
Armenian Commercial Presence In Tiflis

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The Armenians have been inhabited in Tiflis¹ since its foundation, 5th century, and the 15 centuries to follow they have always had a big role in the city's prosperity. Let's bring just a few examples on the problem coming from late Middle Ages. Thus, in 1650, King Rostom conferred on the Armenian Prince Bayandur "the authority to rule the big Tiflis City", while in 1714, by the Royal Charter, Prince Behbutyan was granted the Melikdom of Tiflis, that was to become hereditary to that family (until 1801, 15 Behbutyans had successively occupied that position). Jean Chardin, a French traveler, attested that in 1671, of the 14 churches in Tiflis, 8 were Armenian, while another Frenchman, botanist Joseph de Tournefort, noted that in 1701 Tiflis had 20 000 inhabitants, of which 14 000 were Armenians of the Armenian-Gregorian faith, 3 000 were Muslim, 2 000 were Georgian, and 500 were Catholic Armenians.

These and other facts coming from earlier times make a ground to put forward the thesis that in Georgia², the basic elements of urban population had been laid down by the Armenians. The Georgian kings and princes had a permanent residence in ancestral estates, and visited Tiflis from time to time, with their relatives, servants and serfs. As noted by a specialist of Georgian cities' history P. Ioseliani, Georgia's cities were none other than highland fortresses, military strongholds, extending their shade over the thriving and multiplying inhabitants. The same idea was shared by the Caucasus researcher E. Weidenbaum: "There have never been cities in Georgia in the classical or European sense of the word, but rather there were strongholds held by princes and extending their defensive capabilities to small villages randomly populated by irrelevant traders having no inherent organization". The population of those villages, "the irrelevant traders" were mostly Armenians and Jews, while the bulk of the population in Tiflis and Gori were Armenians, who had their own interior organization. Placing the Georgian cities under the disposal of Armenians was a clever strategic initiative: Mainly in comparison with the village-dwelling agriculturally-minded Georgians, the Armenians inherited traditions of tradesmanship coming from the past. The cities could be developed only by crafts and trade, so, by an unwritten agreement the Armenians were genuine rulers of the cities, being at the same time subject to the Georgian kings. Which was convenient for both of them, this situation remained for centuries; this is a wonderful evidence of the interpenetration of the two nations in the course of their joint existence.

E. Weidenbaum continues: "Only in Tiflis and Gori the Armenian population formed the urban class, which developed or rather, implemented its own organization. They were the so-called mokalaks. The time of their arrival in Tiflis is unknown. That class had probably been formed from the Armenians who in a strange land sought salvation from enemy looting. They were mostly traders but some went into crafts. Although the mokalaks did not make part of that class" [3]. Mokalak is the Georgian for Citizen. Initially it was the name denoting all dwellers of Georgia, however later "mokalake" transformed into an honorary title, awarded by royalties to the residents of Tiflis or Gori who had had a long-time urban origin and paid a special tax or makhta. This tax was lump sum payment of 4 000 rubles, which was a huge sum, so a question arises on the origin of this money, which is commerce, the permanent business of the mokalaks is trade. In the 18th c. every year about 2000 camel load packs of hides were exported to Persia and Karin (Erzurum).

The post of King Vakhtang VI's nazir³ was occupied by mokalak Hovsep Pitoyan. Visiting Russia in the retinue of King Teimuraz in 1760 were three mokalaks, high-ranking tradesmen Gevorg Bagdadyan, Nazar Gevorgyan (Egorov), and Melkon Davtyan. The mokalaks had important roles in the royal house of Irakli II (that Georgian king is known in Armenian historiography as Heracl). Thus, mokalak Amirian executed different diplomatic assignments, as "divans"-secretaries were working the Tumanians, translators - the Enikolopyans, the meliks were the Behbutians, the golden letter carvers or incrustators - Beburyans, the equerries - the Ghorghanyans, etc.

At the time of Irakli II, in the late 18th century, there were 556 houses of mokalaks in Tiflis, exclusively Armenians. Only after the Russian conquest (1801) there was an inclusion into the mokalak class of one Georgian family.

The mokalaks were also rendering financial assistance to the royal family.

Thus, Irakli II borrowed 300 rubles from mokalak Mr. Hakob., while in a warrant of 1799 we read: "I, prince Georgi, owe you, Melik Shakar, 200 rubles. When the stockkeepers return from the pastures, I will fully refund.

Please, do not disclose it to anyone".

The year 1801 saw a really historical occasion, felt by the nations of South Caucasus up to date. Georgia was included into Russia.

It was a revolutionary event, which also had a substantial economic influence on a number of big and small Transcaucasian nations. As noted by David Ananun, an authority in economic science, "Following the Russian conquest, Transcaucasia became an open market, a fair, with Tiflis as the most prominent shopping place. The Persians and Turks made war and looted, while the Russians made war and traded". The difference was this. Another note by the same author describes the changes in South Caucasus, particularly in the economic field: "There was no large field of trade, in each khanate⁴ there was an individual custom unit, all of which created obstacles to the development of trade. The purpose of trading activities was to satisfy the modest needs of the local population.

With the coming of Russians, the situation changed. First of all, all Persian intermediaries disappeared who had been hindering the exchange of goods. Transcaucasia entered into direct relationships with a large and comparatively cultured Russia. Secondly, established in Transcaucasia, was a large layer of Russian officials and the military, which as consumers, posed new requirements to the trading patterns of the area. That layer was not like the previously acting Persian officials, since they paid for the goods that they received. The Russians introduced great amounts of money, while the continuous military activities opened the door to large-scale expenses.

The population got a chance to exchange their produce and craftsmanship for money. That violated the natural economy principles, and started the commodity relations, and exchange of goods and money. The Russian rule had a revolutionary significance for the economic life of Transcaucasia.

Transcaucasia became a large market, consuming imported goods in exchange for the local raw and reprocessing materials. While in 1822 the import was 825 985 rubles and export 463 123 rubles in goods (Russia), in 1875 the relevant figures were 8 096 141 and 13 983 499 rubles".

