, but the agricultural section is a special feature of the Georgian Guard. This undertaking is not to be confused with Russian compulsory labour. The Georgian organisation

signifies the civilising of militarism, but the Russian organisation is the militarising of civil work. In the People's Guard, the workers who would prefer to be outside the army are not subjected to military discipline, which would compel them to undertake specific work; but soldiers who would otherwise stay in barracks without occupation are provided with the opportunity of breaking the monotony of an unproductive existence by useful and various activities. Only experience can show whether the Guards can do more productive work on these large estates than as private workers, but even if this should not be the case, they will certainly be able to reduce the cost of their maintenance.

The large estates cover a part of the requirements of the Guards. We have here a very interesting experiment, the extension of which deserves serious consideration. Its maintenance and successful accomplishment in Europe might lend a more reasonable and tolerable aspect to the enormous European armies. It is not a specially socialistic measure it could be accepted by any middle-class government, but if this were done, what would become of the military contractors? How many European Officer Corps would not find employment in useful work below their dignity?

It is not a Socialistic measure to set to work upon State land soldiers who are undergoing their period of training, but it might be of importance for the development of Socialism, as a starting-point for the establishment of one form of Socialist agriculture.

In spite of their pronounced peaceable disposition and employment, the People's Guard have shown their readiness

for fight on every occasion that has arisen. Unfortunately, such occasions have not lacked, as we have seen.

Voluntary armies alone cannot permanently suffice for the Socialist Republic. The spirit of democracy required participation, in military service, of all capable of bearing arms, which was equally reinforced by the necessity for securing the Republic against its mighty external enemies.

Thus, by the side of the People's Guard, arose the army of general military service. Its definite shape represents a militia, similar to the Swiss militia, and is under the control of the War Minister. In the event of war, the regular army and the volunteer army are united under the same supreme command. In the general conscript army, the War Ministry zealously foster educational activities, and the democratic principle has been widely applied, for the first time, among these troops. Yet in this case, the officers are not chosen by the soldiers, but are appointed by the War Ministry. The majority of the officers are Social-Democrats. As regards the military feeling of the troops and the relations of the separate sections of the army, a reasoned judgment cannot be passed by a layman, especially one who is not familiar with the language, and has not had the opportunity for a lengthy observation. I was assured, on various sides, that no jealousy existed between the Guard and the regular Army.

One thing is certain, that until February the whole army had been entirely successful in its campaigns; the entire army was feeling a great enthusiasm for the independence of the Fatherland. It suffered severely from the lack of arms and munitions.

Chapter XII

The Bolshevist Invasion

In the first period of independent Georgia, its forces had been put to many hard tests. But its severest trial came last spring, as the result of the Bolshevist invasion by the strong Russian forces, simultaneously from the south, from the north, and from the east.

This treacherous invasion occurred without any declaration of war in the first half of February. The world first heard of it from the Georgian side. The Social-Democratic Party and the Trade Unions, as well as the Federal Socialist Party, announced positively, together with the Georgian Government, that Georgia had been invaded by Russian troops and was threatened to the utmost.

They expected an immediate and vigorous protest against the proceedings of Moscow would be forthcoming from the International Socialist Congress at Vienna.

Unfortunately the telegram arrived late and, in addition, the Congress was suffering under the influence of the formidable crisis into which continental Europe had been plunged by the senseless demands made on Germany by the Entente. Thus the general interest was occupied by Western rather than Eastern politics. Above all, the representations which came from Moscow, and which decisively denied any invasion of Georgia by the Russian Army, served to confuse the judgment.

It is not necessary to subject these representations to a detailed examination, as they answer themselves by their contradictions and inconsistencies.

In order to be able to deny the invasion of Russian troops, it was first stated that some villages on the Georgian frontier had revolted, embittered by the tyranny of the Georgians. Some Armenians on the southern border had given the signal, and then the rebellion spread to Signakh, which lies in the east of Georgia, towards Azerbaijan. Simultaneously, Abkhasia had risen in the extreme north-west, close to the Russian border.

It is a remarkable fact that the rebellions broke out precisely in those places, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Abkhasia, where large and constantly increasing masses of Russian troops had been quartered since November.

