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GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC  
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# RUSSIAN EXPANSION IN THE CAUCASUS AND GEORGIA

The Expansion of Russia in the Caucasus and Georgia project offers the readers collection of scientific-popular articles which aims to cover the Georgian-Russian relations of the XVIII-XX centuries in a manner different from the widely propagated perspective of the official Russia.

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Otar Janelidze

# THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA



*The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919, by Sir William Orpen*

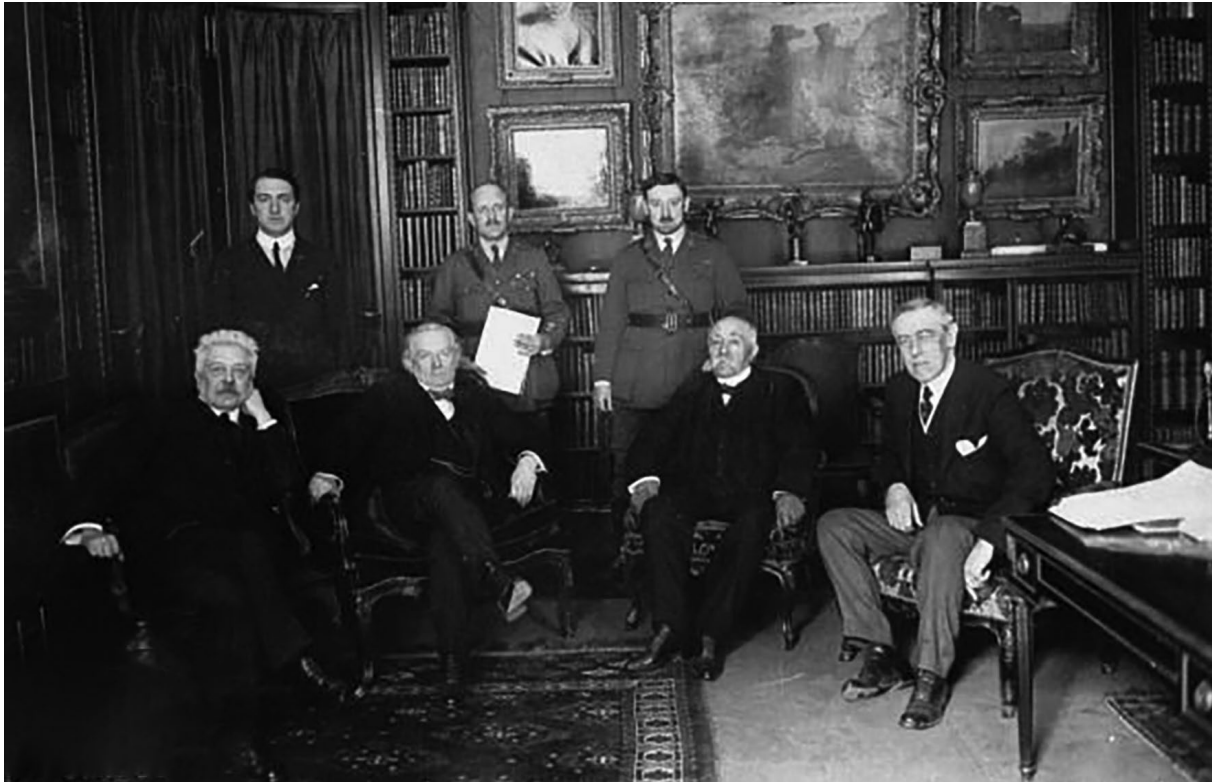
**T**he long and large-scale bloodshed from 1914 to 1918, which was later called the First World War, caused unprecedented damage to humanity. In addition to the millions of victims, hundreds of cities, villages, and other settlements were destroyed, and many industrial and economic facilities, buildings, roads, railways, etc. were erased from the face of the earth.

Because of this, there was great anticipation for the end of the war and the continuation of a peaceful life. This very problem was on the agenda at the international Paris Peace Conference, which was convened by the victorious states. The conference began its work on January 18, 1919, and ended one year later, on January 21, 1920. It is often called the "Versailles Conference," but only the signing of the "Treaty of Versailles" took place in the historic Palace of Versailles, while the main negotiations and work took place in the building of the French

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. The Paris Peace Conference laid the foundation for the Versailles-Washington system of international relations, a global world order that lasted until World War II.

