

A MODERN HISTORY OF  
GEORGIA

DAVID MARSHALL LANG, M.A., D.Lit.

Reader in Caucasian Studies in the  
University of London

WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON  
20 NEW BOND STREET LONDON W1

Th  
ful  
co  
to  
tw  
in  
R  
th  
th  
P  
ti  
C  
th  
S  
a  
  
c  
a  
l  
o  
:  
:  
:

© 1962 by David Marshall Lang

---

*Made and printed in Great Britain by  
William Clowes & Sons, Limited, London and Beccles*  
17/6943

TO THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE  
AND THE NEW GEORGIA



## CONTENTS

Preface		xiii
Chapter		
I The Land and the People		I
	<i>Geographical position of Caucasia — Ethnic variety — By rail to Tbilisi — Origins of Georgian Christianity — Tbilisi old and new — Industry and agriculture — National characteristics of the Georgians — Literature and the arts</i>	
II Rise and Fall of the Georgian Kings		23
	<i>From tribe to monarchy — The coming of the Romans — Christianity and the growth of feudalism — The rise of the Bagratid dynasty — The Mongol yoke — Ottoman Turkey and Safavi Persia — Rapprochement with Russia — Collapse of the monarchy — The Russians take over</i>	
III Georgia under the Tsars: Resistance, Revolt, Pacification: 1801-32		42
	<i>The liquidation of the old order — Prince Tsitsianov — Death of a general — Subjugation of Western Georgia — King Solomon II and Napoleon Bonaparte — The revolt of 1812 — Suppression of the Georgian Church — Eco- nomic progress and literary contacts — The conspiracy of 1832</i>	
IV Tsar Nicholas and Viceroy Vorontsov: 1832-55		70
	<i>The Murids of Daghestan — Russian reverses — Georgian feudalism and Russian serfdom — Deus ex machina — Attempts at reform — Formation of the Caucasian Viceroyalty — Industrial progress — Decline of the old aristocracy — Literature and the theatre — The Crimean War — Passing of an autocrat</i>	
V Social Change and National Awakening: 1855-94		94
	<i>Alexander II and the liberation of the serfs — Shamil capitulates — The integration of Western Georgia — The peasant question in Georgia — The rise of the</i>	

CONTENTS

- Georgian intelligentsia — Land hunger and peasant discontent — The edicts of 1864 — The War of 1877-78 — Commerce and industry — Russian Pan-Slavism and the lesser breeds — Ilia Chavchavadze and Georgia's re-awakening — Alexander III and Russian reaction — Great Georgian writers of the late nineteenth century*
- VI The Storm Gathers: 1894-1904 116  
*Tsarism under pressure — Accession of Nicholas II — 'Gri-Gri' Golitsyn — A Georgian anarchist — Populists and Marxists — The Third Group — Sweated labour — Stalin's revolutionary youth — 'Legal Marxism' and the fighting underground — 'Down with auto-cracy!' — Plebe and the Black Hundreds*
- VII Georgia in the 1905 Revolution 146  
*Russia and Japan — Bolsheviks and Mensheviks — Bloody Sunday — The Gurian communes — The Georgian Church Militant — Massacre at Tbilisi Town Hall — Witte and the Duma — The Tsar regains the upper hand — The Cossacks take over — Blood and fire in Georgia — The Friends of Georgia Committee*
- VIII On Borrowed Time: 1906-17 169  
*The Georgians in the Duma — The Viborg Declaration — Social-Democrats and Anarchists — Stolypin and the Second Duma — Murder of Ilia Chavchavadze — The Georgian Church in crisis — Plight of the Georgian peasantry — Industrial unrest — War declared, 1914 — Mussolini and the Georgian Socialists — The Georgian Legion — Caucasian battlefields — The Turks on the defensive — Breakdown of Tsarist Russia — Literature, art and intellectual life up to 1917*
- IX Towards Georgian Independence: 1917-18 192  
*Abdication of Nicholas II — Kerensky and the Georgian Social-Democrats — Economic change and social revolution — Restoration of the Georgian Church — Disintegration of Russia's Caucasian Front — Short rations and Bolshevik broadsheets — The Bolsheviks seize power — The Transcaucasian Commissariat — The Turkish menace — Brest-Litovsk repudiated — An ephemeral federation — Germany takes a hand — Birth of the Georgian Republic*