Thus, the conquest of Georgia triggered serious, completely new economic relations carried out by the Georgian cities. Considering the fact that the urban population consisted mostly of Armenians, it becomes clear that they had to lead the economic reforms. Taking into consideration the fact that in the XIX century too the population of the Georgian cities mainly consisted of Armenians the arguments become substantial in statistical layout. Thus, in 1803 there were 2700 houses in Tiflis, of which 18 belonged to the Georgians, the rest were Armenian. According to the census of 1821, living permanently in Tiflis were 2951 Armenians, as well as 417 Georgians and Russians; in Gori - 331 Armenians, 121 Georgians and Russians; in Ananur - 123 Armenians, 24 Georgians and Russians; in Telavi - 236 Armenians, 74 Georgians and Russians; in Sghnakh - 377 Armenians, 12 Georgians and Russians.

Why do we emphasize the economic factor? Because the conquering policies of Russia in Transcaucasia had primarily a favorable influence, while in the case of Armenians and Georgians it had a salvatory manifestation with regard to the religious faith. Nonetheless, it was this factor that in 1917 - 1920 triggered the genocide of Armenians in Baku (1918) and the displacement in Tiflis (1918-1922).

In 1813 Russia conquered the Khanate of Baku, in 1827 Russia conquered Eastern Armenia, and subsequently established the Caucasus region ruled by Governor-General, with Tiflis as the capital. Georgia had sea and the capabilities to maintain relationships with Russia. Baku had oil and sea.

One may say that the province of Yerevan presented no economic interest, being only a buffer zone for the Russian Empire that could be converted at any time into a battlefield. However, finding themselves in the united and equal state, legal, economic territory of the Russian Empire and in the consisting of a common country, the Armenians began "conquering" Transcaucasia using their civilization resources of carryinhg out economic activities and national, "genetic" inclinations. and became the host of "the main pavilion" of the Tiflis fair.

The "conquest" of Tiflis started by hiring the state contractors.

The matter is that supplying food to the Russian army, construction work for the state institutions, general catering for the authorities were done by a system of contractors. It was a wonderful way to become rich, since a contractor dealt with a state treasury that issued regular payments (e.g., a certain Kalinian made a fortune by supplying meat to the army). State tax collection was also done by contractors, particularly collecting the silk taxes which was in the hands of Armenians. Thus, in the former Khanate of Gandzak, the silk contractors were Shadinyan and Jamalyan, in the Nukhi region there were Fridonyan, Ter-Grigoryan and Izmiryan, in Shamakh and Shushi, silk used to be put up to auction, while in Ghuba the contractors were Lazaryan, Ter-Ghukasyan, Mirzoyan. The contracting system was initially convenient for both parties. First of all, the Russian authorities lacked resources to maintain the relevant service, while the Armenians, Georgians and Tartar-Azerbaijanis lacked the experience of state service. Besides, the contracting system was such that it was both unavoidable and temporary, since the Russian authorities could eliminate it at any time. However the contracting resulted in a relationship that later produced serious attrition between cities and nations. The matter is that the the priority immediately was taken, in comparison with the neighbor countris, by Armenians being experienced in concluding bargains. Moreover, the Armenians started to exchange and sell the contracting services, i.e., to do business with regard to the national features, that was prompted not by nationality, but rather by the economic imperatives. Gradually there came about a trading, contracting, pawn-broking capital, hosted by the

Armenians. It was this capital that seeking new domains of business application, established the industrial production in Transcaucasia. Enriched from contracting and silk, some part of the Armenian capitalists laid the basis of oil production in Baku, the other part deployed extensive economic activities in Tiflis.

This situation in Transcaucasia resulted in demographic changes. The Armenians of Artsakh (Karabakh) started on a massive emigration to Baku, while the target for the Yerevan province was Tiflis.

In 1834, "the Big Stall" was populated by 16 807 Armenians and 3 582 Georgians. In 1848 Tiflis' population was 30 814, with regard to religion it was 13 779 Armeno-Gregorians, 786 Orthodox (including 415 Armenians), 371 Lutherans, 1317 Muslims. Major occupations: trade and crafts. Of 1926 craftsmen 1448 were Armenians.

In 1845, Yu. Gagemeister, a Russian specialist in Caucasus, noted: "... Armenians, no doubt, occupied a very important position in the Transcaucasian population due to their abilities, activities, and pursuit of education. They have permanently been considered the most enterprising operators. But the continuous looting to which they had been subjected during the previous arbitrary rule, had taught them to care exclusively for their own needs. That is the reason why in the villages they look almost like other inhabitants and live a poor life. But instead, in the cities, where there is sponsorship and protection from persecution, their activities are expanding to cover all possible fields. Having been living under the Turkish and Persian yokes for centuries, they can appreciate the favorable fruits of the Russian rule that liberated them from suppression awarding them all rights of bountiful citizenship. Being highly gifted in the spirit of highlands and talents for commerce, they since the time immemorial rule over the whole of Transcaucasia in matters of trade. They drew the trading paths to Russia, and it is only through them that the goods from Transcaucasia are sold in Russia. Decades of successful trade made them travel for commercial purposes to Leipzig, Hamburg, Trieste, Marseille, and despite ignorance of European tongues and other defects, some of those brave traders acquired very considerable capabilities. Many European goods were sold in Persia by Tiflis Armenians. In a word, it is enough to show them a new branch of trade, and they will get to work, even if it is not quite familiar and even risky".

How much truth is contained in this excerpt?

On September 1, 1847, the citizens of Tiflis, Mkrtich Shah-Muradyants and Makar Ghulyants established the trading house "Shah-Muradyants and Ghulyants", that executed diverse intermediary transactions at moderate prices, sending silk and other goods to Moscow or selling them in Tiflis, and undertaking money orders. That trading house located in stall 17, fourth floor of the Tamamshyan Commercial Building, was the first Firm in Transcaucasia.

In 1853, there were 3330 traders, of which 2283 Armenians. The city had only 2 food stores, belonging to Gr. Mirakyan and S. Elozyan. Of eight diamond dealers 5 were Armenians, 2 Jews, and one Georgian. Of 14 innkeepers 10 were Armenians, of which one was a luxury hostel belonging to Vardan Arshakuni, the future mayor. Received here in 1850 was the future Tsar of Russian Empire Alexander II, later this place was converted into an important center for public gatherings.