The capital of France had been the place of international peace negotiations and the signing of truces many times, but the forum in question exceeded all previous similar events in terms of its scope and results.

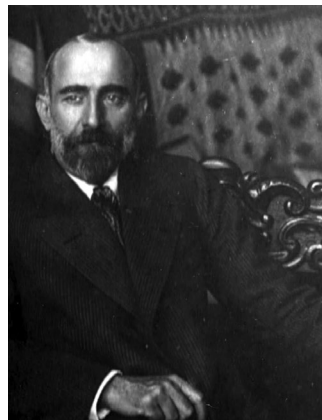
The conference was led by the Supreme Council of the Entente States, that is, the Allies, which was formed back in November 1917 and consisted of the heads of state, represented by one minister each. Due to the October coup d'état in Russia, which soon resulted in the withdrawal of the country from the war, the representative of Russia was not invited to the Council. The Supreme Council of the Allies included the core members of the "Covenant" – the five victorious states: Great Britain, France, the USA, Italy, and Japan.



The Big Four – Vittorio Orlando, David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson

Several working bodies were formed at the conference, namely the “Council of Ten,” “Council of Four,” “Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs,” “Council of Heads of Delegation,” and “Council of Prime Ministers.” However, the primary issues were decided by the leaders of the so-called “Big Four”: US President Woodrow Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. About a thousand journalists covered the work of the Paris Peace Conference, half of them from the United States of America.<sup>1</sup>

Representatives of the victorious states in Paris were busy discussing the new order of humanity and drawing up a new political map of the world. In order to imprint the Georgian flag on this map, that is, for the leading countries of the West to officially recognize the state independence of Georgia, the authorities of the Democratic Republic decided to send an official delegation to the conference. The government discussed this issue on November 17, 1918, and entrusted Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze to lead the delegation. Along with Chkheidze, Noe Ramishvili, Niko Nikoladze, Grigol Rtskhiladze, and Spiridon Kedia were to be part of the delegation. In the event of Ramishvili's absence, he was to be replaced



Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze

by Irakli Tsereteli.<sup>2</sup> Later, this composition was altered to some extent, and, by December 6, the following had been selected as members of the delegation: Karlo Chkheidze (chairman), Irakli Tsereteli, Grigol Rtskhiladze, and Nikoloz Jakeli. A group of “knowledgeable persons” and specialists – the so-called “Deliberators” – were also selected to accompany the delegation,

<sup>1</sup> Newspaper *Klde* (The Rock), 1919, January 22.

<sup>2</sup> A. Menteshashvili, “*sakartvelos demokratiuli respublika da parizis samshvidobo konperentsia*” (The Democratic Republic of Georgia and the Paris Peace Conference), *Bulletin of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, History, Ethnography, and Art History Series*, 2, 1992, p. 139.



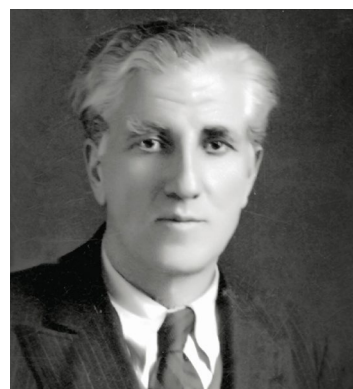
Ivane Javakhishvili



Irakli Tsereteli



Ilia Odishelidze



Vlasa Mgeladze

among them Professor Ivane Javakhishvili, General Ilia Odishelidze, and member of the Constituent Assembly, Vlasa Mgeladze. The famous Georgian historian and scientist Ivane Javakhishvili was tasked with describing the geographical territory and ethnographic life of Georgia, as well as substantiating the groundlessness of the territorial claims of neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan. Before leaving for Europe, he had to present a report to the government on the Georgian borders. In addition, Javakhishvili had to participate in the development of the five-verst map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the preparation of which had been entrusted to General Ilia Odishelidze and Pavle Ingorokva.<sup>3</sup>

