

ALEKSANDRE (ALYOSHA) SVANIDZE (1884-1941)**ალექსანდრე (ალოშა) სვანიძე (1884-1941)****MAIA GAMBASHIDZE,**Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University,
Ass. Prof., Georgia, Tbilisi, Chavchavadze St. #1Tel.: 599960904, maia.ghambashidze@tsu.ge**ORCID 0000-0002-1008-2869****Abstract**

Alexander (Alyosha) Svanidze (1884–1941) - Assyriologist, orientalist, historian, economist, financier, public figure, an extremely educated, aristocratic, intelligent person, whose name has been forgotten for various reasons. Many unknown important deeds are associated with his name: he was Stalin's brother-in-law and an indispensable advisor in making domestic and foreign decisions of the country, and while holding responsible positions, he did a lot for Georgia, to save the Georgian treasury and the Ekvtime Takaishvili library, to support Georgian science and personally, Ivane Javakhishvili, with his zeal the anniversary of Shota Rustaveli was held and Mr. etc.

Aleksandre Svanidze's life is divided into two parts - socio-political and socio-scientific. These two spheres of his life periodically alternated with each other, although if he had concentrated on them, his scientific potential would have brought much more to the country. He wanted to pursue science with all his heart, but unfortunately, as he himself said: "The dream of escaping from the abomination of human society and the extreme personal misery of every person arising from it" and settling in his native village could not be fulfilled for various reasons - he fell victim to repressions.

On November 1 (14), 2024, Aleksandre Svanidze would have turned 140 years old. Hopefully, his biography will raise many new issues in the study of the history of the early 20th century in various directions, and his scientific research will take its rightful place in historiography, which will undoubtedly be a great acquisition for Georgian science.

Keywords: Aleksandre Svanidze; Stali; Ancient Near East; Assyriolog; Hittitology; Hrozny.

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აბსტრაქტი

ალექსანდრე (ალიოშა) სვანიძე (1884–1941) – ასირიოლოგი, აღმოსავლეთმცოდნე, ისტორიკოსი, ეკონომისტი, ფინანსისტი, საზოგადო მოღვაწე, უზომოდ განათლებული, არისტოკრატი, ინტელიგენტი პიროვნება, რომლის სახელი სხვადასხვა მიზეზთა გამო დავიწყებას მიეცა. მის სახელს არაერთი უცნობი მნიშვნელოვანი საქმე უკავშირდება: იგი გახლდათ სტალინის ცოლისძმა და შეუცვლელი მრჩეველი ქვეყნის საშინაო და საგარეო გადაწყვეტილებების მიღებისას, ხოლო საპასუხისმგებლო თანამდებობებზე ყოფნისას, მან უაღრესად ბევრი გააკეთა საქართველოსთვის, ქართული საგანძურისა და ექვთიმე თაყაიშვილის წიგნთსაცავის გადასარჩენად, ქართული მეცნიერებისა და პირადად, ივანე ჯავახიშვილის ხელის შესაწყობად, მისი მონღოლებით ჩატარდა შოთა რუსთაველის იუბილე და მრ. სხვ.

ალექსანდრე სვანიძის ცხოვრება ორ ნაწილად იყოფა – საზოგადოებრივ-პოლიტიკურ და საზოგადოებრივ-სამეცნიეროდ. ეს ორი სფერო მის ცხოვრებაში ერთმანეთს პერიოდულად ენაცვლებოდა, თუმცა, რომ დასცლოდა, მისი სამეცნიერო პოტენციალი მეტად ბევრის მომტანი იქნებოდა ქვეყნისთვის. მას გულით უნდოდა მეცნიერებას გაჰყოლოდა, მაგრამ სამწუხაროდ, მისივე თქმით: „ადამიანთა საზოგადოების სისამაგლისგან და ამისგან წარმომდგარ ყოველი კაცის უკიდურეს პირად სიბეჩავისგან“ თავის დაღწევა და საკუთარ მშობლიურ ბაჯში დასახლების ოცნება, მიზეზთა გამო ვერ აისრულა – იგი რეპრესიებს შეეწირა.

2024 წლის, 1 (14) ნოემბერს, ალექსანდრე სვანიძეს დაბადებიდან 140 წელი შეუსრულდა. იმედია, მისი ბიოგრაფია, ბევრ ახალ საკითხს წამოსწევს მე-20 საუკუნის დასაწყისის ისტორიის კვლევისას სხვადასხვა მიმართულებით, ხოლო მისი სამეცნიერო კვლევები ისტორიოგრაფიაში თავის კუთვნილ ადგილს დაიჭერს, რაც ქართული მეცნიერებისათვის უდაოდ დიდი შენაძენი იქნება.

სამიუბო სიტყვები: ალექსანდრე სვანიძე; სტალინი; ძველი ახლო აღმოსავლეთი; ხეთოლოგია; ასირიოლოგია; ჰროზნი.

Introduction

There are scholars whose existence becomes known to us only belatedly—if at all—despite the significant mark they have left on the public life of the country and the development of particular academic disciplines.

At the origins of Georgian Assyriology—which inherently entails the study of the ancient history of the Caucasus in the context of Near Eastern civilizations—stood several scholars whose names have only recently begun to gain recognition within the Georgian academic sphere¹. Among them were **Mikheil Tsereteli**, **Tite (Titus) Margvelashvili**, and **Aleksandre Tsereteli**.

For some reason, and seemingly not by coincidence, the fate of each of these figures became entangled with the Soviet repressions: Mikheil Tsereteli, for well-known reasons, ended his life in exile, and his name remained banned in Georgia almost until the end of the twentieth century; Tite Margvelashvili likewise fell victim to Soviet repression; and Aleksandre Tsereteli spent many years banished from his homeland.

I believe the list of repressed Georgian scholars of the Ancient Near East under the Soviet regime should rightfully include the name of yet another Georgian public figure, orientalist, assyriologist, and later economist and financier—**Aleksandre (Alyosha) Svanidze**. Mentions of him are scattered and rare, and unfortunately, his biography and both scholarly and civic contributions remain largely unstudied to this day².

Regrettably, almost no modern scholar writing on the subjects that Aleksandre Svanidze once explored has cited or even mentioned his research. I believe that, upon reviewing the present material, readers will be convinced that Aleksandre Svanidze truly deserves at least a modest study dedicated to his scholarly contributions. As a result, we may confidently acknowledge him as one of the pioneers and enablers of Assyriology—the most ancient branch of Georgian oriental studies.

My research on Aleksandre Svanidze's biography lasted ten years, as during this period I kept encountering new information related to his life. From a scholar of the Ancient Near East, the Subject of my interest appeared to me as an exceptional financier and political economist. Later, I also came to understand his family circumstances, which were initially unknown to me — he turned out to be the brother of Stalin's first wife, a fact that inevitably shaped Aleksandre's future in the public sphere.

In this work, I have tried to reconstruct Aleksandre Svanidze's life path, to supplement and clarify his biography with previously unknown materials. Accordingly, while his scholarly works are named, they are not analyzed here, since a complete annotated collection of Aleksandre Svanidze's works will soon be published, which I believe will also be of great interest to the broader public.

It should also be noted that since Aleksandre Svanidze's biography is directly connected to major historical and political events of the 20th century, I have deliberately refrained from analyzing those

¹ For a more detailed discussion of 20th-century Georgian Assyriological research, see: Giorgadze, Gr. (1981), pp. 117–127. This inherently includes the study of the ancient history of the Caucasus in the context of Ancient Near Eastern civilizations.

² More Gambashidze M. (2025) ???

events or expressing my own views on them in this book. In most cases, I have limited myself to publishing sources, which I believe will leave room for historians of early 20th-century Georgia (and beyond) to explore and conduct their own research. I would also like to emphasize that I warmly welcome any comments or new documentation that could enrich Aleksandre Svanidze's biography.

On November 1 (14), 2024, Aleksandre Svanidze would have turned 140 years old.

Results and Discussion

I. Date and Place of Birth, Family — Parents and Sisters

Aleksandre (Alyosha) Svanidze was born on November 1 (14), 1884³, in the village of Baji, Ambrolauri municipality, in the region of Racha, Georgia.

His exact birth date is confirmed by the student enrollment sheet from the University of Halle⁴, Germany, and official documents from the League of Nations⁵, both of which also indicate the year 1884.

His father was Simon Svanidze, a nobleman by origin. It is noteworthy that in the University of Halle's student certificate, Aleksandre refers to himself with the title "Von", highlighting the noble status of his surname. However, in later documents, he no longer used this title when signing. His mother was **Sephora Dvali**, who was the sister of **Spiridon Dvali**, whose son was **Rapiel Dvali** and whose grandson was academician **Rapiel Rapiel's son Dvali**.

Aleksandre had three sisters: **Aleksandra (Sashiko)**, **Ekaterine (Kato)**, and **Mariam (Mariko)**. Sashiko was older than him, while Kato and Mariko were younger.

Aleksandra (Sashiko) Svanidze (1879 – October 8, 1936; buried in Tbilisi at the St. Nino Cemetery of Kukia next to her younger sister Kato Svanidze) lived with her husband and sister at 3 Freilina Street (today's Sulkhan-Saba Street. The **Society for the Dissemination of Literacy** was located at 2 Freilina Street, and the editorial office of **Iveria** was at 5). From 1902, she ran a women's tailoring shop here together with Kato, which became popular throughout the city. According to a letter from her husband **Mikheil Monaselidze** to **Stalin** and entries from Aleksandre's wife **Maria Korona's** diary, Sashiko had cancer and most likely died from it.

Ekaterine Svanidze (Kato, April 2, 1885 – November 22, 1907; buried at St. Nino Cemetery, Kukia) was Stalin's first wife⁶. Stalin met his future wife Kato at 3 Freilina Street in Tbilisi. In 1907, shortly

³ In the 1930s, Aleksandre's birthday was celebrated according to the new style, on November 14: Svanidze M.A. (1993), 24.

⁴ See University of Halle enrollment sheet, Gambashidze M. (2025).

⁵ See League of Nations official documents regarding A. Svanidze, Gambashidze M. (2025),

⁶ Marriage certificate: <https://www.primetime.ge/news/istoriebi/nakhet-vin-iyvnen-stalinis-kavtiskheveli-mejvareebi>

after giving birth, Ekaterine died at the age of 22 from abdominal typhus. She left behind a son, **Yakob**, who after her death was raised in the Svanidze family home in Baji⁷.

Aleksandre's third sister was **Mariam** (Mariko, 1888 – March 3, 1942). She studied in Tbilisi at the St. Nino Girls' Gymnasium (today Public School No. 47, 9 Chitadze Street, formerly 13 Ermolov Street⁸). From 1927 to 1934, she worked as the personal secretary to **Abel Enukidze** (1877–1937), who from 1922 until his execution in 1937 served as secretary of the **Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR**. In letters to **Ambako Chelidze**, Aleksandre refers to Abel as a close friend, suggesting that the Svanidze and Enukidze families had been friends since childhood in Racha. In 1939, Mariam was sentenced by the Supreme Military Collegium of the USSR to 10 years in prison, and on March 3, 1942, she was executed alongside Aleksandre (Alyosha)'s wife, Mariam Korona.

II. 1901–1917: Tbilisi Theological Seminary – Social-Democratic Workers' Party – Tbilisi First Gymnasium – Studies in Germany: Leipzig and Halle Universities – The Book "Empiricriticism" – Letter to the Board of the Historical and Ethnographic Society – Presentations at the Ethnographic Society in Tbilisi – Academic Articles – Dissertation – Imprisonment in Germany – Georgia: Membership in the Ganja Branch of the Society for the Dissemination of Literacy – Academic Activity

Aleksandre studied at the Tbilisi Theological Seminary, from which he was expelled in 1901 along with 40 students (at the time, Aleksandre was living in Tbilisi, on Amagleba Street. Supporters of Stalin, and Stalin himself, frequently visited or lived with him). In the same year, Aleksandre traveled to Germany for study together with **Malakia Toroshelidze**, but returned in 1902.

In his university enrollment form in Halle (1910), Aleksandre himself noted that prior to enrolling at Halle University, he had studied at Tbilisi First Gymnasium, where he completed a seven-year course. After returning from Germany in 1903, Aleksandre worked as a typesetter in Konstantine Tavartkiladze's printing house in Kutaisi. During this period, he formally joined the Social-Democratic Workers' Party⁹, adopting the party pseudonym "**Alyosha**." He was again preparing to go to Germany for further studies.

In 1904, Aleksandre traveled once again to Germany, this time to Leipzig, but had to return in 1905 due to the revolution. That year, he was sent on a party assignment to the Signaghi district. During this time, he contributed to the Bolshevik newspaper "Chveni Tskhovreba" under the pseudonym **A. Bajeli**.

⁷ For more about the life of Yakob Jughashvili see: Sukhothini I. (1991).

⁸ Aleksandra Svanidze-Monaselidze, comrade Koba (Stalin), his wife Kato, and others (memoirs), Tbilisi, April 3, 1934, 9; In Aleksandre's family archive is preserved a document from the school confirming that Mariam Svanidze studied here in 1912-13 and paid a tuition fee of 25 maneti, Gambashidze M. (2025),

⁹ More about this issue Gambashidze M. (2025).