CONTENTS

X	Independent Georgia: 1918-21	209
	<i>Formation of the Georgian cabinet — Trends in Georgian Socialism — The agrarian question — Financial instability — The British replace the Germans — An Armenian invasion — Denikin and the Whites — The British withdrawal — Georgia at the Paris Conference</i>	
XI	Georgia and Communist Russia: 1920-24	224
	<i>Collapse of the White Russians — The Russo-Georgian Treaty — Communist propaganda in Georgia — Upheaval in Ossetia — Rise of Kemalist Turkey — Georgia and the Second International — Krassin and Lloyd George — The Red Army invades Georgia — Death agony of independent Georgia — Lenin versus Stalin on Georgia — Revival of Great Russian chauvinism — The insurrection of 1924</i>	
XII	The Stalin Era: 1924-53	245
	<i>Industrial development — Georgian agriculture collectivized — The war against the kulaks — 'Dizziness with Success' — The rise of Beria — The Five-Year Plans — Georgia under the purges — Political reorganization and the Stalin Constitution — The Georgian émigrés — Georgia during World War II — The final terror — Death of a dictator</i>	
XIII	Georgia in Our Time	263
	<i>Beria's brief heyday — The Tbilisi riots — Industry and construction — Scientific advances — Growing pains of modernization — The housing crisis — Farming and plantations — Education, medicine and sport — Scholarship and science — The economic potential of Georgia — Russian nationality policy today</i>	
	Maps	275
	Notes	279
	Bibliographical Notes and Suggestions for Further Reading	284
	Index	287

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Highland Georgia: A farm in upland Svaneti
- 2 Old Tbilisi: The Citadel and Muslim quarter
- 3 Modern Tbilisi: The main pavilion in the Stalin Park  
(*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 4 Old Tbilisi: Houses on a cliff overlooking the River Kura  
(*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 5 Modern Tbilisi: Baratashvili Bridge (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 6 The Georgian Military Highway (*Photo: Paul Popper*)
- 7 Grading grapes at Tsinandali State Farm in Kakheti (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 8 The traditional game of *tskhenburti* or 'horse-ball' (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 9 Modern Tbilisi: the Sports Stadium
- 10 Choir of centenarians, Abkhazian ASSR (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 11 The 'Mother and Son' sanatorium at Tsikhis-dziri, Ajar ASSR (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 12 An old Laz peasant (*Photo by courtesy of Denis C. Hills, Esq.*)
- 13 A village in the Daghestan ASSR
- 14 King Erekle II of Georgia (1744-98) (*Portrait in State Gallery, Tbilisi*)
- 15 His Consort, Queen Darejan (*Portrait in State Gallery, Tbilisi*)
- 16 The treaty concluded in 1783 between King Erekle and Catherine the Great of Russia
- 17 Giorgi XII (1798-1800), last king of Eastern Georgia  
(*Portrait in the State Gallery, Tbilisi*)
- 18 and 19 Georgian national costumes as worn by the nobility in the late 19th century (*Photo by courtesy of Mrs W. G. Atwood*)
- 20 Marjory Wardrop (1869-1909) (*Photo by courtesy of A. C. Wardrop, Esq.*)
- 21 Oliver Wardrop (1864-1948) as Commissioner to Transcaucasia, 1919 (*Photo by courtesy of A. C. Wardrop, Esq.*)
- 22 Metekhi fortress jail, Tbilisi (*Photo; J. Allan Cash*)
- 23 Arrest of Akaki Tsereteli in 1907 after writing a lampoon on the Russian governor of Tbilisi