“At the beginning of 1919, Georgia sent a large delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris, composed of all kinds of experts,” writes Konstantine Kandelaki, “but only a few men from this numerous delegation – the main political delegates – reached Paris, and with great difficulty; such was the difficulty to travel and get visas at that time.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> O. Janelidze, *Ivane Javakhishvilis kvaldakval* (In the Footsteps of Ivane Javakhishvili), Tbilisi, 2019, pp. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> K. Kandelaki, *sakartvelos erovnuli meurneoba, damoukidebeli sakartvelo: misi sotsialuri da ekonomikuri mdgomareoba* (National Industry of Georgia. Independent Georgia: Its Social and Economic Situation), Book Two, Paris, 1960, p. 185.

Of course, transportation was not easy either, but visas for entry to Paris were essential and were indeed issued with great care. In particular, visa applicants were checked to see if they had connections with the Bolsheviks or Ottoman political organizations.

The Georgian delegation was not able to travel to France with its full composition, and only Karlo Chkheidze and Irakli Tsereteli, who arrived to Paris at the end of February 1919,<sup>5</sup> were allowed to participate in the conference (Zurab Avalishvili, Konstantine Gvarjaladze, and Davit Gambashidze, who had been sent to Europe earlier, were waiting for them, and Ioseb Gobechia, who managed to get a visa, joined them in April of the same year). Other members of the delegation returned to their homeland from Constantinople.

Noe Zhordania writes in his memoirs: “In 1919, the Peace Conference was convened. We organized a delegation headed by Kar. Chkheidze, with Ir. Tsereteli as a member, and others. We chose these two persons with two considerations: they were known in Europe from St. Petersburg, and as such we thought they would have an influence on the Europeans, and they did not play a big

<sup>5</sup> The delegation of Azerbaijan going to the conference in Constantinople was delayed even longer – four months. D. Pommier, *The Wilsonian Moment of the Azerbaijani Delegation in Paris (1919-20)*. <https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/books/978-88-6969-454-7/978-88-6969-454-7-ch-06.pdf>

role in our domestic affairs, and so sending them away would not do us much harm.”<sup>6</sup>

Karlo Chkheidze and Irakli Tsereteli were well-known figures not only in the Russian Empire, but also in the International Workers' Movement. They had close relations with international socialist circles and their leaders, who, in turn, had some influence on the governments of their respective countries.

The representatives of the opposition spectrum of Georgia, especially those of the National Democratic Party, thought that staffing the delegation only with socialists was unjustified. According to some, the arrival of the Georgian delegation in Paris was complicated because the heads of the delegation were socialists. Giorgi Gvazava stated during his speech at the Constituent Assembly: “I was against sending socialists to the Conference, but whoever our delegate is, is first of all a delegate of Georgia, not a party representative. I was sure that regardless whether the representative was I. Tsereteli or Chkheidze, they will only be a representative of Georgia and not socialism. ...delegates have their purpose, they have been entrusted by us to speak on behalf of Georgia and protect its interests at the Paris Conference.”<sup>7</sup>

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia developed and approved an action plan and guidelines for the official Georgian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>8</sup> If the Paris Conference were to refuse to recognize Georgia's sovereignty, Karlo Chkheidze was instructed by Noe Zhordania, the head of the government, to accept the protectorate of England or France, on the condition of non-interference in Georgia's domestic affairs.<sup>9</sup>

The Georgian government delegation that arrived in Paris stayed at the address 37 Perouse Street, located in the central part of the city. At that time, there was still no regular postal connection between Tbilisi and Paris, and so the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not have continuous contact with its delegation in Europe. This hindered and hampered the operational exchange of information. Akaki Chkhenkeli also mentions this circumstance in his “Diaries”: “The delegation does not have enough information from here. ...It seems that they do not have reports and directives, neither from the government nor the foreign minister.”<sup>10</sup>



Grigol Rtskhiladze

Although it is true that the Georgian delegation was accompanied by one of the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a courier, who was tasked to travel to Georgia and return twice a month to exchange information, it was not always possible to travel with such intensity. Therefore, the Georgian mission in Constantinople, headed by Grigol Rtskhiladze, was actively involved in the transmission of information.