And what was the nature of the Tiflis trading activities in 1846 - 1850?

The trading activities were divided into four branches: The first one

was trade with Europe. Among the imported goods were sugar, wines, coffee, paints, silk, woolen and cotton cloth, luxury goods. Exports from Tiflis included raw silk, silkworm, cotton, wool, fish caviar and raw hides. Thus, import amounted to 2 million rubles, while export was 2.5 million, of which 900 thousand was coming to Tiflis, 1 600 thousand to other locations.

The second branch was trade in Russian Empire. Traders based in Tiflis could be encountered all around Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Ukraine, St. Petersburg or Moscow. They imported alcohol and vodka, tea, candles, articles of iron, copper, clay, glass, leather, cotton, and cloth. The export consisted of raw silk, cotton, rugs, etc. The import was 3.5 million rubles, export - 1 million.

The third branch was trade with Asian countries, particularly with Turkey and Persia. The import was tobacco products, cattle, rugs, felt, silk and cotton cloth, casual clothes, dried fruit, export was mostly products of Russian factories. Imported goods: 2.8 million rubles, exported - 1.3 million rubles. Thus, in three branches the circulation was 11 million rubles, of which the share of foreign traders in Tiflis was 2 million, while those of Tiflis (over 90% Armenians) - 9 million.

The fourth branch was selling goods inside the city. There were around 100 thousand consumers in Tiflis, who spent annually 3.5 - 5.5 million rubles, while the house owners collected rent 300 thousand rubles annually.

Now let us again review the statistical data on the Tiflis population, so as to clarify, what was the specific weight of the Armenians in trade. In 1863, Tiflis had 62 318 inhabitants. Of those 1707 were hereditary nobility (9/10 Georgians, 1/10 Armenians), 1997 were personal noblemen (Armenians and Georgians, half-in-half) not doing trade at all. Doing the trade were 466 honorary citizens, and 3217 registered tradesmen, exclusively Armenians.

On March 25, 1876, a census was held in Tiflis, the results were published 4 years later in the official bulletin of the Statistical Committee of Caucasus. According to this trustful and exact source, the city had 104 024 inhabitants of which 12 356 were the Russian troops. Compared to 1864, the growth of the population was huge at 55.5%. The basic population consisted of Armenians, Russians and Georgians - 87.08%. Armenians were 37 610 (36.16%), Russians (including troops) - 30 813 (29.62%), Georgians - 22 156 (21.30%). Besides, living permanently in Tiflis were 38 nations - a conglomerate of 13 445 people (12.92%).

The city was divided into 16 districts, all carrying Armenian names. D. Kobiakov, the compiler and editor of the collection, notes: "The Russians mostly lived in the newly built part of the city, avoiding the congested suburbs and narrow passages, which meant that they did not want to tolerate the unhealthy conditions of the old town and Havlabar. And also: "The Armenians are not too exigent with regard to personal comfort, therefore they lived in the old town. The exception was District II [Yerevan Square. note, that here at Paskevich, later Makharadze Street, was situated the house of Al. Mantashyants, now the House of Art Workers], housing the wealthiest Armenians".

This last statement by the author, to put it mildly, is untrue, the issue has quite another turn. First, it is sufficient to give a once-over to the list of house owners of the newly built subu rb,

and you will see numerous Armenians. Secondly, the natives of Tiflis, the Armenians, had built the Old City, and were meat and bone connected with their grandfathers' property. The Russians, on the other hand, appeared much later, and naturally, had to get established in the newly built environment. The Armenians, for example, started to settle in Moscow in the 14th century, but no one would think of saying that those inhabitants coming from the Armenian lane had an inferior standard of living comfort.

Of some interest is the literacy of Tiflis population, which was 36.5%, whereby the Russians 9 000, Georgians and Imeretians 7 000, 1500 of 2 000 Germans, 1 000 of 1 500 Poles, the literate Armenians were 30.21% (around 11 000), however 22.79% were also Russian speakers.

D. Kobiakov also wrote: "The Russians in Tiflis mainly represent the working class having no capital, neither the Georgians possess any capital.

But the Armenians, possessing nearly all realty in Tiflis, are not enterprising people. Contracting and trade - that is their favorite business, their imagination does not go farther".

This last statement is also groundless. Because while indeed, the Armenians are advanced in trade (of 6203 tradesmen 4237 were Armenians, 1078 Georgians and 98 Russians), the processing industries had 11 thousand workers of which the Armenians were about one half, 3 000 Georgians, 1 000 Russians. And in this field the absolute priority belonged to Grigor Grigori Adelkhanyan.

That man established "The G. G. Adelkhanov Stock-holding Company for Producing Leather and Felt in Caucasus"⁷, which was the second largest firm in Transcaucasia after the Oil Production Company in Baku.

The initial data on G. Adelkhanyan is dated back to 1869, he is mentioned as assistant of the Tiflis State Bank of Russia Department Inspector. Two years later he becomes Inspector, and after two more years he is designated manager of the "Tiflis Reciprocal Credit Society". According to the latest data of 1916, G. Adelkhanyan was still occupying that position for over 33 years at the head of the oldest Finance and Credit Institution in Transcaucasia. However, G. Adelkhanyan remained in the history of Armenian business not only because of that position.

Everything started in 1875, when in Tiflis, at the bank of Kura, in a private house in Vorontsovskaya Street he founded a small leather factory.

Here 30 workers in all did the reprocessing of sheep and goat skins, while the annual production was 60 thousand rubles. However, at the very start, the production was of such high quality and was so highly demanded, that Adelkhanyan opened a store in Tiflis, and another in St. Petersburg, at 28, Karavannaya St. Two years later, in 1877, the factory started processing cattle hides and became the undisputed leader in this field in Transcaucasia. In 1879, Grand Prince Michael, the Caucasus Commander-in-Chief, made an agreement with G. Adelkhanyan for 5 years to supply the leather boots to the Russian Army at 360 thousand rubles yearly.

It is to be noted that the Agreement was regularly prolonged, so Adelkhanyan remained a permanent supplier to the Army up until 1917 - 1918, when the Caucasus front line was finally dissolved and the

Russian troops retreated both from Western Armenia and Transcaucasia.

