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THE STRUGGLE
OF THE
CAUCASIAN PEOPLES
FOR INDEPENDENCE

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INTRODUCTORY. Caucasia lies between two continents—Europe and Asia. Separated from the former by the Black Sea and from the latter by the Caspian Sea, Caucasia represents a borderland of each of these two continents and is therefore a country of Eastern Europe as well as of Western Asia.

Politically Caucasia is divided into two parts—North Caucasia and South Caucasia, or Transcaucasia, the dividing line being the crest of the main chain or the water-shed of the Great Caucasus range. Actually, however, Transcaucasia in the political sense extends in places beyond this dividing line, as Eastern Georgia in the North and Azerbaijan in the North East.

Caucasia has an area of about 480,000 sq. klm.¹ and is twice as large as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

When speaking of the contemporary history of Caucasia we have to consider separately four groups of Caucasian peoples: the North Caucasians, the Azerbaijanians, the Georgians, and the Armenians, the North Caucasians inhabiting the northern part of the country and the others the southern part or Transcaucasia, of this Azerbaijanians occupy the south-eastern part and the Georgians the central and western parts. The real Homeland of the Armenians lies within the boundaries of Turkey—round Lake Van and North and North-West of it, only a portion being situated in the extreme South of Central Transcaucasia.

These four countries have together a population of about 11,000,000 (1939 census) distributed as follows:—

North Caucasia	2,800,288	Capital Orjonikidze ²)	Popul.	127,172.
Azerbaijan	3,209,727	„ Baku	„	809,347.
Armenia	1,281,599	„ Erevan	„	200,038.
Georgia	3,524,289	„ Tbilisi	„	519,175.

Before World War I (1914—1918) Caucasia was part of the Russian Empire, and constituted a separate administrative unit, the Vice-Royalty of Caucasia, which had its centre at Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.

SETTING UP OF OWN STATE ORGANISATIONS. As a result of the First World War part of the territory of Transcaucasia went to Turkey and as a result of the Revolution of February 1917 Caucasia regained her independence. North Caucasia convoked her first all—North Caucasian Assembly in Vladikavkaz (now Orjonikidze) in March 1917, the deliberations of which resulted in the formation of the Union of the peoples of North Caucasia and Daghestan, which later, in December of the same year, was proclaimed a Republic—the Republic of the Union of North Caucasia and Daghestan, or North Caucasian Republic.

The advent to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia was followed by the breaking off of all relations by the nationalities of all Caucasia with Central Government in Petrograd. On the 11th May 1918 the independence of North Caucasia was declared formally and notified to all Powers. Soon after that it was de jure recognised by Turkey and de facto by Germany.

In Transcaucasia the Extraordinary Transcaucasian Commissariat, appointed by the Provisional Government of Petrograd, was dissolved, and on the 11th November 1917 the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijanian leading political parties formed a Joint Provisional Government—the Transcaucasian Commissariat (President E. Gueguetchkori, a Georgian). In February 1918 the Transcaucasian *Seym*³) was convened, which elected C. Tcheidze (a Georgian) as its President, and which in April 1918 was transformed into

¹) Geographical and not political area is to be understood.

²) Formerly Vladikavkaz.

³) Parliament.

the Federal Democratic Republic of Transcaucasia. The independence of this Republic was formally proclaimed on April 22nd and it was recognised by Turkey on April 28th.

The next step to be taken was to effect the unification of the two Republics—the North Caucasian and the Transcaucasian—into one federative or confederative republic, to create a kind of Caucasian Switzerland. The respective negotiations were started at Batumi at the beginning of May 1918. However, they soon broke down owing to external circumstances, which proved to be not only the obstacle to the unification of all Caucasia, but also even a cause of the disintegration of the already established Federal Republic of Transcaucasia.

Two months before the proclamation of the Federal Republic of Transcaucasia, Moscow had by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty ceded to Turkey the Provinces of Batumi, Ardahan and Kars. This naturally aroused great indignation throughout the country and the Transcaucasian Sejm protested against this decision before the Powers. In spite of the fact that already in December 1917 the Transcaucasian Commissariat had concluded an armistice with Turkey, the Turks continued their military operations, exploiting the retreat of the gradually disintegrating Russian Armies. There remained only one slender hope for the Transcaucasian Sejm—namely straightening up the matter by direct negotiations with Turkey. And indeed the Turks agreed to a conference at Trebizond, which they had reoccupied. But this conference, which lasted the whole month of March 1918, did not prevent Turkey from occupying these provinces by force, owing to the fact that the Sejm failed to agree on the question of war or peace with Turkey. In the circumstances the Transcaucasian Sejm saw itself forced to dissolve, and on the 26th May 1918 the Federal Republic of Transcaucasia broke up into component national States, each of which formally declared its own independence on the same day.