The documents collected in the personal fund of its head, Karlo Chkheidze (fund 2115), and the materials in the fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (fund 1864), which are kept in the central historical archive of the National Archives of Georgia, give us a clear idea about the activities of the Georgian delegation at the Paris Conference. Particularly noteworthy is the famous book by Zurab Avalishvili,<sup>11</sup> and others.

Like the politicians and public representatives of other newly emerging states, the Democratic Republic of Georgia also had high hopes for the Paris Peace Conference. They thought that it would solve not only problems of international importance, but also regional and even internal state issues. For example, in Tbilisi and Yerevan, they expected that the border-territorial disagreements between the two neighboring countries, including that of the Lore neutral district, would become the subject of discussion at the conference; Azerbaijan also believed that its territorial claims with Armenia or Georgia would be satisfied in Paris; and Karlo Chkheidze even raised the issue of facilitating the return of the Abkhaz muhajirs and their descendants, who were expelled from Georgia to the Ottoman Empire by the autocratic regime, before the Supreme Council of Allies,<sup>12</sup> this,

<sup>6</sup> N. Zhordania, *chemi tsarsuli* (My Past), Tbilisi, 1990, p. 94-95.

<sup>7</sup> *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), Vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 161; 170-171.

<sup>8</sup> P. Surguladze, “sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba da parizis samshvidobo konperentsia” (Constituent Assembly of Georgia and the Paris Peace Conference), in the collection *The Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Experience of Parliamentarism*, Tbilisi, 2011, pp. 29-32.

<sup>9</sup> N. Zhordania, *chemi tsarsuli* (My Past), p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> A. Chkhenkeli, *dghiurebi* (Diaries), Tbilisi, 2022, p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Avalishvili, *sakartvelos damoukidebloba 1918-1921 wlebis saertashoriso politikashi, mogonebani, narkvevebi* (Independence of Georgia in International Politics of 1918-1921. Memoires. Essays), Tiflis, 1926.

<sup>12</sup> З. Папаскири, *Абхазия – История без фальсификации. Издание второе, исправленное и дополненное*, Тбилиси, 2010, с. 221-222.



Evgeni Gegechkori

Karlo Chkheidze during the Paris  
Peace Conference, 1919

although doubts were expressed in the press that the Paris Conference would be more of an intermission than an end to the world war.<sup>13</sup>

The Georgian delegation in Paris had to make great efforts in parallel with its direct duty to disprove the groundless accusations made against the Democratic Republic and its government by various sources, such as the White Guards' General A. Denikin's reports to the Allies, as well as the report of the British Army command in the Caucasus and in the publications of the Armenian press published in the Ottoman Empire. For this purpose, they prepared and distributed bulletins, handed out notes, and gave written and oral explanations. For example, at one of the delegation's meetings, Irakli Tsereteli mentioned that he explained to Albert Thomas "all the rumors that were passed on to him by the Armenians, especially about the supposed fact that we were German allies. I described to him the difficult situation that had forced us to approach the Germans, and I also revealed that the Armenians themselves turned to them in times of trouble."<sup>14</sup>

In order to raise awareness of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and gain the support of international public opinion for the newly formed Georgian state, the Georgian delegation in Paris contacted the largest French publication, *Le Temps*, whose political section was managed by the famous journalist Emile-Andrien Hebrard, and bought the rights to print information in the newspaper. Due to the efforts of the delegation, the 14-page illustrated magazine *L'Image* of October 1919,

N 221, published in Paris, was fully dedicated to Georgia, and an information bulletin about Georgia was also published.<sup>15</sup> Varlam Cherkezishvili, a famous Georgian anarchist and publicist, published the book "Georgia. Its Traditions and Political Rights"<sup>16</sup> in Paris in 1919, and Irakli Tsereteli published the book "Separation of Transcaucasia from Russia and the Independence of Georgia"<sup>17</sup> with a foreword by Albert Thomas, a prominent French socialist and member of the French Parliament.

The delegations of the states formed as a result of the collapse of the Russian Empire – the so-called limitrophe – including the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, were not allowed to attend the conference. The issues of small states were discussed in various commissions of the conference, and delegates were invited to the sessions only when the discussion directly concerned their countries.

