



საქართველოს
წიგნობრივი მემკვიდრეობის ეროვნული ცენტრი



BILISI

T B I L I S I

- ... 1500 years old city
- ... capital of sunny Georgia
- ... important centre of culture, science, industry

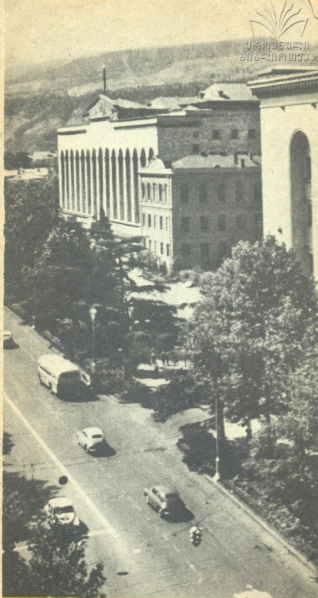
Many roads lead to Tbilisi. The dusty and ancient caravan roads, where from times immemorial regular and active streams of traffic were carried on, were replaced by broad highways, streets, prospects, avenues, railway lines, air routes. From each road, from the banks of the river that divides the city in two, from each surrounding hill there unfold before the eye views of unsurpassable beauty and charm.

On one side of Tbilisi rises Mtatsminda ("Holy Mount") from where a beautiful view of the city is opened, and perched high up near its summit is the Church of St. David. Here the Russian writer Alexander Griboyedov and his wife Nina Chavchavadze, daughter of the Georgian poet Alexander Chavchavadze, are buried. Nicolas Baratashvili, the greatest Georgian romantic poet of the 19th century, Akaki Tsereteli, "the nightingale of Georgia," and the writer Iliia Chavchavadze, the leader of the intellectuals of his time and other prominent men, are also buried here.

Closing our eyes we see, once again, the old town of Tbilisi, a labyrinth of narrow, crooked streets, looking like an ageing woman under the weight of her centuries. But on opening our eyes we see the ancient cathedrals and churches, temples, fortresses and other monuments of her past preserved and cherished side by side with her splendid new bridges and embankments, broad streets, magnificent and handsome buildings, parks, gardens, squares, stadiums; and Tbilisi, with her face changed, looks like a beautiful golden maiden, eternally young and alluring.

The history of the city is blended with the heroic history of the Georgian people. Nature and history have combined to make Tbilisi what she is.

Tbilisi, one of the most ancient cities of Georgia, is 1500 years old. During the long ages of her existence she has traversed a long path of prosperity and misfortune. The part she has played in the history of Geor-



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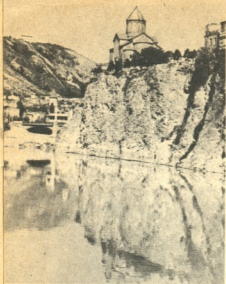
The Government House

gia is significant. Her life was a ceaseless, incessant struggle against foreign invaders. She was often taken by storm, razed to the ground, conquered, but her spirit was never crushed. When the Georgian Feudal Monarchy was at the summit of its efflorescence Tbilisi was the centre of the culture and political life of the country. Subsequently, in the course of centuries (after the 13th century), she became the prey of the Mongols, Turks, Persians, Arabs and others who made terrible havoc throughout Georgia. And, once more, Tbilisi was captured, pillaged, reduced to ashes. Though conquered and repeatedly devastated Georgia never submitted to her conquerors.

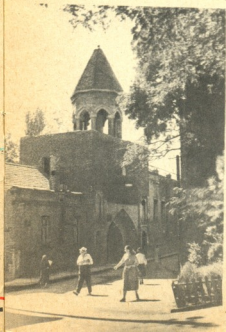
At the beginning of the 19th century Georgia was incorporated in the Russian Empire and Tbilisi became the residence of the Governor of the Caucasus sent by the Tsar. The importance of the part she played in the revolutionary movement of the Georgian people must be particularly noted, and on the 25th of February 1921, the Red Flag of the Soviet Union was raised high over Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia.

On the slope of a hill overlooking Tbilisi stands a huge statue of a woman dressed in the Georgian national costume. In one hand she holds a sword, in the other a bowl. This is an ancient emblem of the city, signifying — "ability to meet the enemy; ability to meet a friend!"