The Democratic Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were recognised *de facto* by the Allied Supreme Council in January 1920, while Georgia was accorded *de jure* recognition by the same Council (Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and Japan) on the 21st January 1921, and by many other States (Turkey, Rumania, Austria, Poland, Germany, Argentina, Mexico, etc.).

Soviet Russia was the first European Power to recognise Georgia *de jure*. This recognition took the form of a special Treaty of Peace signed in Moscow on the 7th May, 1920. Earlier on the 7th August 1918, Soviet Russia had expressed in the supplement to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty her consent to Germany's recognition of Georgia as an independent State. All the three Republics of Transcaucasia were recognised *de facto*, even by General Denikin, the Supreme Commander of White Armies in South Russia, on the 11th February 1920.

The independent life of the four Caucasian Republics was, however, short. Soon Moscow armies invaded and occupied them one by one. The first victim was naturally the North Caucasian Republic which although exhausted by the incessant wars with the White Armies of General Denikin, put up a valiant defence for her independence. It was conducted by a Committee for Defence specially formed for the purpose in September 1919 and headed by Sheik Ali Haji of Akusha. Next Azerbaijan fell in April 1920, and then Armenia at the end of the same year. Finally Georgia was invaded without even a formal declaration of war, on the 11th February 1921, in violation of the Treaty of Peace of May 1920 and of the Treaty of Commerce of the 14th November 1920. In violating the Treaties with Georgia Soviet Russia followed in the footsteps of her predecessor, Imperial Russia, who in 1801 violated the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance concluded between Georgia and Russia in 1783.

After five weeks of stubborn resistance Georgia was finally crushed, succumbing to the superior force of four Russian Armies, the 11th, 8th, 9th and 13th, and the famous cavalry of Budienny and Zhloba; the war ended on the 19th March 1921.

At its last session at Batumi on the 15th March 1921 the Constituent Assembly of Georgia empowered the president, N. Jordania, to go with his National Government into exile in Western Europe and to work there by all diplomatic means for the restoration of the independence and sovereignty of Georgia.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS IN EXILE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES. With the final occupation of the whole of Caucasia by the Soviet Moscow armies, the leading members of the National Governments of the Caucasian Nations and many leaders

of their political parties as well as members of their national armies and a considerable number of the intellectuals left Caucasia and sought refuge in exile. Colonies of such emigrés are found at present in Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Italy, France, Western Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Argentine, the U.S.A., etc. Before the last war such colonies existed also in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia.

The dissolution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Transcaucasia in May 1918 was regarded by the Caucasian peoples as a temporary separation. On the day of the declaration of the independence of Georgia, 26th May 1918, Mr. N. Jordania, then President of the Georgian National Council, defined the basis of the Georgian Policy towards her neighbours as follows :

“ . . . although the critical situation in which we find ourselves obliges us to separate, we shall do everything to re-establish the Union of Caucasia under the form of a Confederation. Our road and our ideal lead us to the organisation of the Union. The Confederative State will gather all our forces and all our will in face of the external enemy against whom we will know how to defend ourselves ”.

As a first step towards the realisation of this policy Georgia concluded Treaties of Defensive Alliance with Azerbaijan on the 16th June 1919, and with Armenia on November 3rd of the same year, by virtue of which all disputes were to be resolved by means of agreement or arbitration.

Unfortunately this work of the political consolidation of Caucasia and the realisation by these means of close unity between her peoples was shattered by the grave blow which the Russian Bolsheviks dealt Caucasia in invading and occupying the territories of the Caucasian Republics.

The unification of North and South Caucasia, which in spite of the endeavours of their respective Governments proved difficult to accomplish during the short period of their independence because of external circumstances was, however, realised abroad by the political emigration of these countries. In 1921 the leading members of the National Governments and Delegations of the four Caucasian Republics began in exile a long campaign to regain the independence of their respective countries. Now firmly convinced that freedom had been lost because there was no unity among them, they resolved to give priority to the achievement of this unity.