At various times, the head of the Georgian government delegation and individual members met and spoke with US President W. Wilson's advisors, J. Haskell and E. Hauz; the Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Bertello; the representatives of France, F. Bouyon, Kammerer, and Colonel Lagonis; Assistant to the British Foreign Minister, L. Mallet; the British delegation's expert in Oriental affairs, Professor J. Simpson; British government representa-

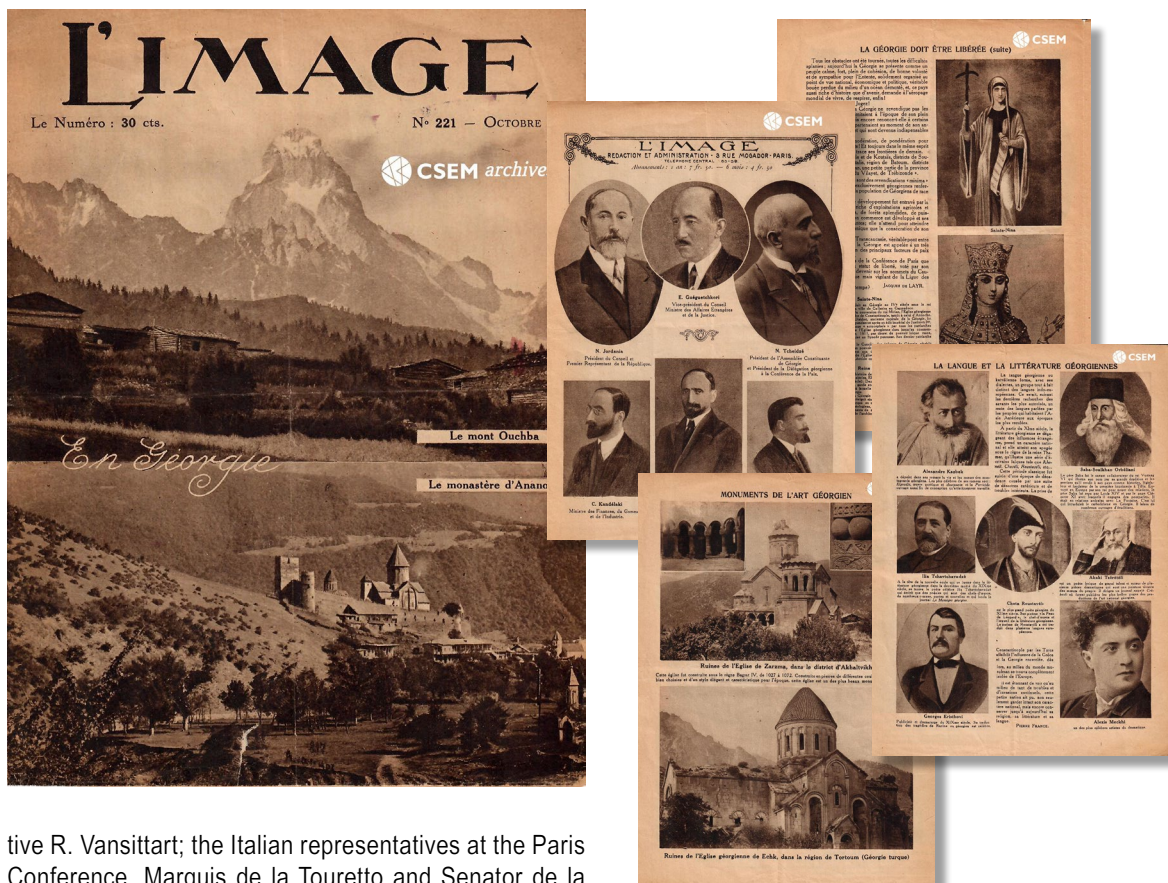
<sup>13</sup> Newspaper *Sakartvelo* (Georgia), 1919, January 26.

