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GEORGIA IN HISTORY AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

By DR. DAVID MARSHALL LANG

Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on October 30, 1957. Mr. C. A. P. Southwell, C.B.E.; M.C., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: First, I should like to express the apologies of Sir Hugh Dow, who was to have taken the chair, and to say what a privilege it is for me to occupy the chair in his absence.

Those of us who have been into even part of the area of Georgia are very often horrified by the lack of knowledge, even geographical, of these countries. The object of this Society is to try to bring the facts to our members. We are indeed fortunate today in having with us Dr. Lang, who is going to talk about Georgia. The title of his address covers a rather wide field, embracing history as well as present-day affairs. As a member of the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and following a diplomatic career in Tabriz and Teheran, he is well equipped to speak about this area, on which he has also published a book.*

As an outsider and a newcomer to this distinguished Society, I must say that when I received the invitation to come here today and address you, and when I saw the eminent names that make up your Officers and Council, I felt a certain trepidation. I became reassured, however, when I got to the end of the literature that was sent to me and I read in a memorandum for the guidance of lecturers that, while the Society includes numerous experts on different parts of Asia, many members are not well informed about particular countries. Should Georgia happen to be one of the particular countries about which some members of the audience may be particularly well informed, I hope that they will excuse the more or less elementary nature of some of the things that I want to say.

The excellent map which your Society has kindly provided illustrates the essentially "cross-roads" character of Georgia in the map of Russia and the Middle East. This factor has played an important part in the formation of the Georgian nation and of the Georgian national character. Georgia lies to the south of Russia, to the north-east of Turkey, and on yet another side to the north-west of Persia, and it is sandwiched between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. That means that Georgia, like Armenia, has been a focal point throughout its chequered history in the migrations of peoples and in the imperial power complexes which have existed in that region from time to time.

In prehistoric times the Caucasus region was a battleground for such races as the Scythians and the Cimmerians. But the earliest historical description of the Georgian tribes which is open to us is, I suppose, the very vivid, not to say lurid, account of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand

* *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832.* New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1957.

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on their retreat from Persia. Those of you who have read that work will remember that after crossing Armenia, where the local people lived in half-subterranean mud huts, Xenophon and the Greeks arrived among some strange people, the Chalybes, the Mossynoeci, and the Tibareni, and various others who inhabited a neighbourhood which has been identified as the present-day Lazistan.

You may remember reading how one of the tribes was so inhospitable and wild that rather than have anything to do with the Greeks, even in the way of trade, they threw themselves off the precipitous cliffs rather than be polluted by conversation with the foreigners.

Xenophon also remarked that the moral habits of some of these tribes left a lot to be desired. He remarked cryptically that what the Greeks did in private they did in public, and what the Greeks did in public they did in private, a sentence which has occupied the attention of commentators.

Another tribe inhabiting the area, incidentally, was known to classical writers as the Louse-eaters. That is the translation of their name, which was supposed to refer to their excessive animosity towards the use of baths.

I do not want to linger too much upon ancient history beyond reminding you that in those classical times the Caucasian languages, as nowadays, were already occupying the attention of philologists. Strabo recalls that the Romans, who occupied garrison towns and ports around where modern Sukhum is situated, had to employ up to seventy interpreters to cope with the seventy or more different languages spoken by tribes who came down there to do business with the garrisons.

The Georgians are essentially a Mediterranean race. That is to say, they are not a variety of Russians, a variety of Turks, or a variety of Persians. They are the survivors of an ancient family of peoples. Sometimes they are called Asianic and sometimes, when one is dealing with the theories of the late Professor Marr, one finds that they are called Japhetic. Perhaps it is wise to stick to a cut and dried geographical title and call them South Caucasian peoples. (They are, of course, the principal group living in the Transcaucasian area immediately to the south of the main Caucasus range.)

The Georgians—and here again, to protect oneself from scientific objection, one has to be careful—are said to belong to the same family as the Basques in France and Spain. The theory is that when the ancestors of the Greeks and Italians of today arrived from the north in the ancient invasions, they drove away the tribes whom they found living around the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Ægean coasts, and while the Basques took refuge on the Pyrenees and round the Bay of Biscay, the Georgians, a great deal further east, took refuge in the mountainous regions of the Caucasus, where they now live, and found shelter among the forests around the Black Sea and in the valleys backing on to the high Caucasus range.

