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Renegotiating the empire, forging the nation-state: the Georgian case through the political economic thought of Niko Nikoladze and Noe Zhordania, c. 1870–1920

Adrian Brisku*

The Institute of International Studies, Social Sciences Department, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

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This article begins with an observation of a contemporary and yet reoccurring political dilemma that small nation-states face with respect to larger states in being either inside or outside of supranational political entities regarding political and economic asymmetries. Employing an intellectual history approach, the article explores this dilemma with reference to the Georgian nation in late-nineteenth century Tsarist Russia and the early twentieth century, when that territory briefly became a nation-state: It explores this through the language of political economy articulated in the thoughts and actions of two founding Georgian national intellectual and political figures, the statesman Niko Nikoladze and Noe Zhordania, who was one of the first prime ministers. It argues that conceiving of the nation(state) primarily in economic terms, as opposed to exclusively nationalist ones, was more conducive to the option of remaining inside a supranational space.

Keywords: Georgian nation-state; political economy; Russian empire; small versus large nation-states; Nikoladze; Zhordania

Introduction: "the in or out Dilemma"

> "Our country's [Georgia's] fate and future is strongly entangled with the Russian condition and Russian social and political life has influence on our country's destiny." (Nikoladze 1966c, 358)
>
> "It was incomprehensible they would hate such a small nation, small country, which does not disturb anybody but seeks its own comfort. These two neighbours, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, were and remained our enemy. As such, country's defence became our main priority." (Zhordania 1990, 105)

Exploring political and economic interactions between smaller and larger nation-(state)s, within and without supranational settings, is a complex and inexhaustible endeavor. At its core is the perennial question of political and economic asymmetries – which in good times can perhaps become a source of security and prosperity; but which, in times of crisis, are a cause of instability and conflict. This question lay at the heart of the 2014 Scottish debate and referendum on whether or not to remain within the UK (Huhne 2014). It also became a major question vexing relations between some smaller and some larger, richer member states within the European Union (Soros 2012); and between member states and

*Email: abrisku@faculty.unyp.cz; abrisku@yahoo.com

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the Union's formal political center, that is, Brussels.[1] Evidently, despite heated debates regarding political and economic imbalances, the Scottish nation voted to stay within the UK; while, despite the severity of the ongoing European financial crisis, the more economically distressed Eurozone states did not in the end seek to exit the Euro, nor indeed the Union (Rose 2012). The question which therefore arises is why these various nation-states opted to remain within these "uncomfortable" supranational settings – be it the UK or the EU – rather than choosing to exist politically and economically as independent nation-states?

Contemporary European political and intellectual debates have much to say about staying within the Union and dealing with the crisis, but not much about withdrawing from the Union. What appears to be missing from contemporary debates, and from the scant scholarly analysis[2] thus far with regard to this dilemma, is a comparative[3] historical, political economy-focused perspective that deals with two crucial aspects. The first is that of considering the issue regarding "in" or "out" in a historically contiguous manner, referred to here as two distinct "historical moments:" first that of "renegotiating the empire," whereby a nation seeks an accommodation of sorts within a supranational framework; and second that of "forging a nation-state," whereby a small nation gains its independent status, and subsequently interacts with larger states outside the preceding supranational framework. The second aspect is that of engaging with political economic vocabularies and projects – that is, economic ideas as beliefs and actions (Maier 1987, 2–5) – of political activists in the context of these two "historical moments."

As to the first aspect, modern European history is replete with examples of the first "historical moment," in which the national revival of small nation states took place within the context of imperial/supranational states undergoing liberal political and economic reforms; and also of the second "historical moment" of imperial implosion and the subsequent emergence of nation-states. The case of late nineteenth-century Georgia, a small nation whose elite was significantly integrated (politically, militarily, and administratively) within the Russian Empire, much like for instance Scotland within the UK, and benefited from Russian imperialism (Jones 2005, 2), presents a good case of comparison in the first "historical moment" and in linking the discussion on political economy and nation to the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment debate (see further below). As an independent nation-state struggling to survive politically and economically during the early twentieth century, it is particularly illuminating. The opening quotes above are from, respectively, the Georgian statesmen and political activist Niko Nikoladze, and one of the First Republic's prime ministers Noe Zhordania, who sought to renegotiate better relations for their small nation within a reformed empire. They, subsequently, laid the political and economic foundations for the short-lived Georgian nation-state. Their political texts (taken in context)[4] and projects shed light upon their realistic – and idealistic – views regarding economic and geopolitical understandings of nation and empire that serve to question a Georgian historiographical narrative which conceives of the nation in purely ethnic terms, while postulating an inevitable path toward statehood and the collapse of empire (Jones 2013). Also, unlike Miroslav Hroch's insightful comparative account of the revival of the nationalism of small nations within multi-ethnic empires, portrayed as an antagonistic process of "patriots" fighting for the "oppressed" nation against the "ruling nation" (Hroch [1985] 2000, 12–13), these texts serve to indicate also the historical possibilities for renegotiation and renewal (political, legal, and economic) between representatives of the "oppressed," and the "ruling nation," as within the context of a supra-national framework. Analytically, such complexity can be captured by proposing a hierarchy of political orders/spaces: namely, an *inter-state order* – that is, a big/imperial

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state sphere, defined by war, values, and commerce; an *intra-state order* – that is, an imperial center, and a peripheral national space of interaction through violence, law, and/or language; and a *national space* defined by ethnic and economic relations – one open to transnational commerce.

The second aspect, meanwhile, is novel, for while great thinkers and modern scholars have dealt with this dilemma, there is relatively little literature which deals with the question of how nationalist activists implement their economic understandings of nationhood in supranational and in nation-state contexts. As a moral political philosopher and Enlightenment thinker, Immanuel Kant did not have much to say about economic imbalances between small and large nations; but in political and legal terms he believed that they could ensure their existence against lawlessness and war, "outside" a supranational entity, by participating in a common "league" of nations: one that would operate within a legal framework so that "even the smallest state could expect security and justice, not only from its own power and by its own decrees but also from this great league of nations" (Kant 1983, 34). The eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher, David Hume, meanwhile, directly addressed these asymmetries from his own immediate context of the small and impoverished nation of Scotland as it relinquished its political and economic independence within the terms of the 1707 Union with the bigger and richer nation of England. Understanding the new discipline and vocation of political economy as being revolutionary when international trade became an affair of state, Hume remained ambiguous towards an expectation that it would even out these asymmetries: one important reason for this being that this new vocation had become a deciding factor with regard to the "superiority of one nation over another" (Reinert and Roge 2013, 6). Hence, at the level of *inter-state order,* political and economic union was instrumental to success in international commerce, but was no guarantor at the level of *intra-state* order with regard to ameliorating the existing political and economic imbalances between Scotland and England (Hont 2005, 267–322). Meanwhile the "father" of classical political economy Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations,* downplayed this ambiguity when he asserted that nations, small and large, engage in free trade and the division of labor. He thus set into motion the idea that freedom of capital must be unrestricted; while labor, albeit under constant pressure to change and specialize, would eventually come to enjoy wealth. Smith seemed less concerned with this dilemma when he proposed that rich countries suppress competition and create poor countries as outlets for their trade (Hont 2005, 304–305). Less keen on the idea of the nation state, vehemently antagonistic to the prospect of state and capital accumulation, and a staunch defender of labor, Karl Marx, in his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) was highly pessimistic with regard to political economy's supposed premises of fair wealth creation and distribution, as long as the means to such processes remained in the hands of a few capitalists who also controlled a given state's political and legal structure.