Paris, where all the leaders had settled, became the headquarters of this movement, represented by the Armenian, Azerbaijanian and North Caucasian Delegations who were sent to Paris by their respective legal Governments at the time of the opening of the Versailles Peace Conference, by the Georgian National Democratic Government under the Presidency of N. Jordania, who had been empowered by the National Constituent Assembly of Georgia to work abroad for the liberation of the country, and by the Georgian Legation in Paris, the status of which was maintained for 13 years (1921—1933, actually for 9 years after the recognition by France of the Soviet Government in 1924).

In June 1921 and in September 1924 the Presidents of the Armenian, Azerbaijanian and North Caucasian Delegations and the Georgian Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris signed two Declarations. In these they asserted the geographical, economic and political unity of all four Republics and the consequent need for united action and concerted foreign policy. They also resolved : “ from now on to settle by compulsory arbitration all disputes or issues existing, or liable to arise, between them, and in the first instance frontier disputes ”. In the Declaration of September 1924 it is stated, that while ardently desiring and fighting to be free to dispose of their own destiny and to have an independent existence “ the peoples of Caucasia have affirmed their sincere wish to live in peace and good will with their neighbours, notably with the Russian people, and have furthermore manifested their desire to give equitable satisfaction for the economic interests that Russia may possess in Caucasia at the time of the settlement of mutual relationship ”.

A body known as the Council of the Four Republics had also been formed. This Council carried on its activities by correspondence or by word of mouth, its members were sent to the various capitals of Europe as well as to Geneva. They attended every international conference in order to further the interests of the whole of Caucasia and of each individual Republic.

In 1925, however, the Armenians withdrew their co-operation. The decision taken by the Armenians was due to a special document signed in November 1924 by the Azer-

Armenians, Georgians and North Caucasians, in which they referred to the Caucasian Unity as a Confederation.

It was not that the Armenians were against the Caucasian Confederation, but they argued that the November Declaration was not consistent with Article 7 of the Declaration of June 1921, whereby the four contracting parties agreed that the equitable delimitation of the Turko-Armenian Frontier was one of the essentials of the projected Confederation. The chief concern of the Armenians was the fact that their territory known as Caucasian Armenia was much reduced by the cession by the Russians in 1921 of parts of it to Turkey (the Kars Treaty of October 1921), and they wanted these parts to be restored to Armenia and included within the Confederation. The international situation had, however, changed since June 1921. The new nationalist Turkey had won the day and her consequent recognition by the Powers (the Treaty of Lausanne 24th July 1923) had confirmed her possession of the territories she had acquired by the Kars Treaty. Moreover the Lausanne Treaty had rejected any territorial rights of Armenians in Turkish Armenia. In these new circumstances the Representatives of Azerbaijan, Georgia and North Caucasia contended that the realisation of Armenian postulates would entail dangerous consequences for the whole of Caucasia, since friendly relations with Turkey could not be dispensed with, a fact which the Armenians themselves fully realised. The Caucasian nations, Armenians included, earnestly desired to be on friendly terms with their neighbours and to co-operate with Turkey, for aggressive aims whether from the North, West or South represent a common menace to them all.

Although the Armenians had withdrawn the Council continued to function. It made every effort to keep responsible foreign statesmen informed of every stage of the struggle for liberation. Stress was laid on the repressive measures introduced in Republics. In order to keep public opinion informed of current events in Caucasia the Council brought out a monthly journal in French, known as *Le Prométhée*.

CAUCASIAN CONFEDERATION. In 1934 the Representatives of the three Republics of Caucasia signed in Brussels a Pact of Confederation which was based on the principles proclaimed in the Joint Declaration of June 1921, referred to above. Armenia did not sign this Pact, but a place was reserved for her in it.

At the same time were formed: the Council of the Federation, consisting of 12 members, each Republic having 4 Representatives elected by its National Centre, and the Praesidium of the Council, consisting of 3 members, one from each of three Republics.

The creation of the Caucasian Confederation is not a result of the fanciful imagination of the Caucasian Governments and Delegations in exile, out of touch with the events in their own country. On the contrary, it was based upon and in fact was dictated by the events that have been taking place in the country itself. The bitter experience of the past had taught the Caucasian peoples the value of solidarity. The instinct for national self-preservation has shown them the community of their political interests. The Azerbaijanians and the Armenians, who during their short-lived independence had fought each other, were now under Russian occupation, fighting side by side against the Russians, the Azerbaijanian partisans and refugees receiving food and shelter from the Armenians and the Armenians from the Azerbaijanians. The bitter struggle for their national independence has fully impressed upon the Caucasian peoples the consciousness of their common historical destiny.