The picture which such hypotheses present to us resembles, as will probably have occurred to you, the picture when the Ancient Britons were driven out of the middle of England by the Anglo-Saxons and took refuge in places like Cornwall and the mountains of wild Wales. (I speak as a Scotsman with due privilege when I refer to "wild Wales.")

In general, the Georgians are a well-built people with dark hair and aquiline features. The ones that I know tend to have bushy, beetling eyebrows and hawk-like noses. Their warlike ability has always been famous in the East and they are fine horsemen. I recollect reading one of the chronicles of the crusading period where the Georgians or Iberians of the Caucasus were described as a martial people living next door to Gog and Magog. (You are probably all aware that the mediæval mythology situated Gog and Magog very vaguely in an area north of the Caucasus and extending into Central Asia and as far east as one could go in mediæval times; in fact, about three-quarters of the area over which Marco Polo travelled would vaguely have been called Gog and Magog in the Middle Ages.) One of the Latin Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Jacques de Vitry, writes concerning the Georgians :

"They have done a great deal of damage to the Saracens and Medes and Mohammedan infidels, by whom they are everywhere surrounded. They wear their hair and beards about a cubit long and have hats upon their heads. When they come into the Holy City, they come in with trumpets blowing and banners flying, in spite of the local Saracen military leaders, who dare not molest them in any way."

In fact, this does not surprise one when one reflects that until recent years a Georgian nobleman would never go out without his gun and a belt full of daggers for fear of sudden attack by the hill tribesmen or perhaps by some hostile feudal neighbour. Until Soviet days it can be said that even at meal-times he would keep his dagger by him and use it for chopping up the meat.

It is also significant that the usual way of saying "good morning" is "Gamarjoba," which means "victory," and the reply is "Gagimarjos," which means "may you conquer."

I should like to emphasize that these warlike qualities of the Georgians are accompanied by a great dignity and charm of manner. Certainly one finds little trace of servility and bowing and scraping between the different classes of society. This was a factor often commented upon by Russian writers after the occupation of Georgia in 1801, Russia at that time being, as it is now, a thoroughly servile state divided into ruling classes and ruled in no uncertain way. The Russians were quite shocked to find Georgian peasants—officially serfs—sitting at table with their masters, addressing them quite familiarly and telling them exactly what they thought about any instructions that might be issued to them, in a perfectly intelligent way.

The Georgians are not an inhibited race, but appreciate the good things of life. They belong to the Mediterranean world in many aspects. You will not be surprised to hear that they produce their own excellent wine and are lavish with hospitality. There is a rich fund of Georgian folk songs and dances, which are accompanied on an instrument rather like a balalaika.

The Georgians may be divided into a number of well-defined regional groups. In Eastern Georgia is situated the capital city of Tiflis, otherwise known as Tbilisi. (An affectation by "Sovietologists" is to talk about

Tbilisi, which is the Georgians' form of name for their own capital, when Tiflis is meant, rather in the same way as someone might insist upon talking about Moskva when one means Moscow.) The people of Eastern Georgia around Tiflis have a certain aristocratic air. Their particular language is accepted as the literary one. If one could talk about the King's Georgian, one would select the Kartlian literary dialect. The Kakhetians, who had to defend the eastern marshes of Georgia against the Turks, the Mongols and the fierce Lezghians of Daghestan, have very pronounced tough peasant qualities and are well known for being rugged and bull-necked fighters.

The Western Georgians and Mingrelians, on the other hand, who live on the other side of the Likhi mountains over the Suram defile, are well known for being exceedingly wily. Beria, the late chief of the Soviet secret police, was a Mingrelian, but some might argue that towards the end of his life he was not quite wily enough.

Many amusing remarks about the Mingrelians are recorded in early embassy accounts from the Ottoman Porte. One reads in Busbecq's *Turkish Letters* in about 1559 of the Mingrelian prince who came to Constantinople with a large following of grubby and ragged retainers. He was a huge man, says Busbecq, but, alas, of a low level in civilization. When his funds ran out he started selling off his retainers one by one in the Constantinople slave market, until at last he went back with only two secretaries. The Mingrelians are well known for their mental agility and their skill at making money.

