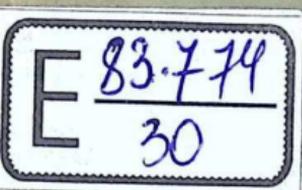


GEORGIA

AND THE WAR



BY

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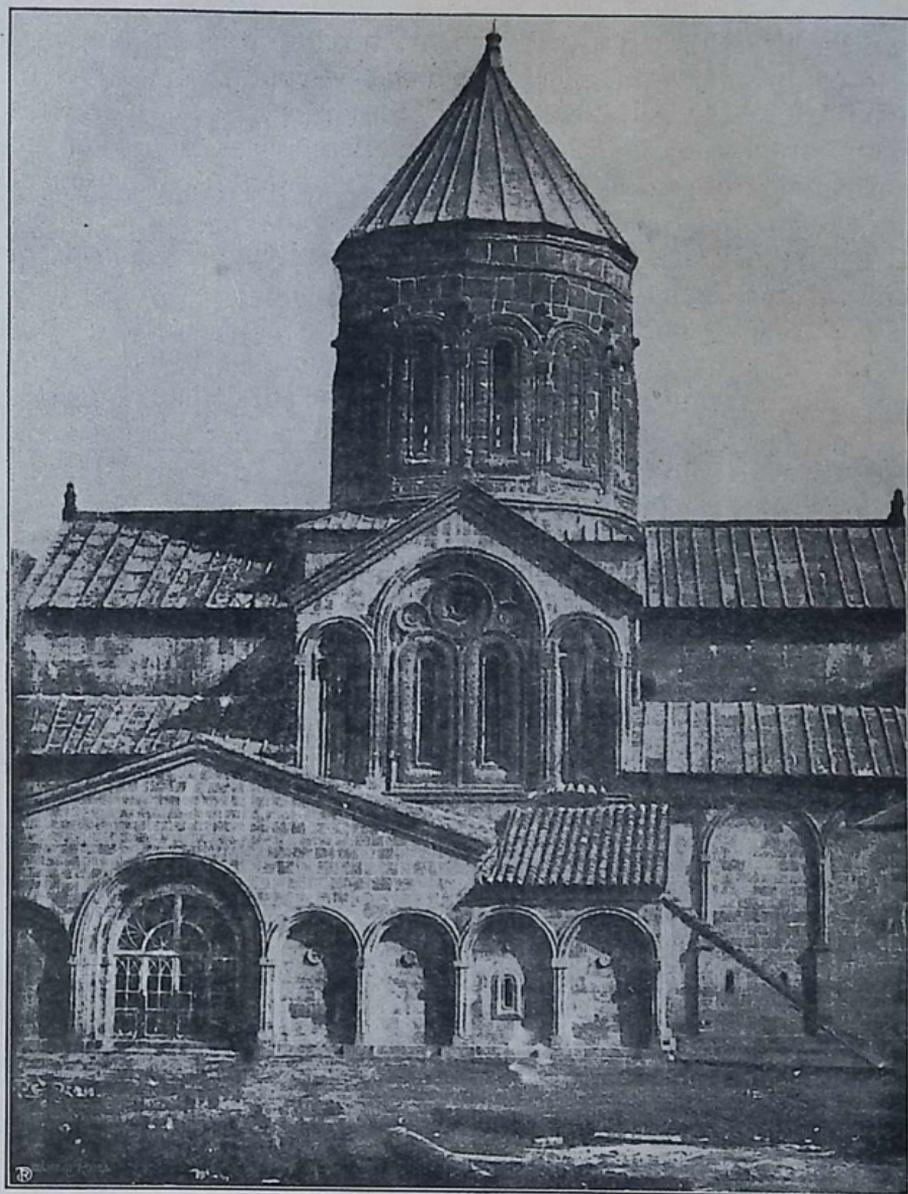
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ZURICH:
THE ORIENT PUBLISHING COMPANY

35 BAHNHOF STRASSE

1916



Cathedral at Mtskhéta, dating from the 6th century.

J. Herz
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PREFACE.

The following exposition is presented for the consideration of all those who regard the destruction of a people as an infinitely more shocking crime than the murder of an individual man. In making it I rely upon the sympathy of those who are willing and able to see the tragedy in the history of a people who have been so shamefully deceived and down-trodden by Russian despotism. I have not subjected myself to any restraint in my statements, and have kept nothing silent, but have attempted to speak the truth to friends and foes.

If the history of my unhappy country reveals facts which have been the source of earlier political mistakes on the part of those neighbours of ours who are now contending along with us in the maintenance of common interests, the blame for this does not fall upon Georgia. The facts are indeed well-known, and as for the rest, they belong to a distant past. The Georgian nation has forgotten them, and in no wise do those old events hinder us from maintaining a friendship with Turks and Persians in order to attain a common goal.

We must, however, for the future seek to create conditions that shall make the recurrence of such mistakes, with their inevitable consequences, forever impossible. Those of our friends among Turks and Persians who base their views upon facts and historical truth will understand what is said to them here. An old Georgian proverb runs: "To his friends a man speaks the truth face to face, to his enemies behind their backs."

The European reader will find it easier to understand me. He realizes the value of life. Well then, consider that Georgia has been defending her existence through many centuries, and is still alive to-day, notwithstanding all the sufferings she has had to endure. She wishes to free herself from Russian slavery, which aims at her ultimate extinction.

It may be that the value of our national life is not to be compared with that of the Athenians, but still this national life of Georgia, small as she is, has been great and heroic, during a period of more than two thousand years, and the future will soon give the proof that Russia has not yet in any way been able to destroy it.

Brosset, who has the best acquaintance with Georgian history, has characterized Tiflis as the product of the labours of generations of heroes. We will add: this is so, not only for Tiflis, but for every corner of our country; for every foot of our soil has been drenched with the tears and blood of thousands, whose descendents have to endure to-day yet worse, but who are prepared, however, to struggle to the last, if help does not come from one side or another.

If one would only come to our aid and give us an opportunity of showing that our national life is yet to-day of worth!

* * *

I.

By Turkey's declaration of war against Russia the problems presented to us by the present world-war became complicated to an extraordinary degree. These great problems concern not only the significant changes of a political and social character which the war will bring in its train for the great European communities; they affect also the political organization of other nations, both great and small, which heretofore have not been able to lead an independent existence, apart from the protectorship of the great powers, and which have not yet been found worthy to rank as independent and free members of the great family of nations. The very numerous Hindoo people, the Mohammedan peoples, the Poles, Finns, natives of Ukraine, Irish, Georgians, etc.—all these are still looking forward to their future freedom, and the problem of their national independence has been for a long time one of burning interest. This problem they expect the present war to solve.

The Caucasus also forms no exception to this general phenomenon of the awakening of subjugated peoples. The Caucasians, and especially the Georgians, understand the importance of the present moment. The hour of their awakening has struck. The war which has broken out between Turkey and Russia affords the Georgian people the best means of acquiring again the political freedom which they lost a hundred years ago. With this in mind, Georgia has grasped the hand of Turkey and her great allies, Germany and Austria-Hungary, in order to join with them in carrying on the war against Russia, against that terrible power, which for centuries has been at work enslaving, not only the peoples which she has subjugated by violence, but the Russians themselves.

Turkey is fighting with Russia on the Black Sea coast and on the frontiers of Georgia. The Ottoman troops on their advance from Erzerum cannot avoid Georgian territory, if they intend to march against Tiflis, the capital of Georgia. Turkey cannot think of taking possession of the Caucasus until she has occupied Georgia, and it is only natural that the question should arise as to what is to be the future of that country and of the whole Caucasus, in view of the approaching likelihood that the Russians will be obliged to withdraw from these lands before the advance of the victorious Turks.

Not the Georgians alone, but all the various peoples of the Caucasus will march together with the Turks in order to free that region from Russian rule. If some are of the opinion that the Armenians are ready to join with the Russians, they are exaggerating the matter very much. The number of the Armenians of the Caucasus who have made the Russian cause their own is not great, and one can count absolutely upon the intelligence and high character of the Armenians in general, who will never allow their sons, who have been treated like brutes by the Russians, to place themselves on the side of barbarism, and to betray the other peoples of the Caucasus with whom they must in any event live, and, in the interest of peace and of the prosperity of the whole country, act in harmony.

All the peoples of the Caucasus will consequently make common cause with the Turks in the great work of driving the Russians out of their land. The gains which will accrue from this action must however be shared between these peoples and Turkey, in as friendly and reasonable a manner as possible; for there is no single one of the Caucasian peoples which would not be able to live more or less independently, to the great advantage of itself and of all its neighbours. It would, therefore, be a mistake not to be made good later, and the source of much future friction, if the Turks should attempt to substitute their own rule for that of the Russians, and to make out of the Caucasus simply a number of Ottoman provinces.

The Ottoman Empire has a just claim, arising from the toils and expense of this campaign, to the possession of those parts of the Caucasus which fall to it by right, and with the assent of those inhabiting them. But the right must be reserved for those Caucasian races which represent great distinct and historical unities, of forming politically independent communities, which may thereupon be able to establish a free Caucasian federation, based on the voluntary coming together of its single components. This will be the only possible solution of the Caucasian problem, after the Russians have been driven out.

II.

The population of the Caucasus is made up principally of four elements, each of which must be taken into account in deciding the political fate of the region. These groups are the Georgians, the People of the mountain districts, the Tartars and the Armenians.

The Georgians inhabit the central and south-west parts of the Caucasus, comprising the Governments of Tiflis, Koutais Sukhum and Batoum, together with the half of the Governments of Kars and Sakathala, according to the Russian administrative divisions. This is the historical and also the modern region which has belonged from remotest times to the Georgian people, and which from the beginning of their history, they have defended by force of arms.

The number of the Georgian population amounts at present to about three millions, of which about two and a half million are Christians, and from 300,000 to 400,000 Mohammedans. The political history of Georgia has been that of a continuous defence of its land, which has been drenched with the blood of its sons. It has been the defence of a high culture, which this intelligent, industrious and highly gifted people created, during centuries of gradual development. Political in-

dependence and the liberty of living according to their national habits and customs, the unrestricted profession of their religion, and the cultivation of their literature, their science and art, which in Georgia were not inferior to those of the Greek Orient,—the desire to preserve these has inspired the Georgian people from the earliest times in their heroic struggles with numberless enemies.

Settled in the Caucasus since time out of mind, the Georgians have had to wage the most bitter conflicts with all their neighbours. Out of these struggles they came forth victoriously. In the time of Pompey, Georgia had even a sight of the Roman legions. After the introduction of Christianity, Georgia from time to time waged war with Byzantium and Armenia, and also from time to time allied herself with these in fighting the Persians, who were then also threatening the Byzantine empire. The Persians carried on a sanguinary religious war with the adherents of Christianity, which had already made its way into Georgia, but they were decisively beaten.

With the development of the political power of Georgia, which in the fifth century had become independent of Byzantium, as well as of Persia, the national church was organized with a "Catholikos" at its head. This church was in the eleventh century declared to be "autocephalous" according to canonical law, and has played an important part in the development of the national culture of Georgia.

Immediately after the introduction of Christianity, an ecclesiastical literature began to be created in the Georgian colloquial language, and in consequence of this, the educated Georgians of that time were not unacquainted with ecclesiastical and philosophical questions. On this foundation a rich theological and philosophical literature grew up. The people began to think and to feel in a manner peculiar to themselves, and under the influence of the new religion and of the culture which appeared in its train, they were able to develop national psychological characteristics of their own.

In painting, sculpture, architecture, church music and literature they were able to introduce a social spirit, an intellectual enthusiasm, and an ideal of this world and of the other. And when upon the foundation of the moral and cultural levels of the people, the political and social conditions of the land developed themselves, this took place in such an orderly way that the national organization could be fitted out at once with a high standard of political and social institutions.

The Georgian state as a political institution was conscious of its own position, it had its aims and its plans, and it was animated by the wish to live in freedom, to endure no foreign oppression, and never to yield up its own intellectual attitude for that of others. In this way Georgia became a historical personality which can never die a natural death, and will maintain its individuality to the last.