That same year, he was imprisoned for distributing proclamations, along with several comrades, but was released a month later thanks to his family's efforts.

In 1906, Aleksandre Svanidze was likely back in Halle, Germany for study, as indicated by Aleksandra's (Sashiko's) memoir: *"Kato told him: 'I live with my sister and brother-in-law, my brother is in Germany...' "*

According to the memoirs of Aleksandre's sister, Aleksandra, his studies in Leipzig were funded by his family in Tbilisi. As noted earlier, on 22 November 1907, Aleksandre's sister, Ekaterine (Kato) Svanidze, passed away. Aleksandre attended the funeral, which means he had returned from Leipzig to Tbilisi.

In 1908–1909, he worked at the **"Bolshevik Literary Bureau."** In the summer of 1910, Alyosha was again in Georgia, as he was vacationing with his family in Racha. On 19 October 1910, Aleksandre enrolled at Halle University, where he chose courses in philosophy, history, and political economy.

In 1911, Aleksandre published a book in Tbilisi titled *Empiriocriticism*, in which he criticized Lenin's well-known work *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*¹⁰. The failure of the 1905 revolution had caused widespread disillusionment among its supporters, especially within the intelligentsia and nobility, leading some to become opponents of Marxist ideas. Certain educated members of the party attempted to reexamine Marxism. These individuals were called **"revisionists."** They sought to "improve" Marxism using the foundations of empiriocriticism – a reactionary, subjectivist-idealist philosophical doctrine developed in Europe in the first half of the 19th century. In Georgia, notable proponents of revisionism included **K. Tsintsadze, A. Svanidze**, and others¹¹.

In 1912, Aleksandre was presumably still in Germany, studying history, philosophy, and political economy, with philosophy selected as his major discipline.

In January 1913, Aleksandre wrote a letter from Germany to the Board of the Historical and Ethnographic Society. In it, he listed the most recent Assyriological–Ancient Near Eastern–Caucasian scholarly literature, which he believed would be valuable for the Georgian academic community in future research. He considered the translation of these works essential and even offered his own services for this purpose to the Historical and Ethnographic Society—at the time, one of the foremost scholarly institutions in Georgia. The contents and significance of this literature are explained so clearly in the letter that no further interpretation is required¹².

It must be noted that the Assyriological literature selected by Aleksandre Svanidze, which pertains to the ancient history of Georgia, includes such fundamental works that they have not lost their scholarly significance even today. I believe that his proposal to translate these works into Georgian—so that the Georgian scholarly community could become acquainted with them—would have yielded

¹⁰ The complete annotated edition of Aleksandre Svanidze's works will be published in nearest future: Svanidze Aleksandre (2025), Works, Academic Book Publishing (acad.ge), Tbilisi.

¹¹ For more on the revisionists, see: Kacharava, Yu., Kikvidze, A., Ratiani, P., Surguladze, A. (1973), pp. 149-150.

¹² The letter is stored in the Institute of Manuscripts, in the archive of the Georgian Scientific-ethnographic Society, file no. 302: "Recorded in the incoming documents register on January 25th, under no. 25, entered in the journal under no. 73, February 1, 1913 (Outgoing document no. 15)."

immensely fruitful results at the time, both for Georgian Assyriology and for the broader study of Georgia's ancient past. It is true that some of the works he listed were indeed translated into Georgian in later periods; however, regrettably, Aleksandre Svanidze's role in identifying this literature has gone unacknowledged.

Following this letter, he returned from Germany and, in the spring of the same year, presented three reports at the Ethnographic Society—on March 5 and 15, 1913¹³. His first lecture, delivered on March 5, was titled “Ancient Traditions about the Amazons and Argonauts and Their Historical Foundations,” in which he discussed the possible historical reality behind the Amazons and their links with the western Georgian tribes.

The second and third presentations by Aleksandre Svanidze were delivered on May 15 of the same year. These were titled: “Assyrian Cuneiform Inscriptions Concerning Georgian Tribes and Their Interpretation” and “On a Problem in Georgian History,” the latter addressing the terms “Iberia/Iveria”.

In 1913, Aleksandre published a review in the journal *Ganatileba* (Education) of the book: “*An Outline of the History of Armenia in Relation to the General Course of Events in the Near East. Period I: Ancient History*. Lectures by Prof. G.A. Kharatyan (pp. 1–360),” *Ganatileba* (1913), No. 4, pp. 319–320.

The following year, in 1914, Alyosha wrote from Germany to his sister, Aleksandra, stating that he was completing his higher education and needed money for his dissertation, travel, and other minor expenses—funds which Aleksandra promptly sent. At the outbreak of World War I, on August 5th, he was arrested. “*For four years, he was held as a prisoner of war in Germany.*”¹⁴

That same year, while under police surveillance in Magdeburg, he refused Mikheil Tsereteli and the “Georgian Committee” to collaborate with them or travel with other Georgian students to Constantinople. Nevertheless, thanks to assistance from fellow Georgians, he was eventually released and returned to Georgia.

By the summer of 1915¹⁵, despite his friendship with Mikheil Tsereteli, he had to decline an offer to collaborate with the Committee's newspaper, **Kavkasia** (Caucasia)¹⁶. The reasons for this decision are likely multiple and are evident in the letters of Mikheil Tsereteli, which he wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the German Empire. In those letters, he described Aleksandre Svanidze as a trusted acquaintance who could be considered reliable for collaboration with the “Georgian Committee.”

On March 31, 1915, while in Berlin, Mikheil Tsereteli—then a member of the **Committee for the Liberation of Georgia**—wrote to Otto Günther von Wesendonk, Secretary of the Legation and Head of the Near Eastern Affairs Desk at the German Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding Georgian prisoners of war. In this letter, he mentioned Aleksandre¹⁷:

¹³ Gambashidze M. (2025).

¹⁴ Gambashidze M. (2025).

¹⁵ Baqradze L., (2009), p. 38.

¹⁶ Baqradze L., (2009), p. 96.

¹⁷ Mamulia G., Astamadze G. (2019), N 48, 146–147; For detailed information on Georgia-Germany relations, see: Georgian-German Cultural Mosaic (1918–1921), (2021).

The matter concerned propaganda efforts among Georgian prisoners of war and the recruitment of collaborators for the publication of a Georgian newspaper in Berlin—an initiative that Mikheil Tsereteli, a principal member and participant in the **Committee for the Liberation of Georgia**, regularly reported on to the German Foreign Ministry¹⁸.

On May 16, 1916, Mikheil Tsereteli and Giorgi Kereselidze addressed a petition to an unidentified German official regarding the release of Aleksandre Svanidze, who was by then referred to as a civilian prisoner¹⁹.

It is noteworthy that traces of Aleksandre Svanidze can be found in Georgia as early as 1915: in that year, Aleksandre appears as a member of the **Ganja branch of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians**. While the website of the Prosopography of Georgia lists this involvement under the year 1916²⁰, the records of the Society's Ganja branch include a membership list from 1915, in which the surname *Svanidze* appears (entry no. 55). It would be advisable for this discrepancy to be corrected on the website. Additionally, it would be useful to clarify (see person ID: 23171 in the database) that A. S. Svanidze refers to Aleksandre (Alyosha) Simon's son Svanidze. This would allow for the completion of his personal data—his gender, for instance, would no longer be listed as “unknown.” Accordingly, the biographical entry for Svanidze on the website of the **National Parliamentary Library of Georgia** should also be corrected, as it currently lists his birth date as uncertain²¹.

How long Alyosha remained in Ganja is unknown.

As it turns out, in October 1917 Aleksandre intended to travel to Russia but was delayed en route due to a suspension of railway traffic, and only arrived in Tbilisi in 1918.

Between 1912 and 1914, Aleksandre conducted a particularly remarkable series of scholarly studies in the field of the Ancient Near East, which was his primary area of academic interest—and arguably remained so for the rest of his life. The period of study he spent in Germany appears to have been especially productive: he engaged in intensive research into ancient Near Eastern topics, wrote articles, and published them in Georgia, primarily in the scholarly, pedagogical, and literary journal *Ganatileba*

¹⁸ For detailed information on the Committee for the Liberation of Georgia, see: Bakradze L. (2009); Mamulia G., Astamadze G. (2019).

¹⁹ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (PA AA), Akten Betreffend den Krieg 1914, Unternehmungen und Aufwiegungen gegen unsere Feinde. Tätigkeit in den Gefangenenlagern in Deutschland. R - R 21256; Mamulia G., Astamadze G. (2019), N 117, 289-290. 21256.

²⁰ <http://society.iliauni.edu.ge/persons/article/23171>

²¹ <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/ilia/ka/00010805/>; <https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/103090/1/1336.pdf>; <https://prosopography.iliauni.edu.ge/sources/3644-mimotsera-qartvelta-shoris-tsera-kitkhvis-gamavrtselebeli-sazogadoebis-ganjis-ganyofilebastan-da-angarishebi-ganyofilebis-mushaobis-shesakheb-1913-1915>; <https://prosopography.iliauni.edu.ge/factoids/21380-1916-tsels-ilarion-grigolis-dze>.

(*Education*), edited by **Luarsab Botsvadze**. The journal was published from 1908 to 1918 and was supported by prominent public figures, educators, and writers of the time²².

Given this context, it is unsurprising that the young, promising student working in Germany received strong recommendations from **Ekvtime Takaishvili** for the publication of his lectures as articles in print—particularly since the study of the ancient Near East, understood as the cradle of all civilizations and as the prehistory of Georgia itself, was already considered highly significant a century ago.

Between 1912 and 1914, Aleksandre published five Assyriological articles in *Ganatleba*:

1. **“The Georgian Tribes from the Earliest Times to the Age of Xenophon (On Ethnic Terms)”**, *Ganatleba*, Scholarly-Pedagogical and Literary Journal (1912), Vol. VII, pp. 528–535; Vol. VIII, pp. 571–582.
2. **“The Georgian Tribes and Xenophon’s Testimony (On Ethnic Terms)”**, *Ganatleba*, Scholarly-Pedagogical and Literary Journal (1912), Vol. IX, pp. 649–653.
3. **“Remarks on the Prehistory of Georgia”**, *Ganatleba* (1913), No. 2, pp. 99–106.
4. **“Assyrian Inscriptions Regarding Georgian Tribes”**, *Ganatleba*, Scholarly-Pedagogical and Literary Journal (1913), Vol. VII, pp. 529–531; Vol. IX, pp. 664–663; Vol. X, pp. 730–735.
5. **“The Georgian Deities Anina and Nina (Etymology of the Words)”**, *Ganatleba*, Scholarly-Pedagogical and Literary Journal (1914), Vol. III, pp. 205–207.

In these articles, Aleksandre analyzed the most current foreign scholarship of the time, and drawing on the views of renowned European Assyriologists, he offered his own hypotheses regarding the origins of Kartvelian tribes and the close ties between the Georgian world and the ancient Near East.

In my view, the fact that these Assyriological studies by Aleksandre Svanidze (alongside those of Tite Margvelashvili and Mikeil Tsereteli) remained unknown or were completely forgotten for so many years represents a significant loss to Georgian Assyriology and to Georgian Oriental studies more broadly. These scholars were the pioneers of Georgian Assyriology, laying the first stones in the foundation of Georgian Near Eastern scholarship.

III. 1918–1920: Member of the Council of People's Commissars – Editor of the Weekly Journal *Army and Nation* – Application to the University for a Lectureship – Teacher of German at Tbilisi First Gymnasium – Head of the Library of the State Museum – Scholarly Work.

²² Gambashidze M. (2025).

From 1918, Aleksandre is once again seen in Tbilisi: on June 14, he was dispatched to Vladikavkaz by the Russian Federative Soviet Republic's party mission, as a member of the Council of People's Commissars²³.

That same year, Aleksandre published and edited a weekly journal in Tbilisi, *Army and Nation*. The editorial office was located at No. 5 Palace Street, in the building adjacent to the "Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians." Only four issues of the journal were released. The editorial staff collaborated with the following individuals: **Colonel A. Abesadze, General Andronikashvili, General Professor Benashvili, Colonel, Lieutenant General N. Gedevanishvili, Doctor Nik. Eristavi-Shervashidze, Lieutenant Andr. Kekelidze, General G. Kvinitadze, Soldier I. Siradze, General Zak. Kipshidze, Beital Kutateladze, General Chivadze, Colonel L. Chivadze, Aragvispireli, Barnovi, Gomarteli, Grishashvili, Ertatsmindaeli, Kakabadze, T. Margvelashvili, Nikitini, Kipiani, Robakidze, Sulishvili, Uznadze, Kuchishvili, Iv. Javakhishvili, Chichinadze, Sharashidze, Hani, and Kikodze**²⁴.

In July 1918, at the suggestion of **Ekvtime Takaishvili**, A. Svanidze addressed a request to the rector of the newly founded University, **Mr. Ivane Javakhishvili**, regarding his appointment as a lecturer in Eastern history. Due to Mikheil Tsereteli's departure abroad, the newly founded University was left without a lecturer in Ancient Eastern history, which is why E. Takaishvili considered Alexandre a suitable candidate for the position. Evidently, he advised Svanidze to submit a request to Javakhishvili for this appointment. The Council of Professors of the Georgian University reviewed the matter during its July 17, 1918 session (No. 5) under the item²⁵:

What prevented the University from appointing Aleksandre Svanidze as a lecturer? There is speculation that the Georgian Ministry of Education did not permit him to take up a university post due to his Russian citizenship. Whether this is a reliable claim remains unknown, but the fact is that he remained outside the University system, which significantly altered the course of his life. We also do not know what might have unfolded had he indeed been appointed.