Seminal thinkers as these have set the contours of debate within the discipline, reinforced by the argument of modern scholars such as Benedict Anderson, with his notion of "print capitalism" (Anderson 1991, 222–224), and Ernest Gellner with his arguments regarding the economic efficiency of national cohesion (Gellner 1983, 140). However, there has been comparatively little scholarship devoted to the roles of political activists – such as Nikoladze and Zhordania – who engaged with ideas of political economy (wealth creation and redistribution) and nation[5] within the context of empire and nation-(state). This, then, is a perspective that can be illuminating for relevant contemporary debates.

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Between nation and empire

It would require nearly a century before the language of classical political economy became articulated within Tsarist Georgia's intellectual milieus, and when it did permeate, it had already been challenged, most notably by Marx's intervention. This was a challenge that the politician and statesman Noe Zhordania (1869–1953) addressed in terms of his political conception of the Georgian nation. Yet, the enlightenment figure Niko Nikoladze (1843–1928), the first promoter of political economy in Georgia, believed that the re-emerging nation – controversially incorporated in 1801 into a union with the mighty Russian Empire (see The Russian–Georgian Treaty 1783) – could prosper within this imperial setting (Nikoladze 1966a, 24). Nonetheless, both men understood that political economy offered insights not only into the ordering of the nation's internal development – in terms of territorial politics, the improvement of technologies of cultivation, or of industrial production (Reinert and Roge 2013, 2) – but also a role for the empire as a facilitator of opportunities, and as a shield against risks which inevitably confront smaller nations within what is an inherently unequal interstate economic order.

This understanding was discernible, irrespective of the intellectual and political differences between the two men – bearing in mind that Zhordania's Georgian Social Democratic Party (GDSP) recognized Nikoladze's socialist leanings, but disliked his "petty bourgeois" inclinations (Jones 2005, 38). Nikoladze's close associate, Giorgi Tsereteli, categorized the national intellectual scene at that time in terms of three distinct groups. The first group (*pirveli dasi*), the first generation of national cultural revival nationalists, was led by "the father of modern nation" Ilia Chavchavadze, espousing to reformist conservative politics. Placing his and Nikoladze's "reformist" and "democratic progressive" politics in the second group (*meore dasi*), Tsereteli characterized the third group (*mesame dasi*) as home to Zhordania's "revolutionary socialist" thought and activities. This division was subsequently perpetuated by later Georgian historiography. Indeed, for as versatile a figure of public and political life, with various interests and ideas – activist, entrepreneur, city mayor, politician, as well as, importantly, a ferocious and prolific commentator and analyst of events and issues affecting his native country, imperial Russia, and the European continent (Gogua 2003, 3) – post-Soviet Georgian scholars find Nikoladze "complex and hard to classify, and [someone who] often changed his opinion" (Jones 2005, 38). Soviet Georgian scholarly opinion – ideologically constrained as it was – appeared confused as to where his politics stood (Gogua 2003, 3): was he a "progressive revolutionary democrat" (Gorgiladze 1961; Metreveli 1980) or a "liberal bourgeoisie" (Khundadze 1927, 1931; Radiani 1954)? Such scholarship was unable to account for Nikoladze's evolution from the "left" to the "right" of politics (Zakariadze 1955). Early Soviet scholarship regarded Zhordania and his party as camouflaged European bourgeoisie ideologues: political and ideological readers of "Marxism through petty-bourgeoisie glasses" (Khundadze 1927, 98). In some ways, post-Soviet scholarship confirmed European Social Democratic influences in his thoughts and actions – influences which set him apart from Russian Marxist forms of thought (Guruli and Vachnadze 1999, 315; Jones 2005, 56–58). This was especially so when he headed the government of the First Georgian Republic between 1918 and 1921 (Brisku 2013, 37–38).

This was an understanding, nonetheless, emerging from an ongoing national debate – already in place since the 1860s – which had become framed in terms of an irreconcilable opposition between arguments of the cultural versus economic development of the nation. On one side stood the leader of *pirveli dasi*, Chavchavadze, who advanced the thesis of ethnic cultural development (culture, language, and religion) (Jones 2005, 35–37); on the

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other side stood Nikoladze, who prioritized the nation's economic development – economic growth and trade (Jones 2005, 38). Zhordania, meanwhile, occupied a middle position, seeing economic development as inseparable from national cultural and social progress. It is possible, thus, to consider the categorization of their national intellectual contributions into three groups (*dasi*) not only in political ideological terms but also in political economic ones. And yet what was absent from this debate was the alternative of forging the Georgian nation-state *outside* of the empire. This was not only because the nation's fate appeared sealed within a political "union" with imperial Russia, owing to past events, but also because of an understanding that the nation's present and future chances of peace and prosperity, within an existing hierarchical political and economic order (inter-state, intra-state, national), seemed to be better served by remaining united with Russia.

Inter-state ordering: violence, values, and commerce

It was via this hierarchical frame that Nikoladze could articulate three vocabularies that were conducive with respect to imperial states' inter-state ordering: violence, values, and commerce. He saw violence, by which he meant war, as an intrinsic and natural feature of human life (Bakradze 2011, 82), as well as of inter-state relations. Values also – in the sense of human values, which he thought "civilized" nations such as Britain and France upheld in their conduct of European politics – had long been a feature of these relations. The Russian Empire, as an integral player within this order, devotedly made use of these notions, as Nikoladze noted in an article entitled "The Political Situation" (1878), which commented on diplomatic efforts between the Russian and Ottoman governments over the 1875–1876 Balkan crisis, which in turn led to the 1877–1878 Russo–Turkish war. Convinced as he was of Russia's right to engage in wars, Nikoladze could not defend its record in upholding "human values" or "noble foreign politics" in international affairs, particularly with regard to the human rights abuses of Balkan Christian populations within the Ottoman Empire. He considered "our politics," referring to the Russian position in the *Eastern Question*, to be marred by hypocrisy, for it was obvious that the empire's primary motivation was not that of protecting Slavs from these abuses, but rather that of negating the terms of the 1856 Treaty of Paris[6] – a move that he, nonetheless, supported (Nikoladze 1964b, 63). The gap between Russian values and Russian imperial interests undermined its credibility not only vis-à-vis progressive European public opinion, but also with respect to the forging of alliances with European states on a basis of moral superiority. Ever since Empress Catherine the Great had sought to defend Ottoman Christians' rights, Nikoladze continued, "Europe has been aware that behind Russia's humanist ideas and moral power has been the intention of taking Constantinople" (Nikoladze 1964b, 64). If the Russian Empire could not restore credibility at this level through "noble foreign politics," then the only way possible was by demonstrating its commitment to "internal development and improvement of life" (Nikoladze 1964b, 67), this implying a call for greater attention to be devoted to matters of political economy.