In the 11th century under the great king David II (1089—1125), Georgia became united into a kingdom. Although in the first centuries after the reception of Christianity, Georgia had to wage a terrible war with Byzantium and Persia, from which it finally issued victorious, yet it was not at that time a political unity. It was divided up into different principalities. The kings of the race of Bagratiden, who reigned at first in the province of Tao-Klardshethi, carried on a bitter struggle against the rule of the Arabs—which latter lasted from the 7th to the 12th century—and at last succeeded in uniting the whole Georgian country. David II in the year 1122 was able to drive the Arabs out of Tiflis, and thereby to complete the political unity of Georgia.

Under this king, Georgia extended her rule over all the peoples of the Caucasus. She was already a great and powerful kingdom, and could not only impose her will upon her neighbours, but also make herself respected by the great powers of that time. Georgia reached the summit of her political power and of her intellectual and economic development in the 12th century. The reign of queen Tamar (1184—1212) is the golden

period of Georgian history. The great Georgian poet Shotha Rustaveli belongs to this famous time; he left as a legacy to the Georgian folk his master-work entitled "Vepkhis Tkaosani", a poetic composition which occupies the same rank in Georgian literature that the "Divina Commedia" does in the Italian, and which is known by heart in all Georgia to-day, just as it was in the best days of Georgian independence.

A great multitude of poets, theologians, historians and scholars belong to that period of the 11th and 12th centuries. Architecture was also brilliantly developed at that time, and its works, some in ruins, and others well-preserved, can be seen yet to-day; while the architectural remains scattered over all Georgia still arouse the astonishment of connoisseurs. The characteristic paintings and sculptures of the Georgian churches and palaces, in their perfection of execution, can well endure comparison with the artistic productions of the same time in European lands. The hymns, which had their origin in earlier times in the songs of the people, and which are yet to-day fully preserved, were the best products of the Georgian popular music, which is as complicated and peculiar as the Georgian language. The united and well-organized state had its written code of laws, which was made up from the legal provisions which were in use in the different provinces of the country. The organization of society was also well advanced, and there were enduring conflicts between the different classes, which the state sought to allay, but which in any case produced an intensive social life. The position of Georgia, at least in the time from the 11th to the 13th century, was that of a great civilized kingdom whose character was by no means oriental. It was a Christian kingdom, not only in a religious sense, but also in that of its general culture, and in this the Georgian folk yet to-day resemble more a South-European than an oriental people.

The hordes which inundated Caucasia and Europe in the 13th century poured themselves likewise continually over Georgia.

The invasion of the Mongols, shortly after Georgia had been laid waste by the sultan Djelal-Eddin, whom the Mongols drove out of Tiflis, almost destroyed the independence of Georgia, and trampled down her economic and intellectual prosperity. The massacring, not only of the higher ranks, but also of whole sections of the Georgian population, laid the land waste both economically and morally. The rule of these invaders brought a catastrophe upon Georgia, and caused her to disappear, so to say, for more than a century.

After the Mongols had withdrawn, the general level of the civilization of the land was found considerably lowered. The country was divided politically into small and weak principalities, and it was not until the 14th century that Georgia succeeded in recovering from her abasement. Under king George V (1318—1346) she even sought again to become a political unity, but her old glory had departed, and the second Mongol invasion in the 14th century broke the strength of the nation, notwithstanding the overwhelming defeat of the army of Timur by king Bagrat V (1369—1395).

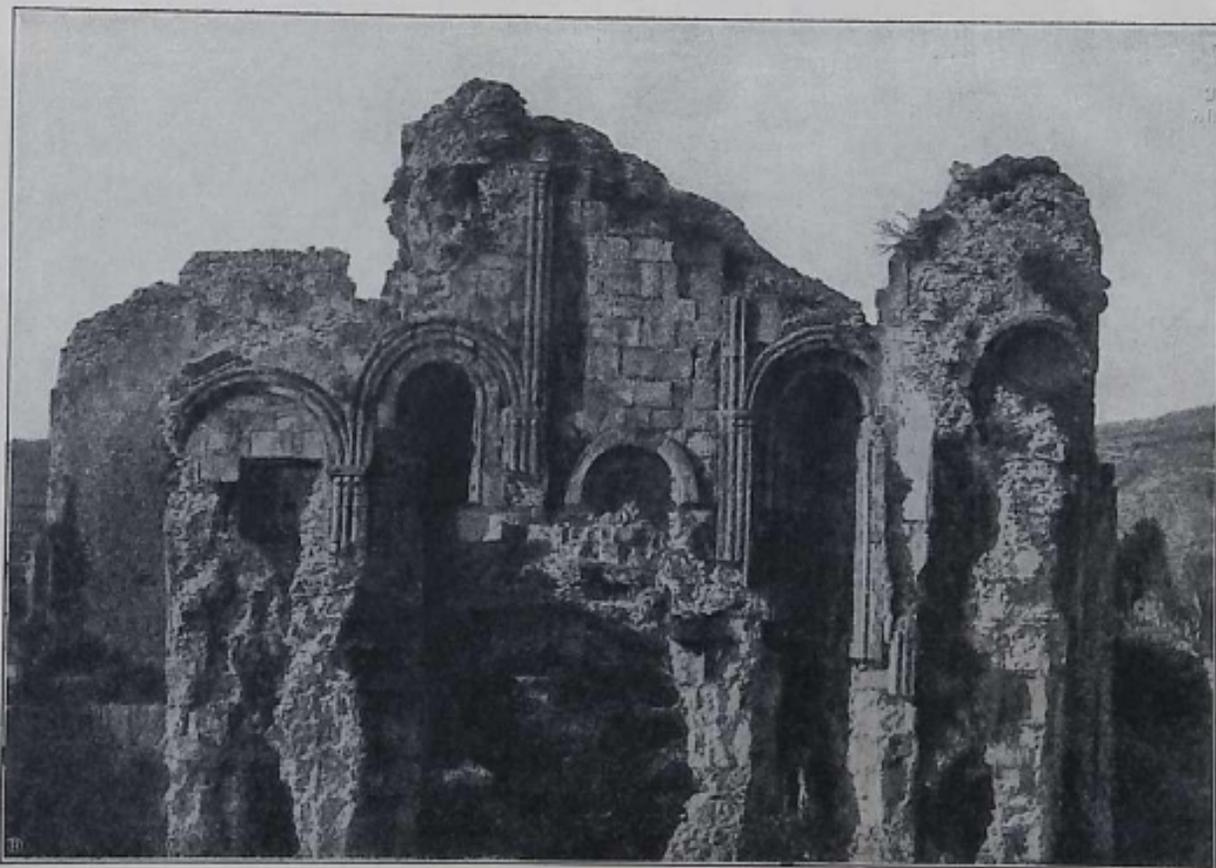
Under king Alexander (1413—1444) the country declined yet more. The Turks and the Persians were able at that time to gain the upper hand over Georgia, and did not leave her alone until they had completely robbed her of her political independence. Georgia had been molested by the Turks from the time of their first appearance in Hither-Asia, but she had always been able to keep the adversary at a distance, and especially under king David II administered decisive defeats to the Turks. From now on, however, Georgia had to suffer unspeakably from these perpetual disturbances, so that she was forced to take desperate measures.

The Turks and the Persians had likewise to suffer, at the time of the Mongol invasion, from the rule of these hordes, and they then sought to form an alliance with Georgia and to obtain her support. But after the withdrawal of the Mongols, and especially after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks

and the definitive organization of the great Ottoman empire, Georgia soon found in Turkish Asia Minor a powerful enemy. Religious differences, which in those times played a most important part, still further aggravated the position of Georgia. At this same time also the Persians again became powerful. When Georgia in the 14th century was again united, her enemies were not easily able to subdue her, but the invasion of Tamerlane, who laid waste Georgia for twenty years, and the definitive division of the kingdom into many small principalities, gave the Turks and the Persians the possibility of maltreating Georgia until the end of her political history.

The Turks and the Persians divided Georgia into two parts. Eastern and south-eastern Georgia fell to the Persians, western and south-western to the Turks. In the 15th century, the Turks succeeded in establishing themselves also in the interior and on the coasts of Georgia. The forcible Mohammedanizing of the Christian population began at that time; in the 16th century, this compulsory conversion became more intensive, and during the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, was carried through systematically by the putting to death, selling into slavery and subjecting to other cruelties those who were recusant.

The Persians likewise ravaged East-Georgia in the 16th and 17th centuries. They compelled the nobility and even the kings to renounce the religion of their fathers. This campaign of extermination against the Georgian people found its culmination in the invasion of Shah Abbas I of Persia, who in the year 1614 massacred, after the defeat of the Georgian army, more than 100,000 peaceable Georgians, and carried off more than 100,000 others to Persia, where yet to-day their descendants in Fereidan, one of the most remote provinces of Persia, speak their Georgian mother tongue in the form in which it existed at the time of their abduction. Some years later Shah Abbas devastated Georgia a second time, and only the strategical ability of the high-chancellor George Saakadze



Cathedral of Koutaïs (10th century), destroyed in 1691.

(Didi Mouravi) saved the land from entire destruction. He succeeded in completely overthrowing the armies of Shah Abbas, and in delivering him such decisive blows that the Persian king was never able subsequently to annihilate Georgia, as he had sworn to do.

The Turks were continually endeavouring, at this same time, to lay waste the southern and western parts of the country. They destroyed all the great monuments of Christendom, the splendid cathedrals with their innumerable treasures and their wonderful works of art, so that in the districts of Akhalzikhe, Akhalkalaki, Shawshethi and Tao-Klardshethi, only the ruins now bear witness to a glorious past, to a high standard of civilization, and to a culture which has disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace behind.

All has, however, not yet been said. Still worse is the relapse of a whole people into barbarism, occasioned by a compulsory change of religion, in a case in which religion had formed the basis of the whole intellectual development of the nation. The nationalization of the Georgian church which educated the Georgian national spirit on the basis of Christian culture, and the complete independence of that church, had been just the facts which enabled it to play so great a role in the nation's spiritual progress. From the 8th century on, splendid cloisters had arisen in all parts of the country. They were the seats of learning for Georgia in Greek science, as well as in that of the Occident. The clergy who went out from these cloisters founded others at home and abroad, in Jerusalem, on Mount Sinai, on Mount Athos, in Rumelia and other places, which in the 11th and 12th centuries developed into great academies. Even the Byzantine emperors were induced to send their children to these, and to have them taught in the Georgian tongue.

From these academies went forth the greatest theologians and commentators, the best translators of the Holy Scriptures and of the Greek philosophers. We are acquainted with a great

number of Georgian authors of the 11th and 12th centuries, of whom George Mthatzmindeli of Mount Athos and Jean Petritzoneli of Petrizonisi in Bulgaria are the most significant.

We must notice also that the moral and intellectual influence of the Christian church upon the Georgian people had its foundation, not in the superiority of Christian dogma over that of other religions, but much rather in the national character of this church. It had become a national institution and one which surpassed all others in its significance. This is the reason why the compulsory change of religion had for a consequence the disorganization and the disappearance of our church in the Georgian provinces which had been conquered by the Turks, and led to the complete relapse of these provinces into barbarism.

All vanished: the architecture, which was the expression of the spirit of the people; the arts, which had been developed under Byzantine and West-European influences based upon the similarity of religion; the educational system in the Georgian language, which was the actual speech of the people, and possessed an alphabet, the beginnings of which reached back several centuries before our era; and the history of the past, which was nothing else than a constant struggle in defence of their nationality and religion—all had disappeared.

The inhabitants of Meskhethi, of Schawshethi, of Adchara might no longer write Georgian and cultivate that language, of which the great Petritzoneli had made such wonderful use in expressing the finest philosophical thoughts, after he had framed a terminology which was as forcible and clear as that of the Greeks; and the poetry of Rusthaveli, who was himself a Meskhi, was lost for the Mohammedanized provinces of Georgia.

Notwithstanding the fact that Georgian ceased to be the language of religious worship, and although one could no longer make use of it as a literary and scientific tongue, yet the Georgian Mohammedans preserved it for themselves, if only

as their original native language, and for use in their families. But the development of the language was put a stop to, and that which to-day is spoken in these provinces is only an un-literary Georgian dialect. The glorious history of the people ceased at the moment when Christianity also ceased to exist among them.