The inhabitants of some Armenian border villages are supposed to have insisted on advancing towards Tiflis. The Russian Government stated it had endeavoured, out of love of peace and benevolence, to help the threatened Georgian regime, and offered its mediation between the Georgians and the Armenians. It could not help it if Georgia contemptuously rejected this mediation.

But scarcely was Tiflis captured than the picture immediately changed. The Armenians had discharged their debt, the Armenians could go. No further mention was made in the Russian telegrams of Armenian rebellions, but now it suddenly appears that Communists had captured Tiflis and overthrown the Menshevists.

Pravda (in Moscow) congratulates the Georgian comrades, and says that “Menshevist Georgia has become the last refuge for the counter-revolution.”

No further references to the Armenian rebellions or to the peace mediations. Can any reasonable man hold it to be possible that Moscow would have offered its helpful mediation to a Menshevist Government which was threatened by Communists?

The later Russian telegrams about events in Georgia brand the first news as lies. They more closely approach the truth, but do not quite touch it. They admit that Tiflis was captured by Communists, and not by revolting Armenians. But they would have us believe that it was Georgian workers and peasants who rose against their own Government and captured Tiflis.

One Moscow telegram stated: “The Georgian Revolutionary Committee announce the seizing of Tiflis by the revolutionary Georgian workers and peasants.”

Thus the same Georgian Communists, who up to January could only secure an insignificant representation in any workers’ or “peasant” organisation of Georgia, under conditions of the fullest liberty of legal activity, had suddenly gained sufficient strength in February to overthrow the Georgian Government.

This is sufficiently remarkable, but more remarkable is the following.

A rebellion of revolutionary workers usually first breaks out in an industrial centre, and thence spreads over the

remainder of the country. The Communist revolt of the “revolutionary workers of Georgia” did not break out in Tiflis, which comprises half of the industrial workers of Georgia, but, as the Russian report itself establishes, in remote villages, inhabited by a backward agrarian population.

In such villages there were, indeed, numerous Communists, well armed, and led by those who cherished implacable hatred of any Menshevist organisation. They were the Russian Armies, and only they were in a position to lend the Georgian Revolutionary “Committee” the strength to advance successfully against Tiflis, and to seize the town.

If, in spite of all, the Russian Government still attempts to create the belief that its three strong armies on the southern, eastern, and north-western boundaries of Georgia refrained from any share in the fight between the Communists and Menshevist Georgia, this is obviously because invasion by the Russian Armies would represent the most impudent and shameless mockery of the principles most sacred to every Socialist, which principles even the most hardened Bolshevists still had doubts about throwing on the scrap-heap.

Yet stronger than such doubts is the hatred which the Moscow Dictators cherish against everything which is called Menshevist or Social-Democratic. They consider this is to be synonymous with counter-revolution, but in reality they hate it far more than the actual counter-revolution.

They enter into negotiations with capitalist England and America, but they have sworn mortal enmity to every proletarian organisation which accepts the principle that the

emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves, and that it cannot be introduced by the involuntary submission of the workers to the commands of Moscow.

The men of the Moscow International endeavour, with the aid of every kind of lie and every species of corruption, to split all Menshevist and Social-Democratic organisations. And shall they tolerate right on their borders the Social-Democratic Republic of Georgia, this “last refuge” of Menshevism, as *Pravda* said, within the Russian sphere of power?

Georgia was Menshevist. Therefore, its death sentence was pronounced in Moscow.

Chapter XIII

The Moscow Bonapartism

The Menshevism of Georgia is the most important, but not the only cause of the Bolshevik invasion. The world policy of Moscow forms another reason. As Czardom did formerly, so now Bolshevism, although from quite different standpoints, regards England as the greatest and most dangerous enemy of Russia. And this great Empire seems by its geographical position alone among all the Powers of the world to control the road on which England can be dealt a blow, and brought to her knee, without the mastery of the seas, namely, the road to India.

Soviet Russia is now playing with the grandiose idea of Napoleon the First to attack England in India. Napoleon came to grief by the first step which he took, as he could not stand up against the English at sea. Without the victory of the English at sea, his failure to penetrate into the interior of Asia would have been much more inglorious, as it would have by mere insufficiency of the means of transport prepared for him a Moscow at the very beginning, of his military career.

