

Role and Support of Germany along the Difficult Way of Gaining Georgia's Independence in 1918

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Abstract: Georgia - country with ancient and rich original culture which goes back as far as millennia and its knowledge and recognition has crossed national borders and entered the international level to become the cultural legacy of the humankind; During the centuries, Georgians have been embroiled in struggles against the World's biggest empires (Roman, Byzantine, Mongol, Persian, Ottoman, Russian, etc.); This small country was invaded and destroyed many times. However, Georgians have managed to preserve their cultural and traditional identity for 5,000 years. Therefore, our paper aims to deliver the main difficulties in the country especially in the first quarter of 20th century, to present key politics of Germany in the same period, as well as to highlight the problems that existed and needed to be urgently resolved. Besides, we also emphasize the importance of collaboration of Georgia with Germany to understand the role and contribution of German people that became vitally important while gaining independence in 1918.

Keywords: Georgia's independence, German support, Georgian-German Relations, World War I

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

German-Georgian relations during 1918-1921 are poorly studied as this issue was an object of prohibition during the whole Soviet ruling era. It is crucial that in nowadays geo-political situation these historical facts should be studied in a detailed form as it would be important for modern days Georgia to set the right directions of external policy on its way to European integration process and also clearly define Germany's historical mission in this region as well as its current interests.

1.2 Aim of the study

Taking into consideration the importance of study German political, economic and military assistance in reaching Independence of Georgia in 1918 as well as Georgia's further development in 1918-1921, the aim of the study is to highlight unknown historical facts of Georgian-German political, economic, military and cultural relationships; to give political evaluation to the studied period on the background of present political relationship between two countries; to evaluate the historical importance of assistance to new independent country; to compare Georgian-German relationship developed within 1918-1921 with relationships 70 years later, since 1991 till present; to interpret the Germany's role on the background of the globalization;

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During the centuries, Georgians have been embroiled in struggles against the World's biggest empires (Roman, Byzantine, Mongol, Persian, Ottoman, Russian, etc.); This small country was invaded and destroyed many times. However, Georgians have managed to preserve their cultural and traditional identity for 5,000 years. The first quarter of the 20th century can be considered as one of the hardest periods in Georgian history. Time, when that small country had to deal with political interests of different countries inventing to split the whole territory of Georgia into as many parts as possible owning the most important strategical points according to their certain benefits. The Caucasus Campaign consisted of the disagreement and later armed conflict between major empires of that time, Ottoman Empire and Russian Empire. Due to the volume of the conflict, it gradually covered other geographical areas like Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Central Caspian Dictatorship. Along with this, United Kingdom joined in as Middle Eastern Player during World War I. Because the Caucasus was involved in the campaign, it spread into the minor regions, reaching as far as Trabzon, Bitlis, Mus and Van. The marine posts were controlled by Russian navy in the Black Sea Region of the Ottoman Empire, but this did not last long due to the internal conflicts in Russian Empire, Russian Revolution of February 23, 1917, triggered by newly established Armenian state of Armenian former volunteer and irregular units. The Central Caspian Dictatorship mentioned above was Mountainous Armenia helped by Dunster force of elite troops from Mesopotamia and Western fronts. The conflict escalated at Batumi on March 3, 1918, with the arrival of German Caucasus Expedition, the goal of which was securing the oil supplies and this led to the termination of the campaign itself signed under the name of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk of June 4, 1918. Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, signed a treaty of Batum with Armenia, but still continued its engagement with Caspian Dictatorship, Republic of Mountainous Armenia and Dunster force of the British Empire, all being finalized in the Armistice of Murdos of October 30, 1918. In February 25, 1921, Soviet Union annexed the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the hostilities came to an end on October 23, 1921 with the treaty of Kars, a continuation of the earlier Treaty of Moscow of March 1921, to be ratified in Yerevan on September 11, 1922. The Treaty of Kars was a treaty between the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, having declared Turkey as a republic in 1923, the representatives of Bolshevik Russia, Soviet Armenia, Soviet Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, being annexed by Russia in the early 19th century and later being a part of the Soviet Union, Georgia was isolated from the rest of the World and was deprived of the opportunity to have an open relationship with different countries in any field. The situation in Georgia was hardened not only in the capital surroundings but regions as well. As for the regions of Georgia, the Rise of Georgian nationalism during the early years of the transformation process evoked fears of ethnic minorities that escalated in bloody conflicts and secessionist movements. The major ethnolinguistic groups within Georgia are Georgians, Abkhazians and Ossetians. (T. Kirn, E. Khokrishvili, 2009, pp. 116-117) In May 1918, following the revolutionary events in Russia, the Democratic Republic of Georgia, which included Samachablo/South Ossetia, was founded. North Ossetia, however, was taken over by Russia. Georgia invaded Samachablo/South Ossetia to prevent it from taking further steps towards independence, which were regarded as a threat against territorial integrity. There followed in the years 1918 to 1920, a series of uprisings, which were put down bloodily by Georgian troops. About 5000 people alone died during the clashes between April and June 1920, and about 20000 South Ossetians fled to North Ossetia then. Even today, these events continue to burden Georgian-South Ossetian relations.