Four days after this session, on September 17, 1918, by the order of the Head of Higher and Secondary Education Institutions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed as a teacher of German at **Tbilisi First Boys' Gymnasium**. Interestingly, on the same day, the following individuals were also appointed as teachers at the Gymnasium alongside Svanidze: **Ioseb Giorgi's son Avalishvili** – teacher of Physics and Mathematics; **Grigol (Gigo) Iason's son Natadze** –

²³ <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/personality/cards/8365> This file is housed in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, within Fond 558, Opis 1, Delo 3904.

²⁴

https://ka.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E1%83%AF%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98_%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%94%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98;

<https://iverieli.nplg.gov.ge/handle/1234/294346/simple-search?filterquery=Journal&filtername=type&filtertype>equals>; Silaqadze D. (2018), 543.

²⁵ Gambashidze M. (2025).

teacher of History; **Tamar Giorgi's daughter Zaalishvili** and **B. Kutani** – teachers of French²⁶. Presumably, Aleksandre worked as a teacher until November 1920.

From September 1919, he was appointed **Head of the Library at the Museum**. At the same time, the following individuals were appointed as museum staff: **Professor Aleksandre Tvalchrelidze** – Head of the Department of Mineralogy; Doctor of Zoological Sciences **Ivane Chkhiqvishvili** – Head of the Department of Zoology; **Boris Shishkin** – Head of the Department of Botany²⁷.

On December 19, 1919, upon the recommendation of **L. Melikset-Bek** and **N.D. Romanov**, Aleksandre Svanidze, then serving as the Head of the Museum Library²⁸, was nominated as a member of the **Caucasian Division of the Moscow Archaeological Society**. He likely held this post for one year, meaning that 1920 was also spent in Tbilisi²⁹.

In 1919–1920, Aleksandre published several highly interesting and important articles in various journals printed in Tbilisi – *Army of the Republic*, *Seven Stars*, *The Georgian Economist*, and *Eroba* – on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and topics in Georgian economic development:

1. *The Strategic Importance of Georgia*, *Army of the Republic* (1919), No. 10, pp. 9–11.
2. *The Historical Dimension of The Knight in the Panther's Skin (A Few Remarks)*, *Seven Stars* (1919), No. 2, pp. 196–214.
3. *The Issue of Maritime Trade in Georgia*, *The Georgian Economist* (biweekly journal), (1919), Nos. 7–8, March 1, pp. 16–19; No. 9, pp. 10–16.
4. *Guilds in Ancient Georgia*, *Eroba* (1920), No. 10, pp. 19–26.
5. *On the Issue of Currency*, *Eroba* (1920), Nos. 13–14, pp. 42–52.

In my view, these articles by Svanidze—especially his thoughts on Georgia's strategic development, the use of the Black Sea for bringing Georgia closer to Europe economically, and the issue of monetary circulation—were, for that time, bold statements that were far ahead of their era. Aleksandre wrote them in the context of an independent Georgia, and their content remains highly relevant even today, a century later, as our small independent country—caught between great empires—continues to face many of the same challenges.

²⁶ <https://prosopography.iliauni.edu.ge/persons/15199-aleqsandre-simonis-dze-svanadze>. "The surname of Svanidze is also incorrectly listed on the website as **Alexandr Simoni's son Svanadze**, which should be clarified, and accordingly, the data will be corrected in the prosopography database. See: *Alexandra Svanidze-Monasedze, the late Koba (Stalin), his wife Kato, and others (Memoirs)*, Tbilisi, 03.04.1934, 10."

²⁷ SSM Archive, 1920, 149/137, f. 206, Tchkhaidze G. (2003), 227–228; where Aleksandre Svanidze is mentioned as a museum employee. Presumably, he worked there while simultaneously teaching at the gymnasium.

²⁸ Protocol No. 103. December 19, 1919. Proceedings of the Caucasian Section of the Moscow Archaeological Society, Vol. VI, Tiflis, 1921, p. 48.

²⁹ It has been suggested that Aleksandre was part of the delegation for the peace treaty signed between the RSFSR and Latvia on August 11, 1920: *Revolutionary Movement Figures in Georgia (Collection of Biographies)*, (1961), 496. However, this fact is not confirmed: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/138404-mirnyy-dogovor-mezhdu-rsfsr-i-latviey-zaklyuchenny-v-rige-11-avgusta-1920-goda>

IV. 1921: Yakob's Transfer to Moscow to Join Stalin – Marriage – People's Commissar for Education of Georgia – Negotiations in Kutaisi: Meeting with Grigol Lordkipanidze – Ekvtime Takaishvili and the Rescue of the National Library – Decree on the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Army – People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Georgian SSR – People's Commissar for Finance – The Question of Transferring Lore to the Armenians – Organization of the Treaty of Kars – The Kars Conference – Decree on Bank Deposits

The year 1921 proved to be an eventful one in Aleksandre Svanidze's public life—this marked the beginning of his political activity in the service of the Soviet Union.

Presumably, it all began with the Sovietization of Georgia. As it turns out, at the request of his brother-in-law, Aleksandre escorted Kato's and Stalin's son, Yakob, from Racha—where he had been raised by the Svanidze family following his mother's death—to Moscow³⁰.

It is likely that during this journey to bring Yakob to his father, a conversation took place between Aleksandre and Stalin concerning Alyosha's (Aleksandre's) entry into political life and his appointment to a state position. Stalin needed an educated, intelligent, and—above all—trustworthy person, and it is hard to imagine anyone more suitable than Aleksandre. It is not out of the question that Aleksandre had been summoned to Moscow precisely in order to be offered a party position, for it seems unlikely that he was needed solely to bring Yakob to his father. We do not know what Aleksandre himself thought at the time—how much a non-party individual like him supported Stalin's worldview—but the fact remains that, as we shall see below, Aleksandre agreed to his brother-in-law's proposal.

It is also possible that this agreement was not motivated solely by ideological considerations; quite likely, it was also driven by financial necessity. In 1921, Aleksandre married **Maria Anisimovna Korona** (1889–3 March 1942), a resident of Tbilisi. Maria came from a wealthy Jewish family originally from Spain and was born in Tbilisi³¹. She had completed the Bestuzhev Higher Women's Courses in Saint Petersburg and later studied at the Tbilisi Conservatory³². Her first husband had died in 1918, leaving her with a son, Anatoli (19??–1941). In the 1920s, she performed as a singer at the Tbilisi Opera, but after marrying Aleksandre, she no longer appeared on stage³³. In the 1930s, while living in Moscow, she pursued further studies in economics at a women's higher education institution³⁴.

Following the Sovietization of Georgia on 25 February 1921, it became necessary to establish a provisional Council of People's Commissars for the Republic of Georgia. This task appears to have fallen to **Sergo Ordzhonikidze**, who was in Baku at the time and maintained correspondence with Lenin and Stalin, receiving directives from them. The composition of this council, naturally, required Stalin's approval. On 2 March 1921, Stalin sent a telegram to Ordzhonikidze in Baku, strongly recommending

³⁰ Gambashidze M. (2025).

³¹ Alliluyeva S. (1990), 61.

³² Unfortunately, we could not find any information about him in the Conservatory's archive

³³ http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_s/svanidze_ma.html; Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 193.

³⁴ Alliluyeva S. I.: 20 Letters to a Friend, 49.

Aleksandre Svanidze for the council due to his exceptionally positive qualities. Stalin described Alyosha as “non-party, intelligent, and well-connected, capable of freely assuming the position of Commissar for Education or Foreign Affairs.”³⁵

As we learn from the "Chronicle" section of the newspaper *Komunisti*, issue no. 2, dated March 3, 1921, *"In the Commissariat of Education. The temporary board of the Commissariat of Education has been appointed as follows: Mikha Okujava, Aleksandre Tsereteli, and Niko Mgeladze."*³⁶

Accordingly, this was the composition of the temporary board of the Commissariat of Education, with the position of head apparently vacant. Naturally, Sergo Ordzhonikidze could not have opposed Stalin's suggestion: it appears that *"on that very day"*, after *"consulting with comrades"*, he agreed to appoint Stalin's *"non-party and intellectual protégé"* as the People's Commissar for Education of Georgia and a member of the Revolutionary Committee.

Thus, on March 6, 1921, the Revolutionary Committee of the Georgian SSR approved (the order was issued on March 8) the temporary composition of the Council of People's Commissars of the Georgian SSR. According to this resolution, A. Svanidze was appointed *People's Commissar for Education of the Georgian SSR*. During his absence, Comrade Orakhelashvili was temporarily assigned to carry out the duties of this post. It is assumed that, due to his broad erudition and education, Orakhelashvili was also simultaneously tasked with fulfilling other party duties (as will be discussed below).

In issue no. 14 of *Socialist-Federalist*, dated March 16, 1921, the list of the temporary composition of the Council of People's Commissars was published, in which Aleksandre Svanidze is named as the People's Commissar for Education:

Composition of the Council of People's Commissars of the Republic of Georgia
On the temporary composition of the Council of People's Commissars of the Georgian Socialist Soviet Republic, as approved by the decision of the Revolutionary Committee of the Georgian Socialist Soviet Republic on March 6, 1921.

However, Aleksandre Svanidze only assumed this post two weeks later. The reason was that March 1921 was a particularly difficult time for the country. As previously mentioned, although the order appointing Aleksandre as People's Commissar for Education had already been issued on March 8, 1921, the situation in the country was extremely tense:

From February 16 to 23, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia had to fight against the armed forces of Soviet Russia, a conflict that ultimately resulted in the Sovietization of the country. On February 24, 1921, **General Giorgi Kvinitadze** issued Order No. 131, under which Georgian military units withdrew from Tbilisi.

To this dire situation was added the aggressive advance of the Ottoman Empire from the south and west: on February 22, the Ottomans issued an ultimatum to the Georgian government demanding the evacuation of the Artvin and Ardahan districts. The Menshevik government fled abroad. Notably, the

³⁵ RGASPI. F. 558. Op. 1. D. 2198, <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/personality/cards/6659>.

³⁶ Gambashidze M. (2025).

Deputy Chairman of the Georgian government, **Grigol Lordkipanidze**, did not follow them into exile—he remained in Adjara and continued to resist alongside **General Giorgi Mazniashvili**.

The Ottoman Empire was not content with the capture of Artvin and Ardahan; it now sought to annex Batumi as well. Exploiting the incursion of Russian forces into Georgia, it created additional pressure on the Georgian government from the southwest, enabling the Russian 11th Army to regroup and resume military operations. The Georgian government was forced to withdraw troops from Artvin and Ardahan.

Subsequently, the Ottomans attempted to seize Akhaltsikhe and Batumi.

The core of the matter was this: the Ottoman authorities had decided that, following the fall of the First Republic of Georgia, the country would cease to exist legally and would be annexed by Russia. They sought to take advantage of the chaos to rapidly occupy the territories bordering Turkey. The country was in a state of confusion, lacking confidence in the newly formed Revolutionary Committee. The Ottomans likewise dismissed the Revkom as insignificant—in their view, the country was essentially ungoverned, and they intended to capitalize on that vacuum³⁷.

On March 16, 1921, the Russo-Turkish Treaty was signed in Moscow. According to its first article, the Artvin and Ardahan districts were transferred by Russia to the Ottoman Empire, while the second article stipulated that the Batumi district would be handed over to Soviet Georgia under conditions of suzerainty³⁸.

On March 12, 1921, Grigol Lordkipanidze called the **Revkom** (Revolutionary Committee) in Tbilisi from Batumi and, in response to its demands, offered the following conditions:

1. All military operations on all fronts were to cease by 2:00 p.m. on March 14;
2. Troops were to remain in their current positions;
3. Negotiations were to begin between the government of Georgia and the Revkom, with the city of Kutaisi proposed as the location for talks.

In response, the chairman of the Revkom, **Philippe Makharadze**, expressed readiness to halt hostilities for 24 hours and begin negotiations. However, he placed a condition on the talks: *Grigol Lordkipanidze must formally recognize the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and its authority over Adjara*.

That same night, on March 16, 1921, an eight-hour telephone conversation took place between **Grigol Lordkipanidze** and **Mamia Orakhelashvili**. Meanwhile, Turkey was rapidly taking advantage of the unclear situation. On March 17, 1921, Kiazim Bey, the General-Governor of Batumi on behalf of the **Grand National Assembly of Turkey**, issued an order bringing Batumi under Turkish jurisdiction.

On the day following the conversation between Grigol Lordkipanidze and Mamia Orakhelashvili, on March 17, 1921, both parties arrived in Kutaisi, and negotiations began in the evening, in which A.

³⁷ See Gambashidze M. (2025).

³⁸ Vardosanidze S., Gurskaya V., Kharadze K., Jikia L., Kvaratskhelia M. (2015), 27-31.