The Munich Agreement (Sept. 1939) brought about a new situation in Eastern Europe. Germany established her hegemony over the much reduced Czecho-Slovak State. The ensuing international crisis led to renewed activity amongst the Caucasians and to the Armenian's re-orientation of their policy and their decision to join the Caucasian Confederation. Negotiations began forthwith and after some time agreement was reached on the main points.

The principal item of dispute, that of the frontier of the Confederation, was solved by acknowledging "as the northern frontiers of the Confederative State of Caucasia the courses of the rivers Kuban and Kuma, and as the southern frontiers the established and existing boundaries of the Soviet Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia". The demarcation of the northern frontier was introduced by the North Caucasian Delegation with the reservation that the North Caucasians wished to come to an understanding with the Cossacks, their northern neighbours, and that some sort of concession was possible.

After conceding to the Armenians some points such as the recognition in principle of the rights of Armenian minorities in other Republics of Caucasia, the text of the agreement was finally approved and signed in Paris, on the 28th May 1940, and Armenia thus became a member of the Caucasian Confederation. The text of the Pact of the Confederation reads as follows :

“ The Representatives of the National Centres of Armenia, Azerbaijan, North Caucasia and Georgia, duly accredited, after having heard the report of the Commission entrusted with the drafting of the pact of the Caucasian Confederation, have decided to adopt and to sign the act of Caucasian Confederation according to the following principles :

(1) The Caucasian Confederation, while guaranteeing the national character and internal sovereignty of each of the Caucasian Republics, will conduct foreign relations in the name of all the Republics as an international unit of higher authority.

(2) The Confederation will have one single common political frontier. Customs barriers as well as all other obstacles to free communication of the different Republics of the Caucasian Confederation shall be abolished and the said Republics will form a customs union and a single territorial unit for international transit trade.

(3) The foreign policy of the Confederated Republics shall be directed by the competent Authority of the Confederation.

(4) The defence of the frontiers of the Confederation shall be entrusted to the Army of the Confederation, comprising the armies of the Confederated Republics under a single command subordinate to the directive Authority of the Confederation.

(5) The Confederation shall guarantee the rights of national minorities in each Confederated Republic.

(6) Every dispute which may arise between the Confederated Republics and which can not be settled by direct negotiation, must be submitted for compulsory arbitration, or else to the Supreme Court of the Confederation. The Confederated Republics pledge themselves to accept unreservedly and to put into execution the arbitration awards or the decisions of the Supreme Court.

(7) A Commission of experts will proceed forthwith to elaborate a draft Constitution for the Caucasian Confederation, bearing in mind the principles formulated above ; this draft shall serve as working basis for the First Constituent Assembly of each Republic.”

On the same day (28th May 1940) the new Council of the Confederation (including also Armenian members) issued a new Declaration which fixed the boundaries of the Confederation as indicated above and in which it was restated that “ the liberation of Caucasia from Russia continues to be the aim of the peoples of Caucasia. In conducting this struggle for complete independence and economic and political liberation from Russia, the peoples of Caucasia declare that this struggle is directed not against any specific régime in Russia, but against Russian domination in general. For this reason no compromise or agreement is acceptable to the peoples of Caucasia so long as the complete independence of the Caucasian Confederation has not been recognised by Russia.

“ With regard to the adjoining States to the South—Turkey and Persia—the foreign policy of the Caucasian Confederation towards these States will be founded on sincere friendship and good neighbourly relations.”

REACTIONARY POLICY OF SOVIET RUSSIA. It is now six years since World War II ended by the victory of Russia and her Allies, the Democratic Powers of the West. Instead of applying the principles of the Democratic Peoples' Sovereignty and of the Atlantic Charter, Soviet Russia is gradually and systematically destroying the non-Russian peoples of the Union by partial or even wholesale deportations. In this connection we may point out the tragic fate that befell Eastern and Central North Caucasia when in 1946 Moscow liquidated the Checheno-Ingush A.S.S.R., the Kabarda-Balkar A.S.S.R. and Karachai Autonomous Province, degraded them to the status of “ oblasti ” (districts) and deported their population wholesale to Siberia and other remote parts of Russia.