The people were to forget their past, and in fact the following generations lost their recollection of it, and the only sign of their being a distinct nationality which remained was that they preserved their own language in the midst of peoples speaking other tongues. In this, however, lies just the tragedy of their existence. What are they? Gürdjis! What is their past? From where do they come? What is their history? They do not know and they are not permitted to know, although up to three or four centuries ago they had their national personality, and since then have in no way been lost among those who forced them into their present condition.

Perceptions which are determined by such a psychical state as their present one cannot be very clear, and in fact they are quite dull even in the case of the most educated among them, and although they carried on for three hundred years a bitter struggle just for the purpose of not falling into such a deplorable condition, they were so completely subdued that they have even lost the remembrance of the struggle itself.

The rest of Georgia maintained, from the 16th century on, until the loss of its national independence, a desperate fight against this relapse into barbarism. This wretched situation at last led Georgia to call upon the European powers for help.

Georgia was the only independent Christian power in the whole Moslem Orient. The invasions of Turks and Persians followed each other in an almost unbroken series. Nearly every year some part of Georgia was laid waste, and the population massacred or sold into slavery. Even our next neighbours, the Lesghues, the Circassians and the other Mohammedan mountain-tribes began to plunder Georgia, and during the 17th and

18th centuries the Georgian peasant was obliged to till his field with the hoe in one hand and a sword in the other, to protect himself against the raids of the Lesghuer and Chechene robbers.

The tribute of young slaves of both sexes, which the Turks and especially the Persians exacted of the Georgians, demoralized the people and depopulated the country. Many Georgians became so degenerate that they even carried on a slave trade with the members of their own race, in spite of all prohibitions of the church and of the laws of the land. In Poti there was a market, where the wives and children of Georgians could be bought like cattle.

The compulsory change of religion was extended beyond the boundaries of Georgia proper as far as Guria. From the 18th century, it is true, thanks to the ability of king Irakli, Eastern Georgia again acquired consequence and power. In his numerous campaigns, Irakli frequently defeated the Persian armies and put an end to their raids.

During the long rule of this last-mentioned king (1760—1798), Georgia rose again out of her ruins. The attainment of political power and the securing of safety against the Persians, the Turks and the inhabitants of the mountains, favoured the re-birth of the sciences, of literature and of the arts, which had already begun to flourish again under king Vakhtang VI (1703—1737). It seemed as if the black times, as that period of invasions is termed by the Georgians, had passed by for ever. The renown of Irakli extended to Europe, and Voltaire and the empress Catherine II often spoke of him in their letters. Frederick the Great often said: "I in Europe and the brave king Irakli in Asia."

Irakli in the year 1783 concluded a treaty¹ of alliance with the Russian empress, Catherine II., by which the Georgian dynasty and autonomy were to be respected. In return for

¹ See appendix II.

this, Georgia gave the Russian emperors the right of investiture, and waived the right of treating independently with Turkey and Persia. Georgia by this treaty resigned part of her sovereignty. At first Irakli wished to have nothing to do with the Russians. He sent an embassy to Austria and Prussia in order to obtain protection there, but in vain. This embassy was never able to reach its destination and besides that, neither Prussia nor Austria, at that time, took any political interest in Georgia and the Caucasus. Nothing remained for the king, therefore, but to seek help from the Russians.

Contemporaneously with Irakli II in East-Georgia, king Solomon the Great (1752—1782) of Imeretia had completed the same work of liberating and enlarging his kingdom of West Georgia. He put to rout the princes, who were continually in revolt, defeated the Turks, and compelled them to desist from their robberies in the Georgian provinces. But the death of Solomon on the one hand, and the increasing age of Irakli on the other, together with the incapacity of their sons, and the internal intrigues, which were at that time disturbing Georgia, determined the fate of the land.

The enemy did not overlook the fact, that of the two lions of Georgia, the one was dead, and the other stricken with age. Agha Mohammed Khan, king of Persia, who was enraged at king Irakli on account of the treaty concluded by the latter with the Russians, which could not but be ultimately threatening to Persia, invaded the land in the year 1795. The old king, who had been betrayed by his generals, came in contact with the shah of Persia at Krtsanisi near Tiflis. Only his guard was now with him. His grandson, however, Solomon II, king of Imeretia, supported him with his small army. General Tseretheli, who commanded the Imeretian army, also played the traitor, and went back to Imeretia with more than half of his forces. Although by reason of this he had only a handful of men with him, yet the old king defeated Agha Mohammed Khan, who fled to Persia in the belief that Irakli had

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a large army. Some traitors¹, however, had secretly brought Persian troops to Tiflis, and the king was only with difficulty able to escape from there. Tiflis was burned and razed to the ground.

But it was to be the last time that Tiflis should be overtaken by this fate, for Irakli had induced the Russians to march on the city. There was indeed nothing else left to be done. A congress was called to meet at Tiflis, to discuss the question of uniting all Georgia under one sceptre; it was attended by representatives of the various Georgian principalities, but it led to no result. The differences of opinion among the members of the royal family and among the princes of the several districts were too great, and the weakening and deterioration of Georgia had already gone too far to save the situation.

After the death of king Irakli in the year 1798, his son George XII came to the throne of East-Georgia. Solomon II reigned in Imeretia. The Turks and the Persians were by no means pleased with the establishment of a Russian protectorate over Georgia, and they sought through diplomatic agents to prevent the treaty from coming into effect, making Georgia the greatest promises. But the Georgians, who had been continually deceived through so many centuries, put no confidence in these promises, and George XII concluded in 1799 a defensive treaty² with the emperor Paul I of Russia. By this treaty Georgia was to become a vassal state of Russia. Both rulers died almost at the same time and before the treaty had been ratified, but Paul's successor, Alexander I, declared nevertheless, in an imperial manifesto issued in 1801, that Georgia was annexed to Russia.

This was the first violation of our treaties, against which the Georgian minister in St. Petersburg at once made protest and left

¹ According to tradition the instigator of the treachery is said to have been Darcho Bebutashvili, the Burgomaster of Tiflis.

² See appendix II.

the Russian capital. The Russian army began without delay to march into Georgia, where it found support even from many Georgians themselves who preferred in any case the rule of Russia rather than that of Persia or of Turkey; others were simply bribed by Russia. The subjection of Georgia and of the whole Caucasus dates from this time.

The Georgians soon saw that they could place no confidence in the solemn promises, treaties and imperial manifestoes of Russia. On their very first entry into Georgia, the Russians began a systematic suppression of the Georgian national institutions. Instead of permitting the legitimate heirs of Irakli II or of George XII to ascend the throne as had been promised in the treaty, the members of the dynasty were, after the short reign of David, the son of George XII, simply arrested and sent to Russian provinces, and the church which had possessed an independent head for centuries, was robbed of its independence and property. The catholikos too was arrested and sent to Russia, and from now on the Russian synod was to direct the ecclesiastical affairs of Georgia. Georgian law ceased to be in force, the Georgian language was forbidden to be used in the secular schools and in the educational institutions of the church, as well as in legal proceedings and other public functions.

In West-Georgia, where Solomon II would not voluntarily place himself at the disposition of the Russians, the most horrible cruelties were perpetrated against the inhabitants, the clergy, the nobility and the representatives of the dynasty. The king for several years kept up a heroic resistance, but when he saw that nothing more could be done, he fled to Turkey and passed his last years in Trebizond, where his grave in a Greek church is still to-day pointed out. Two archbishops were strangled to death in Koutais, put in a sack and buried somewhere in the mountains; even the location of their graves is unknown. The most oppressive taxes were laid upon the Georgians, and they were subjected to compulsory labour of

all kinds. Corrupt and rapacious officials were everywhere placed in office, who ill-treated and robbed the people, and even the women were not safe from the brutality of the Russian soldiers.

The time when Georgia had been subjected to predatory attacks had thus returned, and the country was betrayed by those of the same faith, who had been called in for the protection of the people. The Georgians saw themselves compelled therefore to take up arms again. Now came a period of most formidable revolts: that of the Georgian mountaineers of 1804, the revolt of 1812 in Kakhetia, and thereafter those in Imeretia, in Guria, in Mingrelia, in Swanetia, and in Abchasia. These all indicate a bitter struggle of little Georgia in the 19th century against Russia, in defence of her rights which had been trodden under foot by the Russian emperors.

All was however in vain. A small people, who had been exhausted by struggles lasting for centuries, could not continue to resist a great empire that was able to send out regular armies. The revolts were cruelly suppressed, and at last, in place of the maintenance of the dynasty, which had been guaranteed by the treaty of 1783, we had to submit to having a Russian viceroy who ruled with absolute power over Georgia and Caucasia.

In place of an independent church, ecclesiastical dignitaries of the Holy Synod came in, corrupt exarches, who enriched themselves from the property of the Georgian church; in place of a national system of defence, compulsory military service for Russia was introduced, from which the Georgian soldiers returned home broken down, out of the most distant Russian districts to which they had been intentionally sent. In place of the administration of Georgian law, which corresponded to the social structure of the land, Russian law was brought in, which made worse the condition of serfdom, increased the privileges of the ruling classes and robbed the peasants of their communal property; Russian money took the place of the

national coinage, and the mismanagement of Russian functionaries, known as it is in all the world, supplanted the Georgian government ("Gouvernement supérieur") which under the treaty was to be maintained. The Russian language was introduced for all public matters and in all public institutions, in place of the Georgian, although the former was not known by the Georgians; the Georgian schools were supplanted by the Russian, in which generations of Georgian children were harrassed for a century.

In such a way as that set forth above, has the "Emperor's word" and the solemn treaties made by Russia with Georgia been kept, and notwithstanding all this, the Russians keep constantly complaining of the ingratitude of the Georgians, whom they profess to have liberated, and from whom, they say, they had the right to expect the greatest loyalty towards the government and the throne of the Czar.

At this same time a very remarkable and lamentable development of affairs took place. The Mohammedan mountaineers were continuing their hostilities against the Georgians as if the Russians had never set foot in the Caucasus, and this brought it about that Georgia was obliged to make the Russian crown the splendid gift of the whole Caucasus. Although knowing that the Russians had shamefully deceived them, there was yet a multitude of Georgians who held it for a patriotic duty to support the former in the work of completely conquering the Caucasus, and of weakening Turkey and Persia.

We must, to be sure, keep before us the fact, that the Russians in the beginning of their rule over Georgia had understood how to flatter the nobles, and to win them over by appointing them to high civil and military posts.

One can easily see how in this way the remarkable fact occurred that the Georgians assisted the Russian forces to conquer the Caucasus, to defeat the Persians and the Turks, and to wrest from the latter the earlier Georgian provinces, which had in the meantime been for a long while Mohammedanized.

In fact the Russians owe it to the numbers and the courage of the Georgian soldiery and to the Georgian military leaders that they were able to subjugate the Caucasus, and finally to drive out the Turks from its borders. The names of the Georgian generals, Djandieri, Tchavtchavadze, Loris-Melikoff,¹ Amilakhvari, Amiradjibi and others are well-known from the history of the Russian wars in the Caucasus against the Turks and mountaineers.

The Russian government however in place of rewarding the Georgian people for the sacrifices they had made and the blood they had shed in its cause, continually made their situation worse. A reign of terror began which lasted a full century. A campaign against the language, in which it was sought, although in vain, to banish it even from use in the church service, the Russian colonisation in Georgia for the purpose of Russianizing the country population, the persecution of the Georgian press, the banishment to Siberia as a punishment for every complaint made against the cruel injustice to which the land had fallen a victim and all the inquisitorial brutalities of which Russians are capable—these were the things that were visited upon the Georgians.

The blows also which were delivered at the economic life of the Georgian people exceeded all precedent. The Georgian lands were confiscated by the state, and divided among Russian and Armenian colonists, while scarcely enough land was left to the Georgian peasant to enable him to maintain his family upon his own property, which his ancestors had for thousands of years defended against the inroads of Asiatic hordes.

The national conscience however revolted against all this cruelty. The uprisings mentioned above, and which were so

¹ The celebrated Loris-Melikoff was an Armenian only in reference to his religious confession. He was brought up in Georgia, and belonged to the Georgian nobility; his mother tongue was the Georgian, and he took an active part in all Georgian national affairs.

pitilessly suppressed, did not form the only protest on the part of the Georgian people. An extraordinary activity began to show itself within the Georgian community. A new and copious literature arose as a continuation of the old, in which the free, and by no means oriental spirit of our people, found expression. A press came into being which discussed the most various scientific, literary, artistic and social problems. Journalism flourished, and a multitude of writers rose up, who had been trained in Europe and in Russia, and of whom many were as talented as any of their celebrated Russian, or even European contemporaries.