South and North Ossetia were granted status separately, On April 20, 1922 South Ossetia and in 1924 the North Ossetia. In 1922 South Ossetia, within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic received the status of an Autonomous Region ('oblast'). South Ossetia remained in this status during the whole Soviet period. On 7 July 1924 North Ossetia was given the status of an Autonomous Region within the RSFSR, on December 5, 1936 of an Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic. As clearly shown, the two Ossetia ultimately became integral parts of two different Soviet Republics. (T. Kirn, E. Khokrishvili, 2009, p. 79) Today South Ossetia is called 'Tskhinvali region' or 'Samachablo' by Georgians and is a territory of 3900 square kilometers, located in

Georgia, but the status in international law is controversial. De facto government of South Ossetia considers itself to be an independent State since its declaration of independence on 29 May 1992. It has been recognized by five Member States of the United Nations (UN) after the military conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008. The states that recognized its independence are Russian Federation, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Tuvalu. Georgian government as well as the majority of Member States of the UN consider it an inseparable territory of Georgia (Nußberger, 2013). As for Abkhazia, from 1846 to 1917, Abkhazia was subordinated to the Russian Tsarist administration for the Caucasus. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Abkhazia first obtained the status of the Autonomous Republic within the Soviet Union, but later, in 1931, it was incorporated as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) into the Georgian SSR. (T. Kirn, E. Khokhashvili, 2009, p. 82) Once known primary holiday destination for not only Georgians but the whole Soviet Union Elite, Abkhazia is located in the north-western corner of Georgia. It's surrounded with the Black Sea to the south-west and the Caucasus mountains and Russia to the north-east. The region fought a war of separation with Georgia in 1992-93 and formally declared independence in 1999. After the Georgian-Russian war in 2008, official Moscow recognized Abkhazia as an independent state. Georgia responded by declaring Abkhazia as "occupied" territory by Russia. Recently, Abkhazia has gotten more actively involved with Russia. Under a five-year agreement between Russia and Abkhazia of 2009, Russia took formal control of Abkhazia's frontiers with Georgia. After this period, in 2014 Russia and the breakaway Georgian region renewed their cooperation in a "strategic partnership" agreement. This was negatively reacted by the Georgian government, which accused Russia of an attempt to annex Abkhazia. (www.bbc.com , 2018)

The declaration of independence on 26 May 1918, in the heaviest period, when the Georgian statehood had practically disappeared, Georgian language had almost been deprived its status of a state language and Georgian Orthodox Church had nearly lost the autocephaly and turned into one of the eparchies of the Russian Church, is the very important date in the history of Georgia. After 117 years of losing independence and being part of the Russian empire, this declaration gave birth to the Georgian Independent Republic. Unfortunately, the independent state existed in a very short period – less than three years. However, the 26 May declaration remained as a basement for the restoration of independence during the 70 years of Soviet ruling, and on 9 April 1991 the restoration of independence was based on the public legal and constitutional heritage of 26 May declaration. It is the commonly known fact and frequently shared view that the declaration of independence in 1918 was strongly supported by Germany and without this support, the independence could hardly be achieved, if ever. It shows that the relations between Germany and the Georgian part were very superior by 1918. However, these relations did not last long, and by the end of the same year, things had been changed. The following chapters discuss Germany's role in the declaration of independence in 1918 and German-Georgian relations by that special period. It also attempts to provide backgrounds and explanations of these relations.

As a chief player on the continent, especially the industrial expansion that gave Germany a new authority, the naval power, Germany led the Central Powers in World War I (1914–1918) against France, Great Britain, Russia and (by 1917) the United States. Defeated and partly occupied, Germany was forced to pay war compensations defined by the Treaty of Versailles and was deprived right on its colonies as well as areas given to re-established Poland and Alsace-Lorraine. As a result of the German revolution of 1918-1919, the emperor and the various kings and princes were deposed, and it leads to the establishment of the Weimar Republican unstable parliamentary democracy. The German Revolution broke from dissatisfied and alarmed sailors, who believed that their lives would be wasted in vain into the war. While the Social Democrats grasped the power, radicals across the country rallied to establish a communist society under the slogan "All Power to the Councils!" The Spartacus League launched an uprising in Berlin, council republics were proclaimed in Bremen and Bavaria, and workers' revolts shook numerous German towns. Ironically, a tragical turning point of history, the Social Democratic government

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crushed the rebellions with the help of right-wing militias, paving the way for the unlucky Weimar Republic—and ultimately the rise of the Nazis. (libcom.org, 2012) The Reichstag* (German parliament) election campaign in 1912 was a rally against the conservative - Center Party alliance, although some National Liberals still felt that the struggle against Social Democracy should take precedence. A rival organization to the Hansabund, the Middle-class Association (Mittelstabsverband), formed in the previous year, supported the conservatives. The fronts hardened, dashing Bethmann's* (*Theobald Von Bethmann-Hollweg – 5th Chancellor of German Empire in 1909-1917) hopes for a liberal-conservative compromise. He kept away from all by resigning and as a result found himself in a deadlock.