Imperial internal economic development, however, was linked to international commerce, where violence and values collided. In his doctoral thesis, titled *Du désarmement et de ses conséquenences économiques et sociales* (defended at the University of Zurich in 1868), focused on the social impact of disarming standing armies (a question which was anchored in a vivid European debate between the "party of peace" versus the "partisans of war", Nikoladze detected an intimacy between war and international commerce. There were sinister, yet necessary, intentions behind the imperial state's reasons for sustaining permanent armies in the modern world: namely gaining commercial and strategic

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advantages over other states, as well as distracting public attention from domestic issues (Nikoladze 1868, 2). This view chimed with Adam Smith's enthusiasm for the British imperial project, which allowed for the exercise of both military and economic power abroad for economic gain (Reinert and Roge 2013, 2). Nikoladze warned the imperial state with war, industry, and commerce had become so intertwined at the international level that the advocacy of disarmament, and of redirecting military spending to public education and works, as advocated by a "party of peace," would, whilst resonating positively with "noble politics" and European public sentiment, in fact cause a "general calamity" and lead to a "violent commotion" in economic life before it improved the material or moral well-being of European societies (Nikoladze 1868, 7–17). He went on to argue that "economic science" should be employed in the service of a "gradual" process of change, which would guarantee internal stability – the ultimate goal for any society – and that this should be implemented through a societal, rather than state-led, initiative. In this way, he argued, European states could reorganize their internal economic order, abandon their permanent armies, and engage in peaceful relations (Nikoladze 1868, 5–50) without having to come to some sort of political agreement at the interstate level.

This was, of course, idealistic: nearly a quarter of a century later, when he came to reflect on the opportunities and challenges for small nations within the context of interstate commerce and competition, he found that, unsurprisingly, no European empire had dismantled its permanent armies or given up on war as a means of gaining economic advantage. On the contrary, there were definite strategic advantages which imperial military muscle afforded to a nation's economic development, as had been the case with the Russian victory in the 1877–1878 wars against the Ottoman Empire. This victory had successfully reinstated the empire's geostrategic position in the Black Sea. But more importantly for Georgia, it re-unified Ottoman-occupied regions (most notably the port town of Batumi), which had previously been captured from the medieval kingdom of Georgia, thereby not only expanding the nation's economic space, but, crucially, also connecting it directly with European commercial trading routes (Nikoladze 1878, 177).

However, if national and imperial interests coincided at this level, there were other aspects of affairs the nation was obliged to think about regarding its future on its own. In 1894, in an article "On French Affairs," Nikoladze, having by now become the elected mayor of the small town of Poti which he would proceed to govern for 18 years and successfully transform into an influential trading center, argued that if the objective of richer states was industrialization, it must also be so for poorer and smaller nations. For without "working weapons" (railways, ships, etc.) "soon [people] become slaves of the richer neighbor, and regardless of how smart and energetic its members, they would not be able to rid themselves of common slavery" (Nikoladze 1894b, 154). He went on to argue, in a subsequent article titled "The Necessary Power," that time was of the essence in achieving economic (as opposed to political) independence through national industry and capital (Nikoladze 1894a, 133).

Zhordania also conceived of the interstate order as defined by predatory imperial rivalries and wars. Like Nikoladze, he accepted the idea of anchoring a nation within a mutually beneficial alliance with the imperial state, such that the idea of a nation-state (Zhordania 1922c, 201–203) would not be necessary. This mode of thinking – rejecting political nationalism – was common not only among Georgian intellectuals/politicians, but also among others in different parts of the Russian Empire (Jones 2005, 17). Thus, smaller nations would have a harder existence at this level, without imperial backing. In his autobiography entitled *My Past*, written in 1938 while in exile from Georgia and more than 15 years after the fall of the first Georgian Republic which had been taken over by Bolshevik

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Russia, he recognized that imperial Russian military aegis offered Georgia protection from the two other regional empires: the Ottoman and the Persian. He recalled how, as a 10-year-old boy at the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, while growing up in a noble family in the region of Guria, then the frontier zone between the two empires, people "did not want Russian administration, Russian internal rules, but they wanted and respected the Russian army" (Zhordania 1990, 15).

But small nations would have an even harder time in political economic terms, because in an interstate order comprising large "economic units" locked into a mutually dependent relationship, each striving for economic independence, as Nikoladze would have it, such states would find it impossible to thrive unless they remained or became part of a larger "unit" (Zhordania 1898, 2). Changes in their interactions were triggered by forces associated with international capitalism, commerce and finance, which could thwart the development of smaller nations unless, internally, a common front between capital and labor could be forged. At the interstate level, however, as he elaborated in a longer article published in 1913 entitled "Our National Question," the empire functioned as a shield for military protection as well as an "economic unit" which was much more viable than the economic sphere of a small nation. In this article, published the same year as Joseph Stalin's article "The National Question and Social-Democracy," he engaged not only with Nikoladze's position on nation and nationality, but also with Stalin's, who viewed the nation in historical, territorial, and linguistic terms and in its economic life (Stalin 1913, 54) and as it will be elaborated further below would place them both in the "territorialist" as opposed to "culturalist" positions within the wider European Marxist debate on nationality (Zhordania 1922c, 165–186). Importantly, Zhordania continued, the empire's economic unity had resulted from a centuries-long process of building protective mechanisms (such as its army and its military infrastructure). And in order to sustain itself in a competitive economic world of industrial production, it had to continuously militarize and resort to extortive politics beyond its borders in search of agricultural regions and markets. For better or worse (more usually the latter) such policies and practices constituted the basis of colonial politics on the part of contemporary empires (powerful industrial states), which systematically subjugated new countries and territories so as to expand their own "economic unit." This subjugation could only be accomplished, he continued, by military and/or diplomatic means – means and expenses that a small nation such as Georgia could ill afford (Zhordania 1922c, 201–203).

Aside from war and commerce, Zhordania employed the vocabulary of values to describe a future interstate order, the practices of which differed from that of Nikoladze. If the latter empires could potentially resort to noble politics based on human values, for Zhordania it was even conceivable that war might disappear altogether, and peace and cooperation would come to govern relations between smaller nations and larger states provided that socialist values were embraced.