Soviet Russia does not need to repeat the first step of Napoleon. It can commence with the second. This has lost none of its difficulties, as a far larger army is necessary for the conquest of India to-day than was the case at the end of the eighteenth century. The Russians can hardly get very far without great railway construction. Such works are out of the question in the present condition of Russian industry. However, the plan is bold, and in boldness the Bolsheviks

equal Danton and the first Napoleon. In this quality, and not in their positive achievements, rests the great power of attraction which they exercise over so many persons who live far from their jurisdiction.

One of the stages of the road to India is Persia, into which the Bolsheviks have already penetrated, although unsuccessfully, last year. At that time, their basis was too narrow. It would be considerably broadened by the possession of Georgia. Thus Moscow world policy required this country for further military progress.

As chance had it, *Rosta* at the same time as it announced its account of the Georgian conflict had the following dispatch from Moscow. "On February 28th an agreement was signed in Moscow between Russia and Afghanistan. "

The West of Georgia is a part of Russia's Eastern policy directed against England.

The likeness to the policy of Napoleon is a close one, and has already been pointed out. But the resemblance is more than a mere chance. We are struck more and more with the manner, in which the course of the great French Revolution has been repeated in that of Russia, although the international situation and ideology are of quite a different order to-day than at the end of the eighteenth century.

Montesquieu, Voltaire and J.J. Rousseau are scarcely read to-day; Marx dominates the hour, and present-day Russia is not, like the France of one hundred years ago, the most highly developed, but the most backward of the countries of the European continent. But the principal tasks, agrarian reform and the overcoming of Absolutism, corresponded in

Russia in 1917 so closely with the of France in 1789 that since that date the Revolution here has followed the same stages as there, only in Russia with younger and simpler social sections in considerably grosser forms.

Here, as there, we find first of all a middle class revolution. In France, it developed into the Reign of Terror of the Jacobins, who were supported by the lower classes, especially in the capital. In Russia the Reign of Terror of the Bolsheviks, who proclaim the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

In order to maintain themselves, the Jacobins found themselves obliged to substitute for the bureaucracy, the police and the army of the old regime, which had been abolished by the Revolution, a new police and army, much stronger and more centralised than the old, and therefore established that machinery of domination which was to lead to the Empire of Napoleon.

The Bolsheviks have found themselves obliged to pursue the same course. Gradually, they have more and more restricted the self-government of the working class in the domain both of economics and politics, created an all-powerful police apparatus, proclaimed the dictatorship of the factory chiefs, reduced the Soviets to a shadow, and instead have built up a great, strictly disciplined army, to which all that remains of Russian industry is subservient.

Thus, Soviet Russia has entered upon a phase of the Revolution which corresponds with the third phase of the French Revolution, viz., the phase of Absolutism and the domination of the police and military forces.

We may class this the Bonapartist phase. The victorious general is, indeed, lacking. Meanwhile, Russia is in the stage of the Consulate of the two Consuls, Lenin and Trotsky.

Like the Moscow Bonapartism, its French predecessor derived from the Revolution, the allurements of which it retained, whereby so many enthusiasts have been deceived. It is notorious that the fiery republican, Beethoven, was in 1804 an enthusiastic worshipper of Napoleon, immediately before the latter made himself Emperor. Napoleon passed as the incarnation of the Revolution, only because the reactionary powers hated him as much as the Revolution itself, although the Napoleonic Empire already possessed a character which distinguished it fundamentally from the Revolution.

The present-day Moscow regime has as little in common with the proletarian dominance of the State as the French Empire at the beginning of the last century had with the Republic.

The so-called Soviet Republic of to-day does not rest upon the power of the proletariat, but on the strength of its army and on the impotence of the proletariat against this army. As the strength of the army grows so the power of the rulers of the State increases, but simultaneously grows their dependence on the only element on which they are able to support themselves, the military. Accordingly, a new militarism is arising in Russia, and likewise a new imperialism. For the latter, the impulse towards constant extension of power and fields of exploitation is peculiar to militarism as well as to capitalism. The need for employing his army, and constantly providing fresh booty and

advantages, drove Napoleon to that restless policy of conquest which finally collapsed at Moscow. The same conditions are to-day creating in Russia similar efforts on the part of the Moscow Imperialism.