G. Adelkhanyan is the first one in the whole Caucasus to implement the leather production at European standards. His products won a bronze medal at a Russian Art-and-Industries exhibition in 1882, and a gold medal at an exhibition in Tiflis in 1889, a gold medal from the Russian Ministry of Finance and the Technical Society of the Russian Empire, a gold and silver medal at an exhibition in Nijni Novgorod in 1896.

A serious business always needs financial investment, which was the reason why on April 12, 1896, G. Adelkhanyan, along with Hovhannes Alikhanyan and Petros Alibekyan started "The G. G. Adelkhanov Leather and Felt Joint-Stock Company", with a fixed capital of 1.5 million rubles. That production giant consisted of three plants: leather factory, felt factory and footwear production. The industrial complex extended 1.5 hectare, all asphalt and concrete, had two-store outhouses, trolley carriages, water transport, hot-water lines, while leather was sold all over Caucasus.

Founded in 1889, the three-floor heat plant spread over 1700 m², total area being 3150 m², and a power plant. Since 1890 thousands of felt boots were produced, in 1896 production started of pea jackets, and thin felt jackets were in very great demand in Russia, particularly in Siberia and the Far East as clothes for soldiers, fire fighters and seamen.

In 1886, the basic footwear factory building had three floors, occupying 660 m². Manufactured here were the military boots for the Army, all types of shoes for Europe and Asia, with soles imported from US. The European part of Russia maintained a great demand for goatskin coats and felt boots, and G.

Adelkhan~Kan was the first man who started to manufacture them on an industrial scale. In 1912 he had two shoe shops in Tiflis, while St.

Petersburg store sold saddles and other leather articles. The store moved from Karavannaya St. to a more central part - Nevski Prospect 44.

In 1900, all the three enterprises owned by G. Adelkhanian employed 1107 workers and the gross product was 1 904 451 rubles.

All that is cited to counter the ridiculous opinion that the Armenians in Tiflis were only contractors and traders. The Armenians were far advanced even in nearly all branches of economy. G. Adelkhanyan was by no means unique.

As far back as 1870, brothers Hovhannes and Gabriel Minasyans, started silk manufacture and fish production, and later oil extraction in Baku, then in Tiflis the first cotton tissue factory, that 20 years later was sold to the notable banker Hovhannes Chitakhyan, the largest realty owner of the city.

In 1871 foundation was laid of Tiflis Commercial Bank [14] and the Society of Reciprocal Credit [15], on both of them D. Ananun wrote: "They became centers for gathering Armenian capital and making policies".

The founders of the Commercial bank were traders, enterprise owners, estate owners M.Alikhanyan, Hovh.Amiraghyan, D.Nadiryan, M.Tamamshyan, A.Ghorghanyan, Al.Tairyan, Kh.Ter-Mkrtchyan, S.Ghorghanyan, Al.Onikyan, E.Ejubyan, Hovh.Ananyan, Al.Babanasyan, brothers S. &

H.Izmiryan, N.Mirimanyan, S.Mirimanyan, N.Fridonyan, Hovh.Rotinyan, Gr.Tamamshyan, brothers M & Hovh.Tsurinyan, E.Davtyan, Hovh.Evangulyan, Hovh.Margaryan, brothers E., I. & Al.Tsoviyan, E.Jaghetyan, H.Alelyan, Dr. M.Shakhparonyan, who, in order to keep clear of the suspicion and blame on the part of the authorities, engaged Princes N. Bektabekov and P. Nakashidze, high-ranking officials I. Zubalov and K. Reuter, the latter having for a short time been manager of the Bank Board. Having started operations with 500 thousand rubles fixed capital, this bank in 1914 had 6 million rubles fixed and 3.8 million savings capital, it was the only financial institution in the Caucasus to sell its bonds at St. Petersburg stock exchange.

The Society of Reciprocal Credit was organized after the same principles.

The Chair of the Council of the Board was elected V. Kaidanov, members Al. Mantashyants, Hovh. Chitakhyan, Al. Matinyan, S. Jaghelin, while the manager was G. Adelkhanyan from start to end. In 1915 this crediting institution had 3102 members, 1210 of them Armenians.

Ending the subject of banking, it must be noted that on 30 November 1912, the Armenians established another bank, the Merchant Bank of Tiflis, with 5 million rubles constituent capital [16]. The founders were the mayor of Tiflis Al. Khatisyan, A. Miliants, A. Baghdasaryan, M. Bozarjants, H. Seilanyan, M. Dolukhanyan, A. Enfiajyants, S. Giulbenkyan, E. Tiunibekyan, Gr. Hambartsumyan, H. Kamoyan, S. Ter-Hovhannisyan, M Kalantaryan, M. Martirosyants. It should be added for comparison that in the same year the top strata of the Georgians at last woke up from slumber and created the first Tiflis Nobility Land Bank, with fixed capital 147.300 rubles.

The 1880s were a new period of growth for the Armenian capital in Tiflis.

Gevorg (Egor) Ghazumyan, Chair of the Tiflis Merchant Deputation, Merchant of the First Guild, established the merchant bank "Egor Kasumov and Co.", with the initial capital only 14 thousand rubles, of which 10 thousand was invested by the founder, while 4 thousand - his four collaborators. In 1881, the company had 20620 depositors, and the basic capital was 88 thousand rubles, of which 15 thousand was G. Ghazumyan's, 73 thousand - others. However, what is surprising was the productivity of this company: the circulation of money was 1 857 858 rubles...

The Russian capitalist T. Morozov's trading agent A. Makarov, in 1881, seeking for new markets, made a reconnaissance visit to Transcaucasia and was completely disappointed, writing in dismay: "In Tiflis the trading and industrial interests are entrusted to Armenians". In the same year the "Kavkazski Kalendar" publication wrote: "In all cities of Tiflis province the Armenians are the ruling element.

In Tiflis Armenians make up nearly one half of the population (45%), Georgians 26%, Russians 24%, Tartars 5%. In other cities the Armenians smother the Georgians with their numbers. In Akhaltsikh they constitute 93%.