Renegotiating the "union:" morality, legality, evolution, and revolution

How, then, to ensure that the Georgian nation took maximum advantage of what the imperial setting offered to it in terms of interstate order, while reducing power imbalances with respect to the imperial center? Their respective answers boiled down to a set of political and legal strategies that served to renegotiate the nation's political position, while preserving the union. For Nikoladze, violence and war were part of interstate relations, but as far as intrastate order was concerned, neither state nor societal violence was permissible. As someone convinced that evolutionary rather revolutionary means were the best path to achieving

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societal progress (Nikoladze 1964c, 258–259), he rejected for instance the political terrorism employed by the Russian populist group, *narodnaia volia*, which had assassinated the reforming Tsar Alexander II in 1881 (Gogua 2003, 32–39).

Nikoladze was adamant that Georgia's historical experience with the Russian Empire had been forged through violence. The harshest examples were the peasants' double subjugation by Georgian nobility and by the Russian state with its colonization policy. He was convinced, however, that this violent and bloody past had been caused by the respective peoples' not understanding one another's languages (Gogua 2003, 122). This was a rectifiable mishap with Georgians learning Russian (which was already dominant in the nation's legal and education system) at the expense of Georgian – a controversial point which he had already made as a 17-year-old in his first ever published article, in 1860, titled "Do We Need the Georgian Language?" (Suny 1994, 128). In turn, getting to know each other better through a common language, as well as by means of building a common advanced education system, was crucial as he remarked in an 1873 article entitled "Life in Russia: A Survey" (Nikoladze 1966c, 358).

Language and education aside, past and present examples of violence necessitated a renegotiation of existing political relations on the basis of morality: a morality which in turn needed to be translated into a formal legal framework (Gogua 2003, 122–124). This renegotiation could be such as to avoid an (unachievable) political independence, as the subjugation of uprisings in Poland in 1830 and 1863 by the imperial Russian state had shown. Instead, he argued for the extension to Georgian towns of local self-rule in the form of the *zemstvo* system – which was already in place in advanced parts of the Empire – to enable the national bourgeoisie to fully participate in municipal decision-making (Nikoladze 1875). Meanwhile, a more ambitious avenue of renegotiation would be a constitutional arrangement along the lines of that which the Hungarian nation had negotiated with the imperial Habsburg state – a deal that gave birth to the "Dual Monarchy" in 1867. As Nikoladze argued in an 1897 article entitled "Kossuth and Deak," it was important to employ evolutionary means as Ferenc Deak had done in his peaceful political deal with the Habsburgs, as opposed to the revolutionary means employed by Lajos Kossuth in the 1848 bloody and failed bid for independence. By so doing, the Hungarian nation had successfully reclaimed the right to control its finances, and to have control over its parliament, laws, and army (Nikoladze 1997, 186–213).

Another alternative means to soothing relations between imperial center and nation was that of "progressive politics." This could be pursued by means of establishing closer political ties with "democratic" forces (Jones 2005, 43), or otherwise with the "liberal-bourgeoisie" of Russia (Khundadze 1931, 110), so as to implement the above-mentioned legal frameworks in order to generate meaningful political communication, access, and interaction between the nation and the imperial center. The imperial mindset, and hence politics, as he noted in "Life in Russia: A Survey," had changed after the Crimean war from a paternalist attitude – with state commanding an obedient society – toward that of creating an advanced society with laws and regulations, rights, and duties for local governments (Nikoladze 1966c, 359–361). Therefore, it behooved respective nations within the empire to seize the new opportunity following the 1905 Russian Revolution, when political pluralism and limited constitutional monarchy and self-government became a real possibility for all of them (Nikoladze 1913, 4–5).

If for Nikoladze evolution was the proper path to renegotiating a better relationship with the imperial center, for Zhordania it was revolution: cultural, economic, as well as political. In an article titled "Georgian People and Nationalism" (1911), he argued that cultural development and autonomy were what mattered to most people, whereas nationalism

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exacerbated political and economic imbalances between nation and empire. Cultural autonomy – understood as education in one's native language and literature, as well as an understanding of "high" and "low" culture (politics, economy, commerce, and industry) – encouraged the nation's development and openness. Through the prism of this scale of "high" and "low" cultural autonomy, Zhordania reflected on Georgia's past experience and future relations with the imperial center, which he characterized as encounters between Georgia's "low culture" (feudalist) versus Russia's "high culture" (bureaucratic) (1922b, 64). Therefore, morality commanded that the small nation forfeited its demand for political independence. "The Russian arrival," he wrote,

> brought about [a] high political system in the lower one [Georgia monarchy] and therefore Russia became the defender of decency, i.e. defending the country from outside enemies and from dissolute feudalists … Both were beneficial for the country and both represented big steps forward. (Zhordania 1922b, 64)

"This is," he asserted, "the essence of our whole history in the last 100 years" (Zhordania 1922b, 65).

Despite the fact that they were both critical of imperial politics and society, in contrast to Nikoladze, Zhordania construed Georgia's historical relations with imperial Russia on the basis of achieved progress, rather than merely as having been created through violence. This seemed contradictory, for violence was certainly one of the means that the GSDP employed at the turn of the century. Even after the *October 1905 Manifesto on the Improvement of State Order*, the Emperor's response to the 1905 Revolution which established a form of constitutional monarchy and legalized political parties at the State *Duma*, Zhordania had accepted the pursuit of a socialist revolution by legal means (i.e. participation in State Duma elections). He still had to convince Georgian politics, Nikoladze included, that his party was for change through elections. In 1913 Nikoladze, in an article titled "On Our Politics," saw the GSDP encouraging "workers, property-less and hopeless people towards struggle and violence, whereas Georgians ought to dealt with their causes in a normal way" (Nikoladze in Khundadze 1931, 104). The normal way was, of course, the hard-won cause: political participation through elections, for that improved intra-state relations and thwarted the revolutionary fever swirling around the Caucasus. In fact, together with Chavchavadze, he served on a Caucasian delegation to a meeting with Russian State Council representatives seeking Caucasian representation in the imperial *Duma*, which was unforeseen in the 1905 Manifesto (Jones 2005, 174), after which Chavchavadze established the Georgian National Democratic Party (GNDP), which Nikoladze would join (Janelidze 1997, 9) in 1917.

Zhordania might have supposed that he had already convinced the Georgian political spectrum, including Nikoladze, of the wisdom of embracing a legal path to a socialist revolution, for this had been his position, among other issues – such as privatization versus nationalization of property; bottom up, democratic elections versus top-down appointments; "working people"[7] versus working class representation; and cultural national versus national territorial autonomy within the empire, as with Lenin in the 1903 and 1905 historical split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks within the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party to which the GSDP had adhered (Jones 2005, 104–128). Zhordania's firm stance made, according to Nikoladze in a letter to him, "Georgians regarded him 'as a messiah'" (Jones 2005, 127) but also would have tremendous repercussions on the country's decision to leave Russia. Nonetheless, he had to make this point again in the 1911 article "Georgian People and Nationalism."