To this policy Georgia has now been sacrificed.

It is important to make this quite clear. The effect upon us would be disastrous if it were a genuinely proletarian Republic which had suddenly invaded another proletarian Republic, a small, friendly and peaceful community. To invade it without any declaration of war, in the midst of peace, was indeed an infamy more wicked than the German invasion of Belgium in 1914. For then Germany was engaged in a war for its existence and the invasion was an episode of the world-war. The Bolshevik invasion threatens to paralyse the whole of the Socialist propaganda against the war and to brand it as humbug.

Never before have wars wrought such destruction as to-day of technical appliances for the needs of production and of communication, and never before was peace so essential to the prosperity of the peoples.

It brings consolation, encouragement and hope to large sections of people when we Socialists point out that it is capitalism alone that renders war inevitable, and that the proletariat is the force that will bring peace and maintain it.

The world rule of the proletariat would be synonymous with lasting world peace! And now we have two Republics, governed by the proletariat, existing side by side, and one makes war upon the other with a treachery that is seldom met with among capitalist governments.

Were Russia still a proletarian republic, the events in Georgia would inflict a serious blow on the whole of our propaganda, in which we describe the proletariat as the firmest support of peace.

Yet, in reality, the Russian proletariat has borne no share in the invasion of Georgia, because it has ceased to exercise political power in Russia. We are justified in continuing to assert that the general rule of the proletariat will secure lasting world peace; that between two States, equally governed by the proletariat, no occasion for war will any longer arise; and that the international solidarity of the workers will be strong enough to settle peacefully any possible conflicts between two proletarian States.

For the Russia which has just made this execrable invasion into Georgia is no longer a proletarian, but a Bonapartist community.

Far from rejoicing over the conquest of Georgia, the proletariat of Russia vigorously condemned it, as was shown by the protest issued in Berlin on March 3rd by the Foreign Agency of the Social-Democratic Labour Party (signed by Abramovitch and Martoff). In Russia itself, the proletariat is muzzled and cannot express itself freely, but the Social-Democratic Party, that is, the Menshevists, is competent to speak in its name. Times have changed since Bolshevism forced Menshevism into the background and won to its side the mass of the workers in the large towns. This was the case in the autumn of 1917, when the craving for peace outweighed every other consideration among the masses, and the Bolsheviks gave to it the most powerful and unequivocal expression.

Since that time the domination of Bolshevism has become synonymous with constant war, with hunger and poverty, and also with the complete suspension of every kind of liberty of movement for the proletariat. Peace and freedom are to-day most stoutly championed by the Menshevists; the mass of the Russian proletariat turns more and more towards them; and the Bolsheviks attempt in vain, by all means of electoral shuffling, corruption, intimidation, bloody terror, to dam the rising tide of opposition.

The invasion of Georgia has been undertaken, not with the concurrence, but against the wishes of the Russian proletariat. The latter is free from the latest Moscow blood guilt.

We are entitled to expect that the entire international proletariat, so far as it does not obey the behests of Moscow, will unanimously endorse the protest of our Russian comrades.

The fear is groundless that such a protest will strengthen French and English imperialism, which is hostile to Soviet Russia. Quite the contrary. We blunt the points of our weapons in the struggle against the imperialism of the capitalist Powers, if we are afraid to denounce imperialism when it arises out of a proletarian revolution, and discredits the latter. It is our business to remove the influence of imperialist ways of thinking from the proletariat. How can we do this if we tolerate an imperialism which masquerades in the name of the proletariat?

Yet another factor renders it necessary for the Social-Democratic parties of the world to make a decisive stand against the Moscow Bonapartism.

The close parallel which exists between the course which the Russian Revolution has hitherto followed and that of the great French Revolution must not blind us to the differences between the two events. In the eighteenth century France was the most progressive State of the European continent. To-day Russia is still the most backward amongst the great States of Europe. Although the French Bonapartism constituted a strong reaction from the Republic, its policy of expansion brought many improvements to the rest of Europe. The present Moscow Bonapartism is not only reactionary in relation to the proletarian revolution of Russia, out of which it arose, but even more so in comparison with the proletarian movements of the rest of Europe, which it seeks to fetter.

A further distinction exists between the old Bonapartism of Paris and the new one of Moscow.