Svanidze also participated. Although there were three parties involved in the negotiations, only two were actual participants, while the third served as the chair and conducted the proceedings:

1. The delegation of Democratic Georgia (Gr. Lordkipanidze, Al. Dgebuadze, I. Gedevanishvili, D. Sharashidze);
2. The representatives of Soviet Russia (Abel Enukidze, Al. Svanidze) and of Sovietized Georgia (M. Orakhelashvili, Sh. Eliava, Gambarov).

It is noteworthy that Aleksandre, who attended and participated in these negotiations, served as assistant to the representative of the Russian government, Abel Enukidze. Consequently, the treaty was signed by Mamia Orakhelashvili, Grigol Lordkipanidze, and Abel Enukidze. Aleksandre Svanidze's signature does not appear on the treaty.

There is extensive literature in Georgian academic sources concerning these negotiations, and therefore we will not dwell on them here. What is important for our purposes is that this transcript provides a clear example of how two opposing political parties demonstrated considerable diplomatic tact and aristocratic culture in the process of debate and mutual agreement. From the transcript, we will highlight only Aleksandre's participation in the discussion, where he intervened several times³⁹:

As a result of the negotiations, a 17-point agreement was drawn up. Following the agreement, the Sovietized Georgian government, with the help of Russian troops, entered Adjara and secured the country's border. In the March 22 edition of the newspaper *Komunisti*, a telegram from Philippe Makharadze addressed to the people of Adjara appears on the front page under the headline "*Liberation of Adjara*," in which he congratulates them on their liberation and the granting of autonomous self-governance.

Let us now return to Alesha's official duties: Aleksandre Svanidze began serving as **People's Commissar of Education of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic** on March 21, 1921, which he announced to the subordinate institutions of the Commissariat via *Komunisti*.

Thus began Aleksandre Svanidze's career in official service. What resulted from his brother-in-law's proposal and his agreement to accept this position, we shall gradually observe below.

Presumably, Aleksandre, who had received his education in Europe and clearly understood what and how things needed to be organized in the country in this regard, was acutely aware of the problems facing Georgia in the fields of education and culture. He also recognized the dangers that the post-Sovietization chaos posed to the country's cultural treasures—dangers that could lead to their destruction or dispersal (with some instances likely already confirmed). He might have thought that, should Stalin entrust him with the sphere of education and culture, he would be in a position to help save the Georgian national heritage. Given his close ties with **Mr. Ekvtime Takaishvili** and his insider understanding of the issues at stake, he would have known the situation in detail.

Following the proclamation of Sovietization, the country was plunged into total chaos. Widespread looting and the illegal appropriation of state property were rampant. The Housing Commission had begun requisitioning homes in the city, registering properties abandoned by those

³⁹ See Gambashidze M. (2025).

fleeing Soviet rule and relocating others into them. Many took advantage of this situation. Cultural and educational items also appeared to be targeted for theft. To combat this, while serving as People's Commissar of Public Education, Aleksandre issued an order on March 22, 1921, stipulating that all cultural and educational affairs were to fall under the authority of the Commissariat of Public Education. The decree stated:

Aleksandre Svanidze's order of March 22, 1921, was promptly disseminated and accepted by all cultural and educational institutions. Evidence of this can be found in the minutes of the March 26, 1921 meeting of the Board of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy, which include the following:

One month earlier, according to minutes of the Board of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy dated February 22, 1921, the chairman of the main board and director of the Library-Museum, Davit Karichashvili, received a proposal—delivered through Constituent Assembly Chairman Ekvtime Takaishvili—that if the Georgian army were forced to evacuate Tbilisi, the valuable items of the Society's museum should be packed, documented, and sent to western Georgia. Faced with this danger, the Society dutifully carried out the government's request, inventorying the valuable treasures stored in its museum, packing them into crates, and shipping them to western Georgia.

Ekvtime Takaishvili's prudent action was followed by the urgent departure of the Democratic Government of Georgia, along with Takaishvili and the Georgian treasures, into emigration. It is likely that Mr. Ekvtime did not have time to take his valuable personal book archive from his home, leaving everything to chance. No one knew who might be moved into his apartment. For this reason, I believe that Svanidze's March 22 order was likely issued with one crucial goal in mind—to rescue Ekvtime Takaishvili's apartment and its priceless archive from looting and destruction.

This hypothesis is supported by three highly important documents found in the archives of the Georgian Historical-Ethnographic Society at the Institute of Manuscripts:

The directive issued by Aleksandre Svanidze on 22 March empowered the Commissariat of Education to take action against the looting of items of national importance and value. It is likely that during his brief tenure as the People's Commissar of Education of the Georgian SSR, Aleksandre Svanidze played a key role in securing the preservation of Ekvtime Takaishvili's library and private archive—an act of profound service to the country.

During his time as Commissar, the Revolutionary Committee of the Georgian Soviet Republic, with his participation, issued a decree on 31 March 1921 for the eradication of illiteracy within army units. Evidently, the army suffered from acute illiteracy, likely linked to the insufficient instruction in the Georgian language—a concern repeatedly raised in newspapers of that period.

On **3 May 1921**, A. Svanidze sent a telegram to Stalin, expressing deep concern about the conduct of Georgian (Party) comrades. He warned that they were making a serious political mistake by failing to respond adequately to the mistreatment and harassment of foreign nationals. As it emerged, the German-Caucasian Bank in Tiflis had been looted, and the Italian-Caucasian Bank had also suffered losses. Similar robberies occurred in Kutaisi. On **10 May 1921**, Svanidze's telegram was reviewed at a session of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, attended by Lenin, Stalin, Molotov,

Kalinin, and others. Based on the contents of the telegram, the following directives were issued to the “Georgian comrades”:

The Central Committee also instructed their Georgian colleagues to **pay special attention to trade relations between Georgia and Italy and Germany**, as these were of critical importance to the entire Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. The reason was that the United States and France were actively attempting to sabotage Soviet international trade relations.⁴⁰

It is notable that during Aleksandre Svanidze’s tenure as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia, he established good relations with Germany’s then-representative in Georgia, **Ernst von Drufel**, who had been active in the country during the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Svanidze had longstanding ties with Germany and the Germans, further bolstered by his profound education and exceptional diplomatic skill, which made him a capable figure in managing international relations.

In my view, within the context of the entire Soviet administration of the time, **Aleksandre clearly stood out in every respect**. His influence was not sustained solely by his familial connection to Stalin or the latter’s recommendations, but also by his **natural aristocratic bearing, intellectual sophistication, analytical thinking, and ability to act with long-term foresight in addressing complex issues**. For these reasons, he was ideally suited for any position of leadership. This was likely also Stalin’s view, as he repeatedly reassigned Svanidze to governmental roles in areas where difficulties were particularly acute.

On **11 June 1921**, Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed People’s Commissar for Finance of the Georgian SSR. From **1918**, the newly established *Democratic Republic of Armenia* began promoting the idea of creating a “*Greater Armenia*”—a project that implied claiming all territories to which Armenians had ever had any historical or cultural connection. In **December 1918**, Armenian forces invaded *Lower Kartli* and *southern Georgia*, but were repelled by the Georgians. Following this conflict, a special agreement was signed between Armenia and Georgia, according to which *Borçalo Uyezd* and the *Lori region* were declared a *neutral zone*. However, the Georgian population of the area regarded the agreement as illegitimate and sought to unite the region with Georgia.

In **November 1920**, the *Democratic Republic of Georgia* occupied the disputed territory. On **4 March 1921**, Armenian Bolsheviks took advantage of the Sovietization process and covertly occupied the district under the pretext of establishing “revolutionary order,” appointing their own representative. Due to the complexity of the territorial disputes between the republics, on **2 May 1921**, the *Caucasian Bureau* (Kavbiuro) of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) created a special commission to oversee the regulation and delimitation of borders between the South Caucasus republics.

Several sessions of the commission followed. The first session was held on **25–27 June**, during which the Armenian side not only demanded the *Lori district*, but also parts of *Akhalkalaki* and *Borçalo uyezds*. The commission failed to reach an agreement, and the matter was handed over to the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b).

On **5 July 1921**, the Caucasian Bureau held a session during which the *Nagorno-Karabakh* question was discussed and resolved in favor of *Azerbaijan*. As a result, Armenia’s territorial expansion was

⁴⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 161, fols. 1–2.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/58501>; <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/134491>

thwarted, and it became critically important for the Armenian side to attempt to gain control of the *neutral zone of Lori*.

Indeed, on **7 July 1921**, the Caucasian Bureau convened a second session, attended by *Stalin*, *Ordzhonikidze*, *Makharadze*, *Kirov*, *Narimanov*, *Myasnikov*, *Nazaretian*, *Orakhelashvili*, *Figatner*, as well as *Aleksandre Svanidze*, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Georgian SSR, and *Mravyan*, Foreign Commissar of the Armenian SSR. The session focused specifically on the status of the Lori neutral zone and decided that it should be annexed to the *Armenian SSR*. As for the *Khrami* and *Akhalkalaki* districts, their status was referred to the *Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia* for deliberation, pending final approval by the Caucasian Bureau⁴¹.

On the same day (**7 July 1921**), an agreement was signed in *Tiflis* between the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijani SSR on the regulation of their mutual borders.

On **16 July 1921**, the *Political Bureau* of the *Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia* held a session to review the Caucasian Bureau's decision of 7 July. The Georgian Politburo confirmed the decision to transfer *Lori* to Armenia; however, it added a clause noting that since the Georgian Central Committee had not been consulted during the discussion in Moscow, the Caucasian Bureau should be asked to reconsider the matter. Furthermore, it was deemed appropriate to conduct a *referendum* in the neutral zone.

As for the *Khrami* and *Akhalkalaki* districts, it was resolved that these territories should remain within the borders of *Georgia*.

Naturally, the Caucasian Bureau did not take into account the proposal to hold a referendum in the *Lori* region, and the territory was handed over to *Armenia*, while the *Khrami* and *Akhalkalaki* districts remained part of *Georgia*.

Thus, as the documents show, *Alyosha (Alexander) Svanidze* was present at the aforementioned session of the *Caucasian Bureau* on **7 July 1921**, despite having officially held the post of *People's Commissar for Finance of the Georgian SSR* since **11 June**. Nevertheless, in the session minutes reproduced below, he is referred to as the *People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs* of the Georgian SSR and was summoned to *Moscow* alongside his Armenian counterpart, *Mravyan*. Of particular interest is Svanidze's personal opinion on the transfer of *Lori* to Armenia. It appears that by this time, he was already occupying both positions—a fact later confirmed by the text of the *Treaty of Kars*⁴².

Unfortunately, the document presented below, in which he is mentioned, lacks signatures, so we cannot say with certainty whether Alexander Svanidze signed it or expressed a specific opinion regarding the matter.

At this point, it is worth citing an interesting decree dated **16 July 1921**, signed by the *Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Georgian SSR* and *People's Commissar for Finance, A. Svanidze*. This decree introduced a one-time *extraordinary sanitary tax*. Evidently, the country was facing outbreaks of *cholera* and other *epidemic diseases*, prompting the Revolutionary Committee to create a special fund financed through a one-time levy imposed on the population⁴³:

On **13 October 1921**, *Alexander Svanidze*, who—according to the *Treaty of Kars*—was simultaneously serving as both *People's Commissar for Finance* and *Foreign Affairs* of the Georgian SSR, took part in the signing of the *Treaty of Kars* and was one of its signatories.

⁴¹ Gambashidze M. (2025).

⁴² <https://iberiana.wordpress.com/iberiana/kars/#5>

⁴³ Central State Archive of the Georgian SSR (TsGAOR), Fond 281, Opis 1, Delo 201, fol. 112. Printed copy. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/134621>

Since the *Treaty of Kars* has been thoroughly analyzed in Georgian historiography, we will not focus on it in detail here. However, it is worth mentioning a little-known letter written by *Alexander Svanidze* in his capacity as *People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs* of the Georgian SSR, addressed to the *Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. In this letter, Svanidze appears as an *organizer of the meeting location* for the negotiations. The letter indicates that the initial venue for the conference was to be the city of *Kars*, but later it was suggested that the meeting be relocated to *Ankara/Angora*. This change prompted Svanidze to write the letter: the Georgian side requested that the venue remain in Kars or be changed to Batumi, citing the need for reliable telegraph communication with Tbilisi, which would not have been possible from Ankara.

We do not have *Yusuf Kemal's* response to this letter, but the fact remains that *Alexander Svanidze's* request was honored by the Turkish side, and the conference—as is well known—was held in *Kars* (it appears *Turkey* declined *Batumi* as the location⁴⁴).

At the end of 1921, specifically on 13 December, we find another mention of *A. Svanidze*: he addressed a letter to *Stalin* in which he referenced *Ordzhonikidze*, stating that he "*is bringing down the heavy hand of central authority upon us.*" Unfortunately, the document itself has not been located, leaving unclear the precise actions of *Ordzhonikidze* that Svanidze was referring to.