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In his "Georgian People and Nationalism" article, Zhordania also asserted that Georgian nationalism would not be a threat to a renewed alliance with the Russian state. Those parties waving the "nationalist flag" – including the GNDP – in truth represented the narrow, sectional interests of only a small faction of the overall population: this being mainly the nobility (Zhordania 1922b, 55–56); while the majority (peasantry/labor) represented by the GSDP were not nationalist in inclination. This was owing to the fact that ever since "Georgia [had] joined Russia," the nobility had, through its 1830s' and 1860s' nationalist movements, effectively carved out for itself an autonomous economic space (privileges against peasantry), as well as a national cultural space, from the imperial state, while keeping the "working people" outside of these national cultural economic realms. In turn, he continued, the Georgian nationalist parties, having failed to become a national bourgeoisie – owing to historical Georgia having been a feudal kingdom, internally disintegrated, and cut off from international trade routes, a space eventually filled by the Tbilisi Armenian bourgeoisie – now sought to gain political traction amongst the Georgian people by "inventing a chauvinist, anti-Russian and anti-Armenian discourse" (Zhordania 1922b, 55–56). Instead of this, he argued, it was necessary that the Georgian people recognize the contributions made by the bourgeois class in Georgia, who, although foreign in origin (mostly Armenian but also Russian and European), had through the action of their financial capital created the "working people" and hence a civil society (Zhordania 1922b, 66–77). For, as he added in his 1913 article entitled "Our National Question," they had effectively opened the Georgian nation to capitalist development, and to wider political and economic networks beyond its ethnographic borders (Zhordania 1922c, 202). The next step in this socialist revolution within the imperial space was – referring back to the 1911 article – a new politics: internationalist in nature, whereby "working people" accepted foreign political and economic powers, but also defended common interests in a new workers' organization in the Caucasus (Zhordania 1922b, 78–80).

Ordering the nation: national capital versus national labor

Nikoladze believed that through the application of political economy, the nation's economic vitality would lead to national freedom and prosperity (capital). This vitality emanated first from the nation's economic life, where he saw it as interacting with the interstate economic order. Paradoxically, he did not envisage this capital-based vitality to be integrated economically with the Empire, regardless of the latter's influence upon it. As early as 1871, he had contemplated the future of Poti: the backwater, coastal Black Sea township that he would run as mayor. "Poti," he wrote, "will have its port of great importance. It will create the biggest and the richest trading cities [in the Russian Empire] that will overtake even Odessa" (Shengelia and Shengelia 2007, 237). This rather more direct concern with the nation, as opposed to the Empire, in politico-economic terms, had to do with a widespread perception – particularly among Western economic thinkers, which he also shared – that Russia remained economically backward in terms of lacking "material goods," tradable stuff, as well as, importantly, "immaterial goods" such as reason and enlightenment (Adamovsky 2010, 350–363). For him most of imperial Russian politicians did not or could not embrace modern economic reasoning (in Bakradze 2011, 60–76), thus further exacerbating not empire's backwardness. Therefore, seemingly, it was easier to turn around economically the nation first than the empire.

In this light, Nikoladze's call to political economy was not a selfish attempt to befit his profile[8] to a wider cause, but a genuine civic awareness of his nation's future prospects within a new world order underpinned by the imperatives of modern industry, trade, and

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finance. Having returned to Georgia from Zurich in the early 1870s, he published an article in 1873 in which he pointed to a discernible lack of public discourse regarding such pressing matters as the role of banks or of higher education in national development, which underscored the urgent need of "projects" (Nikoladze 1966d, 152) that might materialize the link between political economy and the nation. One of his own projects concerned the establishment of a more sound and accessible banking system (Nikoladze 1966b, 256–257) so as to help modernize Tsarist Georgia, which was then administratively divided into two *gubernias*, Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Each was equally dominated, and dogged, by primitive agriculture, unprofitable land estates, and a chronic lack of cash and credit. In an 1873 article entitled "Our Banking Affairs," Nikoladze offered his political-economic diagnosis on the state of Georgian society/economy, burdened as it was by short-term and high-rates credit, writing that, "The laws of political economy and those of society are like the laws of nature. Like a person is unable to alter the laws of nature, so it is impossible for the society and individual to live by borrowing credit" and not meet the deadline for payment (Nikoladze 1966a, 23). This could be solved by a sound banking system whereby "political economy" – and in a bracket he put "social" so as to distinguish between the "political," entailing a role for the imperial state, and "social," referring to a role for society (the nation) in the economy – was like a doctor treating a sick patient (society) with a view to its improvement (*gatskobileba*) (Nikoladze 1966a, 24).

There was an "immorality" – that of profit-seeking without taking responsibility for future national development – inherent in existing imperial and national banking systems (Nikoladze 1966a, 26). In an 1873 article entitled "Our Credit," Nikoladze pointed to a sharp disconnect, even speculation, between imperial financial highways, which were overflowing with enormous, cheap foreign credit flows, and a credit-starved national economy, industry, and commerce. This, he thought, could be addressed by a "governmental initiative" aimed at establishing credit regulations that made banks more interested in the development of industry and trade, rather than in pure speculation (Nikoladze 1964a, 369–370). At the national level, the problem, as he explained in another article entitled "The Bank of Kutaisi," was strong resistance from the landed nobility (Nikoladze 1966b, 255–257). Having established their own banks, the members of the nobility appeared unwilling to contribute to wider economic activities. What was needed was an expansion of mutual credit regulations and city banks within Georgia, whereby a state-sanctioned regulatory framework, and self-regulation, amongst banks might address the acute economic needs of society as a whole (Nikoladze 1964a, 370–375). As it turned out, with his zeal for real and tangible deeds, Nikoladze convinced a group of Georgian nobles to pool together their financial resources, hence establishing a national bank in Tbilisi in 1875. This came to be known as *gruzinsky parlament* (Georgian Parliament) and was headed by Chavchavadze. Soon, however, their relationship foundered precisely on the unresolved debate (economy versus culture) of where best to invest the national bank's profits with Nikolazde's eyes firmly on agrarian improvement, investment in new productive techniques, and as cash to allow peasants to buy their plots of land so as to fend off buyouts by rich Armenian merchants. Chavchavadze wished to focus instead on national schools and cultural institutions (Suny 1994, 132). Nikoladze further envisaged the nation as prospering internally, and succeeding in the transnational market, by also establishing research and development through polytechnic institutes (Jones 2005, 41), by opening up the economic playing field within society and by establishing a solid "national capital" (Khundadze 1931, 95).

Like Nikoladze, Zhordania also viewed national development from the perspective of insights derived from "political economy," but he differed with regard to which perspective was better suited in terms of ordering the nation. If Nikoladze sought to create a "national

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capital," Zhordania advocated strengthening "the working people," and integrating them supra-nationally and internationally (1922a, 8–9).