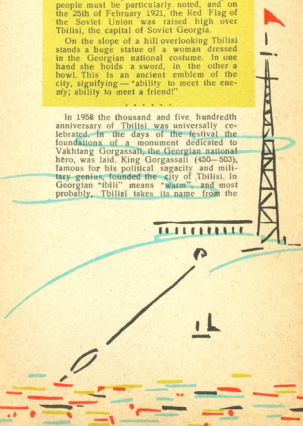
In 1958 the thousand and five hundredth anniversary of Tbilisi was universally celebrated. In the days of the festival the foundations of a monument dedicated to Vaktang Gorgassali, the Georgian national hero, was laid. King Gorgassali (450—503), famous for his political sagacity and military genius, founded the city of Tbilisi. In Georgian "tbili" means "warm" and most probably, Tbilisi takes its name from the



Metekhi Fortress



Anchiskhati Temple



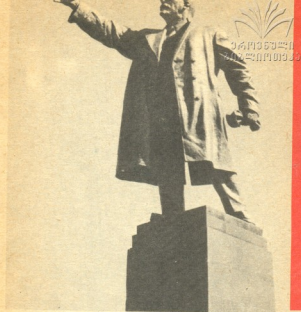
autocratic regime, Georgia's national economy and her culture revived and soon she became once more an important industrial and cultural centre. But the city still remained the dirty old city with a labyrinth of narrow, crooked, ill-paved streets, small houses with overhanging balconies and flat roofs as she had been for centuries before.

In the Soviet period the appearance of Tbilisi has changed beyond recognition. New architectural ensembles have appeared over which a new banner of Georgia flies, beautiful parks, stadiums, accommodating thousands and thousands of people. The city is growing to such an extent that it will soon meet one of the finest roads in the world, the Military Highway.

Much has been achieved in the sphere of architecture. The city's architecture is treated as a single composition whose constituent parts are large, self-contained architectural ensembles. And it must be noted here that the buildings constructed in the Soviet period preserve and develop the Georgian national forms and motives.

On the top of Mtatsminda, where a beautiful park is laid, stands the station of the funicular. The graceful pillars, and fine ornamentation, the roof with its airy network seem to have robbed the building of its weight and density. Near it is the high television tower and not very far is the upper station of the air ropeway which carries people to and from the middle of the city.

Mtatsminda (Upper Station of Funicular Railway and Television Tower)



The Lenin Monument



The Book Palace

Vaké Park



From the summit one enjoys a superb view of the town, the valley, and the surrounding mountains. On clear days the glistening snowy peaks of the Mkhinvari (Karbek) may be seen; and at night the lights of the city below look like an up-turned sky of bright stars.

Tbilisi covers a large area but during the Soviet period it has extended immensely. The great number of parks and gardens strikes the eye. Monumental, architecturally remarkable bridges, towering palatial buildings, specimens of ancient, as well as modern Georgian architecture and art, factories and mills are seen surrounded by exquisitely planned parks, gardens and flowerbeds so that during the whole year Tbilisi reposes in evergreen loveliness.

One of the earliest and striking architectures of Soviet Georgia is the magnificent building of the Georgian government situated on one of Tbilisi's finest and most attractive thoroughfares, the Rustaveli Avenue. The walls are faced with Bolnisi tufa, a soft, porous and enduring stone used for architectural and building purposes. The building seems to shine even on cloudy days in a golden light.

One of the most striking scenes in the metropolis is the river side which is a broad thoroughfare. The steep hills and lofty rocks, the stagnant marshes have been replaced by splendid river embankments set in granite and lined with rows of trees, broad avenues with cool, shady gardens and handsome flights of steps leading to the water's edge.

The Soviet government organizations devote much attention to the work of municipal improvements—increase of housing space, the building of schools, hospitals, clinics, and other public and administrative buildings. Everything is being done to improve and satisfy the cultural and everyday needs of the capital's population. The once narrow and ill-arranged streets and roads of cobble-stones have been transformed into gala asphalted avenues. Hundreds of comfortable buses, trolley-buses, taxis run daily on Tbilisi streets. The municipal passenger transportation facilities of Tbilisi are growing from year to year with increasing rapidity. Old Tbilisi had many small buildings without improvement, a considerable number of which were later demolished. Today only houses with all modern improvements are built. Housing construction in the country at large is expanding from year to year. During the Seventh Five-Year Plan period housing construction will proceed on a still larger scale. The task set by the Communist Party and the Soviet government is to provide every Soviet family with improved housing and to carry out the very need of the future. Everything is being done to improve and satisfy the cultural and every-



Stalin State University



"Dynamo" Stadium



The Hippodrome in Delissi

day needs of the capital's population. One of the achievements of Soviet Tbilisi is the new residential districts. The new residential districts—Vake, Saburtalo, Ghrma-Ghele, Avchala, Navtliakhi, Dighomi, have changed the face of Tbilisi beyond recognition. Housing construction is expanding and growing to such an extent that thousands have received apartments with modern improvements. Individual housing construction is being encouraged by offering government loans. The target of 175 thousand square metres of housing to be built in 1961 exceeds that of all old Tbilisi, a city that has been growing and expanding for centuries.