But however inhuman and barbaric the methods the Russians use against them and whatever the result of sanguinary conflicts, the Caucasian peoples will never give up their struggle for independence. Independence is an objective upon which no compromise is possible.

The Caucasian peoples, their representatives in exile and their emigrés in general believe that they have the sympathy and the moral support of Governments, of Statesmen, of public opinion and the press, and of various social and political organisations in every land. The public opinion of the civilised world has shown itself more and more favourable to the national cause of the Caucasian peoples.

THE FUTURE OF CAUCASIA. The political and economic union of the four Republics of Caucasia will ensure the basis for their economic prosperity and their political evolution, because the wealth and variety of natural resources of Caucasia promise brilliant prospects of the development of all kinds of economic activity of the population. The extraordinary diversity of the soil and climatic conditions present possibilities for the extensive development of the most diverse cultures of rural economy.

The Caucasian Black Sea coast, with its warm and humid climate, offers excellent conditions for the development of subtropical cultivation (orange, lemon, mandarin, banana, tea, bamboo, cork, palm tree, eucalyptus, etc., etc.) and the tobacco industry. The Alazan valley in Eastern Georgia, with its Mediterranean climate, represents a region extremely suitable for viticulture. The Erevan plain in Armenia with its dry continental climate and particularly warm summer, yields, as recognised by specialists, peaches of the best quality in the world, a very sweet sort of grape, and cotton and rice. The Alpine meadows along the slopes of the Caucasian mountains, with a temperature exceeding that of the Swiss meadows, promise extensive development of the dairy industry. The Caspian Sea with its rich reserves of fish opens up immense possibilities for the extensive development of fisheries. Other regions of Caucasia offer other no less priceless resources which will serve as a sure foundation for the peoples prosperity.

Caucasia possesses an immense variety of mineral wealth: oil (estimated reserves over 1,200,000,000 tons), manganese (the best in the world; estimated reserves 161,500,000 tons), coal, copper, argentiferous lead, iron, rock salt, glauber's salt, etc., etc.

The extraordinary abundance and variety of mineral springs and climatic curative places for which North Caucasia is particularly famous, offer a wide development of health resorts.

The immense energy of the river system of Caucasia (the so-called "White coal") estimated at 70,000,000 hp if turned to industrial uses, will provide a powerful impetus for the speedy economic development of the country.

The international or political significance of Caucasia lies not only in its oil reserves, but also in its geographical position. Long before the Caucasian oil was exploited, Caucasia was considered of paramount strategic importance by the powers to the South of the Great Caucasus range, who had to preserve themselves from marauding northern hordes, and also by the Imperial Powers who sought to extend their empires (the Achaemenian, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Turkish).

Caucasia's position as a bridgehead and a jumping off ground for the invasion of Hither Asia was recognised by Russia as early as the 18th century. Russia's encroachments upon Caucasia in the 18th and 19th centuries were opposed not only by Turkey and Persia but also by Great Britain.

This key position of Caucasia, particularly of Transcaucasia, was recognised also by the Germans during the last two world wars. It was towards the end of the First World War that the Germans established themselves temporarily in this region (June—November 1918). German formulas "P.P.P." (Potsdam, Poti, Pekin) and "B.B.B." (Berlin, Batum, Bombay) indicate the importance which the German geo-military thinkers attached to the Caucasian bridgehead.

As long as Russia occupies Caucasia no lasting peace can be established in Hither Asia (Near and Middle East). Just as Tsarist Russia used Caucasia as a military base for imperial aims in Persia and Turkey, so to-day the Red Moscow imperialism is trying to extend its influence to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean through this region. Turkey, Persia, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt will never be safe as long as Caucasia remains under the Muscovite heel.

The free, independent and sovereign Caucasian Confederation on the other hand represents for these States, and consequently for Europe as well, safety, tranquillity, peace and prosperity.

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND THE SUBJECTED NATIONS. The many different nations which composed the Tsarist Empire joined forces during the last two revolutions of 1905

and 1917. They were all working towards one political end, that of overthrowing the Tsarist autocracy in order to establish in its place a new order based on the Western conception of Democracy. This basis served as a starting point for the peoples liberated by the Revolution of 1917 in their task of organising their national and economic life.