Actually the Chevalier Chardin had trouble with the Mingrelians when trying to land his famous cargoes of silks and other goods which he was taking from Constantinople to Isfahan. You may recall his account of a group of ragged-looking outlaws who tried to pillage him on the coast of Mingrelia and who later turned out to be the Customs officers. He reached Isfahan with a much smaller stock than he had on leaving Constantinople.

In geography and climate, Georgia is a land of contrast. In the western part, where the country slopes down to the Black Sea, there is a lush sub-tropical region around Batum and Poti with dense vegetation and malarial swamps, many of them now being drained out. The eastern part, including Tiflis, is more like Spain or Italy, with hot dry summers. Up in the hills there is an Alpine type of landscape. The great snow-clad peaks of Mount Elbruz and Mount Kazbek dominate the scene.

A certain topicality occurs to me connected with Mount Elbruz. After being present, as I also had the honour to be, at the inauguration of the new London University Union by Her Majesty, Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Dr. Dunsheath, the Chairman of Convocation, went off to London Airport to greet his wife, who had just come back from climbing to the top of Mount Elbruz. You might have read in this morning's paper that although it is 18,000 feet high, she said that it was quite an easy stroll to the summit. The great Freshfield, President of the Royal Geographical Society around 1900, climbed all these mountains and had a lot of trouble with the local people, because as soon as he disappeared through the mists they believed that he had been whisked away by spirits or that he was going up there for buried treasure, and that there were

large demons sitting on the top who would throw anyone off who got near the summit, the result being that they completely disbelieved Freshfield's claim to have climbed Mount Kazbek and other peaks. The Russians and the local Georgians can hardly credit that any mad Englishman would think of climbing to the top of a mountain unless there were treasure buried there!

Around these mountainous areas, where Georgia has its frontier with the North Caucasian Republics, in spite of collective farming, one may still find shepherds and hunters living much as they have done for hundreds of years, little affected by the social changes going on in the cities below.

The structure of Georgian society was founded, until the Russians came in 1801, on the system of feudal monarchy. As in mediæval Western Europe, the great noblemen held their lands in return for military service to the king in time of war, when they would appear on the battlefield picturesquely attired with helmets, swords and battle-axes, and their followers ranged beneath the lord's banner. As for the bishops, here again we find in the Eastern Orthodox Church of Georgia quite an affinity with the battling bishops of the West. The bishops enjoyed a good deal of political power and would ride into battle with their vassals.

Next in the hierarchy came the gentry, the squires, and at the bottom were the serfs, who were attached to the glebe and could be bought and sold with the land on which they worked. There was also a burgher class in the towns, with special privileges granted by the king.

The Royal House ruled by the doctrine of divine right. The dynasty were called the Bagratides, or descendants of Bagrat, which is the same as our St. Pancras. There is to this day a pretender to the Georgian throne, my very good friend by correspondence, Prince Irakli, or Hercules Bagration-Mukhransky. The Bagratid dynasty claimed to be descended in the distant past from King David and Solomon of Israel, although this was nothing but a piece of convenient propaganda. Practically speaking, the kings of Georgia did not wield unlimited despotic power, but depended a great deal on the advice and good will of the nobles. They ruled in a direct and patriarchal manner, dispensing justice in person and giving detailed attention to all affairs of state.

This patriarchal and somewhat informal rule was not accompanied by the growth of any really efficient or modern state apparatus such as we evolved in Western Europe under, say, Henry VII or Louis XI or Frederick the Great. The lack of anything like this in Georgia was one of the culminating causes of the fall of the monarchy in 1801. After all, the tendency, which prevailed everywhere in Europe and even in the East from the Middle Ages onwards, towards the bureaucratic-cum-despotic state, was strongly developed in large neighbouring powers. There was the Grand Duchy of Muscovy, which from the time of Ivan the Terrible onwards took in Astrakhan and large areas previously occupied by the Mongols and other tribes. Similarly, from the fall of Constantinople onwards, the Ottoman Turks consolidated their power not only in Anatolia but also in the North Caucasian region. The Crimea was under Ottoman suzerainty until 1783, when Catherine the Great took it over.