The parties reacted very differently to the election. The Center Party, having to shift the wind, edged cautiously to the left. The National Liberals, who had lost badly at the polls, moved closer to the Conservatives and stepped up their attacks on the Social Democrats, while denouncing the government for its lack of imperialist fervor and its failure in full armament. Young Turks in the party, prominent among them Gustav Stresemann, hoped to steer a middle course between the conservation and the Social Democrats, a view that was shared by most of the Independents. On the left, the Radicals around Karl Leibkhecht and Rosa Luxemburg, as well as Karl Kautsky and the center, wanted nothing to do with the bourgeois party. The revisionists and reformists on the right were determined to remain in opposition. Even in Baden, where Liberals and Social Democrats had worked together for a while, the two parties drifted apart. The Social Democrats were thus still pariahs, "Fellow without a Fatherland" in the Kaiser's words. The other parties felt that any close association with them would be the kiss of death. It was thus virtually impossible to create a working parliamentary majority. None of the proposed solutions was viable in the long term. Once again, the role of the Kaiser was critical. Increasing in the army and new battleships were needed. The additional cost was to be met by a prolongation of the increased tax on sugar and a tax on distilleries, the latter much to the disgust of the agrarian, many of whom produced schnapps on their estates. By 1912, the Triple Alliance was in ruins due to fundamental differences between Italy and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and the Middle East.

The situation became extremely precarious with the Balkan War of 1912 when Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro combined to drive the Ottomans out of Europe. The Balkans crisis created an ugly atmosphere in Berlin. There had been a marked increase in demands for Germany to assert itself throughout the world and prepare for war. There were no immediate consequences from the crown council, from which Bethmann-Hollweg had been excluded. Germany once again urged Austria-Hungary to be cautious when war broke out again in the Balkans in the following year. Victors of 1912, supported by Turkey and Romania, turned on their former ally Bulgaria, which was promptly defeated. Germany now tried to improve relations with Serbia, and dynastic links with Romania and Greece were bolstered. The Balkan wars, coupled with Germany's weakened position related to the Triple. Entente lent weight to those who argued that the Reich's armaments program was dangerously modest. Domestic politics on the eve of the war were thus approaching stalemate. A conservative reforming chancellor could not distance himself from the court, Prussia, the military, or the conservatives. By 1914, there were signs of improvement in the international climate. Germany and Britain reached an agreement over the Portuguese colonies in August 1913. In June the following year Britain agreed to German schemes for the Baghdad railway in return for an assurance that it would not go all the way to Basra. Germany, having abandoned its ambitions to have shipping rights on the Euphrates, joined an Anglo-Dutch consortium as a junior partner to exploit the oil resources of the Ottoman Empire. German firms invested heavily in Western Europe and there were many instances of fruitful cooperation between Germans and their future enemies. However, the system was fundamentally unstable and proved incapable of mastering the crisis that lay ahead. (Kitchen, 2012, pp. 176-179) The Bolshevik Revolution in early November 1917 sent shock waves throughout Germany. The peace revolutions of the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was widely welcomed. The German working class showed no particular enthusiasm for communism in its Leninist form and almost all socialists, even the most radical, were disturbed

by the violence and brutality of its dictatorial methods. But Lenin's passionate call for an end to the imperialist war met with an eager response, not only among war-weary workers, but particularly among disillusioned soldiers at the front who were called upon to risk their lives for the absurdly unrealistic war aims of Fatherland Party. By the end of 1918, it was clear that the Kaiser would go. The sailors in Kiel were the first to demand his abdication publicly. The new parliament met in peaceful Weimar, the town of Goethe and Schiller, far away from troubled Berlin (in 1919). Ebert was elected temporary president, Scheidemann appointed chancellor. Deliberations over a new constitution began amid mounting unrest and the wave of strikes by militant workers who made some radical demands.

The new republic was a federal state by far the largest state with 60 percent of the population, was no longer a hegemonic power. The fiercest debates were over, the role of the Assembly left Weimar and returned to Berlin. The most pressing task of the new Reichstag was financial reform. The problems facing Matthias Erzberger as minister of Finance were awesome. The net results of these reforms were to further fuel inflation. Erzberger imagined that significant increases in the tax burden would reduce the amount of money in circulation and thus cut back inflation, but the cost of highest taxes was quickly offset by higher prices. (Kitchen, 2012, pp. 192-201)

2. Literature Review

In his work, Bakradze studied (2010) German-Georgian relations during WWI are explored in a very precise way. WWI was continuing far from Georgia, on the Western border of Russian Empire. Majority of Georgian intelligence believed Germany's victory was inevitable. Moreover, they hoped on that victory. Of course, there were Anglophiles and Francophiles as well, who supposed that after their winning Great Britain and France would push Russia towards the Democracy/Democratization and that war would only improve the situation in Georgia. Caucasian gendarmerie was suspiciously watching different parties, and generally, as usual, used to prepare reports about their activities.

