

THE SOVIET EXPERIMENT OF NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) AND GEORGIA (1921-1928)  
ნეპი-ს საბჭოთა ექსპერიმენტი და საქართველო (1921-1928 წწ.)

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**Abstract**

The communist authorities in the Soviet Union initiated several social experiments (making of a new person, creation of the Soviet people, etc.), the first among them was the new economic policy - NEP, which lasted for 7-8 years from 1921.

NEP allowed market relations within limited possibilities, lease transfer of small and unprofitable enterprises to private individuals and cooperatives, the practice of concessions, etc.

NEP was not a natural process of socio-economic development, it was a temporary and manageable policy initiated by the Soviet government to maintain and strengthen the regime, which was carried out in newly conquered and Sovietized Georgia from 1921. First of all, there were started processes of nationalization of land and production facilities, which were taken over by the state.

NEP was not a novelty for Georgia. In fact, it was a continuation of the policy existing in the Democratic Republic of Georgia from 1918-1921, but in a modified and specific form. NEP accelerated the rise of the light industry, primarily those industries that consumed local raw materials. At the same time, it caused a price imbalance, a so-called price scissors, which was caused by the artificial increase in the cost of manufactured products and the decrease in prices for agricultural products.

The Bolsheviks declared the representatives of the bourgeoisie, rich and wealthy people to be domestic enemies, private capital was outlawed and the "expropriation of the expropriators" was encouraged in the country. Peasants drove the nobles en masse from their estates, and their houses and other buildings were declared public property. In the cities, the government itself realized requisition and confiscation of private properties. Plants and factories were confiscated from the owners, though they were left with the right to use the lease. A well-known soft drinks specialist, businessman M. Laghidze was appointed only as a specialist in his former enterprise.

In 1925, in Moscow, Soviet authorities and American industrialist, A. Harriman signed an agreement on the concession of the Chiatura manganese deposit for 20 years. The Georgian political emigration decisively opposed such alienation of national property, the income of which was included not in the budget of Georgia, but of the Soviet Union, and sharply condemned it. The new economic policy brought innovation to social relations as well. There appeared so-called "Nepmans" or "Sovburs" (Soviet bourgeois), - small entrepreneurs and private traders. Their legal competence was strictly

limited: Nepmans had no social status, or electoral vote and did not enjoy political rights. Kulaks - the same owners, wealthy peasants who used hired labor or were engaged in trade were also excluded from public and political life.

The authorities viewed the category of Nepmans with suspicion, called them "predatory capitalists", "exploiters", "class enemies", and harassed and persecuted them. Communist ideology established the idea that private entrepreneurship and private trade were not organic for Soviet citizens who were building a bright future - socialism and communism.

A kind of liberalization of the economy caused by NEP did not lead to the democratization of political life in Georgia either. In the Bolshevik Party, factionalism was forbidden, and pluralism and multi-partial policy became inadmissible. The regime first attacked the anti-Soviet parties and along with the ideological confrontation with them, started a policy of suppression. To destroy and eliminate the opposing political forces, the methods of "decomposition" - excavation from the inside and "self-liquidation" were widely used. They resorted to the practice of arresting, exiling, and expulsion of individual political leaders. In 1923, the left-wing ESR organization of Georgia joined the Bolshevik Party, the Social-Democratic (Menshevik) Workers', Right-wing Federalist and National-Democratic parties of Georgia announced their self-liquidation under the pressure of the government, although they did not cease to exist and continued their activities underground. Under their political leadership, a large-scale anti-Soviet uprising was organized in August 1924.

NEP was not officially banned in the Soviet Union, including Georgia, but due to the transition to the five-year plans of the public economy, industrialization, and collectivization, it was actually stopped.

Based on the analysis of empirical material, the article shows the changes caused by NEP in the socio-economic life and traditional existence of the population of Georgia.