Even in aboriginally Georgian land like Telav and Sghnakh, the population is exclusively Armenians, 73% and 89%, in Telavi province villages it is from 49.103 inhabitants only 2869 Armenians, that is 6%, in Sghnakh province from 74.142 inhabitants 5.567 Armenians, i.e. 7.8%. The Armenian rural population is mostly

grouped in Akhalkalaki and partly in Akhaltsikh, Borchalu and Tiflis provinces". These references attest that in Georgia, the Armenians mostly stayed in 20 cities, and mostly dealt in trade and industries. In 1889 officially registered in Tiflis were 47 merchants of 1st and 2nd guild, of whom 7 Germans, 4 Russians, one all Tartar-Azerbaijani, Polish, English and French, and 29 Armenians. In the same year the Agricultural and Industrial exhibition featured a complete success for the Armenian exhibitors, awarded gold medals for vineries, tillage, silk manufacturing, apifarming, woodworking, mining, and industrial production.

Also very interesting is the collective psychological image of the Armenian merchant in Tiflis, that was so accurately presented by Magda Neuman.

"An Armenian always undertakes a small operation, and only when he has seen someone do it. But if he has started it, in no case will he stop, no matter the injuries. His extreme caution and indeterminacy in financial operations reduce the chance of losses greatly, but if successful, he proceeds slow and steady, although it may require years of perseverance. By virtue of those qualities, the Armenians for the most part become stall or store owners. Having obtained some success in this way, the Armenian does not go in for a new business, whatever might be the expected gain.

Armenians have never been too successful in developing collective activities, cooperative companies or financial organizations, As a result, they lack organizational skills, they are psychologically isolated, each striving to manage his own enterprise single-handed. He is looking for business with those Armenians, who are like him, lest anyone should turn out to be his better".

M. Neuman is largely right. That the Armenians tried to avoid collective activities, had a substantive explanation. For centuries, being under a foreign yoke or in a foreign country, lacking elementary securities for life, property, furniture, the Armenian saw the only guarantee for his existence, in his economic and commercial activity, therefore he displayed great care and caution. The natural requirement to earn his bread compel him to do business with his brothers, relatives or next of kin, however, in the course of time, the natural development of business within the legal domain prompted him to expand the limits of his activities, emphasizing nevertheless, the feature of national identity, with an appropriate result.

Thus, in 1900, of 71 industrial companies the Armenian ones counted 36 (circulation 2 million 580 thousand rubles), Georgian - 7 (103 thousand rubles), German - 17 (481 thousand rubles). Joint-stock companies - 8, of which only two were Armenian, however, their circulation was 1 million 758 thousand rubles, while the other six companies combined were 1 million 738 thousand.

According to tax-collecting data, in Tiflis trade and production, Armenians owned 62% of all companies, 73% of circulation, and 69% revenues. There were production branches that were Armenian monopolies, that was tobacco products.

As far back as 1855, Hambartsum Enfiadjants had two cigarette stalls in Tiflis, one in Yerevan Square, on the first floor of the Tamamshyan's house, the other in Veliaminovskaya Street, in the house of Khojaminsyan.

They were the first civilized auction places in the city. H. Enfiajyants started cigarette production on an industrial scale. In Tiflis Province, Sghnakh Region, Lagodekh area he had large plantations, with numerous Armenian professional tobacco workers. In 1895, H. Enfiajants established the "Mir" factory which he sold to his relatives in 1901, while himself founded a new one. He enjoyed great authority and respect in Tiflis.

He was 2nd-guild merchant, member of City Public Administration and a Deputy of Tiflis City Duma (1864), since 1895 - Member of Reciprocal Credit Society.

His son Artashes successfully continued father's business and achieved new quality. Since 1912, this 1st-guild merchant employed 280 workers at the "A.H. Enfiajants" Factory, the largest one, and produced cigarettes to 1 million rubles. The factory issued deluxe cigarettes named "Solidnie", "Inteligentskie", "Extra".

Enfiajants was a deeply national man. Being member of the city duma, member of the Reciprocal Credit Society, deputy member of the Merchants' board, member of stock-exchange board, he was also member of the trust boards of Al. Mantashyants commercial school and No.1 Commercial School, Chairman of the Company for Help to Poor Students of the Rail Transport School, Honorary Inspector of Handicrafts School (Kutaisi Province). In 1909 he presented 300 volumes of his late father's books to the "Caucasus Charity Society".

In 1918 - 1920, in the turmoil of the Revolution, H. Enfiajants was compelled to emigrate to Belgium, where he built the "Enfi" cigarette factory, employing numerous refugee Armenians from Caucasus. It is to be noted that in 1925, besides "Enfi", Armenians in Belgium's capital possessed four more industrial enterprises: Brothers A. and H. Goiunjians' "Elmas", D. Msryan's "Tavros", T. Muradyan's "Kars", A. Matosyan's factory "Maruf".

On the basis of the Enfiajants' "Mir" Factory, opened in Tiflis in 1901 was a joint-stock company of the same name, with B. Eghiazaryan as Chairman of the Board, members G. Ter-Asatryan and S. Antonyan (after one year there were new members of the Board G. Baianduryan, R. Gozielyan). With 500 thousand rubles basic capital that Firm produced "Atlas" cigarettes and cigarettes with cardboard holders, sold in private stores in Tiflis and Baku. In all, that factory with 79 workers had an output of 750 thousand rubles worth of cigarettes.

Michael Safaryan yet in 1873 founded one of the oldest cigarette factories in Tiflis. His quality products only in European exhibitions won 14 prizes, as well as 17 medals and commendations at different exhibitions. After he died in 1898, the business was taken over by his daughter Natalia. However, it was naturally difficult for a woman to run a tobacco factory, so, she sold the factory to G. Andinyan and H. Mamedov. The new owners retained the Company's name (that was one of the guarantees for business continuity), and in 1914 the "M P. Safaryan's Successors" produced cigarettes for 200 thousand rubles.

In 1910, another tobacco Firm declared itself in Tiflis, "Seilanyan Brothers" Trading House Factory. Annual output was at 500 thousand rubles. The Company issued cigarettes "Prima", "Zefir", "Delikatnie", and "Imperatorski", "Turetskoe serdtse", "Pridvorni", "Diubek turetski", "Makedonski".

The "Kometa" Factory produced 300 thou rubles worth of cigarettes.