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 24 A 500-ruble note current under the independent Georgian republican régime, 1918-21 (*Photo: American Numismatic Society*)
- 25 Order of Queen Tamar, designed for issue to Georgian émigrés serving with the German and Turkish armies, 1915 (*Photo: American Numismatic Society*)
- 26 An official portrait of I. V. Stalin as Marshal of the Soviet Union (*Photo: Paul Popper*)
- 27 The Stalin Museum at Gori (*Photo: J. Allan Cash*)
- 28 L. P. Beria, Georgian chief of the NKVD and a Vice-President of the Soviet Council of Ministers (*Photo: Radio Times Hulton Picture Library*)
- 29 The Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Tbilisi
- 30 The hydroelectric station at Zemo-Avchala (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 31 Blast-furnaces at the Transcaucasian Metallurgical Works at Rustavi, near Tbilisi (*Photo: Society for Cultural Relations with USSR*)
- 32 The tube-works at the Transcaucasian Metallurgical Works, Rustavi, (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 33 Authors and public figures: Soviet stamps depicting:
- (a) Shota Rustaveli
  - (b) Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani (1658-1725)
  - (c) Akaki Tsereteli (1840-1915)
  - (d) Vazha-Pshavela (1861-1915)
  - (e) Sergo Orjonikidze (1886-1937)
- 34 Georgian calligraphy in the old Georgian alphabet from a Gospel manuscript preserved on Mount Sinai (*Photo: Selly Oak Collection, Birmingham*)
- 35 Church of Saint David, the Pantheon of Georgian writers, on the hill above Tbilisi
- 36 A Georgian dance ensemble (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 37 The famous Georgian actress Medea Japaridze as Cleopatra in 'Caesar and Cleopatra' by Bernard Shaw
- 38 'Tandila's Dream' (1931) by Lado Gudishvili
- 39 A Youth Ball given by Georgian students in national costume (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)
- 40 The Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, Tbilisi State University (*Photo: Soviet Weekly*)



# A MODERN HISTORY OF GEORGIA

The Georgians are among the most colourful, talented and interesting of the national communities embraced within the USSR to-day. Their national history extends over two thousand years and they formed an independent kingdom right up to the Russian annexation in 1801. They later led the resistance of the minority peoples against the tzarist system, and Stalin and his compatriots played a leading part in the revolutionary movement. In modern times, Georgia and the Caucasus have provided the Russian Communist movement and the Soviet state with many effective, ruthless and dominating personalities.

Dr Lang's book is the first detailed study of Georgian history since the Russian annexation to appear in any Western language. The author deals fully with the Georgian historical and social background, and particularly with the impact of Russian and European ways on the manners and outlook of the Caucasian peoples. Attention is focused on both the constructive and the less favourable sides of Soviet nationality policy, and current economic and political trends in Soviet Caucasia are analysed. The work is based on nearly twenty years' study of Russian and Georgian languages and history in their original sources, combined with travel and residence in the Near East, Russia and Georgia itself. Written in a lively and readable style **A MODERN HISTORY OF GEORGIA** will appeal to all those interested in Russian and Near Eastern History, as well as in current international affairs.



THE WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

# Asia-Africa Series

EDITOR : BERNARD LEWIS

*Professor of the History of the Near and Middle East,  
London University*

## Already Published

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE SUDAN by P. M. Holt  
'An excellent book which as a short account of the Sudan Republic's rise to independent nationhood could scarcely be bettered' *Times Literary Supplement*.  
'This most impressive book.' *Sunday Times*.

## To be Published in 1962

A MODERN HISTORY OF GEORGIA by D. M. Lang (*London University*)  
A MODERN HISTORY OF LEBANON by K. S. Salibi (*American University of Beirut*)

## In Preparation

AFGHANISTAN  
ARMENIA  
CEYLON  
ETHIOPIA  
INDIA  
INDONESIA  
ISRAEL  
JAPAN  
JORDAN  
LIBYA  
NIGERIA  
PAKISTAN AND  
MUSLIM INDIA  
PERSIA  
SIAM  
SOMALILAND  
SOVIET  
CENTRAL ASIA  
SYRIA  
VIETNAM

R. N. Frye (*Harvard University*)  
Emanuel Sarkisyanz  
E. F. C. Ludowyk  
Edward Ullendorf (*Manchester University*)  
K. L. Ballhatchet (*London University*)  
C. D. Cowan (*London University*)  
Ephraim Broido  
W. G. Beasley (*London University*)  
Farhat J. Ziadeh (*Princeton University*)  
Nicola Ziadeh (*American University of Beirut*)  
S. O. Biobaku (*University of Ife, Ibadan*)  
  
P. Hardy (*London University*)  
G. M. Wickens (*Toronto University*)  
Stuart Simmonds (*London University*)  
I. M. Lewis (*Glasgow University*)  
  
Col. G. E. Wheeler  
A. L. Tibawi (*Harvard University*)  
P. J. Honey (*London University*)