Numerous scholars of Georgian nationality occupied professorships in Russian universities. A physiologist like Tharkhanoff, chemists like Petrieff and Melikoff, philologists and historians like Zagareli, Marr and others would confer honour on any Russian or European institution of learning. Some of these scholars exercised their talents not only in Russia, but also in Georgia, and indeed making use of their mother tongue, in order to support and direct, in the exclusive interest of their national scientific culture, the work of those Georgian investigators who were active in their own country. And this they did, although there was in Georgia neither university nor higher academy where they could have taught what they knew. The Russians would never have allowed us to establish a Georgian university in Tiflis. They were not at all willing to found a *Russian* university for us in our capital city.

All of this Russianizing policy was however a miserable failure, in spite of the terrorism of Russian gendarmes and of the persecution carried on by the inquisitorial government of the Czar. It was shattered in contact with the national energy, which the sufferings of centuries had not completely exhausted. Georgia rose again out of her ashes, and where her great poets, such as Barathashvili, Orbeliani, Tseretheli, Tchavtchavadze and others had sung, there the attempt to denationalize and to Russify could never be entirely successful.

The Russians noticed indeed this reanimation of Georgia, but only so much the more did they seek to stifle it. The Georgians protested, as only a free-spirited and proud people can. It is but necessary to recall the tragic end of Dimitri Kipiani, the Georgian marshal of the nobility, who had ventured to raise his voice against the Russian exarch Paul. This latter had pronounced from the altar in the Tiflis cathedral an anathema against the Georgian nation, on account of a murder that had been committed by a Georgian seminarist on a Russian seminary-director by the name of Chudnowski, who was besides a very inquisitor, and had well deserved to be removed from Georgia.

Kipiani ordered the exarch to leave Georgia at once, the land which he as primate and archbishop had so unjustly cursed. Kipiani however was by command of the government banished to Stavropol. A disguised Russian monk forced himself into the dwelling of the aged man there, and broke his skull with an iron bar. This abominable crime called forth in all Georgia the greatest indignation, and the funeral of the marshal was accompanied by violent demonstrations in the whole of Georgia, and especially in Tiflis.

It would require volumes to relate the history of the progress of Georgia during the 19th century. We limit ourselves here to saying that not only literature, the arts and sciences took a new start, and that Russia did not succeed in stupefying the national consciousness, but that this latter, notwithstanding the Russifying policy, became more and more aroused, and that Georgia in this period made great economical advances.

The abolition of serfdom in Russia liberated also the Georgian peasants, who developed a truly remarkable activity in agriculture. The production of wine, fruit, silk, tobacco, cheese, maize, etc. rose enormously during this time and allowed the people to make considerable progress in their cultural condition. The metallurgic industry also increased, by reason of the exceed-

ingly great mineral riches of the country. We have only to call to mind the production of manganese, millions of tons of which are yearly sent to all parts of the world. The majority of the mine proprietors and workmen are Georgians. Copper and coal are mined to a considerable extent. The railways which connect the principal centres of Georgia facilitate the industrial and commercial activities of the people, and help to bring them into contact with the centres of civilization.

In Georgia the desire to live in the manner of Europeans, and especially the striving for education and culture, are very great and already exceed the limits of what is necessary; at least there are among us more persons with a university education than are required for so small a land as Georgia. The excessive intellectualism is even injurious from an economical point of view, for the capabilities of those trained in philosophy and science could be employed, with greater advantage for the country, in industry and commerce.

All this has produced a social development in Georgia resembling that of Europe, and bears witness to the sprightliness of this people and their capability of elaborating the higher forms of social life. The conflict of the classes becomes very acute in the villages and towns. The remains of the ancient feudalism, and the oppression of the peasants by the nobles, to whom the soil principally belonged, as well as the oppression of labour by capital—these were the new evils against which the Georgian nation had to carry on an energetic struggle in the second half of the 19th century, and by which Georgia verified its resemblance to the European family of nations.

Socialistic ideas also came to the surface and propagated themselves in the villages and towns. A socialistic press and literature came into existence, and likewise a number of parties, which represented the various socialistic tendencies, and played an extraordinary part in the moral, intellectual and economical life of the country, were formed.

In this way it came about that Georgia had to busy herself in the course of the century with the solution of two great problems, the social and the national. The intelligence of the people had been quickened by the continuous discussion of these problems, and the conflict of classes and party disputes had already gone very far, when the revolution of 1904—1905 broke out in all parts of Russia.

The Georgian people were prepared for these things, and were well-acquainted with the forms of revolutionary proceedings. It can be said without exaggeration that they were the only people that understood the revolution in its proper sense, during the great movement of the years 1904—1905.

In the other parts of the empire and especially in Russia proper, the property of the nobility was burned, factories and workshops destroyed, the most prominent government officials murdered and great demonstrations made, which always ended with the massacre of those who took part in them; but nowhere was a creative activity shown, and no new organization of affairs followed the acts of violence.

In Georgia, on the contrary, where indeed acts of violence also took place, which are scarcely to be avoided during a revolution, these did not at all form the principal characteristic of the Georgian revolution. The Georgian people comprehended the inner purpose of the movement. A revolution which is an attempt to change the old order of things into a new and well-considered one, means for us the realization of a social ideal such as has been preached among us for decades. It is the replacing of old institutions by new ones which better correspond to the new spirit and to new requirements. A revolution is not simply a series of destructive acts, but must possess before all a constructive force for creating anew the whole social, moral, political and economic life of a people.

Some great landed proprietors who had thoroughly ground down the peasants were, as a fact, murdered, together with a few police-spies and governors-general, who had distinguished

themselves by their brutality, but these were only subordinate occurrences. The administrative authorities, the police and the Russian legal officials were however systematically driven out of every village, and were immediately replaced in every community by a new police, a new administration and a new judiciary. The lands of the nobles, who never worked themselves but let out their properties to peasants at a ruinous rent, were seized. The principle that the soil should belong to him who can and will cultivate it was put in practice in Georgia in the years 1905 and 1906.

The depraved priesthood, who trailed religion in the mud, and robbed the people, were held to responsibility. The salaries and fees of the clergy were fixed according to the service they rendered and the ability of those who employed their services. The manufacturers were compelled to raise the wages of their workmen high enough that these might be able to live in a way worthy of a man. A constitutional assembly was demanded whose members should be chosen by universal suffrage, and which should prepare a form of constitution based on the principles of liberty and equality. Finally, one strove to erect a republic which should offer all necessary guaranties for an undisturbed development.

The parties, however, at the same time began to dispute about theories and principles. The social democrats strove for the transformation of the whole Russian empire into a centralized republic, while the federal socialists preached the free federation of all the peoples of Russia after it had been divided into a number of autonomous states. A union of these two parties could not be effectuated during the revolution, and this was one of the reasons for the defeat of the Georgian movement. At the very moment when they were contending against a common foe, the Georgians could not agree among themselves.

The revolutionary movement in all Russia was unfortunately stifled, and Georgia, Poland and the other non-Russian districts

had to suffer infinitely more terrible things than Russia proper. The movement was bloodily suppressed. Whole towns and villages were burned and destroyed by artillery-fire. Many thousands of the inhabitants were hanged, shot or deported to Siberia. The Georgians had to suffer all of these things at the hands of the Russian reaction. A reign of terror replaced the old autocratic rule, and lasts until this day, notwithstanding the so-called constitution, by means of which Russia seeks to deceive Europe and the world.

Everywhere in the towns and villages a systematic provocation is practised, to which the population falls a victim. The governors, the heads of districts, the police commissioners and the provincial gendarmery stand in direct connection with the robbers, who are paid to commit crimes. After every one of these "coups," the "execution" comes, that means the administrative committee stays some days in five or six villages to investigate the robbery. The peasants, against whom these government officials practise all kinds of extortion, see themselves finally obliged to give them in addition a large sum of money for the purpose of getting free from this invasion, and then at last the siege is raised. The robbers are never found; a few innocent persons are always hung in place of the actual criminals, who soon afterwards appear before the police authorities to share with them the booty.

In all parts of Georgia, even in the cities, the people fall victim to this hideous system, and the kidnapping of children of rich citizens, which also takes place for the purpose of obtaining a ransom, never happens without the help of the police, of the officials and of the other "public safety" authorities. For example, in Tiflis, the child of a rich man, named Jusbashew, was kidnapped, and the father had to pay 50,000 roubles to recover it.

In the matter of the oppression of the schools, of the church and of all that constitutes the national property of Georgia, the Russians have, of course, displayed a greater energy after

the revolution than ever before. A plan was even elaborated to deprive the people of lands which they had tilled for centuries. The government, by exploiting an economic crisis which had arisen among the nobility, sought by means of a skilful bank-transaction to get possession of their estates, in order to settle these Georgian land-holdings with Russian peasants. Fortunately this plan of the government had no great success, for the Georgian peasants scraped together their last pennies and bought themselves the lands of the nobility, who were seized with a fever to sell their estates.

The shortcomings of the Russian government and of its representatives in Georgia are undecipherable, unbelievable and innumerable. It would lead us too far to portray here in full the system employed by the Russians in the Caucasus. In order to get rid of it, the Georgians made use of all the peaceable and violent means they could think of, which nevertheless led to no result.

In the year 1907, when all Georgia was mourning for her sons who had been hanged, shot and deported, when dozens of towns and villages had been turned into heaps of ruins, the Georgian nation presented to the Peace Conference at the Hague a petition which was signed by Georgians of all classes. This petition brought to the knowledge of Europe the acts of barbarism which had been committed in Georgia by the government of the Czar, and prayed that pressure might be brought to bear upon Russia, under the methods of international law, to induce her to respect the violated treaty of 1783, and to restore the autonomy which, against all right and justice, she had taken away. The petition was read by the delegates of the different states, but was not openly discussed, because it had not been presented in time to be placed upon the calendar of the proceedings of the Conference.

The Russian persecutions and oppressions have since then only become worse. One is hardly allowed to breathe in Georgia. The people, compelled to toil, and then ruined by extortion

and robbery on the part of the Russian administrators, are in a desperate condition.

The efforts of those Georgians who are labouring to improve, by ever so little, the lot of their people, are impeded by the actions of the police and the judiciary.

The Georgians had indeed preferred to rise up, and to die fighting rather than to endure further this horrible slavery, this undeserved degradation, and the infernal torture, especially of recent years. Proud and warlike as they are, the Georgians might well be feared, if they were in possession of weapons. The Russians are well aware of this, and they have succeeded in completely disarming the population, after having searched every Georgian house and every suspicious locality in the towns and villages.

The present war furnishes the only hope for Georgia. The Georgians cherish great and sincere sympathy with Germany. The liberation of Georgia can only come from Germany. Georgia does not wish to be liberated without making sacrifices on her own part. She is ready to take part in the fight against the cruel foe, in order to deserve her freedom or to disappear entirely and leave the lesson to all oppressed peoples, that it is better to perish gloriously than to live the life of slaves. The Georgian people are only waiting for the suitable moment to show the world that the descendants of those who fought under George Saakadze and under king Irakli will also to-day not retreat before their enemies. Adchara and the other Mohammedan provinces of Georgia have already shown in this war that Georgians can fight desperately when they are supported by their friends. These provinces however have, alas, been utterly laid waste by the Russians upon the withdrawal of the Turkish army.

What is of special importance in the case of Georgia is her position in regard to international law. From this point of view, Georgia occupies a peculiar place among oppressed peoples,

with the exception perhaps of Finland, which land likewise has been subjugated by Czarism through a disregard of international treaties. But the case of Georgia is yet clearer under the law of nations.