**Keywords:** Soviet Union; Georgia; New Economic Policy; Nepman; Concessions.

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## აბსტრაქტი

კომუნისტურმა ხელისუფლებამ საბჭოთა კავშირში არაერთი სოციალური ექსპერიმენტი წამოიწყო (ახალი ადამიანის აღზრდის, საბჭოთა ხალხის შექმნისა და სხვ.), მათ შორის პირველი ახალი ეკონომიკური პოლიტიკა – ნეპ-ი იყო, რომელიც 1921 წლიდან 7-8 წლის განმავლობაში გრძელდებოდა.

ნეპ-ი შეზღუდულ ფარგლებში საბაზრო ურთიერთობის დაშვებას, წვრილ და არარენტაბელურ საწარმოთა კერძო პირებისა და კოოპერატივებისათვის იჯარით გადაცემას, კონცესიების პრაქტიკასა და სხვ. ითვალისწინებდა.

ნეპ-ი არ ყოფილა სოციალ-ეკონომიკური განვითარების ბუნებრივი პროცესი, იგი საბჭოთა ხელისუფლების მიერ რეჟიმის შენარჩუნება-განმტკიცების მიზნით წამოწყებული დროებითი და მართვადი პოლიტიკა იყო, რომელიც 1921 წლიდანვე ახლად დაპყრობილ და გასაბჭოებულ საქართველოშიც ხორციელდებოდა. პირველ რიგში დაიწყო მიწისა და წარმოება-დაწესებულებათა ნაციონალიზაცია, რომელსაც სახელმწიფო დაეპატრონა.

ნეპ-ი საქართველოსათვის სიახლეს არ წარმოადგენდა. იგი ფაქტობრივად, 1918-1921 წლებში საქართველოს დემოკრატიულ რესპუბლიკაში არსებული პოლიტიკის გაგრძელება იყო, ოღონდ შეცვლილი და ერთობ სპეციფიკური ფორმით. ნეპ-მა დააჩქარა მსუბუქი მრეწველობის, პირველ რიგში იმ დარგების აღმავლობა, რომლებიც ადგილობრივ ნედლეულს მოიხმარდნენ. ამასთან, წარმოიშვა ფასების დისბალანსი, ე. წ. ფასების მაკრატელი, რაც საწარმოო პროდუქციის ღირებულების ხელოვნურმა გაზრდამ და სოფლის მეურნეობის ნაწარმზე ფასების შემცირებამ გამოიწვია.

ბოლშევიკებმა ბურჟუაზიის წარმომადგენლები, მდიდარი და შეძლებული ადამიანები შინაურ მტრებად, კერძო კაპიტალი კი კანონგარეშე გამოაცხადეს და ქვეყანაში „ექსპროპრიატორთა ექსპროპრიაცია“ წახალისეს. გლეხები მასობრივად ერეკებოდნენ თავადაზნაურებს თავიანთი მამულებიდან, ხოლო მათი სახლები და სხვა შენობები საზოგადოებრივ საკუთრებად ცხადდებოდა. ქალაქებში რეკვიზიციასა და კონფისკაციას თავად ხელისუფლება მიმართავდა. მეპატრონეებს ფაბრიკა-ქარხნები ჩამოართვეს, ოღონდ იჯარით სარგებლობის უფლება დაუტოვეს. ხილეული წყლების ცნობილი სპეციალისტი, ბიზნესმენი მ. ლალიძე თავის ყოფილ საწარმოში მხოლოდ სპეციალისტად დანიშნეს.

1925 წელს, მოსკოვში, საბჭოთა ხელისუფლებასა და ამერიკელ მრეწველს ა. ჰარიმანს შორის გაფორმდა ხელშეკრულება ჭიათურის მანგანუმის საბადოს 20 წლით კონცესიის შესახებ. ქართული პოლიტიკური ემიგრაცია გადაჭრით დაუპირისპირდა ეროვნული ქონების ამგვარ გასხვისებას, რომლის შემოსავალი არა საქართველოს, არამედ საბჭოთა კავშირის ბიუჯეტში შედიოდა და მკვეთრად დაგმო იგი.