<sup>14</sup> A. Menteshashvili, "The Democratic Republic of Georgia and the Paris Peace Conference", *Bulletin of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, History, Ethnography, and Art History Series*, 1993, No. 3-4, p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> B. Kobakhidze, *sakartvelos sakitkhi parizis sazavo konperentsi-aze* (The Issue of Georgia at the Paris Peace Conference), Dissertation submitted for Ph.D. Tbilisi, 2015, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> V. Tcherkesiff, *La Géorgie ses traditions et ses droits politiques - extrait de la revue de Paris du 1 octobre 1919*, Paris, 1919.

<sup>17</sup> I. Tsereteli, *Separation de la Transcaucasie et de la Russie et independance de la Georgie*, prtface d'Albert Thomas, Paris, Imprimerie Chaix, 1919.



tive R. Vansittart; the Italian representatives at the Paris Conference, Marquis de la Tourette and Senator de la Torre, and a member of the Italian mission in the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Valeri.

On March 14, 1919, the Georgian delegation presented a memorandum to the Conference with a brief description of Georgia's past and contemporary reality.<sup>18</sup> "Georgian democracy, full of hopes and faith, entrusts its freedom and future to those who are called to decide the fate of Europe and the whole world," the memorandum noted.

The document argued for the necessity of Georgia's state independence. At the same time, the Georgian government asked the allied states to support the choice of the Georgian people, to acknowledge the Georgian nation among other nations, and to recognize its sovereignty. Together with the memorandum, the Conference was given a map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia drawn up in French, outlining the territories and borders of the country, which the newly born Georgian state requested be legalized.

The memorandum emphasized that the Government of Georgia, when establishing its borders, "has claims only on those territories which have always belonged to the Georgian people and which are of vital importance to it, but at the same time, do not affect the vital interests of other peoples." The list of these territories was as fol-

lows: The Tbilisi and Kutaisi governorates, the Sukhumi, Batumi, and Zakatali districts, the Oltisi and Ardagan districts west of Kars, some parts of the Black Sea coastline, and the Trabzon vilayet.

According to the memorandum, Georgia, as a separate state, should be interesting to the West with its economic resources (forests, minerals, water energy), Batumi and Poti harbors, as well as its strategically important transit function. Due to its location, Georgia could pave the way for open economic and cultural relations between Europe and Central and Eastern Asia.

During the conference, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia appealed to the High Council of the Entente several times to recognize the state independence of Georgia. As Karlo Chkheidze wrote to Noe Zhordania from Paris on May 14, 1919, "the issue of our independence is clearer and more indisputable than other such issues. This is the opinion voiced in both official and unofficial circles."<sup>19</sup> But it was also clear that the allied states considered the problem of Georgia through the prism of international politics, taking into account Russia's real interests and the balance of power in the

<sup>18</sup> National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 1864, ref. 2, case 117.

<sup>19</sup> Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze. 1864-1926, memorial album, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 92.



The map of territorial demands presented by the Georgian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference on March 14, 1919

region.<sup>20</sup> They were mindful about the unstable situation of the Caucasus countries, their border disagreements, and so on. It is noteworthy that both the Allies and the United States of America considered the South Caucasus in a unified context, and avoided taking responsibility for Georgia, Armenia, or Azerbaijan separately.<sup>21</sup>

The approach of the victorious states is clearly visible in many documents of the Paris Conference. For example, in one of Lord Curzon's notes, he emphasized that "the issue of Georgia's recognition is related to the issue of other Transcaucasian republics, while, in turn, the latter is connected to the solution of the Russian issue and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Turkey."<sup>22</sup>

The concept of the unity of the Caucasus was shared by the President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, who declared: "We do not want to divide the world into small states."<sup>23</sup>

The confrontation on border issues and other issues between the three neighboring republics of the South

Caucasus hindered their unity, which in turn made the region lose its weight and relevance in the eyes of the West. Although Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia agreed to resolve border issues peacefully with the help of international arbitration, and to allow free transit between them, unresolved problems remained. For example, in April 1920, at the Sanremo Conference, Armenia and Georgia could not reach a consensus on the status of the Batumi railway: Armenia, like Azerbaijan, recognized the Batumi district as belonging to Georgia; Tbilisi agreed to run the railway connecting Yerevan with Batumi through the territory of Georgia, but Armenia demanded extraterritoriality for this railway, which was unacceptable to the Georgian delegation. This disagreement also disrupted the issue of supplying weapons to all three republics.<sup>24</sup> Georgian historiography expresses a point of view that we can accept, namely: If the South Caucasian republics had arrived at the Paris Peace Conference with a single delegation or with mutually agreed-upon demands, and not with separate, often contradictory claims, the chance of acquiring the support of the High Council of the Entente would have been much more realistic.<sup>25</sup>

