CHAPTER SEVEN

GEORGIA BETWEEN 1918 AND 1921

Between 1918 and 1921 Georgia was relatively successful in finding recognition by the international community. Georgia did have problems concerning its territorial integrity; there were disputes with Armenia and Azerbaijan. During this period Ajarians, South Ossetians and Abkhazians revolted against the government in Tiflis, trying to protect their own interests. Foreign states played a role in Georgia’s decision to declare independence. Germany and Turkey put pressure on Georgia to declare independence. The British after the end of the First World War controlled Georgia as part of their sphere of influence. Between 1920 and 1921, with the consent of the Allies, Russia re-established its sphere of influence over the Transcaucasian territories, as had been the situation before the Revolution and in 1921 Georgia was incorporated in the RSFSR.

In the period between the Revolution of 1905 and the Revolutions of 1917 Georgian nationalism grew, as well as did membership within leftist parties.\(^1\) There was no sign that Georgian political groups aimed at self-determination, either internal, by striving for autonomy, or external, by aiming at secession.\(^2\) Their main aim was the destruction of autocracy and the adoption of institutional reforms. Georgian politicians, notably Noe Jordania, Georgia’s first elected president, wanted Georgia to benefit from reforms in the Russian political system.

During the First World War fighting affected Georgian territory, when Turkey tried to gain territory from the Russian Empire along the Georgian and Armenian border.\(^3\) On 17th December 1917 an

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\(^2\) No political party had territorial claims, see Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, 18.

Map 4 Georgia