A Tbilisi Electrical Locomotive

One of the most attractive features of Georgian scenery is Samgori ("sami" means "three" in Georgian; "gori" — "hill"), the youngest of all the districts that make up Tbilisi. This district is mainly an agricultural one and in the very near future will supply Tbilisi with fresh products, vegetables and fruit. It was but recently that Samgori was a waste and barren land. Here is the "Tbilisi Sea"—a vast depression made by three hills filled with crystal blue waters of the Iori River. From a waste and barren land the Samgori region has become a veritable garden. The "Sea" has become a favorite place of rest, and especially in summer, hundreds of people come to spend their leisure hours on the beach, swimming, fishing or boating in the dark blue waters or seek the shady alleys that descend to the waterfront.



Tbilisi today is an important industrial centre. Industries were created in the Soviet period which were entirely new to the country — new gigantic metallurgical, electrical-engineering and machine-building

plants. The enterprises of light industry and the food industry were constructed — meat packing and fruit and vegetable canning plants, factories, etc. The factories are equipped with the latest machinery and their output has increased tremendously. Tbilisi's role as a supplier of the people's cultural and material needs is known not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world. Socialist production has expanded so greatly that only in 1960 Tbilisi supplied not only her own country but fifty foreign countries as well with metallurgical machines, machi-



At Tbilisi Sea



nes for the food industry, instruments, tea, wine, cognac, silk and woolen fabrics.

Significant is the fact that Tbilisi has mastered the most complex branches of machinery manufactures, tool-making, electrical engineering and chemistry. Tbilisi supplies the latest equipment to numerous new enterprises.

Many large plants and combinats arose from the small workshops and factories existing before the revolution. The former Tbilisi Arsenal is now the huge S. Orjonikidze Machine-Building Plant which has just celebrated its hundredth anniversary. The V. I. Lenin Tannery was founded in 1875, the Stalin Locomotive-Repair Works on May 1, 1983. In the past the railway-repair

shops played an important part in the development of the revolutionary movement in Georgia; they were the only large scale enterprise industry. During the Soviet regime new enterprises, new industries were introduced and extensively developed in Tbilisi for the first time, as the Air-Craft-Building Works, the V. I. Lenin Electric- Locomotive Works which produces first-rate powerful engines, and the Kirov Machine-Tool Works. Widely-known are the Soviet Georgia Cloth Mill, the Silk-Weaving Mill, the Spinning-Knit-Goods Factory, the Porcelain-Ceramic Works and many other enterprises of light and heavy industries. It must be mentioned that the growth and development of all branches of industry is greatly facilitated by the techni-

cal and agricultural-research institutions. The purpose of these institutions is to provide a scientific basis for large scale socialist technical and agricultural production.

Tbilisi has always been an active and bustling trade centre. Her markets have always been a unique and colourful spectacle. Here we see in pleasant surprise the abundance of fruits, wine, vegetables and other products that the rich Georgian soil produces. The days have passed when there were but two or three large department stores in Tbilisi. All shopping was done in small, dirty, dark shops, stalls or open market-places. Today there are many large department stores which satisfy the constantly growing demand of the people regularly with fresh stocks of goods. Besides the famous mineral waters and fruit juices of Georgia innumerable shops offer the consumer wine, cognac and champagne that have won recognition throughout the world. The largest closed market places of the town are in the Stalin and Kirov Districts.

The first-rate restaurants and cafe'of the hotels "Intourist," "Tbilisi," "Sakarivel" and in the new parks in Vaké and on Mtatsminda are at the service of visitors. The Georgian kitchen is famous for the

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New Block of Dwelling Houses (Saburtalo)



Rustaveli
Avenue.

great variety of its delicious national dishes. Georgia is famous for its wine from ancient times. It is no wonder that Alexander Dumas, sr. was enthusiastic and delighted with Georgian wines when he was in Tbilisi in 1858. In recent years Georgian wine has won more than twenty gold and silver medals at international exhibitions.



Tbilisi is one of the biggest and most important cultural centres of the Soviet Union. It was in Soviet Tbilisi that the Georgian S. S. R. Academy of Sciences has been founded and its scientific-research institutes many of which have become well-known far beyond the country's borders.

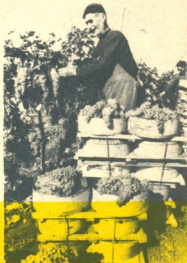
Before the Great October Revolution there was no large higher educational institution or establishment in Tbilisi. The Soviet government has carried out one of its basic tasks, that of making all the achievements of human culture available to the masses. The network of institutions of higher learning in Tbilisi has become very extensive and has greatly increased since the Revolution. Today in Tbilisi there are—Stalin State University of Tbilisi, The Agricultural, Medical, Pedagogical Institutes, the Institutes of Foreign Languages, of Physical Culture and many other higher educational institutions with a total enrollment of more than 30 thousand students.