After Great Britain stopped pursuing an active policy in the Caucasus region and decided to withdraw its troops in the spring of 1919, Lloyd George offered Italy the mandate over Georgia. V. Orlando's government accepted the offer, studied the situation, and planned to send a mission

<sup>20</sup> In the last decade of December 1919, in a conversation with Irakli Tsereteli, who visited the British Foreign Minister, Lord Curzon emphasized that Denikin's case – as to whether he could establish himself in Russia – would be determined in six months' time. "We will wait another six months and make a decision about Russia afterwards, and your issue will also be finally resolved then." National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 1864, ref. 2, case 129, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> B. Kobakhidze, "kavkasia 1918-1924: urtiertkavshiris arshemdgari proekti" (Caucasus 1918-1924: An Unfinished Project of Interconnection), *90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Uprising of August 1924*, Paris, Tbilisi, 2015, p. 277.

<sup>22</sup> *kartuli diplomatiis istoriis narkvevebi* (Essays on the History of Georgian Diplomacy), Edited by R. Metreveli, part II, Tbilisi, 1992, p. 381.

<sup>23</sup> T. Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920* (Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920 ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 154.

<sup>24</sup> Z. Avalishvili, *sakartvelos damoukidebloba 1918-1921 tslebis saertashoriso politikashi* (Independence of Georgia in International Politics of 1918-1921), pp. 209-214; R. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, Vol. 3, Los Angeles, 1996, pp.30-33, 53-57.

<sup>25</sup> G. Mamulia, "From the History of Relations between the Entente States and the Mountaineers Republic of the Northern Caucasus (1919)", p. 25. <https://gfsis.org.ge/files/library/pdf/English-2912.pdf>





Woodrow Wilson

to Georgia, but the change of government in Italy in June 1919 removed the issue from the agenda: the country's new prime minister, F. Nitti, believed that the presence of Italian troops in Georgia would inevitably lead to a military confrontation with Russia, a fact he found unacceptable.

In the same period, the interests of the United States of America in the Ottoman Empire and the South Caucasus were more clearly defined. President W. Wilson was ready to accept the mandate on Armenia, and he dispatched several missions to the region, including the rector of the University of Chicago, Professor Jedson, Captain B. Moore, and General J. Harbord. The missions came to the conclusion that a common mandate was necessary for the South Caucasus, but Wilson's plan was not shared by the US Senate, and this initiative also failed.

The countries leading the Paris Peace Conference – Britain, France, and the United States of America – showed special interest in Russia, where the fire of the civil war had not yet been extinguished. Although Russia as a state was refused permission to participate in the conference, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers cooperated with the "Russian Political Conference" (Русское политическое совещание), created in Paris in 1918, to protect the interests of the White Guard movement. The organization included the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, S. Sazonov, the Chairman of the Provisional Government of Russia, G. Lvov, the former Russian ambassador to France, V. Maklakov, and others.

The allied states supported the idea of the Russian Federation, and Admiral A. Kolchak, as the successor of the Russian tsar and provisional governments, who recognized the debts and other contractual obligations towards the Entente countries, was recognized as its supreme ruler (Верховный правитель России).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Б. Штейн, "Русский Вопрос" на Парижской мирной конференции (1919-1920). М., 1949, с. 245.

The issue of Russia largely determined the situation of the entire Caucasus, including that of Georgia. If the favored power of the allied states (Kolchak, Volunteer Army) were to win in Russia, then the recognition of Georgia's independence was doubtful. This issue went practically unraised at the Paris Peace Conference, until the White Guard movement hopelessly collapsed.