From July, 28/August, 10, all subjects of Germany and Austria-Hungary, who has served in the Russian Army before, were proclaimed as military slaves. Reservists were deported from the European side of the Empire and Caucasus to the province of Viatka, Vologda, and Orenburg. However, many soldiers with German origin continued to serve in Russian Army. Call up of German colonists was going on with the same speed as it was in 1915, the majority of them was thrown from the Western front to Caucasian battlefield. In his work Bakradze (2010) mentions that civilians as well as those who served in Consulate had the right to leave the country in case of the condition if they were not suspected in being spies. But generally, all most famous German people were suspected. So "Spy-mania" * (Espionage mania) and groundless arrests started. The people stayed in prison till the Revolutionary year of 1917. As stated by Bakradze (2010), Russian press started to be filled up with "German phobic" articles. As for the Georgian press, it did not follow the same kind of hysteria. The name of Empire's capital, which sounded in German manner, mainly Sankt-Petersburg, was immediately changed to "Russian" Petrograd. Germans were deprived rights to be grouped in public places. Only group of two people was allowed to speak the German language. German schools started to become Russian ones. Even a bishop of Tavrid and Simferopol, Dimitri appealed to Russian society "to show friendly love and attitude towards compatriots who differ from us by origin and language." Though Supreme Commander-in-Chief Nikolai Nikolaevich called that statement "absolutely Not contemporary!". (ბაკრაძე, 2010, pp. 24-27)

Bakradze (2010) declares, that the only Caucasian newspaper, that was written in the German language – "Kaukasische Post" was closed in the very beginning of the war. All published or printed papers were annihilated in the editorial office. The most "precious foundation" of the newspaper - German type/print hardly founded by the editor, disappeared. As for Turks, they

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couldn't decide whether they are going to start the war or not. But German forcing had some results; German ships, which were acting under the Turkish flag-"Goeben" (Turkish "Yavuz Sultan Selim") and "Breslau" ("Midili") put fire on Russian Cruiser on October 13/27. The first place to be bombed in Georgia was Poti, on October 25/ November 7. After bombing Black Sea Ports of Russia, Russia declared war against Ottoman Empire on November, 2. The Caucasus became the front-line region. (ბაქრაძე, 2010, pp. 29-30) In order to examine the activity of Georgian National Committee, Bakradze (2010) in his study describes the circumstances of its formation. Since Germany considered "Revolutionism" (Revolutionary acts) as the best tool for fighting and destroying the enemy in the war, representatives of the German government started to negotiate about the issue with Constantinople. In the middle of August, Professor of Geneva University, Leo Kereselidze, with the recommendation of the former president of Switzerland, met German Consul in the Revolutionizing of Georgia.

At the end of August two catholic Georgians, probable priests in Constantinople demanded from Austrians and later, from Germans guns for revolt and guarantee for Georgian autonomy. The head of German foreign department-state secretary Von Jago informs Constantinople about his plan to negotiate with Georgians. Constantinople should become the place for Georgians to come together. Here, in Constantinople, ambassador Wangenheim would hold threads of German Policy towards the Caucasus. He was the initiator of meeting with Leo Kereselidze, who just had arrived from Geneva, with Talaat and Enver Pasha at the beginning of September. On September 14, 1914, Baron Wangenheim, on behalf of the German government, sent a promising letter to Georgian immigrants writing that "in case if German government will have any, even a small opportunity to affect belligerents, it will carry out the obligations to fulfill the wishes of Georgian people." Germans promised lavish territories to Georgians, that was against the plans of their ally – Ottoman Empire. For instance, Batumi and northern part of Kars's regions would be included in the borders of future Georgia, thus becoming the leading country in the Caucasus, that once again couldn't be among the interests of Ottomans.

Germans also helped Georgians who eagerly tried to reach Constantinople. Mainly, Germans provided them with false passports changing names for instance, of Nestor Maghalashvili to Nestor Murban, Petre Surguladze to Pier Surat, Giorgi Kereselidze to Georg Kerele and so on, thus enabling them to reach Turkey through neutral Italy. Whole Europe and especially Georgians, who lived in Europe were filled with patriotic feelings and huge desire to negotiate with the Georgian Committee and reach Turkey with the help of Germany. One of the results of Georgians' meetings in Constantinople was the creation of Expanded Committee of Independence, with the elder Petre Surguladze as a head. Chief representatives of the multinational Committee were catholic priest Shalva Vardidze, Georgian Muslims – Meliton Kartsivadze, same Osman or Meliton Bey, Zia Bey Abashidze and Nestor Maghalashvili, same Murad Bey. Machabeli and Tsereteli continued to be the key intellectual forces of the Committee. Incidentally, one thing has to be mentioned, that Germany's benevolence towards Georgia was conditioned not only by Georgians' good organizational skills but the positive impression that Machabeli and Tsereteli had left over German society in Berlin.

Besides all above mentioned, based on the memorandum presented by Machabeli and Tsereteli, Georgians also demanded to get back their legal rights, that were taken by the Russian government. Primarily, Georgia should take back its lost territories and restore its previous historical borders, therefore, meaning that Tbilisi and Kutaisi "Gubernias" (provinces), with Zakatala and Sokhumi, Batumi and Northern part of Kars distinct should be included. Ottoman Empire could owe lands between Yerevan province and Kars distinct, which were lost by Ottomans in 1878 and where the majority of the population were Turks; but by no means, the territory populated by Georgians. According to Machabeli and Tsereteli, in case of Germany's support, the real armed revolt would be launched, which in its turn, would resist the sending of the Russian army to the Northern front, thus making impossible the continuation of mobilization in the Caucasus that would lead to the peaceful situation on the Eastern front of Germany. In