ახალ ეკონომიკურ პოლიტიკას სიახლე სოციალურ ურთიერთობებშიც შეჰქონდა. წარმოიშვნენ ე. წ. „ნეპმანები“ ან „სოვბურები“ (советские буржуа), – წვრილი მეწარმეები და კერძო ვაჭრები. მათი უფლებრივი კომპეტენცია მკაცრად იყო შეზღუდული: ნეპმანს არ გააჩნდა სოციალური სტატუსი, საარჩევნო ხმა და არ სარგებლობდა პოლიტიკური უფლებით. საზოგადოებრივ-პოლიტიკური ცხოვრებისაგან ასევე, გარიყული იყვნენ კულაკები, – იგივე მესაკუთრე, შეძლებული გლეხები, რომლებიც იყენებდნენ დაქირავებულ შრომას ან ეწეოდნენ ვაჭრობას.

ხელისუფლება ნეპმანთა კატეგორიას ექვით უყურებდა, „მტაცებელ კაპიტალისტებს“, „ექსპლუატატორებს“, „კლასობრივ მტრებს“ უწოდებდა, ავიწროებდა და დევნიდა მათ. კომუნისტური იდეოლოგია ამკვიდრებდა აზრს, რომ კერძო მეწარმეობა და კერძო ვაჭრობა არაორგანულია საბჭოთა მოქალაქეებისათვის, რომლებიც აშენებენ ნათელ მომავალს – სოციალიზმსა და კომუნიზმს.

ნეპ-ით განპირობებულ ეკონომიკის ერთგვარ ლიბერალიზაციას პოლიტიკური ცხოვრების დემოკრატიზაცია არც საქართველოში მოჰყოლია. ბოლშევიკურ პარტიაში აიკრძალა ფრაქციულობა, დაუშვებელი გახდა პლურალიზმი და მრავალპარტიულობა. რეჟიმმა უპირველესი შეტევა ანტისაბჭოთა პარტიებზე მიიტანა და მათთან იდეოლოგიური დაპირისპირების პარალელურად, გეზი დათრგუნვის პოლიტიკაზე აიღო. მოწინააღმდეგე პოლიტიკური ძალების დასაშლელად და გასანადგურებლად ფართოდ გამოიყენებოდა „გახრწნის“, – შიგნიდან ძირის გამოთხრისა და „თვითლიკვიდაცის“ მეთოდები. მიმართავდნენ ცალკეულ პოლიტიკურ ლიდერთა დაპატიმრების, გადასახლებისა და სამშობლოდან გაძევების პრაქტიკას. 1923 წელს საქართველოს მემარცხენე ესერთა ორგანიზაცია ბოლშევიკურ პარტიას შეუერთდა, საქართველოს სოციალ-დემოკრატიულმა (მენშევიკური) მუშათა, მემარჯვენე ფედერალისტთა და ეროვნულ-დემოკრატიულმა პარტიებმა, ხელისუფლების ზეწოლით, თვითლიკვიდაცია გამოაცხადეს, თუმცა არსებობა არ შეუწყვეტიათ და საქმიანობა იატაკქვეშეთში გააგრძელეს. მათი პოლიტიკური ხელმძღვანელობით, 1924 წლის აგვისტოში მოეწყო ფართო ანტისაბჭოთა აჯანყება.

ნეპ-ი საბჭოთა კავშირში, და მათ შორის საქართველოში, ოფიციალურად არ აუკრძალავთ, მაგრამ სახალხო მეურნეობის ხუთწლიან გეგმებზე, ინდუსტრიალიზაციისა და კოლექტივიზაციის კურსზე გადასვლის გამო, იგი ფაქტობრივად, შეწყდა.

სტატიაში ემპირული მასალის ანალიზის საფუძველზე, ნაჩვენებია ნეპ-ით განპირობებული ცვლილებები საქართველოს მოსახლეობის სოციალ-ეკონომიკურ ცხოვრებასა და ტრადიციულ ყოფაში.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** საბჭოთა კავშირი; საქართველო; ახალი ეკონომიკური პოლიტიკა; ნეპმანი; კონცესიები.