When the supremacy of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War became clear, the Paris Conference began to discuss the "Cordon Sanitaire" and "Curtalement" policies towards Soviet Russia. The purpose of these projects was to lock Bolshevism within Russia itself and protect neighboring countries from its influence. It was essentially for this reason that Prime Minister Lloyd George, during his speech in the British Parliament on November 12, 1919, considered it possible to recognize the state independence of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia.<sup>27</sup>

On January 10, 1920, at the suggestion of Lord Curzon, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers made a decision to de facto recognize the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Only after that, on January 19, 1920, were the Georgian delegates given a platform in the main body of the conference.

The fact that the Democratic Republic of Georgia's sovereignty had been recognized internationally elicited ecstasy throughout the country. The highest legislative body of the country, the Constituent Assembly, whose sessions had been suspended for two weeks before the New Year, convened on January 14 and dedicated the entire session to this grand date.

The decision was made to send a telegram of gratitude from the head of the Georgian government to the chairman of the Paris Peace Conference, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia would address a similar letter to his British colleague, "who had taken the initiative to raise this issue."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, letters of gratitude were sent to Georges Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Lord Curzon.<sup>29</sup>

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia was very interested, and followed the work of the delegation sent to Paris. The recognition of the state independence of Georgia was delayed, triggering hopelessness in some members of the Constituent Assembly. On May 9, 1919, in his speech before the deputies, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Evgeny Gegechkori, noted: "A few months ago, after the defeat of the German coalition, the whole of humanity gazed with hope at the Paris Conference. We all watched

<sup>27</sup> V. Gafarov, "The Azerbaijani Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference", <http://www.visions.az/en/news/404/6a7cabf7/>

<sup>28</sup> M. Matsaberidze, O. Janelidze, I. Iakobashvili, P. Surguladze, T. Orjonikidze, N. Zedginidze, *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba , kartuli parlamentarizmis gamotsdileba* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Experience of Georgian Parliamentarism), Tbilisi, 2022, p. 351.

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 2115, ref. 1, case 120, f. 38-39.



Participants of the Paris  
Peace Conference

Allies around conference  
table. Versailles, 1919



the proceedings of the Conference with astonishment and full expectation that it would bring down the armistice and put an end to the misery that international war has brought upon mankind, but we must say today that we were almost disappointed in these hopes; even today, the armistice has not been brought about and this fog of bloodshed has not dispersed, and yet we still do not know when it will be, when this joyful time – which is called an international armistice and peace – will begin.”<sup>30</sup>

Some socialist MPs approached the Paris Peace Conference more critically. For example, on June 13, 1919, federalist Yesse Baratashvili announced from the tribune of the Constituent Assembly that “representatives of the imperialists” were gathered in Paris.<sup>31</sup>

Social-Democrat Ivane Gomarteli also questioned “Clemenceau’s democracy,” saying, “I assure you that the number of supporters we gain at the Conference will only be as high as the voice of democracy, European democracy.” “If the imperialist ruling circles of Europe do not recognize our independence in Paris, we will have

to start a different kind of struggle, and in this struggle, our loyal and strong ally and friend will be international working democracy,” SR Ioseb Gobechia declared.<sup>32</sup>

The main results of the Paris Peace Conference are considered the creation of the League of Nations, the signing of the Treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain, the *Traité de Neuilly*, the Trianon and Sevres peace treaties with the defeated states, and the laying of the foundation for the Versailles-Washington system in international relations. Along with these historical decisions, the de facto recognition of its state independence was of immeasurable importance for Georgia.<sup>33</sup>

The Georgian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference actively defended the political and economic interests of its country, demanding the recognition of the independence of the Georgian state and security guarantees. The efforts of the delegation contributed to increasing awareness of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in Europe and dismissing the misconceptions that were formed in certain circles of Western society about the First Republic of Georgia and its government, courtesy of the propaganda of this or that anti-Georgian force.

<sup>30</sup> *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), Vol. I, March 12, 1919 - May 27, Tbilisi, 2019, pp. 390-391.

<sup>31</sup> *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the session), Vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 130.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169; 178.

<sup>33</sup> The Democratic Republic of Georgia was de jure recognized by the leading states in January 1921, just one year after the Paris Conference.