addition, the revolt would be an example for other oppressed nations. The fact was that Georgian plans coincided with the German goals regarding the firstly, reaching unilateral peace with Russia, and secondly, limiting Russian territories to the strictly ethnically Russian state through the revolution of non-Russian nations. The situation progressed in favor of Georgian and German plans. Leo Kereselidze was sent by the Georgian committee to the Black Sea Coastline to increase the number of volunteers from Lazis and Georgian Muslims as well as to provide negotiation with Georgia. Agent Luis Mozel was working from German side beside Leo Kereselidze and other Georgians. Germans not only started to help Georgians with guns but also decided to limit the activity of "Young Turks' committee" because "Young Turks" didn't like the separated action of Caucasian People and aimed at subordination of Caucasus. As for Georgians, they were divided into different groups. Therefore, their views and policy were quite complicated. Among them there were Georgian slaves, who had great influence and fear of Russia, who still considered themselves "Russian soldiers" and ignore Anti-Russian propaganda at all; also, groups with favor towards Germany; groups with Turkish orientation; as well as some neutral groups, people against Georgian Committee (such as noble Shershenlidze etc.) and Georgian Committee itself.

In November 1917, Giorgi Machabeli once again tried to strengthen Anti-Russian policy among Georgians and appealed to 77 officers to request their transfer to one camp. Thus, Machabeli supposed to spread German influence over them much more easily. (ბაქრაძე, 2010, pp. 32-77) Concerning Support in Publishing activity, Bakradze (2010) reveals that in 1915 "Nachrichtenstelle" started to publish newspapers in Hindi, Arabic, Georgian and Turkish languages. For Muslims the newspaper was called "El Jihad", for Georgians - "Caucasus", Georgian one was decorated with one of the famous quotes of Shota Rustaveli. Soon Giorgi Kereselidze was invited to rewrite the newspaper; translation of the newspaper was led by Mikheil Tsereteli. In February 1916, publishing of the newspaper "Caucasus" was stopped. New one had a form of a magazine, and was called "Georgian newspaper" even though it didn't consider itself an heir of "Caucasus".

Editor of the newspaper, Giorgi Kereselidze, brought the printing house of previous "Free Georgia" and scripts from Geneva. Germany totally passed the additional issues of the newspaper to Georgia, as a part of their policy. The circulation of the newspaper in 1916 was 1000. "Georgian Newspaper" was a big success for "Nachrichtenstelle" as well. After declaring independence of Georgia, and the dismissal of Georgian Committee, "Georgian Newspaper" was exhausted. In October 1918, there was already planned to publish new Georgian-German magazine, that becomes clear from the notes made by "Nachrichtenstelle", according to which there was planned to establish 1. Fortnightly magazine, edited by both – German and Georgian editors as well as 2. Weekly survey of Caucasus press. (ბაქრაძე, 2010, pp. 90-106) Bakradze (2010) in his inspiring research also gives us interesting information about the foundation of Georgian-German society.

At the end of 1915, there was decided to found Georgian-German society aiming at establishing closer cultural and economic relations between Germany and Georgia, as well as with Caucasus region, as well as strengthening tourists' interests towards Caucasian countries. Society was established at the beginning of 1916. Caucasian people, except Armenians, have never founded such organization during the war. The head of the Georgian-German Society was the member of Reichstag, secret advisor (Geheimrat), Prof. Drew Franz Von Liszt (1851-1919), secretary – German-Jewish publicist Davis (David) Trietsch (1870-1935), vice-head – Giorgi Machabeli. The first article published by Georgian-German Society gives quite clear information about its plans, such as establishing a library and so on. Members of the society published articles, joined Eastern European events, etc. Important funding was done to "The League of Oppressed Nations" (created by oppressed nations of Russia) by Germany, and the fall of German Empire in 1918 caused the termination of League's activity. Dependence of the League on Germany was relatively clear. (ბაქრაძე, 2010, pp. 109-125) As for the issue of recognition of Independence of

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Georgia/Caucasus – In November 1917, The Central Powers* (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Empire) agreed to promise Georgian Committee orally to recognize an Independence of Georgia. But G. Machabeli and G. Kereselidze considered having the official agreement in the form of a written document. On December 17, Germany already officially informs Georgia about Germany's agreement aimed at the recognition of Georgian Independence. Concerning Ottomans, they also agreed with the condition to take back lost cities of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum.

Emphasizing the main subject of our paper, the following paragraph will cover the support of Germany in Georgia's independence in May 1918. Kazemzadeh (1951) in his work describes the course of events in the South Caucasus and the Democratic Republic of Georgia of 1917-1920. During WWI and the Russian Revolution and civil war of 1917-20, the South Caucasian trade corridor became the focus of International rivalry. The armies and fleets of the Germans, Turks, British and Russians desperately needed oil. A Trans-Caucasian Democratic Federate Republic (TDFR) was created on (9)22 April 1918, but this new state lasted barely a month due to internal divisions between the three founding nations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and to military pressure from Turkey to gain control over substantial parts of the Armenian and Georgian populated territories that it claimed as its own. Under such pressure, the TDFR split into the independent states of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia in May 1918. All were run by governments of a leftist and secular orientation. Georgia, the first of the South Caucasian States to announce independence on 26 May 1918, had the support of Ottoman Turkey. In return, German-Georgian agreements signed on 28 May 1918 included an article that gave Germany agreements signed on use of Georgian railways for the transportation of its men and material. The port of Poti as well as all railroad stations were to be occupied by German troops. Germany had strong economic interests in mining, and in addition to its access to Georgia's ports and railways, Germany received full control over the Georgian fleet and priority rights to purchase raw materials from Georgia. (Kazemzadeh, 1951, p. 123) As reported by Putkaradze (2008), supplementary agreements were signed in Berlin in July 1918; the Georgian government was promised German loans guaranteed by profits from the rail system and the port of Poti. Germany promised to facilitate capital investments in Georgia, essential to its recovery. Three joint stock companies between the Georgian Manganese Company, operating manganese production and managing export; the Chiatura Railway Company, managing the railway connection between Chiatura (the source of Manganese production) and the main railway line in Shorapani; and the Poti Port Company, operating the port of Poti. (ფუტყარაძე, 2008, pp. 128-135)