The Factory was awarded Grand Prix and a gold medal in Rome.

However, the undisputed king of tobacco industries in both Tiflis and Caucasus was Nikogos Hovhannes Bozarjants. He founded his factory yet in 1858, in a private house in the Vera suburb of Tiflis. Being Eastern Armenian, Subject to Turkey, N. Bozarjian was deprived of the right to own a plantation, but using the national and regional connections, he exported high-quality raw material from Turkey. At the Caucasus exhibition of agricultural and industrial articles in 1889 he was awarded a gold medal for fine tobacco processing.

The father's business was continued successfully by his sons, Hovhannes and Arshak. They established "N. H. Bozarjants and Sons" Firm, that became a widely recognized standard. Only in 1914 the factory output was 1 million 300 thousand rubles. It was high-quality cigarettes, of which the best and the most expensive were "Sagangebaj" and "Pokhod".

The Company became an official supplier of the Great Prince Nikolas Mikhailovich.

For an intermediate review, let us consider the data of 1912. At that time there were 35 joint-stock companies in Tiflis, of which 16 were Armenian (including the electric cable car, that was built by the Belgians in 1900, and owned by Ferdinand Takhtajian). The total fixed capital of the Armenian-owned companies was 23.501.918 rubles. Other nations owned 19 sections belonging to the Russians, English, French large companies, their total value being in considerable deficiency to the Armenian investments.

Of 72 industrial companies 38 were Armenian property. Among these, of 5 vodka factories 4 Armenian (Brothers Sesian, "Argo"), of 11 brick20 factories 7 (R. Martirosyan, M Yolchyan), 2 leather and felt factories (G. Adelkhanyan, A. Zargaryants and P. Vardazaryants), all 3 factories of candy (G. Ghozalyan, G. Atovmyan), of 10 woodworking factories 8 (A. Jaghetyan, S. Gasparyants, S. Ter-Asatryan, A. Ter-Khachatryan and G. Tskhovrebov), wood boards, 3 factories (E. Eghiazaryan), of 12 el. power plants 7 (including Poghos and Khachatur Dzitoghcyans from Alexandropol), V. Mamulyan of Mineral Waters, Tairyan, Alikhanyan and Tolei oil making, G. Jaralian cast iron, Al. Melik-Azarian - copper-smelting plants.

The economic excellence of Armenians becomes evident and undisputed in the trading domain. Thus, of 17 stores trading in Asian goods, 10 belonged to Armenians, of 40 drug stores 19, of 110 food stores 60, of 15 snack bars 10, of 12 wine storehouses 4, of 19 wine shops 17, of 206 wine pubs 109, of 9 linen stores 6, of 9 women's clothes 3, of 109 pothouses 73, of 38 hardware shops 30, of 28 gold and silver shops 15, of 11 toy shops 7, of 21 book stores 13, of 25 rugs, silk and wool stores 12, of 78 leather stores 53, of 11 forest wood stores 8, of 142 textile stores 90, of 20 furniture stores 18, of 40 shoe stores 34, of 28 inns 11, of 12 restaurants 6.

And finally, in 1912, of 15 1st-guild merchants 7 were Armenians, of 68 2nd-guild merchants 428.

Let us touch now upon the issue of what the influence was of the =0 Anumerical or economic prevalence upon the urban governance of Tiflis.

In 1890, the Armenians constituted 54.8% of the city population. In 1893 the Tiflis population was 145 731, of which Armenians were 55

553, Georgians 38 357, Russians 36 113, Persians 4 615, Poles 4 300, Tartar-Azerbaijani 2 505, Jews 1 543, Germans 1 661. In 1895, Armenians were 64 720, Georgians 34 452, Russians 26 922, Tartar-Azerbaijani 3 515. In 1901, Armenians were 63 241, Georgians 50 908, Russians 41 934. In 1912, there were in Tiflis 81 452 Armenians, 22 763 Georgians, in 1914 129 589 Armenians (37.7%), Russians 78 356 (22.8%), Georgians 69 563 (20.2%). Finally, the veritable data of 1916: Armenians 149 294, Russians 91 997, Georgians 37 584. Thus, it is clear that on the turn of the 19th century, the Armenians were in the majority.

The same supremacy reigned in the basic entity of the Tiflis governance - the city дума (parliament). Thus, in 1875 - 1886 (mayors: D.

Ghipiani, A. Ghorghanyan, Al. Matinyan) 77.4% of Duma deputies were Armenians, 14.3% Georgians, 8.3% Russians. In 1886 - 1897 (Mayor Al.

Matinyan) the Armenians were 68.6%, Russians 16.7%, Georgians 14.7%. In 1897 - 1910, (mayors G. Evangulyan, K. Vermishyan, V. Cherkeзов) 63.8% of deputies were Armenians, 21.7% Russians, 14.5% Georgians. In 1910, the mayor was Al. Khatisyan, who governed over 7 years. In 1910 members of Duma were 36 Armenians, 26 Russians, 2 Russian Germans and 8 Georgians, in 1914 - 47 Armenians, 18 Russians, 10 Georgians, in 1916 - 53 Armenians, 13 Russians, 9 Georgians. Considering that the overwhelming majority in Duma were merchants and company owners, then it will become evident that the achievements in the economic domain was the road to power.

And the fact that economy mostly was in the hands of Armenians, is proven by the latest statistical data. Thus, in Tiflis in 1916, the Armenians owned 21 of 42 drug stores, 84 of 146 food stores, 4 of 7 paper stores, 63 of 119 wine stores, 116 of 132 leather articles stores, 24 of 29 sausage stores, 21 of 37 firewood stores, 18 of 33 iron ware stores, 17 of 18 oil and oil products stores, 45 of 80 confectioner's shops, 15 of 22 bookstores, 9 of 20 rug sellers, 61 of 67 leather sellers, 61 of 67 leather sellers, 6 of 9 cafes, 98 of 117 flour shops, 101 of 133 textile stores, 19 of 22 furniture stores, 465 of 724 grocery stores, 6 of 11 mineral water stores, 28 of 32 stores of ready-made clothes, 9 of 11 cigarette stores, 19 of 45 watch, gold and silver article stores, 5 of 6 liquor stores, 2 of 3 brick factories, 10 of 15 woodworking factories, 3 of 6 candy factories, 2 of 3 oil-extraction plants, 8 of 17 power plants. Moreover, 2 coffee sellers, all 34 shoe stores, 2 soap factories, 6 cigarette factories, 2 leather and felt factories, 2 woodboard factories, the one macaroni factory, (Petrosyan & Co.) [24].