We have already spoken of the treaty which was concluded between the Georgian king, Irakli II and the empress Catherine of Russia in the year 1783, and also of that which in the year 1799 was entered into between the Georgian king George XII and the emperor Paul I. The first of these two treaties was ratified, and exists therefore to-day in full legal force. The manifesto of the emperor Alexander I, which proclaimed the annexation of Georgia, was the first act in violation of that treaty. Since then, the Russian government has not ceased to violate it, and in consequence, every oath of allegiance taken by the Georgian people or by any of them individually, whether he be a civilian or a soldier, is to be regarded as taken under duress, and in no way binding upon the Georgian nation. The Georgians have never thought of violating the treaty concluded with the Russians, on the contrary, it was the Russian emperors, who having sworn upon their imperial word to respect the treaty, have, notwithstanding this, never ceased to disregard it. This shameful contempt of right has now lasted for more than a century.

Georgia is not a country which has been conquered by Russian arms. She is an independent state, that placed herself, voluntarily and with the observance of international formalities, under the Russian protectorate. If however Russia has not kept her promise entered into with us, Georgia on her part feels no longer bound by the treaty, and remains *de jure* an independent state, whose rights have been illegally violated by Russia, and which has not been transformed into a Russian province by way of conquest. History knows indeed of no Russo-Georgian war, but only of a perfidious and violent annexation of the country by Russia, in violation of solemn treaties ratified under oath.

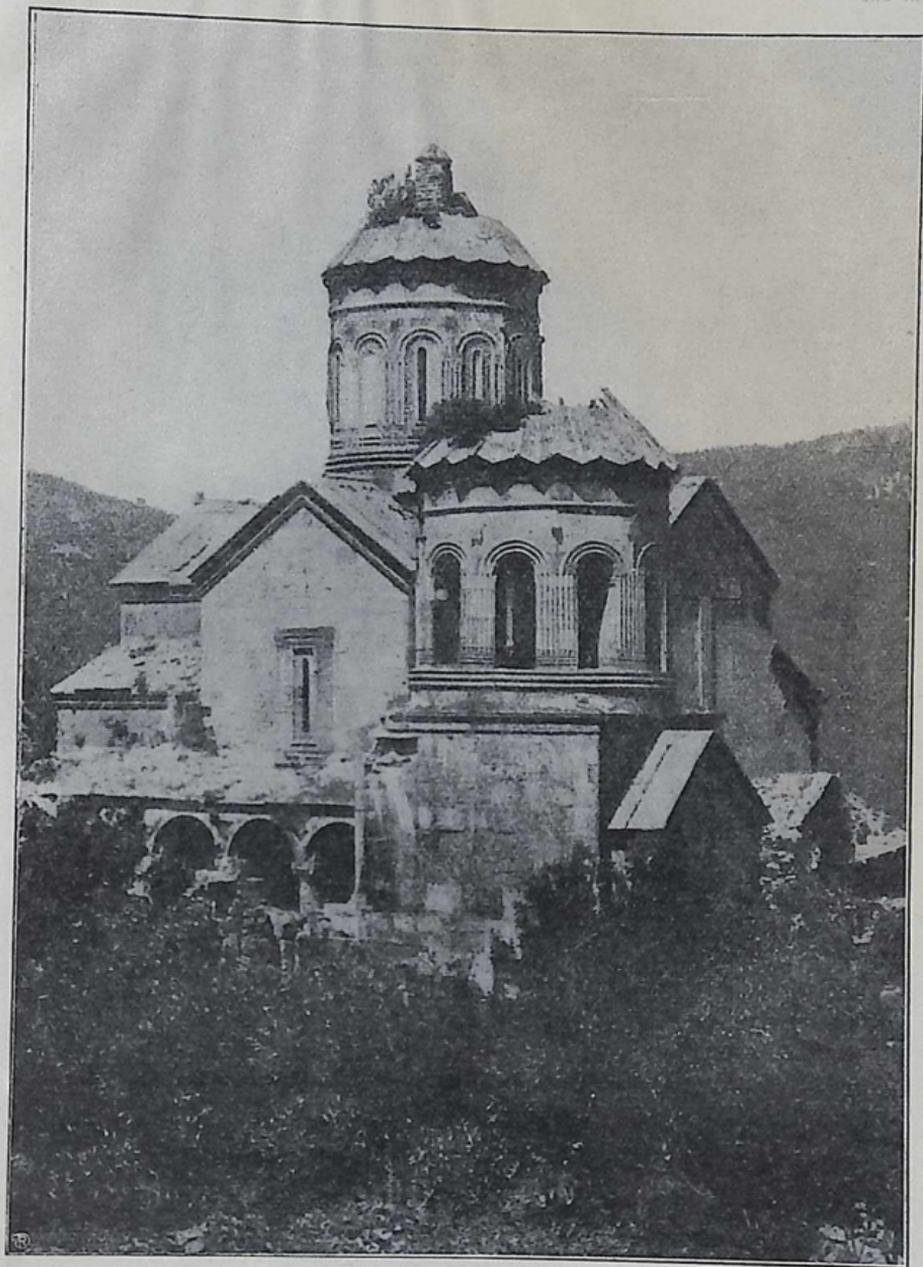
When we in the year 1907 presented to the Peace Conference at the Hague a petition¹ signed by representatives of all classes in Georgia, no voice of any single delegate of the Powers was raised against the justice of this petition, not even that of the Russian representative at the Conference.

If no action was taken upon the petition, the reason was only, as already mentioned, because it had not been regularly placed upon the calendar of the proceedings of the Conference. This mere formal point was taken by the Russian delegate, Nelidoff, who on the interpellation of several delegates, misused his temporary position as presiding officer, by interposing such formalities to order to prevent the shameful political actions of his government from being exposed. But what signified that very silence of the Conference, if not the recognition on the part of the states represented, of the justice of the action of the Georgian nation.

The Georgian nation has consequently now the right to request the friendly powers, Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey, not to regard a hostile procedure of Georgians against Russia as a revolutionary act against a legal sovereign, but as the military action of a belligerent power, which is defending its legitimate claims against the illegal and high-handed measures of Russia.

A very interesting precedent exists for this recognition of the international position of Georgia. Some years ago, three Georgians were arrested in Geneva at the instigation of the Russian government, which requested that Switzerland should deliver them up to Russia. They were set at liberty by the federal tribunal in Lausanne, and their extradition refused. This was done principally on the ground that one of the best-known European authorities in the domain of international law furnished an opinion, that under the relation in which Georgia stands to Russia, hostile acts on the part of the former do

¹ See appendix I.



Church of St. John the Evangelist at Zarzma, built in 1045.

not fall under the caption of a rebellion, but belong to the proceedings of a belligerent party¹.

Every Georgian committee to whom the nation hands over the conduct of its military actions against the enemy or the general administration of the territory freed from the Russian troops has, from this point of view, the right to give itself the title of a provisional government, and the legality of this government can be recognized by the Powers, without this recognition contradicting in any way the rules of international law.

This is the exceptional legal position which Georgia occupies, not only among the peoples of the Caucasus, but also among all other peoples that have been subjugated by Russia. We hope that our friends who side with us against Russian outrages will take the peculiar position of the Georgian people into consideration, and be accordingly well-disposed towards us, as justice and international law prescribe to those strong nations whose vocation it should be to protect the weak.

III.

The Georgians form the most important national element in the Caucasus—a people, who after a long history, have gotten, through an especial misfortune, into the condition which we have here described. Among the peoples in the Caucasus, the Georgians alone have had their political life and their own organized government, and represent yet to-day an element that would be capable of conducting their own political affairs, and of forming a modern state. Regarded from this point of view they are fundamentally different from all other nations in the Caucasus. In reference to these other peoples we shall content ourselves with making a few observations.

There are about two and a half million of Tartars—all Mohammedans—inhabiting the eastern part of Transcaucasia;

¹ See appendix III.

they are very intelligent and industrious. They too are being persecuted by the Russians, and are likewise ready to take up arms and to attack the enemy of their religion. They are scarcely in a position, however, to act independently and to conduct a revolution, to set forth a well-defined political purpose, and to undertake the great work of a political organization for the future Caucasus, without the help of the other Caucasian peoples. They form, nevertheless, an important auxiliary force, which can be of great service to the Turks and Persians in their struggle with the Russians.

The third national element in the Caucasus is composed of the inhabitants of the mountains, who are likewise Mohammedans. These mountaineers can, even as little as the Tartars, undertake independently the political organization of the Caucasus.

The Tartars have, at any rate, a literary language, their press and their literature, while the Circassians, the Lesghues and Chechenes possess nothing of these. Among all the mountain peoples, the Osseths alone have tried to create a national literature; they have even attempted to introduce their own alphabet, which, to be sure, is only an imitation of the Russian. But this is entirely the work of recent years, and this alphabet, together with some samples of their literary productions, indicate that no great progress is, as yet, to be recorded of this part of the population.

The Lesghues are the most numerous of the mountaineers; they number about 500,000, and inhabit the eastern part of the Caucasian mountain-chain and its northern declivity as far as the Caspian Sea. The district they inhabit is called Daghestan.

At an earlier time, the Circassians were the largest of the mountain communities. They once occupied the western part of the Caucasian mountain-chain, with its northern slope as far as the Black Sea, together with the coast district from the western boundary of Abkhasia to Novorossiisk. The Russians

however have destroyed this people, who were celebrated for their fine looks and their warlike spirit; they drove out from their native land in the year 1864 about 500,000 Circassians, and compelled them to settle in different parts of the Ottoman empire. To-day, there are only about 40,000 to 50,000 of this people left in the Caucasus. The other inhabitants of the mountain districts, viz, the Chechenes, Ingushes, Kabardi-nians, etc. are yet more insignificant in respect of numbers and culture. These peoples could claim the right, neither because of a great past, which might allow the inference that they possessed an inherent capacity for organization, nor on the ground of their present standard of culture, to become the liberators of the Caucasus, and the framers of a plan for its future political life. The greatest service that they can lay claim to is the pertinacious struggle which they have carried on against the Russians for some decades, and courageous and excellent soldiers as they are, they can be of great use to the whole Caucasus, when they take up arms against the common enemy, and help to defend the freedom and independence of the mountains. They are full of hatred towards the Russians, and, as enthusiastic followers of the religion of Mohammed, they can heroically cooperate when the whole Caucasus rises in arms against the Russians. The spirit of Shamyl is not yet extinct in the Caucasian mountains.

The Armenians form the fourth of the principal elements of the Caucasian population. It is difficult to speak candidly of this people, for the truth that one would have to express would be taken by many as a manifestation of a spirit hostile to them. It is true, that the Armenians during their whole history have had to endure infinitely severe sufferings, and especially since they have had to exchange their political independence for a foreign rule. It is true, that they have often been compelled to act a double part, as friendly to the Russians and at the same time to the Turks, since they dwell scattered in both countries. And finally it is also true, that

they are an industrious people, clever in business, and in many respects intelligent. In all these aspects they deserve our full sympathy and respect. But this is only one side of the truth, to which we do not dare to limit our consideration, when we are seeking to elucidate the part which a people are entitled to take in the life of so large a country as the Caucasus, in deciding upon its future destiny.

In such a case the whole truth must be spoken, and there is here a disagreeable side. The Armenians of the Caucasus number about one million, but they do not form a compact population, living in a region with definite boundaries. They are scattered over the entire Caucasus. With the exception of a small district in the south, they dwell nowhere upon their own historic soil, but form a foreign element among the primitive peoples. About 200 000 Armenians live on Georgian territory; the majority of these are to be found in the towns of East-Georgia, and especially in Tiflis. They form even a majority of the agricultural population of the Georgian province, Djavakheti, thanks to Russian policy, which erected Armenian colonies in Georgia at the beginning of the 19th century, as a recognition of the service which those Armenians rendered Russia during the Turkish war. The remainder of them live intermixed with the Tartar population, and form nowhere a decisive majority, not even in the historical Armenian provinces proper, as for instance in the Government of Eriwan, where they only slightly exceed in number the Mohammedan population. Everywhere else in the Caucasus they form a minority within the circle of the other inhabitants.

The Armenians are very numerous, it is true, in different cities and especially in Tiflis, but the part they play there resembles very much that of the Jews in Poland, for instance, in Warsaw. This position occupied by the Armenians in the Caucasus, of which they themselves do not in general speak very willingly, gives them no right to form a political entity of their own, or to strive at all after territorial autonomy. It

is just this circumstance which arouses their jealousy against the other peoples of the Caucasus, and especially against the Georgians, who would be in a position because of the facts concerning their population, to erect their own independent state.