Jones (2014) defines that these companies had 50/50 ownership between the Georgian government and German industrial groups. Georgian shares from those companies served as a guarantee for a loan of 54 million German marks for the Georgian government to conduct currency reform. The agreement on this was signed on 15 August 1918 in Berlin. The loan was issued by a group of German banks at a 6 percent interest rate, and revenues from the joint ventures were supposed to service the loan. Not all the agreements signed with Germany in the first months of independence were favorable to Georgia, but the Georgian government needed political and economic support from a major power. Unfortunately for the DRG, the country allied itself with the losing power. (Jones S. , 2014, p. 79)

Maxwell (2008) adds to the description of economic interests of the period, that Germany's initial offer of protection did not prevent Georgia from signing under duress an unfavorable peace agreement with Turkey in order to receive formal recognition of its independence. Agreements were signed on 4 June 1918; one of the supplementary treaties gave Turkey, as it had for Germany, the right to use the Georgian railway for transport of military personnel and goods. However, the German agreements were a priority for the Georgian Leadership, but there was another emerging power to contend with: Bolshevik Russia. Azerbaijan's oil and other Caucasian resources, such as manganese, were too important to the nascent Russian revolutionary state to retreat from the region. After the declaration of Azerbaijani independence,

for example, Soviet Russia continued to fight for control of Baku's economy. Lenin was concerned about the ability of the Baku Soviet to provide oil to the Red Army, which was in the midst of civil war. His telegram of 28 May 1918 to the leadership of the Baku Soviet declared that "most importantly, oil production should be secured". Within two weeks he sent another desperate telegram, ordering the Baku Soviet to "take necessary measures to rapidly export the oil products from Baku". (Maxwell, 2008)

As stated by Gachechiladze (2008), Soviet-South Caucasian relations in 1918-20 were centered on Russia's struggle against the "counter-revolution" in the non-Russian regions and the need for raw materials, especially oil. The British Empire, which occupied most of the South Caucasus in 1918, while the region's fate was being decided by the Paris Peace Conference, began to lose interest in Baku after the oil resources of Southern Iran and the Mosul area, formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, were secured. The government of Georgia recognized the importance of Georgia's strategic location and its port and railway infrastructure, but due to both internal and external instability, its lack of administrative experience and poor management of the economy, it was forced to seek patronage from the powerful Western States. Initially, Germany held some promise, but after its defeat, Britain became the focus of Georgian claims for independence and protection from aggressive Russian armies, Red or "White". (ვახეზილაძე, 2008, V 1. ch. IX) According to Kandelaki, Georgia attempted to establish trade and economic relationships with several European countries, with manganese as its key export product. Georgia was producing 70 percent of the world's production before the war. In addition to manganese, Georgia was exporting agricultural products including tea, tobacco, honey, and silk. The Georgian government allowed the free Circulation of the major currencies of the world on its territory, including pounds sterling, German marks, US dollars, Ottoman lira, and French francs. A local Georgian currency was introduced but soon inflated due to the government's policy of printing money to fund its welfare programs. Hyperinflation was a major factor of internal instability that Soviet Russia used to manipulate domestic dissatisfaction in Georgia.

Following its socialist principles, the Georgian government nationalized hydroelectric power, mineral springs and spas, the Tqibuli coal mines, the Chiatura manganese industry, ports, and railways. However, the social democratic leaders of Georgia were also pragmatists. The government was flexible. The agrarian reform, from 19 acres in grape and tobacco-growing areas to 40 acres in corn-growing areas, and 108 acres in sheep-and-cattle-raising areas. The middle-level nobility did not have their land expropriated and large landowners were promised compensation. (Kandelaki, 1960, pp. 145-163) However, several military conflicts, with Armenia, Turkey, and the Volunteer Army, as well as a de facto trade embargo by Bolshevik Russia, prevented normal functioning of the Georgian economy which sank into corruption and high unemployment. All three South Caucasian states policies and divisions made it far easier for Bolshevik Russia to establish control over the region.