Conceptually, Zhordania did not apply the notion of political economy as systematically or as vigorously as Nikoladze, mainly referring instead to a "political-economic mode," but he was nevertheless aware of its multiple ideological readings (Marxist, liberal, statist) (1990, 28–29). Unlike Nikoladze, he sought to forge a kind of politics which would create a common front ("bourgeois trader" allied with "peasant-worker") in order to achieve success in the world market, rather than – as in the late nineteenth-century context of the dominance of Armenian capital within the Georgian economy – to displace the Armenian monopoly in commerce and industry (Jones 2005, 41). This, as he explained in the article titled "Economic Development and Nationality," first published in 1894, seemed to him to be the path that would best ensure economic success: "economically weak nations often are subdued in the world market. The more commerce is ingrained in people, the more goods are sold abroad, the more beneficial trade agreements are made, the higher the demand would be for materials and labor" (Zhordania 1922a, 9).

To him it seemed clear that Georgian capital could not succeed without labor: yet labor, or rather "the working people," would not be able to support capital without the political and cultural support that a social democratic movement offered.

By opening the national cultural space while putting it on a sound economic footing, the nation would be strengthened and unified, in contrast with Georgia's past, where the nation had been divided against itself (Zhordania 1922a, 3–22). World history progressed, he continued in this long article, by means of individuals/groups of people/nations deciding what their "common interests" were. And surely these common interests were *not* determined by "common blood" or "common language," but were rather shaped by war, or by geographical circumstances, as well as by trade and commerce. These later two impulses, together with new ideas, in fact created lasting effects upon a nation. For the Georgian nation "common interests" meant that capital and labor should cooperate so as to succeed in the world market (Zhordania 1922a, 2–9).

Envisaging the making of the modern nation in terms of economic unification and cultural autonomy, Zhordania would argue, controversially with respect to contemporary Georgian historiography, nearly 20 years after "Economic Development and Nationality," in "Our National Question," that Georgians had no need for their nation-state (1922c, 165). This was not only because in reality the notion of "one nation – one state does not exist" (Zhordania 1922c, 200), but also because – given Georgia's ethnic diversity which bordered on the "territorialist" position with respect to territorial autonomy (he cited here Nikoladze, and among others, Stalin) – within the terms of the national and supranational debate on nationality, let alone independence, freedom, equality, and justice for non-Georgians would diminish. The state, he reminded his readers, had to remain neutral with regards to ethnic differences, just as it had learned (throughout European history) to do with regard to religious differences. By so ordering the nation from his "culturalist" perspective of cultural autonomy (i.e. schools, arts, and professional skills being taught in native languages), then, instead of a political struggle amongst nationalities within Georgia, there would be *cultural* competition. Equally important, it would avoid the outright capitalist exploitation of Georgians, whilst preparing them for a flexible modern world of commerce, capital, and industry, which operated within and without the borders of both nation and state (Zhordania 1922c, 165–186).

The fact was, he continued, that the flexibility that characterized modern commercial and industrial societies effectively destroyed the very idea of national territorial unity: as the Austro-Hungarian Empire showed, "contemporary larger states are not national

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states. The predominant nation is the minority among the majority that is comprised of different subordinate nations ... Contemporary state is first of all an economic phenomenon" (Zhordania 1922c, 172). Thus twentieth century Georgia, particularly Tbilisi, had already lost its "Georgianness," whereby "Georgians blended with other nations and vice versa. Georgia does not cover Georgians and Georgians do not cover Georgia" (Zhordania 1922c, 173). This was his anti-national vision for ordering the nation; the alternative to "territorialist" national economic independence. The latter, with its feudalistic and capitalist impulses, would expand territorially into neighboring countries, triggering a re-awakening of chauvinistic and reactionary politics within the nation, and ultimately causing "[its] death economically" (Zhordania 1922c, 210).

The implosion of the imperial state and the forging of the nation-state

What was it, then, that made Zhordania and Nikoladze abandon the seemingly less risky and more convenient and popular alternative of developing the nation within a transformed supranational state, by "renegotiating the empire" and to opt instead for "forging the nation-state's"[9] political freedom, by declaring the country's complete independence from Russia, on 26 May 1918? To Zhordania, the act of exiting the empire was instigated by World War I's disruption of the existing interstate order which had in turn provoked the implosion of the former imperial/intrastate order upon which Georgia depended for its external defense.[10] With no major political parties having a pre-existing plan for independence, he assured in his autobiography *My Past* (written in exile in 1938, and striking in that he did not seek to embellish the facts with a pseudo-nationalist ethos) Georgia's declaration was predicated upon the need to ensure the "nation's physical existence," which would be directly threatened if the imperial army were to abandon Georgia. As such, the language of political national sovereignty crystallized only a year before the declaration of independence in a cross-party meeting held in Tbilisi in February 1917 (Zhordania 1990, 72). Equally significant was the Bolshevik coup (as he referred to it) of October 1917 in Russia led by his nemesis Lenin: this provided the "historical split" which made it impossible for the GSDP to have a meaningful political voice at the center of the new Soviet State, a factor which was further exacerbated by the Bolshevik "betrayal" in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (March 1918) which ceded Georgian territories to the Ottomans. These factors, along with the unraveling of South Caucasian unity (Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis) as a consequence of the experiment of the Transcaucasian Federation, were the unfavorable circumstances that eventually led to the act of declaring independence, as Zhordania unenthusiastically recalled: "On 26 May [1918] a full Georgian nation was born" (1990, 90).

The seemingly involuntary choice of statehood immediately propelled the small nation-state outside the intra-state order, and into the interstate realm: where it was confronted by direct questions of war and peace, of economic survival, and of the search for regional and international recognition. Zhordania recalled how immediately after gaining control of the government, the full weight of interstate pressure and violence had fallen upon the fledgling state's shoulders: the Bolsheviks attacked; and, while the Ottomans were being expelled, German, British, and French forces lurked in the rear (Zhordania 1990, 90; Lang 1962, 209–223). Untested as they were in foreign policy, Zhordania and Nikoladze resorted to their pre-independence vocabularies with Zhordania, however, changing his previously held views on war. Zhordania, in *My Past*, was surprised when Benito Mussolini, then an Italian socialist, would not "let Germany crush France" as World War I erupted in the summer of 1914. "Socialist are against war"