Down in Persia from 1500 onwards there was the dynasty of the Safavids, who were a well-organized, perhaps somewhat feudal and old fashioned, but efficient and ruthless military power; so that the Georgians remained cut off, and their political structure did not evolve like that of their neighbours.

It is interesting to note as a symptom of this that the Georgian legal code was based until a century ago on the same system of blood money, or wergild, that we had in England in Anglo-Saxon times. Each class of society had its own rate or tariff of blood money, ranging from about £5,000 for a prince or an archbishop downwards. If one prince killed another, for example, he had to pay the dead man's relatives the full tariff, but if a man killed someone of a higher social status than himself, he had to pay double, treble or many times the blood money, and he was liable to be done to death in an unpleasant way as well. If a nobleman, for example, wounded another or eloped with his wife, he had to pay the injured party a certain proportion of the full sum. Wounds were paid for according to the number of barley-corns that fitted into the scar. If the money was not paid a vendetta began, which might end, as in Corsica, with the extermination of whole families.

It is well known that the Caucasus features in the early history and mythology of the Western world. The legend of the Golden Fleece is set in the part of Georgia which corresponds to Mingrelia, which the Greeks called Colchis, where Jason sailed with the Argonauts and carried off the Golden Fleece and Medea the Enchantress. It is also well known that the Sultans of Turkey sent their agents to carry off the Georgian maidens. In the old days, most of the Shahs of Persia had Georgian princesses among their wives and concubines. Travellers record that the Georgian ladies were admired for their delicate complexions and slender figures.

The key event in early Georgian history is the nation's conversion to Christianity. Tradition relates that St. Nino, about whom I have written in a recent work on the Georgian saints,* was a Christian slave from Cappadocia who came to Georgia at the time of the Emperor Constantine the Great and worked miracles, which included, in the somewhat familiar pattern, an eclipse of the sun and a thunderbolt that destroyed the Pagan idols.

From then onwards, from about 330, the Georgians had their own church organization, while belonging, apart from a few lapses due to the infidel Persians' and Saracens' interference, to the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The golden age of Georgian history was the time of the famous Queen Tamar and the epic by Shota Rustaveli, "The Man in the Panther's Skin." This poem, translated into English by the late Marjory Wardrop and published by the Royal Asiatic Society, is cast in the form of an Eastern saga of Arabia, but actually relates to, and gives a fine picture of, the heroic ideals of Georgia in the age of chivalry. Many scholars, including my friend Mr. Robert Stevenson of Cambridge, have likened the

* D. M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*. London: George Allen and Unwin; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956.

chivalrous ideals of the Georgians to those of the troubadours and minstrels of the West.

At that time, the Georgians were able to lend a hand to the Crusaders. They formed a sort of second front behind Saladin and the Turks, who then controlled the Holy Land until the Crusaders drove them out for the time being. In the Georgian chronicles we read, for example, that the Franks came to Jerusalem and took the Holy City from the infidels. The services of the Georgians were much appreciated by the Crusaders themselves, who made some very complimentary remarks about their warlike qualities.

At that time Georgian mediæval art rose to a high peak, especially under Byzantine influence. It will be found as a rule that in Georgian art and architecture it is the church buildings, the frescoes and the enamels that show a Byzantine Greek influence, whereas in the secular, the lay, spheres such as illuminations of later manuscripts not connected with the church—*i.e.*, translations of many famous Persian poetical works which exist in Georgia—the illustrations and the general type of design are copies of the best Persian models of the Il-Khanian and Safavi periods. Georgian art is a not very well-known subject, but it is being increasingly followed up now by specialists in the field of art and archæology, as being an important meeting-point of many trends in Byzantine, Russian and Near Eastern art which would remain obscure without the Georgian evidence.

The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 was a great blow to Georgia. It meant that the country was cut off from direct contact with Western Europe and was ringed round by the hostile Mohammedan powers. In the eighteenth century there was a brief national revival under King Hercules, or Irakli II, who won victories over his hostile neighbours and helped Nadir Shah of Persia to conquer India. Frederick the Great thought highly of the Georgians' military talent and used to say, "In Europe there is I, in Asia the invincible Hercules of Georgia." Catherine the Great of Russia sent Hercules a small army under an obtuse German general to help him fight against the Turks, but, unfortunately, the Russian commander quarrelled with his allies and left them to fight the battles with the Turks themselves, while Catherine the Great claimed credit for the victories which the Georgians won.