The Armenians established and maintained nearly all the Tiflis banking business (Hovh. Chitakhyan and his heirs, Tsoviyanan and Brothers, Fridonyan and Co.), the City Office, the Trading Deputation, the Trading Directorate, the Stock Exchange Committee.

The successful economic activity resulted in a situation whereby the Armenians seized the European-initiated non-domestic fields, rather than business, e.g., in 1907, member of the Committee of Tiflis football fans was N. Lalayants, the Tiflis bicycle sport Vice Commander A. Safaryan, members of Tbilisi Tennis Club were V. and E. Tsoviyanans.

It is to be noted that neither the Russians, nor any other representatives of the Transcaucasian nations had any participation in the above mentioned clubs.

To summarize: In 1917, the total number of Armenians in the whole of

Russian Empire was 1 173 096 and 823 968 Georgians. At that, In Russia, above the borders of Transcaucasia, were inhabited 2248 Georgians and 55.002 Armenians B. Ishkhanian, a political figure and demographer, wrote: "Compared to other nations of the Caucasus, the Armenians, by virtue of their mighty involvement into the political affairs, occupy the first place in industries and trade". Indeed, while occupied in agriculture were 11.41% Armenians, Georgians 79.1%, and Tartar-Azerbaijanis 81.66%, Armenians in the industry were 19.28%, Georgians 5.56%, Tartar-Azerbaijani 4.7%, while in trade Armenians 22.7%, Georgians 4.84%, Tartar-Azerbaijani 5.6%.

The same author goes on: "While Armenians, compared to other nations, occupy the fifth place in industrial production, and the second place in trade, in the Caucasus they have the first place overwhelmingly". Class affiliation in the Caucasus and the numerical composition of the traders was as follows: Armenians 6001 persons, Russians 5119, Georgians 2283, Tartars-Azerbaijani 1386.

To conclude, the numerical supremacy belonged to Armenians, holding in their hands the governance of the city, and most of the economy. That is to say: Tiflis was an Armenian city,

Either the Tiflis Armenians or generally the history of the Armenian capital and benevolence cannot be imagined without Alexander Mantashyants (1842 - 1911). The man who was the leader of the "Armenian" department of Russian (that is to say, Baku) oil production, one of the most important bankers of the Russian Empire, and a most dedicated benefactor of the time.

To perceive the Mantashyants phenomenon, it is important to understand the following: since childhood he was dedicated to two things: the Armeno-Gregorian Faith and the Commerce, those had shaped his system of outlook. Flowing in his veins was the blood of a priest and a trader, a wonderful mix, something that has become an origin of fertility for our nation. Al. Mantashyants' oil was sold worldwide, his oil-carrying ships and storage tanks were spread from Shanghai to Cairo, and it is quite natural that his trademark was everywhere symbolizing the sacrifice of Christ.

The 16-year-old Alexander studied Armenian, Georgian, Russian et al. under the priest Galust Papazyan for five years, and it was the only education that he ever had.

In 1865, a tissue merchant, mokalak Hovh. Mantashyants was elected deputy of the Tiflis city дума. Meanwhile, Duma was completely Armenian, the executive Mayor was S. Abisoghomyan, members: N. Milyants, H. Ter-Ghazaryan, K. Mamikonyan, S. Abrahamyan, M. Ter-Melkisetyan.

One year later, Hovh. Mantashyants with his son, who has already got education, goes to Tebriz on matters of business, then Alexander is dispatched to Manchester, and that was also a streak of luck. Setting his residence there and going on with his father's business, he made his appearance and familiarized with the European everyday life, culture and business environment, for the first time communicated with the Diaspora Armenians, was introduced to the issues of national survival, observed his compatriots in the practice of charity.

In 1866, Al. Mantashyants took part in writing the inner charter of the Manchester community. In 1869 he was=2 0among the donors for the building of the Armenian chapel, he donated 40 pounds with Hovsepyan

from Tiflis, that was the first donation by the future greatest benefactor of the Nation.

In 1870, when the Armenian Church of St. Trinity was built in Manchester, Mantashyants was again among the benefactors, having donated 5 pounds.

In 1872, father and son Mantashyants returned to Tiflis, in the Yerevan Square opened a textile warehouse, then another, and in a year Alexander became member of the Reciprocal Credit Society (up to 1885).

There were many tissue merchants in Tiflis, mostly wealthy, successful merchants, however Al. Mantashyants managed to make a great advancement due to using European methods, great diligence and observancy. For him, the decisive year was 1881. On that year he became 1st-guild merchant and was elected deputy to Duma (up to 1892). Since that year he accepted the post of the honorary trustee of the Tiflis Comprehensive School, that he held till 1894.

The money earned by selling tissues and cloths paved the road for Al. Mantashyants to the higher strata in Tiflis, however the same money demanded new domains, and he entered the financial domain: In 1882 - 1888 he was member of the reporting committee of the Tiflis Russian State Bank. However, his aspiration, his target was the Commercial bank. In 1882 - 1884 he was elected board member of the same bank, in 1885 - 1889 deputy chair of the board, and in 1890 he was Chair for life, naturally, being at the same time the largest shareholder. It was Mantashyants' merit that the bank became one of the best financial institutions of Russia, was valued at the Imperial Exchange and was the only Caucasus bank that sold its bonds at St.

Petersburg Exchange.

Having become a large-scale financier, he continued to run his manufacturing business.