From the *Russian Historical Archive*, another record dating to the end of 1921 has been found: a decree issued by the *Revolutionary Committee of the Georgian SSR* concerning *deposits*, signed by *S. Kavtaradze* (Deputy Chairman of the Revkom) and *A. Svanidze* (People's Commissar for Finance):

V. The Year 1922: Alexander Svanidze's Role in the Repatriation of Georgian Antiquities from Russian Museums – Regulation of Foreign Exchange Operations – Affairs of the Abkhazian SSR – Committee for the Aid of Starving Populations – Protection of Georgian Currency – Dismissal from the Finance Commissariat – Publications

At the beginning of 1922, the *Georgian government*—likely at *Alexander Svanidze's* initiative, considering his personal interest in Georgian antiquities—raised the issue of returning *Georgian cultural artifacts* held in *Russian museums and repositories* to their homeland. On 20 June 1922, a special commission was established comprising representatives from the *Russian Academy of Sciences*, the *People's Commissariat for Education*, subject matter experts, and Georgian scholars.

The matter was debated for several months, as many in Russia's academic circles were not supportive of returning the artifacts. Fortunately, *Alyosha Svanidze*, who happened to be in *Kremlin* at the time, actively supported the cause. Alongside *Enukidze* and *Stalin*, he succeeded in raising the matter at a session of the *Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Russia* on 9 October 1922, leading to a resolution that was—according to commission member *K. Kekelidze*—"beneficial and desirable" for Georgia.

At this session, a list of objects and documents to be transferred to the Georgian side was determined, and the process of returning these items to Georgia began in *January 1923*⁴⁵. As such, this

⁴⁴ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/284636>

⁴⁵ For more details on the decision to return the cultural antiquities to the Georgian side, see: Chkhaidze, G. (2003), pp. 248–250.

previously unknown contribution by *Alexander Svanidze* to a profoundly national endeavor must be recognized and appreciated.

On **9 February 1922**, *Alexander Svanidze* signed a decree on the **regulation of foreign exchange operations** within the Georgian SSR.

The following day, February 10, a meeting of the **Abkhaz Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia** took place, during which Alexander delivered a report on the domestic and foreign situation in the Abkhaz Soviet Socialist Republic.

That same day, *Sergo Ordzhonikidze* sent a telegram to Moscow.

An interesting decree dated February 15, 1922, again features Alexander, who was appointed a member of the Committee for Aid to the Starving Population of Soviet Georgia.

On March 3, 1922, the First Congress of Soviets of Georgia elected the Central Executive Committee of Georgia, comprising 95 members, including Alexander.

Until September 1922, Alexander remained in Georgia, still serving as People's Commissar of Finance. According to a record found in the Central Archive of Kutaisi (Fund 296, Inventory 1, File 1(12)), on June 14, 1922, during a plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Councils of Workers', Peasants', and Red Army Deputies of the Kutaisi District (No. 18, 14.06.1922, Kutaisi), *Alexi Svanidze* was appointed, along with comrades *Mikheil Okujava* and *Besarion Kvirkvelia*, as the implementer of the railway project from Darg-Kokhi-Kutaisi-Kopitnari. One issue requires clarification here: whether this indeed refers to Alexander (*Alyosha*) *Svanidze*, since he is never referred to as "Alexi" in any other documents. However, a definitive conclusion cannot be made, as *Okujava* and *Kvirkvelia* were indeed also active officials at the time.

Important insights are provided by contemporary witness **Nikita Talakvadze** in his "*Diary*": On September 14, 1922, he describes the reason and date of Alexander's dismissal from the position of People's Commissar of Finance. According to Talakvadze, *Alyosha*—whom he refers to as a "national-Georgian communist"—tried to preserve the Georgian currency. As a result, he clashed with the "internationalist, i.e., Russian centralist communists" and was removed from office.

"In recent days, Commissar of Finance Svanidze, who had steadfastly defended the Georgian bon (note), was removed from office: Svanidze did not allow the issuance of denominations higher than 500 tumans. Our currency currently circulates in 100- and 500-tuman notes. Georgian money is worth twenty to thirty times more than the money of Russia, Azerbaijan, or Armenia. In Russia, banknotes in the millions and tens of millions are printed and circulate. Naturally, the same is desired for Georgia—to be 'unified' with Russia and to drown our country in the same misery and poverty. This is what our 'communists' are reaping! If any Georgian communist dares to demand a Georgian border, language, or nationalization of institutions, they are removed from office and either sent to Russia or Siberia... Now Svanidze has been toppled from his financial chair and replaced by some Jew..."

On October 27 of the same year, Talakvadze again notes: "*Svanidze, the Minister of Finance, has been expelled and sent off toward Russia...*"

Another entry, dated November 5, 1922, reads: "...Our communists are not of one mind—a major split has occurred, dividing them into two camps: national-Georgian communists and 'internationalist,' i.e., Russian centralist communists." The latter include **Sergo Ordzhonikidze**, **Shalva Eliava**, and **M. Orakhelashvili**; the former include **P. Makharadze**, **Sergo Kavtaradze**, **A. Svanidze**, and probably **Budu Mdivani** (*Svanidze* has already been sent to Russia, *Budu* to Angora, while Philip is still here, but he too will soon be dispatched to some 'congress'...)"

A similar note appears in Talakvadze's entry of November 7: "...*Svanidze, Commissar of Finance, has already been sent to Russia...*"

Talakvadze's testimony regarding Alexander's dismissal aligns with a record from the Russian Historical Archive concerning the implementation of a monetary reform in Transcaucasia. A protocol reveals that Alexander was present at this meeting and apparently expressed his discontent about the abolition of the Georgian currency. This dissent is likely what led to his removal, although the protocol itself makes no reference to opposition.

According to Talakvadze's recollections, it is clear that Alexander was removed from office in early September 1922 (approximately September 5–11), based on the convergence of protocol dates and diary entries. By November 5, he was already in Russia, presumably with his brother-in-law, who was likely following events from Moscow.

Additional confirmation of Alexander's relocation to Russia is found in a document listing individuals relocated from Georgia, including: 1) Misha Okujava, 2) Beso Kvirkvelia, 3) Gambarov, 4) Tsivtsivadze, 5) Odevilidze, 6) Kurulov, 7) Kakabadze, and 8) Svanidze.

On December 27, 1922, Svanidze was elected as a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Finance of Transcaucasia.

A document dated December 29, 1922, reveals that Enukidze, who managed the state printing facilities for currency, secretly sent a letter to Finance Commissar Sokolnikov regarding the minting of additional currency. Comrades Tugarinov and Svanidze had requested a 3-billion-ruble loan for the State Bank, which had apparently already exhausted its funds for 1922. Approval was granted on January 1, 1923, on the condition that the loan be repaid by February of the following year.

During 1922, Alexander also managed to publish several notable articles on finance and economics while still in Tbilisi:

1. *Golos Trudovoy Abkhazii*, February 16–17, 1922
2. "Financial Policy in Georgia," *Komunisti Droshta* (1922), No. 1, pp. 25–33
3. "On Monetary Circulation," *Komunisti* (1922), May 18, No. 111
4. "In Memory of Comrade Kamo," *Komunisti* (1922), July 18, No. 162
5. "Economic Situation in Europe," *Komunisti* (1922), September 12, pp. 2–3; continued September 13, pp. 2–3

VI. Year 1923: Membership in the People's Commissariat of Finance of the USSR — Issues Regarding the Establishment of the State Gold Reserve Fund — Allocation of Funds for the Construction of the Upper Avchala Hydroelectric Power Station — Regulation of Soviet Union Finances — Restriction on Currency Printing — Issuance of Small Amounts from Cash Reserves — Opening of the Soviet Bank in Iran: Chairmanship of the Management of "Rusperbank" (Tehran) — Ambako Chelidze

From 1923 onwards, Alexander's life in Moscow began⁴⁶. He was a member of the People's Commissariat of Finance of the USSR. On January 5, the People's Commissariat of Finance held a meeting attended by Alexander, where issues concerning the State Bank and currency notes were discussed:

⁴⁶ Gambashidze M. (2025).

Ten days later, the Commission convened again on January 15, 1923, to discuss the establishment of the State Gold Reserve Fund. Alexander also attended this meeting:

On January 16, 1923, in Moscow, the Council of Labor and Defense granted the status of a “matter of state importance” to the construction of the hydroelectric power station in Upper Avchala on the Mtkvari River near Tiflis, and allocated 200,000 gold rubles for this project to the People’s Commissariat of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republics. However, this issue was temporarily suspended due to a protest from A. Svanidze, who opposed allocating 1 million gold rubles from the Transcaucasian Republics for the hydroelectric station. It appears the matter was on hold until Ordzhonikidze’s arrival.

What Was the Nature of Alexander’s Protest? Unfortunately, no additional information on this matter is available. We can only hypothesize that since the Transcaucasian Republic governments requested additional funds beyond the sum allocated by the Kremlin’s decree — and moreover, requested an excessive amount — Alexander considered this financially improper and unacceptable.

Soon after, on February 19, Svanidze was appointed to a commission tasked with reforming the state accounting system across all government structures, primarily focusing on industry and transportation. This task was evidently of vital importance for the newly established Soviet Union. It was precisely for this reason that the responsibility was entrusted to Alexander, who, in my opinion, represented the core of the Soviet administration’s most advanced and educated segment.

On February 26, 1923, another meeting of the People’s Commissariat of Finance was held, attended by Svanidze, during which the issue of restricting currency issuance was discussed:

On March 13, 1923, Sokolnikov wrote “completely confidentially” to Svanidze regarding the issue of small deposit payments from savings cashiers:

Thus, it is evident that Alexander played a significant role in regulating the Soviet Union’s financial matters, especially those related to banking and currency. By early July 1923, Svanidze is documented as the organizer of the opening of the Soviet Bank in Iran and as the chairman of the management of “Rusperbank” (Tehran)⁴⁷.

Since Alexander was assigned by the Soviet government to open the bank in Iran to establish economic relations between Iran and the newly created Soviet Union, it is natural that he sought the closest and most trusted associates for his “team.” For this purpose, he chose his childhood friend Ambako Chelidze (1878–25.12.1940), later known as an Iranologist and a scholar of the Fereydani Georgians⁴⁸. At that time, Ambako was working in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (most likely still on Alyosha’s recommendation), was regarded as a suitable candidate, and accompanied him to Iran⁴⁹.

Ambako Chelidze in his book *“Six Years in Persia”* recounts the arrival in Persia and the opening of the bank⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ <http://www.knowbysight.info/SSS/03974.asp>; The Soviet Bank existed in Iran until 1935: <https://guides.rusarchives.ru/funds/russko-iranskiy-bank-i-ego-otdeleniya-1923-1935-0>

⁴⁸ Ambako Chelidze is an author of the fascinating book on Georgians in Iran: *“The Fereidneli Georgians,”* Tbilisi, 1935. This book was banned immediately upon publication, and the entire print run was destroyed. However, in 1951, a shortened version of it was released.

⁴⁹ The fact that it was Alexander who took Ambako Chelidze to Iran for work is confirmed by a letter from Alexander to Ambako, letter No. 2, in which he writes: *“I have separated you from our land...”*

⁵⁰ Chelidze A. (1964), p. 23.

The suggestion that Ambako Chelidze's arrival in Iran was connected to the patronage of Akaki Khoshtaria is not confirmed, since Chelidze himself writes in his letters and memoirs that his arrival in Iran was related to his work at the Soviet bank there. It seems unlikely that Akaki Khoshtaria financed the presence of the Soviet bank in Iran. Below is a citation from Durmishkhan Lashkhi's dissertation, where unfortunately no source is given:

"Akaki Khoshtaria took to Iran the translator of Iranian poetry, Ambako Chelidze." (Lashkhi D., 2011: 196).

VII. 1924 — Alexander's Recall from Iran and Negotiations with Georgian Emigrants in Berlin: Meeting with Former Georgian Democratic Republic Ambassador Vladimir Akhmeteli — The Chiatura Manganese Issue

The year 1924 arrived. From the Russian Historical Archive, we learn that in 1923–24, Alyosha maintained correspondence with Sergo Ordzhonikidze, apparently concerning various political issues and directives⁵¹. The matter arose because on January 21, 1924, Lenin died. Accordingly, administrative changes were required within government ranks. On January 24, 1924, the Politburo passed a decree ordering Svanidze's recall from Iran⁵².

The reason for his recall from Iran must have been of great importance to the Soviet authorities, since presumably, due to his knowledge of languages, education, diplomacy, and experience, he was regarded as the most suitable candidate both for managing the vast country's internal affairs and for regulating its foreign relations under the newly established regime. According to some reports, in 1924 Svanidze appeared as the General Representative of the Soviet People's Commissariat of Finance in Berlin (Germany), but the exact date of this appointment is unknown, and the reliability of this information cannot be confirmed⁵³.

That year, the Soviet government faced two extremely urgent and important issues: the matter of Chiatura's manganese deposits, and the establishment of economic relations with England. These two issues were closely linked, as the manganese question was directly connected to Soviet economic interests, and consequently to establishing relations with England.

From the German Political Archive, we have obtained a dispatch dated May 21, 1924, sent from Tbilisi to Germany, with a copy forwarded to Moscow⁵⁴. The sender was presumably the German representative in Tbilisi. The dispatch informs the German government that *"Eliava and other representatives of the local [Georgian] government are traveling to Moscow because their views differ from those of the central government regarding the Chiatura manganese issue, and the concession matter must be resolved. Since Moscow has conducted negotiations with the English concerning the concession, the English have shown no interest in Chiatura. The local government is attempting to*

⁵¹ <http://guides.rusarchives.ru/node/7276>.