By 1800 the situation had become impossible, with the country being raided continually from Persia and Turkey. Already in 1783, King Hercules II had signed a treaty of alliance and protection with Catherine the Great, whereby the Royal power was to be safeguarded in perpetuity in the Bagratid line and Russia was not to interfere in Georgian internal affairs, while protecting Georgia against the foreign invader. The result of this was that Tiflis was soon afterwards completely sacked by Agha Muhammad Shah, the founder of the Qajar dynasty in Persia. In further fulfilment of this treaty of protection and non-intervention, the Russians declared the monarchy abolished in 1801 and banished the reigning dynasty to various parts of Russia.

There Georgia remained for over a century until the 1917 Revolution, when, like many other national minorities of the old Russian Empire, she set up a social-democratic republic of her own. In the space of three

years, from 1918 to 1921, the Georgian popular government under its president, the late Noah Jordania, made remarkable progress in modernizing the country and reviving its national consciousness. A university was established at Tiflis. The Georgian Church, which had been placed by the Tsars under the Russian so-called Holy Synod, or Ministry of Religion, was given back its independent position.

Delegations of British trade unionists who visited Georgia during this period brought back highly favourable accounts of the infant republic's free institutions. It is only fair to add that other British trade unionists, who visited Georgia soon after the country had been forcibly invaded by the Russians and when thousands of Georgians were being as brutally done to death in the underground cellars of the OGPU as the Hungarians are in the torture chambers of Budapest today, also brought back favourable accounts of the progress and free development of the country.

The Bolsheviks meanwhile were biding their time. In 1920 they signed a pact of friendship and non-aggression with the Georgian Republic. In the following year, the Soviet Government put its pact of non-aggression into effect by invading Georgia and crushing resistance by the military force of the Red Army. Ironically enough, it was Stalin the Georgian who came in person to Tiflis to supervise the work of bolshevizing his home-land. Strange, indeed, must it have sounded to hear a Georgian supported by Russian bayonets urging the Georgian Communists to burn out the nationalist revival with red-hot iron and smash the hydra of nationalism. Stalin got a somewhat mixed reception in Tiflis and quarrelled violently with one famous local Georgian National Communist, later liquidated, named Philip Makharadze. This man had forgotten to exclude diversionary elements from the meeting hall where Stalin came, and they started throwing tomatoes at him. Georgia is now one of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union. Many Georgian patriots prefer death or exile to life under the Kremlin.

It would, of course, be unfair to give a totally negative picture of conditions in Georgia under Soviet rule. Much has certainly been done to develop the country's rich mineral resources. The oil refineries at Batum have grown in size and importance. Batum is one of the great refineries which process crude oil from Baku and supply it to Great Russia and to the main regions of the Soviet Union. Important manganese deposits which supplied Western Europe in the days before 1914 now work for Soviet industry. The Black Sea region is well suited for tea planting and grows almost the entire supply for the Russian housewife, while plantations of lemons and oranges have been greatly extended in recent years.

In a talk some years ago, I mentioned Georgian tea, and as a result I had several inquiries from English tea firms about the Soviet tea-picking machines, of which they had heard alluring tales. They look like combine harvesters and attractive pictures had been published in Soviet journals. I was, however, brought up short when I read in the accompanying text that these tea-picking machines are as yet in an experimental stage, and the work is actually done by hand.

Georgian wine is bottled in large quantities. Kakheti wine is popular and is shipped to connoisseurs in Moscow and Leningrad. Georgia has

a number of seaside resorts and mineral water spas, which cater for the tired worker or party official from the big cities of industrial Russia.

The capital city of Tiflis, on the banks of the River Kura, has a population of over 500,000. The old city has its mosques and its hot baths and its natural water springs, which are thought to have given rise to the name "Tbilisi" (from the Georgian word "tbili," hot). The old city of Tiflis is now overshadowed by modern schools and factories, but in the bazaar quarter one still meets representatives of all the varied peoples and tribes of the Caucasus.