## Introduction

Bolshevik Russia and the Soviet Union both were ideological states and were based on Marxist doctrine, which implied a class approach to every sphere of public life. In other words, ideology determined both the way of life and the practice of action. So how would such a country allow the New Economic Policy (NEP), a phenomenon that was theoretically completely contrary to the Marxist worldview?

In the conditions of the civil war that started in Russia immediately after the Bolsheviks took over power, the Soviet government carried out a mass nationalization of all branches of the economy and agriculture. Private property was banned. A state monopoly was declared on bread production, foreign trade, banking, and various fields of industry. Controls and regulations were established for overproduction and consumption. The monetary-commodity relationship was changed by the direct exchange of goods and naturalization of wages, food registration and a card system were introduced, there was created a food requisition army (Продармия), which united armed detachments, etc. It was a so-called "Military Communism" that brought Soviet Russia to a total crisis. The economy was declining, inflation reached unprecedented levels, consumer goods became scarce, and political and social relations became extremely tense. The wave of public excitement that stirred up in the countryside spread to the cities as well. Dissatisfaction reigned in the armed forces as well. The leaders of Bolshevism understood that it was impossible to get out of this dire situation by mere violence. It became necessary to compromise on some ideological dogmas. In March 1921, the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted a course on NEP - a new economic policy.

## Methods

The article is based on the analysis of primary sources and the latest special scientific literature. It uses historicism, Historical-comparative, and Descriptive methods. The historical background of the research topic is studied using the Retrospective method.

## Discussion and results

According to the famous American Sovietologist Richard Pipes: "Lenin was convinced that the experiment of building communism in such a backward country as Russia was premature and needed to be postponed until a better time" (Pipes, 1997: 443).

Changing the state course in any field, be it domestic or foreign policy, economics, culture, etc means that the previous policy turned out to be deficient, it failed to achieve the set goal, in short - it failed. The new economic policy was determined by the difficulties that arose in the way of the main goal of the Bolsheviks - the building of socialism (<https://myfilology.ru/150/novaia-ekonomicheskaia-politika-prichiny-sushchnost-sledstviia/>).

NEP was not a natural process of socio-economic development, it was a temporary and manageable policy initiated by the Soviet government to maintain and strengthen the regime, which was supposed to ensure the restoration of the destroyed public economy in a certain period.

The beginning of the new economic policy in Russia coincided with the establishment of the Soviet government in Georgia, the NEP did not enter into force immediately after its announcement, and the process of nationalization preceded it in Georgia as well. In a short time, the land, power plants, railways, mineral resources, and basic means of production were taken over by the state. First of all, the land was confiscated from churches-monasteries and big owners. Buying, selling, and leasing land was prohibited. With the support of the government, "peasants were en masse kicking out landlords and nobles from the feudal estates. Their lands, agricultural equipment, cattle, etc, were distributed among the peasantry. Landlords' houses and other buildings were declared public property. ...by the spring of 1923, the peasantry in all of Georgia received a total of 142,000 dessiatines of land confiscated from the landlords-nobility" (Essays, 1976: 129).

According to the decrees of June 1921, nationalization affected tobacco factories, tanneries, and food industry facilities in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi, all enterprises in the printing, mining, and processing industries (Natmeladze, Daushvili, 2004: 27). In the cities, the government resorted to requisition and confiscation. Factories were confiscated from the owners and they were left only with the right to use the lease. Among them, whose property was subject to nationalization, were the famous Georgian entrepreneurs and philanthropists Akaki Khoshtaria and Mitrophan Laghidze.