Besides this the Armenians are active here principally as traders and usurers, and wherever they find themselves, in villages or in the towns, exploit the Caucasian population in the most atrocious manner. The large industrial capital employed in the Caucasus belongs to the Armenians less exclusively, it is rather for the most part the property of Europeans. The city-inhabiting Armenian of the Caucasus is a type of the trader and usurer, and a veritable bringer of misfortune for the countryman whom he systematically plunders and ruins. This is the chief reason for the hatred which is felt for the Armenian in the Caucasus. The sympathy which many Armenians have exhibited for the Russian government has made them yet more disliked. Since they are not in a position, owing to a want of a compact majority in any given territory, to aspire to a territorial autonomy, the Armenians content themselves with the occasional concessions made to them by the Russians. When for example, the Russians in the year 1904, forcibly seized upon the possessions of the Armenian church, these were restored upon the protest of the people and the clergy. And then too, the Armenians continually oppose the aspirations for autonomy of the other peoples, especially those of the Georgians, because they prefer the Russian rule, which offers them the greater possibility of plundering those among whom they live.

The assertion which they have caused to be proclaimed over all Europe, that they are the civilizing element in the Caucasus, does not at all correspond with the facts, as every one knows who has had anything to do with the country. Foreign traders can never play a civilizing part among a people whose culture is superior to their own. The other peoples of the Caucasus

have their traders and usurers, but the first are more Europeanlike, and the latter are only few in number.

The economic and cultural condition of the Armenian workman, both in the country districts and in the towns, is without doubt lower than, for instance, that of the Georgian. So far as the general national culture of the Armenians is concerned, their modern literature, for example, which has been developed in the 19th century in a Caucasian dialect, can scarcely be compared with the modern Georgian literature, which is the continuation of an older one that has had an organic development since the first centuries.

The Russians seek, indeed, to make use of the Armenians in order to paralyze the national movements in the Caucasus. The connection of the Armenians with the Russian government already dates from a long time back. Formerly the Russians employed them against the Turks, now they use them, as far as possible, not only against the Turks, but also against the Georgians and the other peoples of the Caucasus. The Armenians did not take part in the revolution of 1904 and 1905, although they spread it abroad that they were the virtual leaders of the whole movement. They wished, however, at the same time to show their solidarity with the Georgians, but this was limited to the pompous parades of their armed bands in the streets of Tiflis and of Baku.

The Russians did, to be sure, institute an Tartaro-Armenian massacre in Baku, in Elisabethpol, and even in Tiflis, and in this fratricidal work the Armenians indeed distinguished themselves. The Armenians have the habit of calling such massacres a revolution, but these things have nothing to do with revolution, and in Tiflis it was the very intervention of the Georgian revolutionists that put an end to the carnage. And when later all the revolutionary parties of Georgia had to decide whether they should continue their efforts, the Armenian party left them in the lurch by declaring that there was no sphere of activity for them in Russia. At the same time, however, they

formed a party in Georgia, in Russia and even in Europe, which called itself socialistic, and which worked together with the socialistic parties in Russia and elsewhere in elaborating a common programme.

Fortunately all of these parties have at last comprehended that the so-called Armenian socialism was nothing but a make-believe, and not even a well-disposed make-believe, and to-day no one recognizes this Armenian party (Dashnakzutün) as socialistic; it has even ceased to call itself such. In short, because of the peculiar economic position which they occupy in the Caucasus, and because of their national egotism, which prevents them from recognizing the political rights of others, and through their connection with Russian imperialism in Caucasia, the Armenians have made themselves disliked by the other inhabitants of the country.

In this war treachery was thus once again practised on the part of the Armenians, but nevertheless after the Caucasus has been liberated, they will have to play their part in the political organization of the country, and that is the reason why we have to take into consideration here this fourth element of the population.

It is to be understood that not the whole of the Armenian population is to be held responsible for the views and acts which we have here described. There is an important part that thinks otherwise, that recognizes the rights of its neighbours, and that is ready to work with them in the common cause of freeing the Caucasus. These know very well that an Armenian territorial autonomy is impossible, and since there is no nationality in the whole Caucasus that would not, for its part, recognize the rights of the Armenian nationality, they prefer to work together solidarily with the Georgians and Tartars, and to acknowledge the legitimacy of their political claims.

Whatever regime may be set up in an independent Caucasus, the church, the language, the property and all that concerns

the national culture of the Armenians would be respected. All reasonable Armenians know this, and when it comes seriously to the point of doing away with Russian despotism in the Caucasus, this is the element on which one can count.

IV.

The above are the nationalities with which the Turks must cooperate, in order to obtain a definitive victory over the Russians, and to drive them out of the limits of the Caucasus. Especially is it necessary that they act together with the Georgians, by reason of the significance that attaches to this people, as we have explained herein. Without the assistance of the Georgians, the Turks can never take possession of the Caucasus; as soon however as the Georgians make a move, the Tartars and the inhabitants of the mountain districts will follow.

If however the Georgians, the Tartars, the Mountaineers and the Armenians rise in revolt jointly, they will form a very considerable force, which Russia will have to take earnestly into account, and which, taken together with the Ottoman forces, will be able ultimately to overcome the resistance of the Russian armies. Without a general uprising in the Caucasus, the attempts of the Turks, by means of their own power alone, to conquer the Caucasus would be doomed in advance to failure; and one can easily picture to oneself what consequences a Turkish defeat would have for the two Mohammedan states, Turkey and Persia. It is clear that Russia would break the power of Turkey and Persia completely, if she succeeded in ruling the Caucasus for some decades longer.

The Georgians were at one time compelled, by the continual attacks of the Turks and the Persians, themselves to call upon the Russians for help against those terrible irruptions. In this way only, Russian imperialism was able to gain a firm

foothold in the Orient. If the present war should end with a Russian victory, there can be no doubt that Turkey would lose entirely her Armenian provinces, perhaps in addition, even the whole of northern Asia Minor. Persia at all events would lose the province of Aserbeidjan, and all Persia would be permanently occupied by the English and Russians. The Caucasus itself would remain for ever under Russian rule, and the Russian colonization there would make very much more progress than heretofore. The Russianizing of the Christian peoples of the Caucasus and the rooting out of the Moham-medans would be the consequence of a longer Russian rule in the land, which would lose for ever its historical and national characteristics. For the avoiding of such disastrous consequences, the Caucasians, the Turks and the Persians must act together to accomplish the great aim of destroying the Russian supremacy.

To bring about this end, it is necessary that each of these peoples conforms its claims to the conditions arising from its relations to its neighbours and to justice. The question in this war is not concerning conquests, also not concerning the satisfaction of claims which, in case of military success, would take on ever greater dimensions. To look upon military success in that way would be barbarous and is obsolete, it has ever been also the cause of an ultimate loss for the victor. Everything must be subordinated to the main purpose, with regard to the future progress of events and to the possibilities which may arise after the end of the war.

Whoever should not be willing so to employ victory as to secure peace, and to gain for some time a guaranty against future attacks of the enemy, would lose, in spite of all successes. He would be a statesman who knew neither how to calculate, to estimate values, nor to forecast events. Since the matter concerns itself with the common task of various peoples who have a joint interest in being freed from a foreign yoke, the principle of respecting mutual rights must

be proclaimed, for the subjugated peoples will never shed their blood in order to exchange one foreign rule for another. They desire their rights, and in order to secure them they join with the enemies of their oppressor, but these latter must never forget that the oppressed peoples do not undertake a revolution out of altruism. The Turks must remember that the solution of the Caucasian problem is only possible by acting jointly with the nationalities there, otherwise they can receive no help from the Caucasians, nay, they cannot hope at all of conquering the country. Even if they should succeed in occupying the land, they would be driven out again the next day, either by the Caucasians themselves, or by the Russians, who would not hesitate to seize the first opportunity for doing this.

The problem how the Caucasus is to be governed in the future is a very great one. Any state that should attempt to treat the Caucasus as a conquered province, to rule and to administer it as a region like its other provinces, would be condemned to failure from the first. The example of Macedonia should be a warning to the Turks. The Ottoman government was never able to gain ground in that country, which was continually kept in an excited state, through the revolts and disagreements of its different nationalities. A peace would only have been possible after all these diverse elements had been reinstated in the rights which were their due. The Macedonian revolution will last so long, as any one of its peoples is not in possession of its rights, and this in spite of the expulsion of the Turks.

The Russians, for the same reasons, have never been able to establish peace in the Caucasus, and the Caucasian problem was infinitely more complicated than the Macedonian. Besides the Russian system of government is not less skilful than that of the Turks, so that it would be quite impossible for the latter if they should succeed in getting possession of these lands, to deal successfully, by the use of violent means, with such a difficult problem as that presented by the Caucasus.

The Caucasian people would in such a case resist the new supreme authority, and differences would again break out among themselves. These the Russians would turn to their own advantage, especially since there would continually be found certain elements that preferred the Russian rule to that of the Turks. Bribes and promises on the part of the Russians would ultimately open again to their armies the way into the Transcaucasian plain, and the Russian rule would be established anew, and this time perhaps forever. It would be the greatest misfortune not only for the Caucasians, but also for the Turks and Persians, and perhaps for all Europe, if the Russians, aided by the fact that the Caucasus had been completely subdued and that they were in possession of the whole of the Black Sea, could ultimately force the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and send their fleet into the Mediterranean.

A violent conquest of the Caucasus by the Turks, carried through against the consent of its inhabitants, would have the most dreadful consequences for the Orient, and perhaps for the Occident as well; it would furnish the perpetual occasion for wars and devastations. The Turks should therefore dismiss all thoughts of this kind, and declare that they wish to act jointly with the peoples there in creating an independent and neutral Caucasus. This is the only possible solution of the Caucasian problem. An independent Caucasian state would mean peace for the Orient, a protection for Turkey and Persia, and peace at last for the Caucasus itself, which for centuries has been in a state of unrest. It would mean at the same time, the end of Russian imperialistic aspirations in this part of the East—aspirations which threaten the Mediterranean and a large part of Europe.

Finally, an independent Caucasia would mean the economic liberation of the country, which is to-day compelled to buy inferior Russian goods at high prices, since the Russian customs-tariff system places such a burden upon European merchandise that its purchase is rendered impossible for the Causasians.

Besides this, the land is hindered in all sorts of other ways in its commercial intercourse with Europe.

The products of the Caucasus go in greater quantities to Europe than to Russia. The Georgian manganese ores are exported principally to England, Belgium and France; but thanks to the Russian railway charges, it costs more to transport a ton of manganese from Tchiathura to Poti, a railway journey of about 150 kilometres than from Calcutta to London. The quality of our manganese ores is however so superior that, in spite of all, they can successfully compete with the Indian, Brazilian and Cuban article in the markets of the world.

The Caucasus moreover offers an unlimited field for enterprise and for the investment of industrial capital. The Russians are not in a position to establish in the Caucasus a European industry. Even in Baku, it is foreign capital, principally English, that is employed in the petroleum production; but in consequence of the unsettled condition of things in the country under Russian misrule, the defective land-property laws and the well-known deficiencies in the Russian administration of justice, European capital generally avoids the Caucasus.

The energy displayed in the creation of many industries has, under these circumstances, been that of the Caucasians themselves; but without the systematic help of European capital, the natural resources of the land, however great they may be, can never be exploited on a large scale. On the other hand, a neutral Caucasus would furnish a promising market for European goods, and the peoples, freed from foreign rule, would display their own productive powers, and with the help of European capital and European science, make their land one of the most flourishing in the world. Thus a new country would be won for civilized humanity.

V.

Another new, very important and difficult problem now arises: When the Caucasus has been freed from the Russian yoke, and recognized by the Powers as a neutral state, how is it to be organized? Will it be possible out of this multifarious variety of peoples, habits and customs, religious confessions and past history, to produce a political creation which would be capable of developing organically its own future, and of awaking a Caucasian consciousness, which until now has not existed?

The peoples of the Caucasus, when taken as a whole, do not form a total, as it were, of homogeneous social communities. Much more the contrasts and the manifoldness of social relations and institutions form a principal feature of this country. The historical past, the manners and customs, the religion, the property conditions, the position of woman, the conceptions of right and justice, of duty and personal liberty, of morality, the general standard of culture, and the ideals and aims,—all of these things are fundamentally different in the case of the various Caucasian peoples, and it seems impossible to bring them all under one system, one legal jurisdiction and one constitution.