Tbilisi is proud of her theatres, for many of her producers, actors are well-known not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world. The repertoire of the Tbilisi theatres includes works by Georgian authors and the plays, operas and ballets of Russian and foreign classics. Special mention must be made of the Paliashvili Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Rustaveli and Marjanishvili Drama Theatres, the Russian and Georgian Young Spectators' Theatres, and the Circus, one of the finest in the Soviet Union. "Georgian Films" of Tbilisi is one of the most productive in the country. It produces artistic, educational, technical popular scientific motion pictures and news reels on a large scale. The brilliant performances and concerts given by the Georgian Folk Dance Ensemble must be particularly mentioned.


Outstanding among the cultural institutions is the Sarajshvili Conservatory of Tbilisi where highly qualified musicians in all branches of musical art are trained by teachers and professors of world-wide reputation. In addition, the Conservatory has under its charge a secondary music school which selects highly talented children from the numerous music schools of Tbilisi.



A Fruit Shop



A Vineyard in Dighomi



In the Soviet period Georgian national culture has developed and flourished. The opportunity to express itself in its fullest and most diverse forms is given to amateur art with the aim of paving the way for the further development of the creative art of the people.

There are in Tbilisi different unions, as for example, the Writers' Union of Georgia, the Composers', the Artists' and other Unions.

Many Georgian writers, composers, artists, intellectuals have visited foreign countries; and Tbilisi welcomes with her traditional hospitality guests from all over the world. In 1960 more than a hundred delegations and foreigners from abroad visited Tbilisi.

More than a hundred newspapers and periodicals are published in Tbilisi. Every year books are published in Tbilisi totalling more than a million copies.

Every day the numerous museums, picture galleries of Tbilisi throw their doors open to hundreds of visitors. Mention must be made of the Janashia Museum of Georgia and the Museum of Fine Arts.

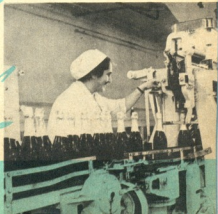
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The Dynamo and Buravestnik Stadiums and the Hippodrome have won a firm place in the life of the people in Tbilisi for they are inseparably connected with the striking history of the development and achievements of Georgian sport. Tbilisi is proud of her well-equipped gyms, arenas for boxing, wrestling and weightlifting, swimming pools, tennis, volley-ball and basketball courts and other sports grounds, the sport centres provided with excellent facilities for training and contest; thus making sports accessible to the whole population. The striking feature of all these activities is the tremendous number of participants and the organizational efficiency of the sports movement which it demonstrates. The splendid



Rustaveli Theatre

At a Champagne Factory



achievements of Georgian sportsmen in contests, competitions, and tournaments have set up world records.

The environs encircling Tbilisi evoke enthusiasm for the visitor who will find places of beauty and historic interest where one can spend one's leisure hours. A 20-30 minute ride by car from the centre of the city takes one to the mountain resorts Izkhneli, Kiketi and Minglissi with its miles and miles of beautiful evergreen forests that rise 1100-1300 metres above sea level.

Tbilisi is lovely all the year round but the best time is autumn when the harvest has been gathered from the vineyards and gives birth to wine.

The visitor in Tbilisi must surely see Mtskheta, the oldest capital of Georgia, situated at the junction of the Aragvi with the Mtkvari. Mtskheta was always a place of such importance in the annals of the kingdom. Associated with many historical monuments, its monuments are of never-fading interest to the student of history. The chief place of interest in Mtskheta is the Cathedral of Svetits-Tskhoveli first built in 328. Mtskheta, the oldest city of Georgia, is but 50 kilometres away from the youngest industrial town of Georgia, Rustavi, where many gigantic new industrial enterprises of a large scale have been already built, more specifically, the Metallurgical Works.

Together with her industries the problem of road and transport had to be solved. The first railway line (Tbilisi-Poti) was laid in 1872, but it was in the Soviet period that Tbilisi has become an important transport centre and the centre of a dense railway network. The Tbilisi junction is also one of the largest in freight turnover in the country. Train-loads of raw material, foodstuffs and industrial commodities ceaselessly arrive at the Tbilisi freight depots and train after train leave for all parts of the Soviet Union.

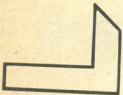
In addition to the railway lines and air-routes radiating from the city in all directions leading to Moscow, Baku, Yerevan, Baku, Sakhumi, Sochi and many other parts of the country, there is the Georgian Military Highway, which connects Georgia with Northern Caucasus.



Georgian Dancers



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