However the October *Coup d'état* caused a rift in this common front of so many different nationalities. Bolshevism carried away one of its members—the Russian people. This de facto isolation found its official confirmation in the slogan of the Soviet Government in Moscow—the right of the peoples to self-determination. It claimed for all the peoples of Russia the right to choose the form of their own government, which meant the non-intervention of the non-Russian peoples in Russian affairs and of the Russians in the affairs of the non-Russian peoples.

Having thus isolated the Russian nation, Bolshevism imposed upon the latter the tyrannical Soviet system, whereas the other nations composing the empire organised themselves according to democratic principles. It was very soon apparent, however, that the principle of national self-determination, of National Freedom so solemnly proclaimed by Red Moscow, was merely a manoeuvre. It held good only as long as Moscow had to contend with internal difficulties, but once the régime was well established in Russia and the Government disposed of a sufficiently large military force, they immediately embarked upon the re-conquest of the peoples formerly within the Russian Empire. Wars which broke out in consequence raged upon the whole front from Finland to Turkistan, and in Siberia. Some of the nations, as the Finns, the Baltic peoples and the Poles, emerged successfully from the strife and set up their independent States, but others, as the Ukrainians, the Byelorussians, the Cossacks, the Caucasian peoples, the Turkestanians and the Tartars were unsuccessful and reverted to subjection.

The Russian people, first by isolating themselves from non-Russian peoples and then by identifying themselves with the Bolshevik aggression against these peoples, created an unbridgeable gulf between themselves and the non-Russian peoples. This gulf widened continually as Moscow endeavoured to force its political and economic system on the latter. The non-Russian peoples tended towards the democratic ideal for their system of government in which creative activity, private as well as social initiative, is one of the main factors, but in which the state is less to the fore. However under Moscow pressure they came under the same old, specifically Russian system, in force prior to the reign of Peter the Great, which consisted of a despotic Government exploiting man and his goods to the utmost limit, tying down the individual and suppressing any initiative in thought or deed. This essentially local system affected only the Russian people, the boundaries of whose country extend to Poland, the Baltic countries and Finland in the West, to the Ukraine and river Don in the South and the Urals in the East. The régime in force in this territory was characteristically Russian, having no affinity of any kind with the régimes of the peoples outside these boundaries. Therefore the main objective of these peoples was and is to get away from Moscow. This centrifugal movement was justified and intensified by the development of the Soviet reign of terror.

The four principal points d'appui of the terrorist régime—Communist Party, bureaucracy, Tcheka—Guepeou—MVD and Army, who use inhuman and barbaric methods to enforce its plans, are subject to fatal deviations which determine the ruthless repression of the Kremlin. The continual purges disorganise the administrative machine and keep up a psychosis of fear among the executives and the rank and file alike. This bloody terrorism has created around the dictatorship inefficiency, poverty of spirit and lack of social initiative. The faults and mistakes of executive bodies, according to the Kremlin, arise not from the system itself, but from the inefficiency, unhelpfulness and disloyalty of individuals. On the testimony of no less an authority than Ivan Markin—who as an engineer has worked on the toughest assignments in the remotest areas of Russia, and as a diplomat has been an instrument of Kremlin policy—the wastefulness of modern Russia is shocking. Much of it is due—says Markin (*The Daily Express*—11th December 1950)—to party spite, to the backbiting secret informers, and to ignorant officials who interfere in all manner of projects they do not understand. Brilliant technicians with years of experience are brow-beaten and overruled, then penalised for mistakes.

The whole Soviet population with the exception of the immediate circle of the Kremlin can see the evil within itself and looks for an opportunity to get rid of it. The antagonism

of the peoples of the Soviet Union to the Bolshevik system found its expression in the fact that in 1941 when Hitler invaded the Union entire armies refused to fight, and surrendered as prisoners of war to the Germans. Moreover, the bulk of the population of the invaded territories hailed the advancing German troops as liberators, for they regarded Hitler as a saviour who would rescue them from the tyranny of the secret political police and the collective system. A more favourable psychological situation could hardly have met the forces of any invader of the Soviet Union. But profound political blunders and errors on the part of Hitler saved the Bolshevik régime. It may quite boldly be asserted that even under the conditions of terrorism at present prevailing in the Soviet Union the political and psychological factors for a successful revolution at an opportune moment are more favourable there today than ever before. The victorious end of the war has not brought to the peoples improved living conditions or any prospect of a better future, for no social, political or national reforms can ever be expected. New armaments and rebuilding and a vast premature expansion of industries impose new intolerable strain and sacrifices. As a result the terror is intensified, concentration and forced labour camps grow in size and number.