To introduce one general homogeneous constitution for the Caucasian lands and peoples would be, from the first, a mistake. The stability of a constitution, it can be said, depends upon the uniformity and social homogeneousness of the people who have fashioned it for themselves. If this principle be valid, then a Caucasian constitution would possess, among all the constitutions in the world, the least stability.

It has been the custom to introduce the example of Switzerland, where cantons of different nationalities form a republican federation, as firm and united as one can imagine, and to draw conclusions from this for a confederation of the Caucasian peoples, which might be established upon a similar basis.

The similarity of conditions in Switzerland and in the Caucasus is however only a very superficial one, and we might rather maintain that an opposite conclusion to that just mentioned is to be drawn from this example. And this, because the social structure of all the nationalities in Switzerland is one and the same, and their respective standards of culture very much alike, and also because even the Swiss cantons have not at once joined in a confederation, but only after conflicts lasting for centuries, and finally because this union was one in which the formerly independent cantons still preserved their complete independence.

If the representatives of all the peoples of the Caucasus should sometime come together in Tiflis in order to create a Caucasian federation, one may be sure the assembly would, after a few days, be broken up by the most violent disputes. They would have spoken as if in different languages, and in no case have understood one another. Their past, their claims, their history, their traditions and their several aspirations, all being different or conflicting, would have given rise to demands which could not be brought into harmony with each other. In order to understand one another, the representatives of each single element of the population must first know exactly what they really have to advocate; they must possess a clear recognition of the rights of the others, which rights must in every case be withdrawn from discussion. In other words, it would be necessary for each of the component parts of the population to regain for itself its political independence, and for each to fashion for itself the political constitution which best corresponds to its social structure. Then first can one undertake the formation of a confederation, presupposed that the necessities and the wishes of the several groups demand this.

Moreover, how could one, for example, bring into effect a uniform conception of legal rights, when among the Georgians, woman has been since the beginning of their history, honoured,

placed above the man, respected and extolled, where she is self-reliant, and free to take part in all public affairs, while among the Tartars, the Lesghues and others, she is but little more than a slave.

In case of a decisive victory of the Germans, the Austrians and the Turks, the Caucasian problem would have to be solved, according to our opinion, in the following manner:

First: Turkey to have a part of the government of Kars and a part of the government of Eriwan, where the great majority of the population is of Turkish origin.

Secondly: Transcaucasia to be made a neutral state like Switzerland, and all the Powers to guarantee this neutrality in perpetuity.

Thirdly: The Georgian nation to recover her historical territory lying within the limits which we have already mentioned and to be formed into an independent Georgian state. The constitution of this state to be framed by a Georgian National Assembly, called together after the recognition of its independence. The Mohammedans who would share in this independent state are almost exclusively of Georgian nationality, and can therefore share in the political life of Georgia; the state to guarantee them absolute freedom in the exercise of their religion and to make them concessions in the domain of law, in conformity with the requirements of Mohammedanism. The Armenians who are willing to live as citizens of an independent state to be entitled to have respected their property rights, their church, their schools, their language and their national culture in general. All citizens of an independent Georgia to be equal before the law, both as to their rights and their duties.

Fourthly: The Tartars and Armenians to have the right of organizing themselves into Tataro-Armenian cantons under the advice and with the help of intermediaries, whom they may choose from among their Caucasian neighbours and also from among Europeans. Mutual obligations to be fulfilled, the property, religion and language of each other to be

respected, and constitutions to be framed, corresponding in each case to the standard of culture. A purely Tartar constitution to be introduced in those districts where the Tartars are in a large majority, with a safeguarding of the national rights of the Armenian minority, and vice-versa, where the Armenians form the larger part of the population.

Fifthly: The mountain-peoples to be united in a federation, each canton or state of which is to enjoy a large independence. The population of Daghestan amounts, for example, to about half a million, and the district inhabited by it is large enough also to justify its having its own constitution. Since they have no complicated relations with their neighbours or with more distant peoples, but live in their mountains for the greater part of the year, they could be organized according to their ancient customs and habits without this being a very difficult task.

The above would be the way to proceed in organizing the various elements of the Caucasian population as one should desire to see it done. Every constituent part must form a well-defined political personality; and its territorial limits should also be well-marked and generally recognized, if future transactions of any kind are to be conducted successfully.

A customs- and monetary union might be introduced at once, at the very beginning of the independent life of these peoples, as the result of negotiations between them. And when their economic relations to each other become more multifarious, the assembly of the representatives of the various nations, to be held periodically, will find ever more numerous tasks awaiting a common regulation and accomplishment.

When then some day the essential differences, which until now have existed between these peoples,—differences which have not allowed them hitherto to form a compact political organization—when these some day shall have vanished or become sufficiently allayed, then the establishment of a permanent federal representative body can be undertaken, and

the principles be elaborated on which a Caucasian federation is to be based. But, in my opinion, considerable time will be required to reach this stage of development.

By liberating the Caucasus, Europe would create a wonderful land, which after fifty years of freedom, could not be recognized as its old self, so great are the capabilities of the Caucasians and the natural resources of the country. Apart from the fertility of the soil and its numerous products, the immense mineral wealth of the Caucasus offers to the European capitalist, for any imaginable period, the most inexhaustible possibilities.

Germany, on whose help we rely in the liberation of the Caucasus, will find, with the assistance of her science, her technic and her capital, an unlimited field of activity in this land, on the gratitude of which she can count, and will be able to acquire great riches, to the mutual advantage of the people of both countries.

We extend a hearty welcome in our country to Germany, that great people of philosophers, scholars and poets. If we, with her help, succeed in obtaining our liberty, she will have no better friends than us,—real friends, without any hypocrisy, from which we Georgians are free. We wish to learn how to think and to labour in the German manner, and hope that in a short time our masters will be able to be proud of their pupils.

APPENDIX OF DOCUMENTS.

I.

Petition of the Georgian People to the States of the civilized World, represented at the Hague Peace Conference of 1907.

In the name of justice and of international law, the undersigned, citizens of Georgia, one of the oldest independent Christian kingdoms, address themselves to the representatives of all civilized states, assembled at the Hague Peace Conference.

We are persuaded that we shall find a hearing and sympathy for our just and legal claims, which demand the loyal observance of an international treaty concluded between the independent kingdom of Georgia and the imperial Russian government, and duly ratified by both of the contracting parties, but by the imperial Russian government systematically violated.

On the 20th of August, 1783, king Irakli II of Georgia concluded a treaty with the empress Catharine II of Russia, on the strength of which Georgia placed herself voluntarily under the protectorate of Russia. The empress solemnly guaranteed on her part, and in her name and in the name of her successors, the maintainance of the autonomous government of Georgia, of the national legislation, of the rights of the independent Georgian church, as well as of the Georgian tribunals and judicial administration, the Georgian coinage and national defence system.

This treaty was ratified on the 30th of September of the same year, and its text is to be found in the 21th volume of the complete collection of laws of the Russian empire.

Paragraph 12 of this duly ratified international treaty reads as follows: This treaty is concluded in perpetuity, but if in the common interests of both contracting parties, changes of any kind should become necessary, they can only be made with the consent of both parties.

In consideration of this article 12, preliminary negotiations were entered into, fifteen years later, between the emperor Paul I of Russia and king George XII. of Georgia, the successor of Irakli II, concerning a revision of this treaty. The question then was, the coming to an agreement that the kingdom of Georgia should in the future be regarded as a part of the Russian empire, while at the same time the autonomous and national rights of Georgia, which were recognized in the protectorate treaty of 1783, should be preserved.

On the 18th of January 1801, a proclamation of the emperor Paul concerning the annexation of Georgia was posted up in the streets of St. Petersburg. In this manifesto the emperor solemnly declared "upon his imperial word," that with the incorporation of the kingdom of Georgia — — — — "all rights and privileges should remain unimpaired."

The emperor Paul and king George died however before they had signed the intended convention, and so no new treaty came into being.

Nevertheless, Alexander I, the successor of emperor Paul, expressed himself, in his proclamation dated Moscow, September 12th 1801, as follows: "On ascending the throne we found the kingdom of Georgia incorporated with the Russian empire, according to the solemn declaration of the manifesto of the 18th of January, 1801."

The Georgian minister to the imperial court protested against this declaration and left St. Petersburg.

The Russian emperor in his manifesto of September 12th, 1801, had, at any rate, confirmed anew the autonomy of Georgia in her elective home government. In the statutes of this Georgian government, which were ratified on the same

day, September 12th, it stands written: "The General Assembly of all four departments forms the highest governing body of Georgia, and decides definitively by a majority of votes all matters affecting the land."

Although the autonomy of Georgia was thus confirmed anew, the Georgians have always regarded the manifesto of Alexander I as illegal, and as a violation of the treaty concluded with Catharine II, which had guaranteed that no change should be made in it without the consent of both contracting parties.

All the acts of the imperial government from that time on have been systematic violations of the provisions of the treaty.

The highest governing body, the members of which were elected, was gradually done away with, and replaced by a bureaucratic and Russian military-administration. At present, there is in the whole higher administration staff and in the council of the governor-general, only one single Georgian official, and he is—the interpreter.

During the last fifty years, the Georgian language has been suppressed in the courts, and legal proceedings are conducted to-day in Russian, which is understood neither by the peasants nor by the labouring population, so that these classes have been deprived of their most sacred civil rights.

The Georgian language has been banished from all governmental institutions and from the administration of justice, likewise from the schools, and partly even from the churches.

Our national military defence system, which was guaranteed to us by the treaty, has been replaced by obligatory service in the Russian army, and our youth sent, for the greater part, to the north of Russia and to Siberia. Military statistics show that 47% of the Georgian soldiers either die or fall sick on account of the climate of those localities.

The policy of the compulsory Russianizing of the country has brought about as a consequence the economic decline of our nation.

Our autocephalous church, one of the oldest in the Christian world, was deprived of its independence and its property by a simple government order.

Our historical monuments and our cathedrals, beautiful specimens of medieval architecture, are going to decay, and are often even destroyed by the Russian clergy; we have not the means to restore them, for the income of our church property, which may amount to about 2 400 000 rubles yearly, has been appropriated by the imperial Russian government.

All Georgian public lands have been declared Russian property by that government. Numerous villages have been located upon these lands, by order of the Russian government, for the purpose of settling therein colonies of Russian subjects or those of other nationalities. To each of these colonists, 15 to 20, and even as many as 50 hectares of land were allotted, while the Georgian peasant in our country of intensive cultivation, possesses, on the average, only one to two hectares. Nothing from these lands which were made Russian state-property has been given to the Georgian country-people. In many parts of Georgia, especially in the coast districts, the St. Petersburg government has even forbidden the sale of land to Georgians. A veritable land hunger has in this way arisen in Georgia, especially in the western provinces, where the price of a hectare of land has risen to the height of from 2 500 to 5 000 francs, and where our peasants are compelled to buy land by the square metre.

The reforms which were introduced in the Russian empire during the 19th century, have found no application to Georgia, with the exception of the abolition of serfdom. Up to the present, we have no juries in criminal procedure, no elected justices of the peace, no Zemstvos, no universities and other high schools, although the higher social classes have let no opportunity pass to petition the Russian government and the Czar to give them the right to establish a university.

Even the lately introduced constitutional form of government is a dismal irony, for the whole Georgian nation, numbering $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions, has only seven representatives in the Duma.¹

We are not only deprived, however, of our rights, but a yet greater misfortune rests to-day upon our land and people.

For two years our land has been under martial law, by which it has been delivered up to the arbitrary will of soldiers and cossacks.

The villages in the flourishing provinces of Guria, Mingrelia, Imeretia and Central-Georgia have been burned and plundered, the gardens and vineyards destroyed, and the possessions of the peasants stolen by cossacks and soldiers. The towns of Koutais, Ozourgethi, Kvirila, Khoni, Tchiathura and 104 villages have been completely or partially reduced to ruins, and hundreds of Georgians killed. Even women and children have not escaped being maltreated and dishonoured. The afflicted population fled into the mountains and woods, where many, especially children, perished from cold and destitution. All of these facts are set forth in an appeal of the Georgian women to the women of the whole civilized world, which was issued in the year 1906.