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was his reaction to Mussolini (1990, 67). For Nikoladze, meanwhile, war and peace were equally natural factors within the interstate order, and with the Georgian state itself now emerging upon this level, the need to choose sides in war, and to thereby obtain the protection of a larger state, was the natural way for the new state to exist. Having been appointed economic advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs one day after the declaration of independence, and already a member of the National Council of Georgia,[11] Nikoladze, as Zhordania recollected, had advised – upon his return from Berlin (Bakradze 2010, 270) where he had handed to the Germans an Economic Memorandum offering control of Poti and of Georgian trade and railways in exchange for 50 million German marks – that given an assured German victory in the war, Georgia should ally itself with imperial Germany, unlike Zhordania who advocated neutrality (1990, 69–91). Despite advocating neutrality and getting the upper hand among his fellow social democrats on it, Zhordania found it "incomprehensible they [larger states, the Ottoman Empire and Russia] would hate such a small nation, small country ... As such, the country's defense became our main priority" (1990, 105). The other large state, Britain, was not helping either. Not only did Britain control Georgian territories initially held by the Ottomans (Batumi) and oppose Georgia's de jure recognition at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, but also it waged economic warfare through an economic blockade in the Black Sea, cutting the country off from international trade (Zhordania 1990, 99–100). In a speech delivered on 4 January 1919 to the National Council – concerning a document on negotiations with the Armenian government over the Georgian-Armenian border war – Zhordania countered the Georgian opposition's claims that France and England had forced an ultimatum on his sovereign government by cutting a deal with Armenia. Earlier, he had predicted that the forging of a nation-state within a multi-ethnic context was bound to lead to the diminution of freedoms for other nationalities within that sphere. Now, heading a democratic government, he presided over a war with a neighboring country: a war that he was prepared to accept if it strengthened the Georgian state, cemented its independence, and gained it regional and international recognition (Zhordania 1919, 189–194).

Zhordania's acceptance of the language of war as a necessary aspect of the small state's survival existed alongside the acceptance of pursuing "the Kantian language:" that is, seeking to enter a league of nations. The vast power imbalances between small and big states could be mitigated by smaller states being formally recognized as such, and hence being allowed to join the League of Nations and participate within its legal framework. Acting before any other big state – most notably Britain – could give its de jure recognition to Georgia, Zhordania took the chance of making a peace deal with Lenin's Soviet state. If Georgia's former patron de jure recognized it, Zhordania reasoned, then others would do so too. The deal was ratified with First Republic of Georgia 2013b (Treaty of 1920),[12] whereby the Soviet state formally recognized Georgia's independence and territorial integrity, in exchange for Georgia's pledge to not permit foreign troops within its territory (Zhordania 1990, 115). The bitter irony for Zhordania's government was that just as other larger states finally recognized it, two weeks later on 27 January 1921 the Bolshevik invasion of Georgia began (Jones 2014, 1). Albeit nominally anti-imperialist, Soviet Russia discarded international law and proceeded to drive Zhordania's government into exile in France. There it would continue to appeal to the League of Nations to react to the Soviet supranational state's military and imperialistic aggression against Georgia, this being a clear violation of the principle of the self-determination as enshrined in the League (First Republic of Georgia 2013a).

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Ordering the nation-state: national democracy, capital, and labor

But what were Georgia's chances of survival or success, in political economic terms, as a small nation-state seeking legal recognition in a new international order which was defined by military and economic warfare? Earlier Nikoladze had championed the development of national capital as a means to energize national economic life by opening it to transnational markets, while supporting it through imperial weight. Meanwhile, Zhordania envisaged a symbiosis between capital and labor: both operating flexibly within national, intra-state, and inter-state economic spaces. Now, as leaders of the nation-state's economic future, they would reconsider their positions with regard to the state's role in the economy, as well as with respect to national capital and labor. War and revolution had disrupted erstwhile trading connections with agriculture suffering, yet with industry being in the worst shape. Many factories closed, there was high unemployment and inflation, the poor and middle classes were severely affected, and international trade weakened. In this context, Zhordania's government encouraged national capital and free initiative, and, given the weakness of private capital, it increased government and municipal roles in industry (Bendiashvili 2001, 220–224).

Having previously had misgivings about the notion of the nation-state – conceiving it as a bourgeois platform for suppressing "working people's" interests and the rights of ethnic minorities – upon becoming prime minister of a socialist government, Zhordania deemed it unwise to submit to Nikoladze's small, oppositional, National-Democratic Party. Nonetheless, the two had to cooperate and a political compromise, reflected in governmental political economy, was found in a government of "democracy," which in practice would represent the lower classes' demands for socialist reforms, but which would first fulfill the needs of the bourgeoisie state, implying the establishment of democratic institutions (Suny 1994, 195). Zhordania admitted, in *My Past*, when reflecting on the three years of statehood, that while government had been effective in filling the power vacuum (in terms of policing and defense) which had been left by the withdrawal of imperial structures, it could not go beyond a "fictiveness" of state-building (institutions and democratic rule) because of the lack of any tradition with respect to the running of state affairs, and because of unpatriotic conduct on the part of government personnel, who, rather than fighting for freedom and reform, worried about their salaries. Nikoladze's National Democratic Party was also unhelpful in this process since it lacked a spirit of unity and confused the idea of democratic rule with unconstructive disagreements (Zhordania 1990, 98–105).

Nonetheless, despite differing views articulated in the National Council on local government financing (Kvaratskhelia 2014, 97–99),[13] Zhordania and Nikoladze would find common ground on wealth creation and redistribution, as well as on the important role of the state in international trade. In outlining the first national economic program, Nikoladze emphasized the need to strengthen national industry (manufacturing) so as to create goods for export, and of securing external markets (Gogua 2003, 46), thereby echoing his pre-independence political economy discourse of "manufacturing … export [ing] more abroad than we import from foreigners … [as to] be able to escape the slavery" (Shengelia and Shengelia 2007, 236). This could not be achieved without the state playing an important role in the economy, as it became clear when Zhordania appointed him the main negotiator in sealing an economic deal with the imperial German state. This deal led in practice to a 30-year interstate "German–Georgian" monopoly over manganese minerals, and as such was disliked by Georgian industrialists. However, it collapsed when Germany lost the war. Nikoladze also served as the principal point of contact with regard to forging deals with British interests: for military factories,[14]

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but also the production of manganese, as he acted as the president of a delegation of the Georgian Manganese Exporting Company (*Temo*) to London in July 1920, where he sought to open international markets, British or American[15] for the export of this mineral, to ensure a steady supply of ore production,[16] and to create reciprocal syndicates with British companies which had interests in India.[17] This experience convinced Nikoladze of the state's vital role in the survival of national capital within these markets. "The monopoly of export and sale of manganese confirms our condition in the world market" he assured, "giving us the possibility of preserving high prices for our ore. As such India and Brazil have been forced to recognize us and follow our steps" (Bendiashvili 2001, 223).

These were some of the political and political economic issues which befell the small nation-state as it tried to establish itself. Yet, as he said in a speech to the National Council in February 1919, compared to the developments within "big Russia" following the revolution there, the Georgian nation was now on a normal path to socialist development and to the strengthening of the state's juridical and constitutional forms (Zhordania 1919, 201). What was needed was to maintain the support of the nation's majority (the peasantry), so as to outbid the Soviet supranational state in political economic terms. In the particular Georgian context, this meant land reform: its distribution as private property (as opposed to Soviet land nationalization) from the hands of the nobility and/or state ownership to peasants – a seemingly calculated move to solidify his political bases to sustain "the revolution and the rule of democracy" (Suny 1994, 195). But, for Zhordania, it represented that meaningful act in which the "socialist regime" assumed "a more Georgian face:" with all the ranks and classes of society, most notably the nobility, acquiescing to "the nationalist moment" (1990, 101). Zhordania was keen to emphasize that it was a *socialist* reform, rather than a revolution, because it was conducted without violence, and through governmental and parliamentary decree, whereby all classes, above all the nobility, complied, thus avoiding "an economic catastrophe, even a civil war" (1990, 67). Such a form of nationalism would have been unnecessary within the imperial context, he continued, for "the national question was not central, only the economy was the subject of struggle" (Zhordania 1990, 101). Yet, it was the price of forging a nation-state of standing for the "working people." The Georgian peasantry gained land, and labor gained protective legislation; even though other socialist commitments, such as providing full employment, remained unfulfilled, not least because of a gloomy state and private industrial sector (Zhordania 1990, 102).