In his research findings Jones (2014) asserts that on 28 April, 1920, Soviet Russia invaded Azerbaijan. Soviet rule was established in Armenia on 2 December 1920. On 25 February 1921, Georgia was annexed by military force. Russia occupied the entire South Caucasus. The Georgian government, after less than three years of independence, went into exile. European states, preoccupied with the division of German and Ottoman territories, and exhausted after four years of war, showed little interest in keeping the Soviet state out of the South Caucasus, and in 1921 the UK recognized Soviet Russia de facto, and in 1924, de jure. This meant acceding to Russian "rights" in the Caucasus. The political, military, and economic cost of maintaining Western control in the Caucasus was too high for Europeans. During the Soviet period, the Caucasus continued to serve as a major source of oil for the Soviet Union, both before and during WWII. However, due to redundant technologies and discoveries of abundant deposits of oil in other parts of the Soviet Union, most notably in Western Siberia, the role of Azerbaijani oil declined and so did the role of Batumi as an oil port (although Poti continued to be the primary port for dry cargo, not only for the Caucasus, but also for Central Asia). Poti serviced Iran after its revolution in 1979. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the re-creation of the three newly

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independent states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia gave these countries a second chance to develop their own resources-this time with the support of the international community – and regain some trading significance for the rest of the World. The oil discoveries in the Caspian Sea in the 1980s necessitated a new transportation network and created new opportunities for Georgia to serve as an important link in a new trade route from Central Asia to Europe and the Mediterranean. (Jones S. F., 2014, pp. 78-81)

Maybe collaboration and efforts of Germany together with Georgian Committee with the purpose of "Revolutionizing" the Caucasus have failed, but much of results were achieved exactly through the propaganda of Georgian Committee; it has prepared the favor of Germany towards Georgia. As reported by Bakradze (2008), the Caucasian policy of Germany was referred to as "foolishness" by many Germans themselves, recognizing that they would never get Georgia. Unfortunately, there was nothing known about the activity of Georgian Committee in Georgia itself, even if some people knew, they had a suspicious attitude towards it. One of the first newspapers, informing the readers about the Georgian Committee, was German "Kaukasische Post." Concerning the Social-Democrats - leading party in Georgia, they took advantage from the collaboration with the members of Georgian Committee before they followed German political orientation. As soon the party changed the course, they blamed the Committee in all failures in the process of moving to Entente. Georgian Committee was well aware, that in case of the collapse of their plans the Committee would never be thanked/nobody would express gratitude towards the Committee.

Possibly due to the existed circumstances, the fact that took place on Spring, 1918, would happen, in any case even without Georgians' and Germans' efforts, but however it is still noteworthy that, the active work of Germany, as well as that of the Georgian Committee during four years of World War I, has to be referred as the bright example of devotion to the idea – gaining independence of Georgia. One more thing has to be mentioned additionally – Georgian Committee has remained loyal to the hosting country and never tried to contact or perform "political games" with Germany's rivals.

At the beginning of Great War, no one even guessed that the war would last four years – full of disappointment, hopelessness, tiredness, blaming, and in such hard, extraordinary situation Georgian Committee endured all difficulties and worked hard to reach the long-wished independence of Georgia. Moreover, after the declaration of independence, the Committee exposed absolute loyalty to new Georgian government and even as far as possible served the government for the future prosperity of the country. On May 26, 1918, the biggest dream of Georgian National Committee - Independent Georgia – has come true; but all struggle and devotion of the Committee passed away as one usual epopee. In those particular years, neither Germany nor the separative group of Georgian immigrants has had any action plan. The collaboration during the First World War was caused by the coincidence and accordance of their interests. The intensive relations that lasted during whole War years resulted in Germany's broad interest towards Georgian independence and laid a basement for Germany to have a superior role in the declaration of Georgian's independence and in building its state.

In contrast with other Western countries, the active role of Germany, especially in 1918-21, strengthened already existed Germanophile tendency among Georgian society that exists till today. In spite the fact that activity of the Georgian committee was depended on Germany's political and financial support, members of Georgian committee have never been Germany's agents and were free in their actions. Germany from its side has become completely depended on Georgian committee in the process of leading Georgian and Caucasian policy. Georgian committee has played a significant role not only in "Georgian", but also in the Caucasian strategy of Georgia. One of the main directions of the Georgian national committee was making the Georgian propaganda abroad and among other nationalities. The mentioned propaganda made it possible not only for Germany and its allies but also for the rest politically engaged society to

be acquainted with Georgia and its problem; Never before relations between Georgia and foreign organization have been so intensive and desirable as they were during the First World War.

Georgian Committee negotiated not only with the "oppressed" nations of Russia but also with representatives of various states of the world. Georgian Committee fought with words and actions on behalf of the idea of consolidation of Georgian nation. It called for the unity and equality of rights of Georgian Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics as well as Georgian Jews. The members of the Committee were Orthodox, Catholics, and Muslims. Georgian Committee was the first serious Georgian organization that was not satisfied with the fact of Georgia being autonomous but eagerly tried to reach the highest goal – Independence. Among other significant achievements of Georgian Committee, a special place is given to the creation of Georgian Legion, that was considered to become the nucleus of future Georgian Army. The Legion was formed in 1915 by Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg. He was a former German vice-consul in Tbilisi, later a German liaison officer with the Ottoman 3rd Army. He was helped by the German Empire-based Committee of Independent Georgia. The members of the legion were prisoners of war and the Muslim Georgian areas and Lazistan, all approximately 15,000 soldiers. The Legion was first commanded by Lieutenant Horst Schliephack. Leo Kereselidze was the highest-ranking Georgian officer. The Legion, as a part of the German Caucasus Expedition, During the Russo-Turkish campaign in 1916-1917 was located in Tirebolu Mountains, beside the Harsit River, nearby the Black Sea. The legion was supposed to promote a revolt in Georgia, occupied by Russia; In fact, it remained under German control, while the Ottomans wanted to use it as a battalion for their army. A lengthy fight in Giresun until 1917 ended the tension after the straining of relationships between the German-backed Georgians and the Ottoman government. In 1918, the previous Georgian volunteer officers joined the National Army of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

Late in 1915, the Order of Queen Tamar was introduced for an issue to the soldiers and officers of the Georgian Legion. Though that dream was predestined from the very beginning, the existence of the Legion underlined that Georgian people could struggle for country's better future not only by word, but with guns as well.