A few days after the announcement of the Soviet government, the Bolshevik Revkom (revolutionary committee) of Georgia handed over the Georgian financier and industrialist Akaki Khoshtaria's house in Tbilisi to Georgian artists (Janelidze, 2020: 303). The Soviet regime oppressed Khoshtaria not only in Georgia but also in Persia. He was deprived of the concession of the oil fields of Semnan and the enterprises that he owned in this country through the requisition. The Georgian entrepreneur regained the concession only in 1925, but in such a way that his controlling package was taken over by the Soviet government (<https://interaffairs.ru/paged/show/lukoil/sixteen>).

After the introduction of the NEP, Khoshtaria was allowed to take over and operate one of his nationalized Tbilisi enterprises, namely a soap factory, on a six-year lease (Communist, 1922, January 18).

A prominent specialist in fresh fruit drinks, businessman Mitrophan Laghidze, was deprived of his factory in Tbilisi, where he was later appointed only as a specialist (Revolutionary Committees, 1963: 217-218).

The old, "nationalist" intelligentsia was considered an unacceptable social layer for the Soviet regime, which became another object of the same repressions. A certain part of "active counter-revolutionary elements" or "dissident" intellectuals was deported abroad on so-called "philosophical ships". In an interview with the American journalist Anna Strong, Lev Trotsky called this action "humanism in a Bolshevik way" and said: "We deported these people because we had no excuse to shoot them, but we could not tolerate them" (Reader, 1994: 265-268).

Even Georgia could not evict the banishing of people who opposed the Soviet regime from their homeland. For example, on October 9, 1922, the Bolshevik government of Georgia expelled a group of 62 political prisoners abroad, including leaders of anti-Soviet parties Samson Pirtskhalava, Noe Tsintsadze, Rafiel Ivanitski-Ingilo, and others. Among those expelled from Georgia, representatives of

the political class prevailed over the representatives of the intelligentsia, who continued to fight for the country's de-occupation and freedom abroad.

First of all, the new economic policy envisaged economic liberalization, allowing a mixed, multi-layered economy, private property and market relations within certain limits, leasing small and unprofitable enterprises, the practice of concessions, etc. which was carried out under strict political control by the regime.

In parallel with the control, the persecution and harassment of the "overthrown exploiting classes" (capitalists, nobility) did not stop. The Bolsheviks declared representatives of the bourgeoisie, and rich and wealthy people as domestic enemies, as for private capital it was outlawed and encouraged the "expropriation of expropriators" in the country. The fight against counter-revolutionary organizations, groups, and individuals opposed to the Soviet government was led by a special government body - the Special Commission of Georgia - "Cheka".

The authorities tried in every possible way not to let the reins of management slip away and resorted to various measures. One such measure designed to oppress the "private capitalist elements" was the introduction of a system of taxes and taxation based on the class principle. For example, in 1921, a "sanitary tax" was introduced against "merchants, speculators and, in general, bourgeois elements" (Essays, 1976: 168), to which were later added industrial and income-property tax, tax on inheritance and gifted property, profits, etc. (Tolkushkin, 2001: 214).

The new regime was forced, cautiously, but still, to cooperate with so-called "bourgeois specialists" because it did not yet have experts in the industry, agriculture, or many other fields. The prerequisite for cooperation was the trustworthiness of the "specialists" (that's what the experienced specialists were called), their loyalty to the Bolshevik government, and the inevitable observance of Soviet labor laws.

NEP revived the light industry, primarily those sectors that used local raw materials. Especially the concentration of production and transfer to the economic account contributed to the development of the industry. The production of consumer goods, etc. expanded. On the other hand, the situation in rural areas became complicated, because the artificial reduction of prices for agricultural products reduced the income of the small-land peasants and deprived them of the opportunity to purchase industrial products, also at an artificially increased cost.

The disproportion between agriculture and industry caused a price imbalance, i.e. Price scissors, which turned into a serious crisis, and emergency measures had to be taken to correct the situation.