The Soviet régime, sustained by oppression and violence, is profoundly tyrannical and is hated most in the countries where it has prevailed the longest. With its supposed or apparent enormous strength the Soviet system possesses a deeply rooted intrinsic weakness.

If World War III ever broke out the Western Allied Powers would have to use every means within their grasp to win it quickly with the least possible sacrifice if they are to save European civilisation from complete destruction and from Moscow domination. It is therefore felt that the Western Democratic Powers will in the event of a new world war use every possible auxiliary and will give heed to the psychological factors and other strong potential weapons which political co-operation with the different nations of the Soviet Union will open up to them. For it is from among the ranks of these people that force will appear which is capable of tipping decisively and speedily the international scales in favour of Western Democracy. It is natural and proper that such a force should come from the peoples who, having rejected Bolshevism, kept intact their morale and their prestige, remained faithful to their democratic ideals and energetically resisted the Red Moscow tyranny.

It should be noted that while the masses of the Russian people in their struggle may be pursuing the liquidation of Bolshevism, the non-Russian peoples are definitely fighting not only for the liquidation of Bolshevism, but also for the recovery of national liberty. The Russian political leaders differ from the Russian masses in this, that they aspire to the inheritance of the former Russian Empire, some of them even to that of Stalin's dominions. It is evident that once the enemy has been overcome this ambition would take hold again and so start a civil conflict, at the end of which a new form of tyranny would probably appear.

The subjected nations are not fighting the Bolsheviks because they are Communists. For them the struggle is against Russian domination in general. The restoration of democracy in what is the Soviet Union to-day is inseparably bound up with that of national liberty, as they were both suppressed at the same time and by the same foreign Power—Moscow. Russian hegemony being untenable it will be the non-Russian peoples who will take charge and who will set up in the place of the Soviet Union a decent new order based on national and political liberty, and who will help the Russians to rid themselves of the Bolshevik régime in order that they may live in peace and friendship with all other democratic peoples.

As can be seen, the border countries which represent the incorporated peoples, that is the Baltic States, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Caucasian States, the Cossack Republics, Turkistan, etc., appear as a very real force in the process of liquidating the Soviet régime. Their line of action is set by the bitter experience of the past and the vital interests of the future. They have come to realise that the final victory is to be determined by the union and co-operation of their efforts and the help they can give each other. A single front of 100,000,000 people united under one fighting banner would be a determining factor in establishing a new order within and consolidating peace outside. Their collaboration resulted in the creation in 1925 by the National Governments and National Committees

in exile of an organisation known as the Promethean League,¹ the aim of which is to prepare the Common Front. The League has been doing extremely useful work in making known to the West the national aspirations of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union and of their resistance to Moscow, in spreading the idea of the Common Front both inside and outside the Soviet Union, in keeping the public of the West informed about the misrule of the Bolsheviks, and in refuting their allegations that they have satisfied the national aspirations of the non-Russian peoples under their sway.

Help to consolidate this unity, to co-ordinate the action of these peoples and so prepare ground which can serve as a rallying point not only for the present struggle against Bolshevism and its domination, but would also deter possible future aggression on the part of Russia: this seems to us to be the real policy dictated by the national interests of these peoples as well as by the international interests of peaceable Europe.

¹ Mr. A. M. Hyamson in his *A Dictionary of International Affairs* (London 1946, s.v., p. 255) defines the Promethean League as a movement which "agitated for the independence of a Greater Georgia, Greater Armenia and the Ukraine . . . encouraged by the Germans." The movement, the origin and real aims of which are briefly explained above, was not concerned with the size of its member countries nor was it confined to the three countries referred to by Mr. Hyamson. The Promethean League linked up the individual national movements of the non-Russian peoples, viz.: of the Karelians and Ingrians in the North West of Russia proper, of the Byelorussians in the West, of the Ukrainians, Cossacks and Caucasians in the South, of Idel-Uralians and the Turkistanians in the South East, and of the Buriats and the Green Ukrainians of Siberia in the East. Contrary to Mr. Hyamson's statement the movement which had its centres in Warsaw and Paris was never encouraged by Germans, nor was it ever under German patronage. For the origin and growth of the movement the interested reader is referred to Prof. Smal-Stocki's article *National Movement in the Soviet Union* in *Contemporary Russia*, Oct. 1936 which is the best review of the subject so far published in Great Britain.