With an economic crisis, however, becoming permanent – inflation rising, salaries for the working class falling – Zhordania admitted in a governmental meeting on 13 October 1920 that the country was experiencing an economic catastrophe (in Bendiashvili 2001, 253). Nikoladze's National Democrats, in their newspaper *Sakartvelo,* declared that this was a catastrophe made possible by Zhordania's bankrupt political economy. However, the British Labor Party Leader, Ramsey Macdonald, who served as a member of a European delegation visiting Tbilisi in the autumn of 1920, lauded the GSDP for its unmatched theoretical and practical achievements, unseen in any other nation-state in the world (Bendiashvili 2001, 254–256).

Conclusion

As Zhordania later recalled, the European delegation upon which MacDonald had served – having arrived in early autumn of 1920, and having recognized and lauded the efforts of Georgia's First Democratic Republic – soon left. "Georgia was alone," Zhordania recalled,

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without international support and facing an approaching Bolshevik army. If it struggled to survive economically, militarily it had no chance of withstanding this newly reconfigured supranational Soviet state (Zhordania 1990, 117–118). Nikoladze, meanwhile, witnessed the Red Army's occupation of Georgia from distant London, busily corresponding and cutting deals with British businessmen for Georgian manganese production[18] as late as 1923 when the country had already become part of the Soviet state.[19] This was no surprise, for the leader of the Soviet state, Lenin, had advised the local leaders in Bolshevik Georgia to "economically, base yourself at once on commercial relations with capitalist countries" (in Brisku 2013, 80).

But how would Nikoladze and Zhordania respond, in political-economic terms, to "the in or out dilemma" as regards the two "historical moments" laid out at the beginning of this article? Clearly, in nineteenth-century interstate political terms and contexts, the Georgian nation was not given a free choice to leave the empire. Both Nikoladze and Zhordania's political vocabularies never amounted to more than, respectively, seeking political and cultural autonomy within a renewed imperial center, where the nation's voice could properly be heard. Politically, this appeared the most realistic alternative, given Georgia's asymmetric relation with respect to the overwhelming military and administrative might of the Russian imperial state. On the other hand, the emerging vocation of political economy offered new hope and scope for the construction of a modern nation within the empire. On this basis, Nikoladze and Zhordania, respectively, sought to revive and expand national capital and labor. Pivotal in forging the short but intense years of the nation's statehood – a process which was triggered more by the existential crisis of the Russian empire imploding, with all of the attendant threats to Georgian internal security and territorial integrity, rather than from any autonomous pursuit of national political independence – both men realized that, provided that bigger states did not resort to political aggressions or economic blockades, the Georgian nation had to share more of its means of wealth creation. Also, state and private (national and foreign) capital had to work together to succeed in the interstate economic order.

Perhaps the price for an independent and prosperous nation-state was "too nationalist" for Zhordania's political ethos, or "too wealth-sharing" from Nikoladze's perspective. Yet, for Zhordania, it seemed invaluable in having established a democratic government, which insisted, contrary to the Bolsheviks, that socialism should promote small independent states (Jones 2014, 5). And if Nikoladze's views on the loss of independence to the Soviet Union remain unknown upon his return to Soviet Georgia, Zhordania would not relinquish his demand for the restoration of the nation's statehood, once he had acquired a taste for its political freedom.

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Notes

1. This became particularly evident in the wake the 2008 Euro and sovereign debt crisis, when smaller and poorer member states contemplated exiting the Union and the UK sought to renegotiate its relations with the Union if not leaving it (Ash 2011).
2. See Keating and Harvey (2014), whose comparative research shows that small states, mostly in northern Europe, can thrive within a hierarchical global market system, provided that the state itself takes a bigger role in the economy.

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3. This is part of a larger comparative study entitled "Renegotiating the Empire, Forging the Nation-State: Habsburg Bohemia, Ottoman Albania and Tsarist Georgia, c. 1870s to 1920s".
4. On the Cambridge School approach see Pocock ([1975] 2003, 554).
5. I would like to thank one of the reviewers of this article in helping me to crystallize this point.
6. The Treaty of Paris ended the Crimean War (1856) with a European coalition including the Ottoman Empire, and limited Russia's military presence in the Black Sea.
7. Zhordania was the first within the Marxist discourse to articulate the notions of "people's struggle" as opposed to "class struggle" and "the hegemony of working people's democracy" (Jones 2005, 65).
8. Forced to discontinue studying as a law student at the University of St. Petersburg in the early 1860s, he graduated with a doctoral degree (the first Georgian to do so) in political economy at the University of Zurich in 1868.
9. This period of nation and state building is avoided in Georgian historiography "because of an ideological distaste for socialism," even though Zhordania's government was national and pragmatic when in power, and did not follow through on its initial socialist orientation (Jones 2014, 3–4).
10. See Avalishvili ([1924] 1990), 15).
11. Sakartvelos sakhelmtsipo saistorio arkivi (SSSA) [The Georgian State Historical Archive], The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Republic of Georgia, 1918–1921, Tbilisi, Fond 1864, Doss 42, p. 3.
12. This Treaty is controversial in contemporary Georgian historiography for being concluded by Zhordania's government in the First Republic – seen as a Marxist state that betrayed national interests, as opposed to those who see Zhordania's "middle of the road pragmatism" in sacrificing his "left wing sympathies" for institutionalizing diplomatic relations with Russia to ensure stability at home (Jones 2013).
13. See Kvaratskhelia 2014, 97–99.
14. Sakartvelos sakhelmtsipo saistorio arkivi (SSSA) [The Georgian State Historical Archive], The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Republic of Georgia, 1918–1921, Tbilisi, Fond 1864, Doss 398, 1–9.
15. Sakartvelos parlamentis ervonuli biblioteka (SPEB) [The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia], Tbilisi, Niko Nikoladze's Private Collection, Fond 61/66.
16. PEB, Niko Nikoladze's Private Collection, Fond 63/65.
17. SPEB, Niko Nikoladze's Private Collection, Fond 21/66.
18. SPEB, Niko Nikoladze's Private Collection Fond 21/127.
19. SPEB, Niko Nikoladze's Private Collection, Fond 21/128.

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