The new economic policy gave an impulse to the activation of trade. Immediately after the creation of the USSR, the monopoly of foreign trade was taken over by the government, due to which all the income of this branch became common-imperial property. Trade with the West was largely conducted by the Soviet country through Georgia. The goods imported from abroad ended up in Batumi and Tbilisi, from where they were sent to different directions of the new empire. In 1922, 87.2 percent of Transcaucasia's exports passed through the borders of Georgia, and 84.1 percent of all Transcaucasia's imports came from Georgia's borders (Essays, 1976: 7).

This kind of trade organization led to a large-scale accumulation of colossally devalued Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani money notes in Georgia. The exchange rate of Georgian money was much stronger than theirs, but it did not escape inflation either. In 1923, the issue of unified Transcaucasian monetary signs began, and the following year, the monetary reform was completed throughout the USSR and the Soviet currency-chervonets, which became the main monetary unit of the country was introduced.

The removal of certain economic restrictions caused by the NEP did not lead to the democratization of political life either in the Soviet Union or in Georgia, on the contrary, the regime became even tenser.

In the Bolshevik Party, factionalism was banned, and pluralism and multi-partiality became inadmissible. Even in such a situation, in 1921-1924 internal party resistance was noted in the ruling political power of Georgia. A group of Georgian Bolshevik leaders (F. Makharadze, B. Mdivani, S. Kavtaradze, M. Toroshelidze, K. Tsintsadze, etc.) labeled as "National-Uklonists" opposed the political course of the Caucasus Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (B), especially an accelerated formation of the Transcaucasian Federation, etc., which subsequently resulted in their punishment.

The Bolshevik regime made the first attack on anti-Soviet political organizations and along with the ideological confrontation with them, started a policy of suppression. To destroy and ruin the opposing political forces, the methods of "decomposition" - undermining from the inside and "self-liquidation" were widely used. Such activities required substantial funds, but they did not hesitate to pay them. For example, on September 21, 1923, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia allocated two and a half billion manats for the activities implemented to "*corrupt and destroy the integrity*" of the Menshevik Party (Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Fund 14, ref. 1, case 494, p. 74).

They resorted to the practice of arresting, exiling, and expulsion of individual political leaders. In 1923, the left-wing ESR organization of Georgia joined the Bolshevik party, the social-democratic (Menshevik) workers, right-wing federalist and national-democratic parties of Georgia, under the pressure of the government, declared "self-liquidation", although they did not cease to exist and continued their activities underground. Under their political leadership, a large-scale anti-Soviet uprising was organized in August 1924.

One significant feature of the new economic policy was the granting of concessions to foreign companies. It is known that the property of many foreign investors (enterprises, capital, etc.) was nationalized in Soviet Russia. Under the NEP, negotiations were started with several former owners on the concession transfer of their previously owned factories. It should be noted that the concessions, along with the economic ones, also had a political impact. The Soviet government used them to strengthen diplomatic and business relations with the West and the international status of the country.

Despite the great importance of the concessions for the almost isolated Soviet country, its leaders were not in a hurry to sign agreements and discussed the conditions of each concession in detail and care.

With the permission of Moscow, the only concession was allowed in Georgia. It concerned the exploitation of Chiatura manganese deposits and was won by the American politician, businessman, and diplomat William Averell Harriman (1891-1986) and his company, the US trading and industrial house "Harriman and Company" ("W. A. Harriman and CO"). Since 1919, this concession in the Democratic Republic of Georgia has been owned by the Chiatura black stone export company "Chemo", one of the managers of which was the famous Georgian publicist and public figure Niko Nikoladze. It was he who was able to interest Harriman in Chiatura manganese.

The concession agreement between the Main Concession Committee of the Soviet Union and "Harriman & Company" was signed on June 12, 1925, in Moscow, after eleven months of negotiations. The document was signed by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Public Economy of the Soviet Union, Felix Dzerzhinsky, and the Vice President of the American company, John Spield Elliott (Communist, 1925. June 14; Time, 1925. June 22).



The contract was signed for a period of 20 years, and during this period, during which 16 million tons of dry manganese and peroxide were expected to be exported. The concessioner was to invest 12 million US dollars. The Soviet side would receive 3 dollars for every ton of exported manganese in the first year, and 4 dollars from the following year.