⁵² Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fund 17, Inventory 3, File 412, Sheet 4; <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/63042>; RGASPI, Fund 17, Inventory 3, File 412; <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/38005>.

⁵³ <http://www.knowbysight.info/SSS/03974.asp>.

⁵⁴ PAAA_RZ101_028642_009, <https://archiv.diplo.de/>

have Moscow send the former Finance Commissar Svanidze abroad to negotiate with the Americans. It appears that the government does not wish to grant concessions to the minor company or to exert pressure on them before the general assembly planned for June, so that the project's implementation will coincide with the government's change of powers. The terms of concessions for other companies are unknown. It is said that Svanidze is attempting to create a mixed ... and export company, which will be difficult if foreign companies continue to exist."⁵⁵

What is this dispatch about? In May 1924, the German diplomat speaks of issues evidently planned by the Soviet government, while German intelligence was so efficient that it informed the German government about these plans already in May. But let us follow the events chronologically: the Soviet government wanted to export Chiatura manganese and to obtain a loan from England, for which it apparently offered Chiatura's manganese as collateral.

Europe was experiencing an economic crisis and was not averse to signing a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The import of oil and other raw materials from the Caucasus was of particular interest, and neither England nor the Soviet Union wanted interference from the Georgian emigrant government. At that time, the emigrant government sought to exploit this moment to influence European states and international powers to restore Georgia's independence. As later historical events show, this plan failed.

In the summer of 1924, the Soviet government sent Svanidze to Berlin to negotiate with Georgian emigrants. There, he met Vladimir Akhmeteli, the former ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The reason was that the Soviet authorities were preparing to conclude a trade agreement with England and to secure credit from them, and the anti-Soviet agitation of the Georgian emigrant government was obstructing this process.

The archive contains two letters sent by **Noe Jordania** to **Akaki Chkhenkeli** on July 18 and 23, 1924, respectively⁵⁶.

What is noteworthy here is that, according to Stalin's information and their confirmation, Svanidze's meeting with **Akhmeteli** and the transmission of this information occurred. This resembles an unofficial proposal. For what purpose? Either they are preparing their business with us for the future, or they are warning us and showing the way, or the matter is urgent, and they want to clear themselves from it.

According to Svanidze, the current rulers are non-Russians, they do not want to pursue a Great Russian policy, but they fear losing influence and need a strong opponent on the independence issue to justify themselves before the Great Russians. One thing is clear: they would not have started talking about **MacDonald** in Moscow if there were no talks on this matter anywhere. This story brought by Svanidze and MacDonald's statement—'your business is not so bad'—agree with each other.

Unfortunately, we are out of the loop. Can we take some measures to clarify this? Since MacDonald himself chose Baldwin junior as a middleman, maybe through him we can learn something! At least we should test the waters by notifying MacDonald through Baldwin about this news from Svanidze. Write or inform Sumbatov to pass on roughly the following version: 'Recently a well-known Bolshevik arrived in Berlin from Moscow, and confidentially told our representative Akhmeteli that Moscow agrees to concede on the Georgian issue if MacDonald demands it strongly!' This information will

⁵⁵ Of course, it is possible to express conjectures and engage in speculation about these events, but at this stage, I have presented all the interesting historical occurrences mentioned in the book—events that truly filled the early 20th century—only insofar as they were significant for establishing the biography of Alexander.

⁵⁶ Gambashidze M (2025).

encourage MacDonald, and maybe he will propose something further. Do not mention Svanidze, because if it becomes known, it will harm both him and us.

Irakli is not going to Paris; you visit Blum and inquire about our matter. Ask on my behalf as well. I read somewhere that Khoshtaria's Persian concession was acquired by the English, and negotiations are ongoing with Moscow to exploit these concessions through the Caucasus. If this is true, the Georgian issue is tied to this as well. It is necessary to understand this matter well..."

Regarding the Chiatura Manganese Issue. In 1920, the independent Georgia established the manganese mining export society "Chemo," which united several joint-stock companies⁵⁷. On August 28, 1924, the Politburo decided to establish a foreign company for the export of Chiatura manganese and resolved to conclude a contract with Deutsche Bank. The People's Commissars' Committee was tasked with continuing negotiations and promptly submitting a draft contract to the Politburo for approval.

On September 11, 1924, based on a report by Minkin, Eliava, Svanidze, Litvinov, Chicherin, and Levin, it was deemed appropriate to transfer the Chiatura mines into single ownership. The continuation of negotiations with Deutsche Bank and consideration of the proposal by "Hariman and Company" were also discussed.

On September 18, 1924, the Politburo again discussed the Chiatura manganese issue and, based on the commission's recommendation, decided to transfer the entire mining territory to one owner, except for one plot, which would remain under the Georgian government's control.

On November 13, 1924, the Chiatura issue was renewed. The decision to resolve the matter in favor of the Americans would be expedient only if their offer exceeded the German proposal.

On November 13, 1924, Alexander Svanidze, together with Pyatakov, Krasin, and Mgaloblishvili, reported at the Central Politburo meeting on the progress of negotiations regarding Chiatura manganese.

On December 4, 1924, the issue was again discussed: in case of a choice between Americans and Germans, preference would be given to Germany, even if their proposal were less profitable. Chicherin was instructed to inform Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau (German Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1928) of the desire to give preference to Germany.

Despite the Soviet authorities' attempts to grant preference to the Germans regarding the Chiatura manganese issue, it appears this was not achieved. Subsequently, on June 12, 1925, the Soviet government finalized a contract with the American banker Harriman.

VIII. 1925–1928: Germany – Economic Relations between the Soviet Union and Germany – Member of the Delegation for Negotiations with France – The Romanov Numismatic Treasure – Birth of His Son – The Platinum Sales Affair – Member of the Soviet People's Commissariat's Workers' and Peasants' Inspection Collegium

⁵⁷ For detailed information about this issue see Gambashidze M. (2025) .

At the beginning of 1925, Aleksandre was sent to Germany. Based on his own request as People's Commissar of Finance, he was permitted to export gold worth 30 million rubles⁵⁸ abroad to cover foreign trade expenses. He was also included in a three-person council (Krestinsky, Bregge, Svanidze) tasked with resolving ongoing payment issues related to foreign trade in Germany. This trio oversaw all Soviet trade, business, and credit organizations in Germany:

From a confidential letter dated August 28, 1925, by M. Faingars, Soviet trade representative in Germany, sent to M. Gurevich, head of the main economic department of the Soviet foreign affairs division, it is evident that a Financial Advisory Council was to be established, which would include Aleksandre Svanidze, Krestinsky, and the head of the Soviet bank in Germany, known as the "GarKrEbo" ("Garantie und Kredit Bank")⁵⁹:

Thus, Aleksandre, residing in Berlin, bore great responsibility for state financial matters — effectively acting as one of the key initiators and organizers of economic relations between the Soviet Union and Germany.

Regarding Aleksandre's publicistic or scientific activities in 1925, only a single article appears, published in the January issue of the newspaper *Kommunisti*: an article about Red Kartli, authored by A. Svanidze (*Kommunisti*, January 28, 1925, No. 22). However, it seems unlikely that Aleksandre himself wrote it during that period, especially if he was in Germany at the time. It is plausible that he wrote the text earlier, and it was simply published later from the editorial archive.

Aleksandre's biographical details from 1926 are scant. Only a few documents survive, revealing that he was in Moscow on January 11, 1926. The Russian Historical Archive also holds a letter from Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya/Ulyanova, addressed to Alyosha Svanidze in 1926, though unfortunately, the text of this letter has not yet been accessed. It is intriguing to wonder about the letter's content, especially considering that Svanidze was reportedly in Berlin at the time⁶⁰.

He is also mentioned in a secret government telegram sent on February 7, 1926, from Berlin by Krestinsky to Litvinov, where Krestinsky urgently requests funds to cover the loan from the "Deutsche Bank." After receipt of the telegram, it appears that Moscow transferred the money⁶¹:

The year 1927 arrived. On March 16, the Politburo appointed Aleksandre Svanidze as a member of the delegation from the People's Commissariat of Finance for negotiations with France. Unfortunately, the exact nature of the negotiations remains unknown, but they were likely related to trade and financial issues, since the delegation also included representatives of commerce alongside Svanidze⁶²:

On July 10, 1927, **Krestinsky** confidentially informed **Chicherin** about the severe financial situation of the Soviet Union in Germany, mentioning Svanidze as well. The problem was that the

⁵⁸ Presumably, today it amounts to approximately \$500,000.

⁵⁹ AP RF. F. 3. Op. 64. D. 648. L. 109–111. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81118>.

It is noteworthy that on the following day, a memorandum between the Soviet Union and Germany was issued: AP RF. F. 3. Op. 64. D. 648. L. 114–117. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81119-memorandum-sovetskoy-delegatsii-po-peregovoram-po-zaklyucheniuyu-torgovogo-dogovora-s-germaniei-dlya-politbyuro-tsk-rkp-b-29-avgusta-1925-g#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4>.

⁶⁰ <https://guides.rusarchives.ru/node/7231>.

⁶¹ AP RF. F. 3. Op. 64. D. 649. L. 215–216. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81178>.

⁶² On the history of the Soviet bank in Europe, see: Krotov, N. (2014); RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 3. D. 622. L. 7, <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/69552> <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/384893>.

Soviet Union had taken a large loan from *Deutsche Bank* but was unable to repay it. Krestinsky proposed ways to resolve this situation, including obtaining another loan from another country, namely Switzerland. As collateral, the Soviet Union was to deposit platinum and diamonds in a Swiss bank. Notably, Aleksandre Svanidze again appeared as one of the main initiators of this idea⁶³:

The Soviet Union was in a financial crisis. Consequently, its leadership was considering every possible option for raising funds. What we will discuss below, in my opinion, is directly related to this issue, and, perhaps surprisingly, it also concerns Aleksandre Svanidze personally.

This concerns the large nobleman—**Georgy Mikhailovich Romanov** (1863–1919)—and his numismatic collection, which he donated to the Russian Museum in 1909. The museum failed to properly store the collection and decided to build a special facility. However, the outbreak of World War I in 1914 interrupted these plans. The coins were first entrusted to the **Saint Petersburg Court Treasury**, then five boxes filled with coins were sent to Moscow, and ultimately four of these boxes ended up in **Serbia**.

On September 26, 1927, Aleksandre Svanidze, who at that time was the People's Commissar of Finance abroad, sent a “completely secret” letter to the Soviet government⁶⁴. He reported that according to information obtained from an émigré banker named **Kagan**, four boxes of the said coins were kept in the “*State Bank of Serbia*,” and their value was at least one million pounds sterling. Furthermore, “two Serbian lawyers” were ready to return this treasure to the Soviet Union in exchange for a 10% commission.

In February 1928, Svanidze participated in a commission investigating the issue of “*Eirobank*” (the Soviet bank in Paris)⁶⁵.

On April 10, 1928, Aleksandre sent a follow-up letter, but the matter was not considered reliable or worthy of discussion in Moscow⁶⁶.

At the end of May 1928, Aleksandre Svanidze was officially instructed to convene a special meeting regarding the return of the former Alexander III Museum's treasury from Yugoslavia⁶⁷. He held this meeting on May 29, 1928⁶⁸:

Ultimately, Aleksandre's efforts did not bear fruit: the Soviet government did not give this matter much importance, distrusted the “Serbian lawyers,” and decided to resolve the issue diplomatically with Yugoslavia, which did not yield positive results. The coin collection ended up with the Romanovs' descendants and, after a long journey, was finally settled in America⁶⁹.

In his personal life, 1927 proved to be a very significant year for Aleksandre and his wife, Maria Korona: on October 15, their son **Ivane** (John Reed, died August 3, 1987) was born in Berlin⁷⁰.

The following summer, Aleksandre sent a letter to his close friend **Ambako Chelidze** in *Iran*, informing him about the birth of his son: “...*In this old age, I have just acquired a son, now nine months*

⁶³ AP RF. F. 3. Op. 64. D. 653. L. 97–99. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81345>.

⁶⁴ GA RF. F. R-374. Op. 28. D. 2784. L. 29.

⁶⁵ Krotov N. (2014).

⁶⁶ L. 40; F. R-374. Op. 28. D. 2784. L. 42; Krapivin M. Yu., Metelkin E. N. (2023), p. 242.

⁶⁷ GA RF. F. R-5446. Op. 31. D. 594. L. 140; Krapivin M. Yu., Metelkin E. N. (2023), p. 242.

⁶⁸ GA RF. F. R-374. Op. 28. D. 2784. L. 15; Krapivin M. Yu., Metelkin E. N. (2023), p. 247.

⁶⁹ For more details on this issue, see: Krapivin M. Yu., Metelkin E. N. (2023), pp. 238–264. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu24.2023.115>

⁷⁰ <https://memory.pvost.org/pages/svanidzeia.html>; Zenkovich N. (2005), p. 407.

old... He is such a boy, playing with the stars. They say he is a mix of Uri and Imereti, something wild must come out of him."