No class-conscious proletariat existed at the time of the great French Revolution. The proletarian sections formed a tail to the small middle class, an extremely divided and unreliable class, which constantly swayed between obstinate resistance and cowardly submission, between anti-capitalist discontent and capitalist covetousness.

At the time of the Revolution this class was without the slightest political experience. However wild its conduct had been during the Reign of Terror, it was an easy matter for the Empire to paralyse this class. The Empire was confronted with no other serious opponents than the old legitimate foreign dynasties, which could not forget the revolutionary origin of the new Emperor. For Continental

Europe at that time there were two alternatives, either Bonapartism or the Holy Alliance.

To-day we are far removed from this. The revolutionary struggle is conducted, not by the small middle-class, but by the proletariat, a class which, in contrast to the former, is of a homogeneous character, and pursues a single object. It will not make terms with capitalism, and much less will it permit any restrictions on its liberty of movement. The workers are not always conscious of the Socialist objective of their class struggle, as was shown in the case of the English workers for more than a generation after the disappearance of Chartism, but in all countries, and under all circumstances, they zealously guard their freedom of movement. At times they may be suppressed and forcibly held down, but this policy becomes more difficult as they grow in numbers, as their political and organising experience extends, and as they become more indispensable in an economic sense.

For decades the proletariat has waged the class struggle in an open and organised manner.

Under these circumstances, the new Russian Bonapartism is faced with quite a different situation from that of the old French Bonapartism. The world is no longer confronted with the choice of two alternatives, submission to the dictation of the new Absolutism, born of the Revolution and the reaction; that is, between Moscow and the Entente. A third possibility exists: the overthrow of the Moscow Bonapartism from within, by means of the strengthening of proletarian freedom, which is best represented by the growing power of Socialist opposition.

The victory of the Alliance over Napoleon signified the triumph of reaction, and the defeat of the peoples of Europe for a generation. But this victory was rendered unavoidable by the excesses which are necessarily bound up with Bonapartism.

The victory of the capitalism of the Entente over Soviet Russia would likewise signify the victory of reaction and facilitate the defeat of the European proletariat, even if not for so long as a generation, nor to the same degree as before. In any event, the proletarian class struggle would be considerably hampered.

Consequently, the workers of all countries, whatever their opinions of the Bolshevist methods, have resisted the efforts of the Entente to crush Soviet Russia.

But this does not imply that the Russian Bonapartism should be defended against all criticism, especially against that which proceeds from the Menshevists. This is called the defence of the Russian Revolution, but is merely a defence of the exploiters of this Revolution against the Social-Democratic opposition, which would be best able to maintain and extend the revolutionary achievements.

Not Bolshevism, but this opposition is now the real support of the Russian Revolution. Its fate depends upon the victory of this opposition, and its speedy victory.

Russia is a peasant State, and will remain so for a long time. Russia's political future rests upon this fact, whichever class or party may succeed in gaining the leadership of the peasants, who are not fitted to pursue an independent class policy.

Hitherto the Russian peasantry has followed the proletarian leadership. The practice of the Bolshevists tends more and more to alienate the peasants, and to make them disposed to accept a capitalist or any other kind of counter-revolutionary leadership.

It is not alone the victory of one of the counter-revolutionary generals which threatens to make Russia once more the citadel of reaction, but also the transference of the allegiance of the peasants to the other side. This would be detrimental to the class struggle, in Europe as well as in Russia.

The defection of the peasants, who have hitherto been revolutionary and led by the proletariat, can only be arrested by the substitution of the Menshevist methods, so successfully practised in Georgia, for the existing Bolshevist methods. Thus the most urgent need of the hour, and the best means of saving the jeopardised Revolution, is the overcoming of Bolshevism by Menshevism.

It is the duty of the Social-Democrats of all countries to assist Menshevism to the utmost extent of their power. This is the same thing as working for the triumph of the methods of little Georgia. It still lies crushed and mishandled by its overwhelming opponent, but simultaneously the ideas which inspired it and made it capable of great things are sweeping over the giant empire of its oppressor. Russia will only be able to prosper when it is animated by the spirit that inspired Georgia. This will constitute the revenge of the Social-Democratic Republic of the Caucasus.