The concession of the Chiatura deposit was one of the major Soviet concessions. It is interesting that the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) discussed its various issues 16 times in 1923-1929 and adopted relevant resolutions (History of Georgia, 2020: 263).

The Georgian society in Georgia did not have the opportunity to publicly express its critical attitude towards the mentioned concession. As for the Georgian political emigration, it was dissatisfied with the Chiatura deposit concession. As early as March 1922, Georgian political parties in exile published a declaration in Paris, which stated: "Only the Jordanian government elected by the constituent assembly can negotiate with foreign states on behalf of independent Georgia.

Any concessions and agreements concluded by the Russian occupational government by violation of the above rule are not binding for the Georgian people and are meaningless" (Tavisufali saqarTvelo (Free Georgia), 1922: N 20).

Due to the conclusion of the concession agreement, Akaki Chkhenkeli, the ambassador of the government-in-exile of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in Europe, handed over a note of protest to the US ambassador in France. The document was addressed to the American citizens as well: "On behalf of the Georgian people, as its legal representative, I once again declare the cruelest protest, I allow myself to warn the American citizens that the Georgian people and its government do not recognize the agreement that will be concluded with the occupiers or their agents as binding on them in the slightest" (Brzola (Battle), 1925, N1: 30).

The Georgian emigrant press also expressed its negative attitude. The newspaper "Battle" wrote: "Black stone is the greatest wealth of Georgia: under normal conditions, it can turn into one of the biggest sources of income for Georgia and provide a visible service to the strengthening of its independence; This is not in the interest of the Moscow government; its goal, on the contrary, is to deprive Georgia of such means, so that it can beg Moscow for mercy, left without funds." The magazine added at the end: "The transfer of the black stone of Chiatura to foreigners ... is a great victory ... over the Georgian nation of the occupiers and its interests", which "crowns the colonial policy of Moscow" (Brzola (Battle), 1925, N1: 15-17).

In 1928, the Soviet government canceled the concession with Harriman and took over the industry. With the history of this concession, it becomes clear once again how disenfranchised Georgia, a so-called socialist state was, which could not even grant its mineral resources as a concession without asking the Kremlin.

It should be noted that the new economic policy brought some innovation to social relations as well. There originated so-called "Nepmans" or "Sovburs" (Soviet bourgeois), - small entrepreneurs and private traders. Their legal competence was strictly limited: Nepmans had no social status, or electoral vote and did not enjoy political rights, were forbidden to work in public structures, acquire higher or technical education, and were doomed to marginalization. Kulaks - the same owners, well-to-do peasants who used hired labor or were engaged in trade were also excluded from public and political life.

The authorities regarded the category of Nepmans with suspicion, calling them "predatory capitalists", "exploiters", and "class enemies", harassing and persecuting them.

Communist ideology established the idea that private entrepreneurship and private trade were inorganic for Soviet citizens who were building a bright future - socialism and communism. In such a situation, the system of values was somehow changed, the attitude of social groups with a Soviet mentality towards industrialists and charity was very different from the attitude towards them in the previous period (the time of the Russian Empire and the Democratic Republic of Georgia) when they were full-fledged and valued members of society. Some authors believe that the NEP decided to turn a significant part of the Georgian society, including the intelligentsia, towards the "new reality and the Soviet position", which is somewhat exaggerated.

### Conclusion

NEP was not officially banned in the Soviet Union, including Georgia, but due to the transition to the five-year plans of the public economy, industrialization, and collectivization, it was actually stopped.

Based on the analysis of empirical material, the article shows the changes caused by NEP in the socio-economic life and traditional existence of the population of Georgia.

In the background of the political repressions of the period following the mass famine of 1932-33 and the material hardships during World War II, NEP, despite the many difficulties accompanying it, remained in the collective memory of the Georgian people as a period of economic prosperity, the abundance of products and pleasant life.

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