In a letter dated March 8, 1929, Aleksandre also writes about naming his son after the American revolutionary John Reed and recommends Ambako to read Reed's book: *"My son's name is **John Reed**. I combined the name and surname of a respected revolutionary and got a new name. John Reed (you have probably heard of him) was an American correspondent for a democratic newspaper in Russia during the revolution. I don't think anyone understood the revolution as fully as he did. In my opinion, his book **'Ten Days That Shook the World'** tells everything about our revolution. If you haven't read it, read it. Knowing your poetic sympathies, you will greatly enjoy reading it."*

Aleksandre is also mentioned by **E. Yaroslavsky** in a letter to **G. Ordzhonikidze** dated October 29, 1927. It is interesting to know where Yaroslavsky met Svanidze—most probably in Germany⁷¹.

On December 2, 1927, **Krestinsky** sent a lengthy letter to Chicherin mentioning Aleksandre Svanidze, who was still in Berlin at the time. The issue concerned a Soviet order regarding the export of state loan bonds abroad in foreign currency. When the German government learned of this from newspapers, Aleksandre, as the People's Commissar of Finance abroad, was summoned and asked for an explanation because such actions were prohibited by German law. Aleksandre asked Moscow for instructions since he was unaware of the matter and could not make decisions himself.

In this letter, Krestinsky defends Svanidze's position and tries to force Moscow to take responsibility for the issue because, in this case, the State Bank would bear the responsibility, not Svanidze⁷²:

The day after this letter, **Chicherin** sent a letter to Stalin regarding the preparation of a Soviet-German economic conference in Berlin, where Aleksandre Svanidze was presumably also expected to participate⁷³.

On December 10, 1927, the Chairman of the State Bank, A.L. Sheinman, sent a letter to Chicherin in response to Krestinsky's letter, defending himself. He mentioned Aleksandre as well, stating that Aleksandre bears no responsibility for the steps taken by the Soviet State Bank⁷⁴:

How the issue of placing bonds abroad by the State Bank was finally resolved is not the focus of this research and will not be further discussed here. The fact remains that Aleksandre's life in Berlin must have been tense and full of responsibilities.

On January 16, 1928, the Politburo raised the issue of the realization (sale) of platinum and assigned Aleksandre Svanidze to study the matter⁷⁵.

On February 8, 1928, a delegation was formed for negotiations with Germany in Berlin, which included A. Svanidze⁷⁶. He was also a representative of the management of the joint-stock company "Exportmanganese" during 1928–1929.

⁷¹ RGASPI. Fond 85, Opis 27, Delo 253, fols. 1–4. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/34239>.

⁷² Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 3, Opis 64, Delo 653, fols. 133–136. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81360>.

⁷³ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81361-zapiska-g-v-chicherina-i-v-stalinu-o-podgotovke-k-sovetsko-germanskomu-ekonomicheskomu-soveshaniyu-v-berline-3-dekabrya-1927-g#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4>.

⁷⁴ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 3, Opis 64, Delo 653, fols. 138–141. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81363>.

⁷⁵ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 669, fol. 6. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/70861>.

⁷⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 162, Delo 6, fol. 23.

On February 18, 1928, Krestinsky wrote “top secret” to Stalin about the composition of the Soviet Commission for Economic Negotiations with Germany, which included Svanidze⁷⁷: “...Regarding your No. 206. The Germans have already been informed of the following commission members: Schleifer (chairman), Brodovsky, Begge, Kaufman, and Lengiel. We can now add Svanidze, but it would be inconvenient to exclude Begge. Therefore, please additionally include Begge.”

On February 28, 1928, Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed as a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the USSR⁷⁸:

In March 1928, Aleksandre moved to Moscow to work in the Collegium. His Moscow address was: Moscow, Ilna 21⁷⁹.

We have a letter dated December 20, 1928, sent by Aleksandre from Moscow to Ambako Chelidze in Iran, where he writes about the export of manganese from Chiatura.

Regarding Aleksandre's publishing and scientific work during 1925–1928, it seems he was heavily loaded with administrative duties, but still managed to publish articles. He published two interesting articles in the newspaper *Kommunisti*:

- *Prospects of Chiatura manganese export, Kommunisti*, November 23, 1928, No. 271
- *Prospects of Soviet Union manganese export, Kommunisti*, December 30, 1928, No. 303

Additionally, an article under his name was published in Berlin: *Die Volkswirtschaft der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken*, No. 14 (1928), Berlin.

IX. 1929–1932: Moscow: Negotiations to Buy Out German-Owned Chiatura Manganese — Moscow: "Inturist" — Back to Berlin: USSR Trade and Industry Representative — London — London School of Economics — Mongolia

In 1929, Aleksandre was active in Moscow. At the government meeting on March 7, Litvinov, Svanidze, and Aralov presented a report on the negotiations regarding the buyout of German-owned property connected to the *Chiatura Manganese Trust*⁸⁰.

Apparently, the responsibilities Aleksandre had in Berlin were so tense and demanding that returning to Moscow was something like a rest for him. On March 8, he wrote a letter to his childhood friend Ambako Chelidze, describing his life in Berlin:

Just one month later, on April 4, 1929, the All-Russian Joint Stock Company "Inturist" was founded in Moscow. Its first director was Aleksandre Svanidze, a member of the USSR People's Commissariat of Foreign and Domestic Trade. The founders of "Inturist" included the USSR People's Commissariat of Foreign and Domestic Trade, Sovtorgflot, the USSR People's Commissariat of Railways, and other

<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/59511> ; Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 672, fol. 7. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/70977> .

⁷⁷ On Soviet–German economic relations, see in detail: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81377> ; Kashirskikh, O. (2004), pp. 155–184.

⁷⁸ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/397891> .

⁷⁹ Gambashidze M. (2025).

⁸⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 729.

<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/38335> .

organizations. The company's charter capital amounted to five million rubles. "Inturist" was charged with attracting and servicing foreign tourists in the Soviet Union, organizing their receptions, facilitating the financial support of foreign specialists and their family members through state institutions, as well as hosting participants of various congresses and conferences. During the Soviet period, Inturist was the main tour operator handling foreign visitors across the entire country⁸¹.

From the Russian Historical Archive, we also obtained another interesting document dated November 1, 1929. It is a typewritten letter by Aleksandre Svanidze where he analyzes Marx's *Capital* and discusses party staffing and operational issues — what today might be called the Communist Party's "business plan." Apparently, this work was carried out personally under Stalin's order⁸².

On December 15, 1929, Aleksandre was appointed deputy representative of the USSR in the field of trade and industry in Berlin. Accordingly, he returned there once again⁸³.

His new appointment and the prospect of returning to Berlin apparently did not delight him but rather saddened him.

In 1929, Aleksandre published reviews on Chiatura manganese, one in Tbilisi and another in Germany:

- *Foreign Press on Chiatura Manganese, Kommunisti*, April 23, 1929, No. 91
- *Tschiatury-Manganerz-Vorkommen und ihre Rolle in der Versorgung der gesamten Wels-Stahlindustrie* (1929), NR N.F. 6, 5/6, pp. 15–17. In: *Georgien: Bibliographie des deutschsprachigen Schrifttums* (2008), p. 52, Wiesbaden.

He also published a book under his authorship: *On the Rationalization of Industry* (1929), Tiflis, Zakkniga.

From 1930 Onwards: Aleksandre Svanidze's Activities in Berlin, London, and Mongolia.

From 1930, there is little detailed information about Aleksandre Svanidze, but it appears he continued to work in Berlin. I came across a very interesting note in German newspapers, specifically the *Grafinger Zeitung* and its Munich edition *Fuerstenfeldbrucker Zeitung*. On September 24, 1930, they reported on elections in Germany. The article's author notes that not only war demands huge expenditures but also preparations for elections.

The discussion then focuses on German Communists, who were receiving funding from the Soviet Union to orchestrate a Bolshevik revolution in Germany. The German Communists received nearly 2 million Marks from Russia between July 1 and August 15, 1930. Among those mentioned as

⁸¹ For detailed information on the history of "Intourist" and its activities, see:

<https://guides.rusarchives.ru/funds/6/uchrezhdeniya-po-rukovodstvu-inostrannym-turizmom-v-sssr-obedinenny-fond-1929-1991> ; <https://www.pnp.ru/social/den-12-aprelya-v-istorii-7.html>

⁸² Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 806, fols. 79–88. The text and its analysis will soon be published in a volume of Alexander Svanidze's works.

⁸³ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 3, Opis 64, Delo 639, fol. 83. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/81474>; and <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/397042>; and <http://www.knowbysight.info/SSS/03974.asp>

intermediaries is Svanidze, through whom Hermann Remmele⁸⁴, a member of the SPD Central Committee, received 650,000 Marks from the Soviet trade mission's treasury on July 20 for the election fund⁸⁵.

Additionally, a report from November 20 shows that Svanidze, together with Rosenholz, made a presentation before the Politburo regarding platinum⁸⁶. Thus, his activity in Berlin lasted about one year, and by this time, he was supposed to return to Moscow.

This return was not merely for a report to the Politburo — on January 15, 1931, on the recommendation of the USSR State Bank, Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed as the State Bank's representative in London and became a member of the Bank's management team and expert commission.⁸⁷

Thus began Aleksandre's London adventure, which presumably lasted until the end of 1931 or early 1932. In a letter dated March 29, 1932, sent from London (or possibly Iran or Tbilisi) to Ambako Chelidze, he vividly and interestingly describes the city and his life there. From this letter, we also learn Aleksandre's London address: *London N4, Oakfeld Road*, which he describes as follows⁸⁸.

According to a report by the Secretary General of the Pacific Relations Institute in the United States, Aleksandre was supposed to complete his studies at the London School of Economics⁸⁹.

From 1931, there is also information on Aleksandre's public activities: on June 16, 1931, he was part of a delegation scheduled to meet in Berlin on July 15 regarding the Siberian gold mines and with representatives of the *Lena Goldfields*, so he likely traveled temporarily from London to Berlin during this period⁹⁰.

On January 10, 1932, Aleksandre was elected Chairman of the Board at a special meeting of shareholders of the Foreign Trade Bank⁹¹.

On March 8, 1932, Svanidze, together with Eliava and others, was appointed a member of the commission responsible for decisions concerning Mongolia⁹².

⁸⁴ **Hermann Remmele (15 November 1880 – 7 March 1939)** was a German communist and a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. In 1930, he founded the “League of Fighters Against Fascism.” In 1933, he was expelled from Germany to Moscow, where he was executed in 1939:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Remmele

⁸⁵ <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00005654?q=Svanidze&page=172,173>

⁸⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 805. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/281707>

⁸⁷ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 810, fol. 15.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/77911>; RGASPI, Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 810.

<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/281714>

⁸⁸ Gambashidze M. (2025).

⁸⁹ *Institute of Pacific Relations: Hearings before the Subcommittee to investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate*, 81nd Congress, Second session on the Institute of Pacific Relations, P. 13., 4499, (1952).

⁹⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 830, fol. 2.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/79572>; For detailed information on the history of the Lena gold mines, see: Razumov, O.N. (1995), pp. 138–153; https://rapsinews.ru/historical_memory_news/20231127/309416503.html.

⁹¹ Krotov. N. (2014).

⁹² Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 875, fol. 2. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/82247>.

On July 5, 1932, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed as an authorized representative of the Committee of Commodity Funds in the Socialist Federative Republics of the Transcaucasus⁹³.

From the Russian archives, we have a note by Stalin in which the phrase "*Ask Mamia about Svanidze* (to inquire of Mamia about Svanidze) appears⁹⁴. Presumably, this refers to Mamia Orakhelashvili, and Stalin intended to clarify some matter regarding Svanidze with him. This is likely connected to the fact that on October 9, 1932, the Politburo discussed party affairs in the Caucasus region and made the following decisions⁹⁵:

Mamia Orakhelashvili was relieved of his duties as First Secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee upon his own request, and the position was to be held concurrently by **Lavrentiy Beria**, who remained First Secretary of the Georgian Central Committee.

Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Transcaucasus.

However, it appears that Svanidze refused this appointment because he would have been subordinate to Beria. For this reason, on October 30, 1932, the Politburo canceled the October 9 decision regarding Svanidze and left him in his former position⁹⁶.

By the Politburo resolution of November 13, 1932, Eliava, Svanidze, and others were assigned to depart in the following days to Mongolia to develop a plan for the delivery of goods for realization in Mongolia in 1933.

Regarding Aleksandre's publishing activity in 1931, he published two articles in the newspaper *Kommunisti*, which he apparently sent from London⁹⁷:

- "Consequences of the Flood," *Kommunisti*, July 25, 1931, No. 170, p. 4.
- "Financial Crash in Germany," *Kommunisti*, December 5, 1931, No. 278, pp. 2-3.

X. 1933–1934: Moscow – Preface to "Arsena Marabdeli" – Ancient World History Textbook – Shota Rustaveli and "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" – Institute of Pacific Relations – Bank – Mongolia – China – Film Screenings with Stalin

In 1933–34, Aleksandre again lived and worked in Moscow. During this period, we have two letters sent from Moscow to **Ambako Chelidze**: the exact date of the first letter is unknown but can be dated to 1933 based on its content; the second letter is dated March 25, 1934.

⁹³ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 891, fol. 11.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/83672>; and

<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/384977>

⁹⁴ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 27, fols. 56–58.

⁹⁵ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 903, fol. 8.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/84668>

⁹⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 905, fol. 14.