However, the formation of new Independent Georgia has been performed without the Georgian Committee, its propaganda and efforts played an important role in connecting Georgia with Germany and its allies. In fact, the Georgian Committee was a bridge between Georgia and Europe. Above mentioned status was, in its turn, achieved by the financial and moral support of Germany. By the creation of strong and steady links between Georgia with other nations, Georgian National Committee becomes the first initiator of Georgian free integration in Europe without Russian interference (ბაქრაძე, 2010, pp. 275-285). Following the variance of previous studies on this subject matter, the current study intends to derive relevant conclusions about the relationship between Germany and Georgia during the World War I and formation of Independent Georgian state in 1918-1921 and finally highlight Germany's role in this process.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. Performed qualitative methods are aimed to discover the views, perception and opinions of different authors about the issue. It emphasizes on subjective interpretation and facilitates effective and in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The desk research part yielded literature review which formed a theoretical foundation of the study and defined its scope and perspectives. Literature review gave us an opportunity to substantiate research problems, detect existing scholarly knowledge concerning the research problems.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The attempts of former Russian colonies to declare themselves as sovereign states in the first quarter of the century were welcomed with indifference by the West, resulting in Bolsheviks reabsorbing the struggling nations for independence and forming an even larger Empire. Ironically, today the very same people still struggle for their sovereignty and territorial integrity as they did at the beginning of the 20th century and the powerful northern neighbor is suppressing them in the struggle up to that time. Should the Western government react or keep their former indifference and face the results of a growing giant power, posing a threat to the whole international community? History is a collection of the lessons that teach us how to lead our choices and build our safe future, so the events of 1918-1921 have very many commonalities with today's state of Georgia. Fortunately, today the international factors are entirely different and the results are expected to be very different. Now the role of the United States and Europe is completely changed when compared with their role in earlier stage discussed: Europe is no longer suffering from post-war devastated state, and there is no tremendous political debt, on the contrary, it is wealthy and exercises "soft power" of supposed democracy and international political solidarity.

As might be expected, Russia is no longer fueled by a strong political ideology today, but despite general weaknesses and socio-economic problems of the previous century, it still exploits its power of the "free hand" which was granted to it when the Western Powers left in 1920-1921 and with the nuclear control threat it continuously intends to do all in its authority to regain the former imperial influence by undermining the sovereignty of its former annexed states and the stability in the states by initiating conflicts both unarmed and armed. Georgia's debut as a modern European, a decent part of the European Community state was hailed by the leaders of the Second Socialist International, such as Ramsay MacDonald, Karl Kautsky, Emile Vandervelde, Ethel Snowden, and many others during its brief independence, Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG) under a social-democratic government in the 20th century.

Leaders of Georgian Republic sympathized Germany arising from the long political connection with German Social Democratic Party and the fact that Germany's government was willing to support Georgia's Independence had a reversed effect on the victorious partners believing the claim of Georgia as a part of the European family. After the defeat of Bolshevism in Russia, the allies were divided among themselves; a part became more concerned with helping Russia's Volunteer Army and others having various arguments in supporting the struggling Caucasus states for independence. As a result of different cabinet discussions, Western forces, namely the small British military detachments took up a temporary Caucasian Mandate and after the events that developed and discussed in the article abandoned Georgian territories in July 1920. Unfortunately, the invasion of the Red Army that followed the abandonment in February 1921 suspended Georgia's dreams for many decades, the independence of DRG lasted merely three years.

The newly emerged republic of Georgia of 1991 has lasted more than two decades. Comparing the geopolitical situation of 1918-21, recent conditions are far better, while the first republic failed to gain support, but only managed to gain a declaratory recognition of its de jure independence in early 1921 by members of Supreme Council of that time. Georgia was not granted any aid for development and its potential as a transit was ignored and left into the chaos and disorder. Problems arose with diplomatic representatives when socialist leaders of Georgia were regarded with doubt by foreign states. This was partially due to the nonexistence of normative principles on non-intervention, which would give more prospects to Georgia's gaining independence. All in all, in both periods one factor being constant is the external threat of the former colonial power of Russia and its supposedly consideration of Georgia as its "privileged sphere of interest", a case that must be dealt throughout Caucasus region and its states. From the lessons learned by history, the crucial role of Germany in declaration of independence by

the act of May 16, 1918, and its preparatory period of being a guarantor. Crucial factor here is the support of Germany during the above-mentioned period, namely the circumstances under which the Act of Independence was declared, which served as a motivation for Georgians to struggle more for the bright future.

Today, the relationship between Georgia and Germany is in the process of development and has been a positive ongoing trend for the last couple of decades. The experience earned in support of Germany for Georgia in its gaining of the first Independence is notable and needs to be studied further since the clarification and relevant theoretical explanation of the above-mentioned aspects, developments and characters are also relevant nowadays, and helpful for the future as well.

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