

SOVIETIZED GEORGIA



THE BOLSHEVIK RING AROUND THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA.

Which succumbed to the Soviet system because all its neighbors were under the control of Moscow, now dominating "the entire isthmus between the Black Sea and the Caspian."

DESPITE THE HOPES of many European observers that the Caucasian Republic of Georgia would be able to resist Bolshevik infection, it has succumbed, we are told, and what is more the Sovietizing of Georgia means, according to *L'Europe Nouvelle* (Paris), the arrival of "a radical change in the general situation in the Caucasus." The entire isthmus between the Black Sea and the Caspian is now in the "hands of Moscow," and the Armenia lately announced the fall of the Soviet régime, according to this weekly, this set-back is only temporary. Thus Russia becomes the next-door neighbor of Turkey. This status might have been the source of complications in affairs between the two countries, it is noted, when we recall that by the peace of Brest-Litovsk the regions of Kars, Ardaghan, and Batoum were assigned to Turkey. To forestall such an eventuality there intervenes the new Russian-Turkish accord of March 16, which "annuls preceding treaties and settles points in litigation to the satisfaction of the two contracting parties."

One of the clauses of this treaty cedes the port of Batoum to Georgia, which means that "Red" Russia becomes master of the

Bakou-Batoum pipe-line and consequently of the petroleum-carrying industry of the Caucasus. By way of balance, Turkey keeps the regions of Ardaghan and Kars. Then, too, we are told that the new treaty also settles the disposal of Nakhitchewan, which for a long time was the source of misunderstanding between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Under the new treaty, this region is allotted a large share of autonomy under the protectorate of Azerbaijan. We read then:

"Once the Soviet Government had secured a foothold in Azerbaijan and in Armenia, the downfall of the young and frail state of Georgia was only a question of time. It surprised nobody. On the contrary, Georgia offered a resistance to the power of Moscow that seemed almost paradoxical in its strength. As a matter of fact, Georgia was, as it were, bathed on all sides with the waves of Bolshevism. In the north there were the Sovietized Caucasian tribes; in the south and east were the frontiers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, which, tho normally independent, were under the thumb of Moscow. In the west Georgia was slap against Turkey, the Turkey of Mustafa Kemal, friend and ally of the 'Reds.'

"Yet Georgia succeeded in resisting the joint efforts of her neighbors for so long a period merely because of certain peculiarities of the people, which are little known, and which should have interest for us because they throw a certain light on the situation in the states of the Caucasus, which has been frequently misrepresented in the press here and there. In the first place, it should be set down that the influence of the Soviets over the mountaineers of the southern Caucasus was fairly illusory until lately. The people of these regions are descendants of the same warriors whom it took Czarist Russia fifty years (1816-64) to reduce.

"It is more than certain that they did not yield readily to the conquering advance of the 'Reds,' considering the fact that they have their horses and know so well the sparse lines of communication in the chain of the great Caucasus. Incidentally, this is a reason for giving a certain amount of credit to the reports we hear from time to time that they are rising up in rebellion against the powers of Moscow. In order to win them to the cause of Bolshevism and to gain the confidence which makes their geographical situation so precious, the Soviet commissaries went so far as to oblige them by creating two new republics, namely, Daghestan and the Republic of Mountaineers. The latter contains Tchetcheni, Ingouchetic, Ossettie, Kaberdie, Karatchai."

On the other hand, it is pointed out that, in spite of the fact that Azerbaijan and Armenia were Sovietized and that Mustafa Kemal and the "Reds" concluded an agreement, it has always been difficult for the Moscow commissaries to obtain observance at the same time of the same instructions by these various states, and we are told that:

"Such a condition of external affairs caused domestic upsets, and this is one reason why Georgia was able to keep up her resistance to the 'Reds' for so long a time. But Georgia came to see that her days were numbered in case a mutual agreement, more or less stable, should be concluded by her various neighbors for offensive purposes, and above all if Moscow should lend them aid, both material and moral. This fate became the more plainly inevitable because Georgia was going through the gravest kind of an economic crisis, and Azerbaijan controlled all her resources of naphtha through Bakou and the gigantic pipe-line connecting Tiflis and Batoum."