Even in our capital city of Tiflis, organized pogroms have taken place under the eyes of the governor-general and of the higher authorities, and even with their assent. On August 29th (September 11th), on October 20th (November 3rd) and on December 21st 1905 (January 3rd, 1906), women and children were murdered on the streets, even in the immediate neighbourhood of the palace of the governor-general.

The systematic persecution of our nation has gone so far, that we have been even forbidden to go to the assistance of the victims in our western provinces.

When the Society of Georgian Women undertook to make collections for the relief of the famishing peasants of Guria,

¹ Now only three.

the viceroy, Count Vorontsoff-Dashkoff, opposed this, and declared the government would not permit the people it had punished to be assisted.

Last spring, when a severe epidemic broke out in the province of Kakhetia, and the Georgian Benevolent Society wished to send physicians there, this was also prevented by order of the governor-general, and even the sending of physicians to the villages of Central-Georgia to vaccinate the people was forbidden.

Hundreds, if not thousands of Georgians, are kept without trial in prison, where they are awaiting their deportation to Siberia or northern Russia.

In the Caucasus, in the past year, more than 300 persons, almost exclusively Georgians, were condemned to death by the courts-martial, and executed. Thousands of peasants and workmen in addition were sent to Siberia and northern Russia.

The European press has made known the cruel persecutions which in the last two years have taken place in all Russia. Even the Russian press has admitted that the number of victims exceeded 40,000, and it is well-known that, next to Poland and the Baltic provinces, Georgia has suffered the most.

We have not been subjected to such degradation and oppression in the whole course of our history since the invasion of Tamerlane. And when we dare to raise our voice to defend our national rights, when we dare to mention our treaty with the empire of the Czar, we are arrested, persecuted and threatened with deportation, and even with the complete rooting out of the Georgian nation.

In this unendurable situation, deprived even of the right of collectively petitioning the Duma or the Czar, the Georgian people have determined to bring before the civilized world their complaint against the unjust and illegal policy of the imperial Russian government and against the systematic disregard of an international treaty which was concluded and ratified in full conformity with international law.

Thanks to the intervention of Europe, the provinces of the Balkan peninsula, Servia, Rumania and Bulgaria have been able to transform themselves into constitutional and flourishing states. In contrast with this, our land with its past of 1800 years of independence and christian civilization, has since the union with Russia, which was to have effected a closer connection with Europe and with European civilization, been completely ruined. In place of progressing mentally and economically, its political and intellectual life has been systematically trodden down, and its hopes of a progressive development unfeelingly destroyed.

We appeal to the states of the civilized world, through their representatives in solemn conference assembled, against this condition of things into which imperial Russia, in disregard of sacred treaties, has brought us, and ask for justice.

We seek their help for the recovery of our rights in accordance with the treaty of 1783, which guaranteed us the integrity of our country and national autonomy under a Russian protectorate.

(The signatures follow.)

II.

Treaty between Czar Heraclius of Georgia and the Empress Catharine II of Russia.

ARTICLE I.—Heraclius shall for the future no more be called, as a Persian vassal, "Vali of Georgia," but he shall take at once, as a Christian and ally of Russia, the title "Czar of Georgia." This title, with the rights and powers pertaining to it, are confirmed by Russia for all time, to him and to his most remote descendents.

ARTICLE II.—The countries which formerly belonged to Georgia, and are now in possession of the Turks, Persians and Lesghues, as Saatabago, Rani, Movakani, Akhaltsikhe, Djavakhethi, Livana,

Atchara, Nukha or Sheki, Shirvan and other places, are to be taken back as opportunity offers, and are to be considered as integral parts of Georgia.

ARTICLE III.—On the death of the Czar, the right of investiture pertains to Russia which shall confer the crown upon the eldest son.

ARTICLE IV.—If a Persian or Turkish ambassador arrives at the Court at Tiflis with secret or open commissions, the Czar shall be bound to report the matter to Russia, and to give no answer until he has received directions from there.

ARTICLE V.—A minister-resident shall live in St. Petersburg as the permanent representative of the Czar Heraclius. It is considered unnecessary that Russia should keep for its part a representative in Georgia.

ARTICLE VI.—All taxes and revenues of Georgia in money, grain, wine etc. belong as heretofore exclusively to the Czar, without Russia being justified in making any claim whatever upon them.

ARTICLE VII.—On making appointments to the highest positions in the state, as for example, that of Sirdar, (commander-in-chief of the army), the Czar is to give a purely formal notice of his choice to the Russian government, without Russia having the right to oppose.

ARTICLE VIII.—The patriarch or catholicos of Georgia shall be numbered as the eighth among the archbishops of Russia, and consequently with his other titles, bear that of archbishop of Tobolsk. The holy synod of Russia shall never—in any form whatsoever—intermeddle in the affairs of the Greek Church of Georgia.

ARTICLE IX.—The Thavadi (the chiefs of the people or princes), and the Aznauri (barons or nobles) shall in all respects be considered equal in rank with the Russian bearers of the same titles.

ARTICLE X.—Those Georgian subjects who wish to settle with their families in Russia shall be free to do so, and, on the

other hand, the Russians have the right of settling in Georgia. Moreover, no one shall be prohibited from renouncing his settlement and retracing his steps. Deserting subjects or soldiers of one or the other power shall be mutually extradited. In case of war with Turkey, the Georgians or Russians who have been serving with the enemy and may have been taken prisoner shall be delivered up to the Georgian Czar, or to the Russian government, respectively.

ARTICLE XI.—Russian merchants who carry on business in Georgia shall enjoy there equal rights and likewise the reverse. In both lands they are subject to the general law.

ARTICLE XII.—The matters herein established can be changed by the two contracting parties, in case it is considered necessary.

ARTICLE XIII.—After a six-months test on both sides, the above provisions shall be ratified.

Exchanged and signed in the fort of Georgievsk on the 24th of July (old style) 1783.

Signatures:

For the Empress of Russia: PAUL POTEKIN.

For the Czar of Georgia: JEAN BAGRATION.

GARSEVAN TCHAVTCHAVADSE.

Treaty concluded at Tiflis between His Majesty, the Emperor Paul I and the Czar of Georgia, Georg XII, the son of Heraclius. 1799—November 23rd (old style).

ARTICLE I.—His Majesty, the Emperor of all the Russians, takes for himself, and for all his descendents and successors, the title of Czar of Georgia.

ARTICLE II.—The eldest son of the reigning Czar (of Georgia), David, becomes Regent of Georgia (Memkvidre), and this dignity is to descend for all time to the successive eldest sons.

ARTICLE III.—The inhabitants of Georgia have no taxes to pay for twelve years, in order that they may be able to recover from the many unfortunate wars &c, and the Regent is to receive, during these twelve years, for himself and the royal family a yearly sum of 20,000 Georgian Tumans (about 820,000 francs).

ARTICLE IV.—The gold and silver mines of Aghtala and the copper mines of Misghana shall be worked by the Russians, and the revenues from these be applied to the payment of the sum named in the preceding article.

ARTICLE V.—A corps of 6,000 men, Russian infantry, to be constantly kept at the full number, shall be stationed in Georgia. The Georgians are to provide the cavalry for this army corps.

ARTICLE VI.—Other troops are to be provided, according to necessity, for protecting the frontiers (Samzghvari).

ARTICLE VII.—Russia will send engineers for building or improving the fortification works, where it is considered necessary.

ARTICLE VIII.—The coins, which are from now on to be minted in Tiflis, shall bear on the one side, the Russian, and on the other, the Georgian arms.

ARTICLE IX.—Provisions which the Russian troops in Georgia may require are to be sold to them at the same prices as the inhabitants of the country have to pay.

ARTICLE X.—If a census is ordered, it shall be taken according to houses (Sakhli) and not according to souls (Suli).

Signatures :

For Russia: ROSTOPTCHIN (Count).

For Georgia: AVALOFF.

PALAVANDOFF.

III.

Copy of a written Opinion of Ernest Nys, Professor in the University of Brussels, Member of the Court of Appeals.

Brussels, 30 Rue St.-Jean, November 24th 1906.

I have received your communication of November 21th and make haste to answer it. In what follows you will find my opinion upon the questions you have asked me.

The Georgians are in a position of legitimate revolt; the present condition of their country is revolutionary; the acts of violence which are committed there in order to help on the Georgian cause to success are political acts, which so far as they are punishable, represent political misdemeanours and offences.

The rule of the Russian government in Georgia is unjustifiable, as well in principle as according to its historical origin. It is founded on deception, and for a whole century has been exercised in a cruel and tyrannical manner.

When Catharine II in the year 1783, obtained control of the navigation of the Black Sea, through her conquest of the Crimea, she applied herself to the extension of the Russian power in Asia. For this purpose she was obliged to assure herself of the support of the Georgian kingdom. A treaty was made on July 24th 1783 between the empress and Heraclius II. This was a treaty of friendship and alliance, the wording of which expressed the very great respect which the Russian government pretended to have for the rights of the Georgians.

Heraclius II, according to this treaty, was for the future no longer to bear the title of "Vali" of Georgia, which was his as a vassal of Persia, but as a Christian and an ally of Russia, he should rather receive the title of Czar of Georgia, and Russia not only sanctioned this title and rank for him alone, but also for his successors forever, even until the end

of time. On the death of Heraclius II, Russia was to have the right of investiture, which she had to use in favour of his eldest son.

Heraclius II was represented in St. Petersburg by a permanent minister; for Russia to have a permanent minister in Georgia was not considered necessary. All taxes and revenues of Georgia were to remain the property of the czar of this country; Russia was to have no right to a share of them in any form whatsoever.

The appointments to the highest state positions, as, for instance, to that of commander-in-chief of the army, were to be submitted to the Russian government, but this was to be only a pure formality, and not to give Russia the right to oppose the choice. Russia was also to have no right to interfere in matters concerning the Georgian church. Finally, the merchants of both contracting countries were to enjoy equal rights.

Heraclius II died in the year 1798. His successor was George XII, a weak prince. Russia took advantage of the international difficulties in which the Georgian kingdom was involved in order to conclude a new treaty. This treaty bears the date of November 23rd 1799. This time, the Russian emperor claimed for himself the title of Czar of Georgia; the son of George XII was to become regent of Georgia, and the dignity of regent was to be transmitted to his successors, and indeed each time to the eldest son.

A Russian infantry-corps of 6,000 men was to be stationed in Georgia, and the Georgians should provide the cavalry for this corps.

King George XII died in Tiflis on December 28th 1800. His son David became in fact regent and administrator. But the loyal carrying-out of the treaties was not of long duration. By means of a proclamation dated January 28th 1801, the emperor Paul I declared the kingdom of Georgia merged in the Russian Empire. He brought about an ostensible appeal

to him from the nobles and people of Georgia, and commissioned a Russian army-corps of 10,000 men to occupy the country.

Paul I died on March 11th 1801. By a proclamation dated September 15th 1801, Alexander I, at one stroke, incorporated Georgia with his empire.

These are the principles of law and justice on which the Russian government bases its claim to the loyalty of the Georgians! Trick, deception, treachery—such are these principles. It is true that the Russian rule has already lasted for a hundred years, but during this long period it has consisted in a detestable suppression of all that which makes up the existence and the *raison d'être* of a nation. The Russian regime has shown itself the bitter enemy of the language and culture of Georgia; it has destroyed the schools and the educational system; it has taken possession of the Georgian youth, and, without any right, sent the Georgian recruits who were fulfilling their compulsory military service, into the most distant provinces of the empire; it has instituted all possible kinds of oppression; it has condemned the patriots to prison and to death, and allowed its brutal soldiery to commit the worst cruelties. In view of all this, who would dare to contend that revolt and revolution were anything else than a duty?

Since you speak of extradition, allow me to refer to the principles which are applicable to this legal measure of relief, and to ask you to read over pages 255 ff. of the work¹ which I am sending at the same time with this. You will find there what the true principles in this case are, and you will likewise notice how eager the Russian government was to overthrow these legal conceptions, and to make valid in the West its own barbaric notions.

Signature:

¹ E. Nys; *Le Droit International* t. II.

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