When I said that I would speak on current affairs, perhaps I led members of the audience to feel that I might be talking a great deal more about the Soviet nationality problem in general, and on Stalin and his Georgian background and his relevance to present-day politics. I thought, however, that I should probably serve the interests of this meeting better by concentrating this time on the background, to give you some idea of who the Georgians are, what they have brought into civilization, what their traditions are and what their national aspirations have been, are, and may be in the future. One thing upon which, I am sure, this Society would be generally agreed, and which we in the West must never underestimate, is the fact that the Soviet Union, which revolves round the Communist Party Præsidium in Moscow and presents itself to the outside world as a monolithic entity, is not really a homogeneous structure at all. It is, as is becoming increasingly recognized, a kind of ideological colonial bloc or imperialist bloc of the old school. This fact has been masked by the cleverness with which Marxism has been elevated into a militant ruling caste religion, just as in centuries long past the Holy Inquisition operated as an international ruling agency based on the Papal See.

I speak as an Anglican with many Roman Catholic friends, and I hope that I should not offend anyone if I said that this international character of the Holy Inquisition had many common factors with international Communism today. The latter transcends nation and country, and this often blinds people to the underlying national tensions which are bound to come out into the open sooner or later. Under the guise of religious reform, the Reformation caused a number of peoples to break away from the hegemony of Rome on largely nationalist and political grounds. The rebellion against the authority of the Pope took on both a political and a religious colouring, just as the Hungarian revolt and the many deviations and "heresies" which we now see emerging in the Communist bloc are argued out partly on nationalist and political, and partly on Marxist dialectical—*i.e.*, ideological and quasi-religious—lines. One can see the analogy time and time again.

Georgia and many other minority peoples in the Soviet Union are potential nations on their own. I must say that I am appalled when I read the utterances of some of our American confrères in high office who have spent years telling these unfortunate peoples of the Soviet bloc to revolt, but who, when the Hungarians or some other wretched nation such as the Georgians do rebel, simply sit by and say that the risk of a world cataclysm is too great to do anything for them. Therefore, I would be the last to say that it is our duty to play up the inherent revolutionary factors

within the Soviet imperialist system. It is, however, something which we in the West should study and be aware of that within the Soviet Union there are not only Russians—White Russians, Red Russians or Little Russians, as the Ukrainians so resent being called, Mr. Khrushchev being the most prominent Little Russian at the moment—but there are also peoples who, like the Georgians, have been, if not great nations, at least interesting nations, independent and lively nations in the past, and may, if it please God, be independent nations one day in the future.

Group-Captain SMALLWOOD: Dr. Lang has told us about the refinery at Batum and the oilfields at Baku. Is there any geographical reason why the oil should not be refined at Baku and sent off in the refined state rather than transported all the way across that large area of country to a refinery?

Dr. LANG: I know that there are present a lot of people who know much more about the intricate mechanics of the international oil system than I do, but I had always understood that Batum acquired its primary importance in pre-Soviet days when there was no good transport system from Baku into Central Russia. There was, and still is, the railway, but it was found about fifty years ago, in the days of Gulbenkian and company, economical to pipe it across Transcaucasia and refine it in Batum. It was then shipped off in tankers, as is done from Abadan nowadays, straight to Europe, or to Odessa and other ports around the Black Sea. There are refineries in Baku also, but from the transport point of view we must remember that the Caspian is not a sea but a closed lake.

Mr. NEUMAN: May I ask about the deportations? There were many deportations before the war from Georgia to Russia and Siberia. How big was this movement?

Dr. LANG: At which period?

Mr. NEUMAN: At various periods. Will you tell us of the periods you know after 1917?

Dr. LANG: You are not interested in the deportations that took place under the Russian Tsars particularly?

Mr. NEUMAN: Let us do one job at a time!

Dr. LANG: The deportations were mostly in connection with the patriotic uprisings, of which the most important one took place in 1924, the year I was born. For obvious reasons, the numbers of people who were done to death or deported by the Bolsheviks have never been disclosed. Various uprisings occurred at intervals. Of course, there were sporadic disturbances, which one does not hear of, happening all the time. I understand that a number of people were, shall we say, "transferred" in connection with the curious or paradoxical demonstrations that took place in Tiflis when Khrushchev denounced that great Georgian statesman Stalin, who had been so successful in turning the whole Soviet Union into a Georgian empire for thirty years that the Georgians could not refrain from cheering.

Miss BROWNE: Is there any philological connection with the Basques?