In 1889, there was an important turn in the life of Mantashyants: As far back as 1884 his friend Michael Aramyants moved from Tiflis to Baku. Along with his compatriots from Karabakh: A. Tsaturyan, G. Tumaian and G. Arapelian, established the trading and oil producing company "A. Tsaturov et al." This company played a substantial role in the oil production in Baku, business was going well, but the financial investments were needed. In 1899 Aramyants came to Tiflis and borrowed 50 thousand rubles from Mantashyants, i.e. from the Commercial Bank, in order to purchase the cistern cars. Mantashyants offered his personal assets, on condition that he would become a shareholder. The offer was accepted, and Mantashyants entered the oil business. In the ten years that followed, Mantashyants purchased the shares of A. Tsaturyan, G. Tumayan, and G. Arapelian, Becoming the rightful owner, in 1899 he along with A. Aramyants established the "A.I. Mantashev & Co." firm which was to become the oil-producing Empire. Suffice it to say that for 10 years (1899 - 1909) the Company owned the largest fixed capital in the oil industry (22 million rubles)⁹.

With regard to Mantashyants as a human being, it should be said that he held dear three principal values: Nation, Church and Family.

Al. Shirvanzade wrote: "It was not the great amounts of money that he donated to the sacred temple of charity, which is the queen of the celestial temples. It was the heart that performed the only role, and the supreme role in the benevolence by Mantashyants. He gave

away without accounting, without empty vanity, he gave, because so prompted his national soul. His benevolence was of a pure Christian character, so what the right hand gave, the left hand ignored. It was his modesty, that is so rare these days. Only a small part of his doings are known to the public. Countless were his deeds that only his very close people knew about" [26].

In 1881 he became one of the founders of the "Armenian Benevolent Society of the Caucasus", and later the vice-chair and an honorary member. That meant that beside the mandatory yearly contributions, Mantashyants periodically deposited large sums, throughout 30 years.

In 1908 he awarded 20 thousand rubles to the Society as a single donation, so as the annual percentage allocations (900 rubles) should go to the Armenian schools. In 1903 he paid 50 thousand rubles to repair the St. Godmother Church with annex. In 1904 he spent over 1.5 million francs on building St. John the Baptist Armenian Church in Paris, for which the French Government awarded him the Legion of Honor. In 1909 he donated 300 thousand rubles to build a new magnificent building of the Nersisian Seminary. In 1910 he granted 250 thousand rubles to build the currently standing Patriarchal residence (1914).

Mantashyants had a special attitude towards education. In 1881 - 1893, he was the honorary trustee of the Tiflis Comprehensive Classical School, and in 1894 - 1907 of the preparatory school, in 1894 he founded a trade school of his name, which continued to teach the youngsters up to 1918.

Moreover, the gifted and talented, often selected by him personally, used to be sent to the best educational establishments of Russia and Europe, while taking care of them throughout the entire course of study. Ar. Sarukhan wrote: "Many Armenian youths' education had been funded by Mantashyants. Mantashyants himself ignored their number. I think that in this way or that he helped about a thousand young men to get their education and to get established in further life. I personally know about a hundred of them, a doctor, a teacher or an architect, a geologist or some other specialist, who owe their entire learning and position to Mantashyants".

One of those was Komitas, who wrote in his autobiography: "In May 1896, on account of the great benefactor Alexander Mantashyan, I moved to Berlin, to complete my higher musical education".

Mantashyan had also another weakness. It was love for art and literature.

His preference was theater, not only did he always attend theater, but also regularly extended financial help both to the "Armenian Dramatic Society" and to individual actors.

The currently existing building of the Sh. Rustaveli Dramatic Theater was formerly called "The Pitoev Theater". Mantashyants, who was the largest shareholder and a member of Isaiah Pitoyan's trading and oil-producing company, started a corporate operation of building the theater, spending 1.5 million rubles.

To be mentioned here is Mantashyants' personal character. He was universally admired for his modesty. Ar. Sarukhan wrote: "He was a modest person and lived a modest life. He disliked valuables, never wore a ring or any other decorations. His watch was very plain, with

a simple chain. The only adornment that he liked to carry was a live flower. He never wanted to own a carriage, he always moved around on foot or by tram, hiring a carriage only on rare occasions". That was not a formality, a horse-drawn carriage cost 25 rubles, however Mantashyants thought that since there were still poor Armenians and refugees in Tiflis, he had no right for luxury, it was indecent and immoral behavior.

There was yet another feature that he had: although the pleasures of life were quite accessible, he was dedicated to his family, his wife and eight children. His wife died of diabetes, in Frankfurt, and was buried in a monastery graveyard. Mantashyants himself suffered from kidney disease and ear pain, and received treatment for several months while visiting Paris. In Spring 1911 he went on a journey to Petersburg, to thence go to Paris, however, died en route on April 19. His body was brought to Tiflis on April 24 and buried on April 30. It was a very mournful day, attended by all Tiflis.

Mantashyants was buried at the side of his wife, in the Monastery graveyard.

Today, however, his resting place will not be found. In 1938 the Monastery Church was ruined and the graves destroyed, not only the one of Mantashyants, but also of other notable Armenian personalities: M Loris-Melikov, A.Ter-Ghukasyan, Hovh. Lazaryan, M. Sanasaryan, B. Shelkovnikyan, P. Izmiryan, and others.

In 1914, the start of WWI triggered the Armenian tragedies.

In 1918, trying to save itself from the sinking Transcaucasian ship, Georgia boarded its boat, and Tiflis was deprived of the significant part of its Armenian population - the cream of its public, political, economic and cultural life.

1Till 1895 the city was called Tpkhis /Teflisi/, 1845-1936 - Tiflis: in 1936 it was renamed Tbilisi.

2For many years Georgia existed in the form of three kingdoms - Kartli, Kakheti and Imereti. On July 24, 1783 the king of Kartli and Kakheti, Irakli II concluded a treaty with Empress Catherina II (The George's Treaty) by which Karteli-Kakheti kingdom /East Georgia/ got under the protection of Russia. In 1803-1864 Western Georgia little by little became the part of Russian Empire, especially after Russian-Persian wars in 1804-1813 and 1826-1828 and Russian-Turkish wars in 1806-1812 and 1828-1829.

In that way Tiflis and Kutaisi provinces and Batumi district made the part of the Russian Empire.

3Nazir- A high rank at court, Head of powder-mill.

4Khanate - the name of many Turkish state formations as well as the ones of nations under Turkey's domination.

By the way, there were 8874 stone buildings and 72 wooden private houses, 14 inns in Tiflis, 2863 stalls made of stone, 15 factories and 119 industrial plants. The real estate was hosted by 5 190 persons.