Dr. LANG: I always fight shy of this question, because many scholarly reputations have "gone west" on these points. Professor Vogt, of Oslo, an extremely able and cautious scholar, thinks that it cannot be shown

that it is either related or unrelated and that the present evidence is insufficient for any positive conclusion.

Mr. PAXTON: Why have the Georgians a reputation for being much more accommodating to the Russians than the other Caucasians? Certainly in 1919 the Georgians were largely responsible for the collapse of the Caucasian resistance to the Red Russians when they eventually Sovietized the area. Is it due to their religion, or to the fact that so many Georgians were prominent in the revolution itself?

Dr. LANG: I cannot accept that proposition, formulated in that way, about the Georgians being responsible for any collapse in 1919, because, after all, the Georgians continued to have their own government until 1921, when they were forcibly invaded by the Bolsheviki. I do not, therefore, understand what the question alludes to.

Mr. PAXTON: I meant, in 1921.

Dr. LANG: It seems to me that you are leading me by your question, because I do not quite follow the premise.

Mr. PAXTON: I can only refer you to a book by Lord Haldane attributing the collapse of the Caucasus to the action of the Georgians in not uniting with the others.

Dr. LANG: Not uniting with the others—that is it. Still to this day I am reproached by my Georgian friends who say: "You sent your officers to us in the name of Denikin, the White Russian leader, and told us to join with him. We would not, and then Denikin collapsed and we were invaded. It was all your fault. How could you expect us to unite with this Denikin, an emissary of the Tsars, who at that time seemed a good deal more dangerous than the Bolsheviki?" In 1920, when the Bolsheviki were thought by British statesmen to be on the verge of collapse, and people said, "We shall see the old régime re-established in a week or two," it was unreasonable to expect these Caucasians to unite with the White Russians to keep the Red Russians out. To understand the ins and outs, I recommend a book by F. Kazemzadeh, a Persian scholar with Russian connections, and who is at present at Yale, called *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*.

I could not possibly in the time at our disposal deal with the question of whether the Georgians' attitude to the Russians let the whole side down in the Caucasus at the time. It is much too complicated, especially as the Georgians also had to deal with the Armenians, who were unfriendly to Georgia and in any case succumbed themselves before the Georgians did, and also with the Azerbaijani Turks, who, as Mohammedans, were unsympathetic to both Armenians and Georgians, the three nations being therefore divided almost like a matrimonial triangle.

Mr. EGERTON: Were the Georgian women who were taken as the wives of the Egyptians and the Turks the same as the Circassian women? If so, were they the same people as those now forming the Circassian colonies in Syria?

Dr. LANG: No. We must make a distinction there. The Circassians are a North Caucasian people. The Adigey Circassians, a warlike folk, have always been on good terms with the Georgians, but they are a distinct people. The Circassian ladies were sometimes preferred to the

Georgians because they were supposed to have more feminine modesty and distinction of bearing.

Mr. NEUMAN : How many Georgians are there out there now?

Dr. LANG : About three million.

Colonel ROUTH : In your very well-informed studies of that area, did you come to any conclusion about the "cradle of human civilization" when man decided that he would stop hunting and grow crops and live in villages? It is suggested that that started between the Caspian and the Black Sea. I wondered whether you came across any evidence of that kind of story.

Dr. LANG : I must crave indulgence for not attempting a reply to that one. I feel very much like the founders of the Philological Society who had to face the question of the origin of language, and accordingly decreed in their original statutes that no discussion should take place in the Philological Society on the question of the origin of language! I feel myself in the same position in regard to that question.

The CHAIRMAN : Our time is up. I would like to ask just one question, and I should be glad to have an answer either "Yes" or "No." Am I correct in feeling that Georgia, with its two thousand years of civilization, its literature, its architecture, and so on, has never really undertaken the nationality effort of expansion—nationalized expansion—into the other countries?

Dr. LANG : The answer is "Yes" and "No"—yes, you are right; no, it has not.

The CHAIRMAN : I know that you will want to thank Dr. Lang for his most pleasant approach to this very comprehensive subject on which he has enlightened us today and to give him your thanks in the appropriate manner. We are very glad to have had him with us.

(The vote of thanks to Dr. Lang was accorded by acclamation.)