<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/84872>; This fact is also noted by Alexander's wife in her diaries: Iosif Stalin v obyatiyakh sem'i (1993), p. 155.

⁹⁷ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 906, fol. 3.

We also have a record dated April 17, 1933, noting Aleksandre's presence on Stalin's reception list—apparently, he met Stalin from 17:35 to 17:55⁹⁸. The subject of their discussion is unknown, but it likely was a topic far more "elevated" than politics. During these years, Aleksandre ceased writing about economics and became fully immersed in Georgian literature. A likely topic was the work of Mikheil Javakhishvili, since that year the Russian translation of *Arsena Marabdeli* was published, with a preface written by Aleksandre. Javakhishvili's novel, of course, faced heavy criticism under the Soviet regime but also found defenders. Soon after, an article by **Beno Buachidze**⁹⁹ appeared in the journal *Drosha*, defending *Arsena Marabdeli* and criticizing its detractors **Sim. Khundadze** and **Shalva Radiani** for misunderstanding the essence of the novel. It is not unlikely that Javakhishvili's defenders had backing at the governmental level in Moscow.

From Aleksandre's letter to Ambako (No. 6), we learn that during this period he was also completely absorbed in Rustaveli's topic and even entered into disputes with Georgian literary figures and poets over it. In 1934, he published his book *The Historical-Geographical Basis of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"*, which was an expanded version of his 1919 article *The Historical Aspect of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" (a few notes)* published in *Shvidi Mnatobi* (No. 2, 1919, pp. 196–214). Its Russian translation appeared in 1936 in Tbilisi: *The Historical and Geographical Foundations of Shota Rustaveli's Poem The Knight in the Panther's Skin* / A.S. Tiflis: Gosizdat, 1936.

It is probable that Aleksandre wrote this book in 1933, as is also suggested by his letter to Ambako, where he discusses Rustaveli and the art of debate (which he sharply criticizes among Georgian literati)¹⁰⁰. Another very interesting fact, provided by **I. Megrelidze**, is that Aleksandre Svanidze in 1933 contributed to the founding of the Rustaveli Institute at Tbilisi University, which later became the Shota Rustaveli Institute of Literature¹⁰¹.

A third possible topic of Aleksandre's audience with Stalin was the question of history textbooks. In 1933, by order of the State Publishing House, an ancient history school textbook by Academician **Nikolai Nikolsky** was published in large print runs and translated into all the languages of the Soviet republics. However, this textbook was criticized by the authorities, and a decision was made to write a new textbook¹⁰².

From November 11 to 13, 1933, Aleksandre rested with his family at a dacha in the village of Kolchuga¹⁰³. At the beginning of 1934, Aleksandre was again in Moscow (on March 25, he sent a letter to Ambako from Moscow)¹⁰⁴.

On March 29, 1934, the Politburo resolved on compiling new civil history textbooks, assigning the writing of the ancient world history section to Kovalev (leader), Academician Nikolsky, Aleksandre Svanidze, and Mishulin¹⁰⁵. Indeed, on May 15, 1934, by direct order of Stalin and the Central

⁹⁸ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Dela 408–411.
<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167134>

⁹⁹ Buachidze Beno. (1933), pp.13–15.

¹⁰⁰ Gambashidze M. (2025), See below Letter No. 6 addressed to Ambako Chelidze.

¹⁰¹ Megrelidze I. (1962), p. 165.

¹⁰² For more detailed information on the history textbook, see:
<https://rodina-history.ru/2016/09/13/rodina-uchebniki-istorii.html>.

¹⁰³ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 155.

¹⁰⁴ Gambashidze M. (2025), See below Letter No. 7 addressed to Ambako Chelidze.

¹⁰⁵ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 942, fol. 7.
<http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/89488> ; For a detailed discussion of this textbook, see:

Committee (likely based on Aleksandre's recommendation), the USSR Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the VKP(b) adopted the decree¹⁰⁶:

Of course, the issue of history textbooks also concerned the republics. In Kandid Charkviani's book *Episodes of Relations with Stalin*, one chapter is devoted to a meeting of historians with Stalin in Sochi, where the issue of a history textbook for Georgia was discussed. Charkviani notes:

This textbook was published in 1943 under the title *The History of the Georgian People from Ancient Times to the 19th Century*. Regarding this matter, in October 1945, K. Charkviani traveled with S. Janashia and N. Berdzenishvili to Sochi to meet Stalin. According to memoirs, they discussed various periods of Georgian history for a week, with the main focus on the ancient history of Georgia. Charkviani conveys Stalin's views, attributing them to Stalin's erudition and deep knowledge of ancient history. Stalin mentioned an article by Svanidze published in the February 1937 issue of *Izvestiya* titled *On the Question of the Hittites and Their Relation to the Georgian Tribes*¹⁰⁷, which Charkviani also "remembered well"¹⁰⁸.

Unfortunately, neither Stalin nor Charkviani recalled that Aleksandre Svanidze had been publishing articles on Georgia's ancient history since 1912, and his books and articles were banned after his arrest. His very interesting and ahead-of-his-time ideas were attributed to Stalin, while those who accessed Svanidze's works freely used his findings without citing him.

On April 25, 1934, Aleksandre Svanidze was appointed a member of the Politburo commission on Mongolian affairs¹⁰⁹. On June 8 of the same year, he was appointed head of a delegation to Xinjiang (China)¹¹⁰. Thus began the active involvement of the Soviet Union in the Far East.

On July 15, 1934, Aleksandre was "strictly confidentially" approved as a member of the governing board of the USSR Pacific National Institute (to be founded), representing the *Vneshtorgbank*¹¹¹:

The background was that the American *Institute of Pacific Relations* sought relations with the Soviet Union. From December 20–31, 1934, the Institute's General Secretary visited Moscow on a working visit and met the Soviet members of the Institute, including Aleksandre Svanidze. The General Secretary, **Carter**, described Aleksandre thus: "*A.S. Svanidze is the director of the Foreign Trade Bank*,

Malyugin, O. I. (2017), p. 413.

¹⁰⁶ Published in No. 113 of *Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, 16 May 1934. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/353205>

¹⁰⁷ On the issue of the Hittites and their kinship with Georgian tribes, see: Mnatsobi (1937), No. 4, pp. 125–136. It is noteworthy that two articles by S. Janashia were published the previous year, and it is interesting why Charkviani does not mention them: Janashia, S. (1936) On the History and Language of the Hittites, *Kommunisti*, 21 December (No. 294); (1936) *On the Question of the Language and History of the Hittites*, *Zarya Vostoka*, 21 December (No. 295).

¹⁰⁸ Charkviani K. (2015), p. 91.

¹⁰⁹ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 944, fol. 24. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/89978>

¹¹⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 946, fol. 30. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/90308> ; For a detailed study on Soviet policy in Xinjiang, see: Hasanli, J. (2020).

¹¹¹ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 3, Opis 66, Delo 413, fol. 34. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/83661> .

which finances all Soviet foreign trade. He graduated from the London School of Economics, speaks excellent English, and is remarkably well versed in USSR international relations."¹¹²

*"...He appears to be no older than 35 years. Despite being one of the busiest people in the USSR, he considered it his duty, upon request, to devote two hours on December 25 for a meeting with us."*¹¹³

On December 25, 1934, a meeting was held between Carter and the Soviet delegation to discuss relations with China, Japan, and the Far East¹¹⁴.

On July 27, 1934, Stalin, Molotov, and Voroshilov sent a letter to the Chinese ruler regarding Soviet policy in the **Xinjiang province of China**. The province's ruler had asked the Soviet Union to help establish communism in his region, but this was refused due to China's backwardness. Instead, they proposed establishing a bourgeois-democratic regime, "not suddenly, but gradually." For the mission to China and subsequent instructions, Stalin again entrusted Aleksandre personally¹¹⁵.

On the same day, Stalin wrote to the USSR General Consul in Urumqi, G.A. Apresov, assigning Aleksandre Svanidze to deliver this letter¹¹⁶:

Accordingly, on July 30, 1934, Svanidze had to travel to China, specifically to Xinjiang province¹¹⁷.

According to a letter from B.S. Stomonyakov, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, dated August 8, 1934, addressed to **D.V. Bogomolov**, Aleksandre was still in China at that time, continuing to carry out government assignments¹¹⁸:

In fulfilling the Soviet government's assignment, Aleksandre handed over two foreign cars to the Xinjiang government as gifts¹¹⁹.

On October 6, 1934, negotiations took place regarding the sale of *Dalbank* and the purchase by *Mosnarbank* of *Dalbank's* Shanghai branch¹²⁰.

Purchase price was set at 10,000 pounds sterling. At that time, the Foreign Trade Bank was already the main shareholder of the bank (2,000 shares). Other shares were distributed among trusted comrades

¹¹² *Institute of Pacific Relations: Hearings before the Subcommittee to investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, 81nd Congress, Second session on the Institute of Pacific Relations, P. 13., 4498-9, 4508 (1952).*

¹¹³ *Institute of Pacific Relations: Hearings before the Subcommittee to investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, 81nd Congress, Second session on the Institute of Pacific Relations, P. 13., 4560-61 (1952).*

¹¹⁴ *Institute of Pacific Relations: Hearings before the Subcommittee to investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, 81nd Congress, Second session on the Institute of Pacific Relations, P. 13., 4504 (1952).*

¹¹⁵ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 323, fols. 12-14. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246892> ; For information on Alexander's activities in China, see also: Krotov, N. (2014)

¹¹⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 323, fol. 22. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246894> .

¹¹⁷ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 155.

¹¹⁸ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 0100, Opis 18, Papka 179a, Delo 3, fols. 9-11. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246897> .

¹¹⁹ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 17, Opis 3, Delo 948, fols. 20, 113. <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru/sections/government/cards/90864> .

¹²⁰ Krotov, N. (2014).

and employees of the Foreign Trade Bank (their shares were kept in the bank's safes): the Chairman of the Bank Council, A.S. Svanidze, held 784 shares; the Chairman of the Bank's Audit Commission, S.V. Ilyin, held 3,196 shares; the Director of the Bank Council, Ya.M. Kazmin, held 3,661 shares. However, former employees of Dalbank received fewer shares: A.R. Levitas retained 201 shares, S.M. Shapiro – 25 shares, and D.E. Sendler, manager of the Beijing branch and Deputy Chairman of Dalbank's Council – 10 shares...

According to the above-mentioned letters, on November 1, 1934, the Chinese ruler sent a letter of gratitude to the Soviet government, expressing great sympathy towards Aleksandre Svanidze¹²¹:

On November 7, 1934, the Soviet consul in China also responded to Stalin's July letter, mentioning Aleksandre again only in a positive context, and noted that a farewell event was organized for him¹²²:

It seems that Aleksandre was to bring these answers back to Moscow, so by that time he should have returned from China. The instructions Aleksandre received for Apresov concerned how to arrange Soviet-Chinese relations, China's relations with Japan, their cultural and trade relations, etc. The text of the document proposed to the Chinese government in 1934 (dated November 1), was presumably prepared by Aleksandre. From a modern perspective, this text is very significant in terms of content, so here it is in full¹²³:

On **November 14, 1934**, Aleksandre sent a telegram from Alma-Ata to his wife, informing her that he would arrive in Moscow within *'six to seven days'*¹²⁴.

Following his extensive journey through China, Aleksandre returned to Moscow on **November 20, 1934**¹²⁵. Interestingly, he brought Stalin a gift from China—a tiger skin—likely inspired by The Knight in the Panther's Skin¹²⁶.

On **November 23, 1934**, Aleksandre is mentioned in director B. Shaumyatsky's notes, attending a film screening with Stalin. These screenings were apparently held in an intimate circle around Stalin, where he personally approved films for release. Notably, the film Aleksandre recommended, *Three Friends* (directed by S. A. Limoshenko), was indeed released on **February 13, 1935**, suggesting that Stalin shared Aleksandre's views¹²⁷.

On **November 28, 1934**, S. Kirov was assassinated. The official funeral was held on **December 5** in the so-called "Columned Hall," and Kirov was buried on **December 6**, with Aleksandre present at the ceremony¹²⁸.

¹²¹ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 323, fols. 26–28. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246906>.

¹²² Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 323, fols. 29–31. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246908>.

¹²³ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), Fond 0100, Opis 18, Papka 180, Delo 18, fols. 7–15. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/246910>.

¹²⁴ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 161.

¹²⁵ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 161.

¹²⁶ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 162.

¹²⁷ RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History), fond 558, opis 11, delo 828, ll. 84–87. Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/438937>.

¹²⁸ Iosif Stalin v obyatiyakh sem'i [Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family] (1993), p. 164.

On **December 21, 1934**, Stalin celebrated his 55th birthday in an intimate gathering at his dacha, attended by Aleksandre and his wife. Aleksandre spent the days from **December 21 to 23** in Stalin's company¹²⁹.

XI. 1935–1936: The League of Nations – Correspondence with Ivane Javakhishvili – A Textbook on the History of the Ancient Near East

The year 1935 arrived. On January 18, Aleksandre was appointed to the USSR Commission assigned to the Financial Committee of the League of Nations¹³⁰. At this time, he was serving as Chairman of the Bank for Foreign Trade. Highly valuable information from the League of Nations archives illustrates the extent of Aleksandre's active involvement in the work of the Financial Committee.

On March 21, 1935, he was received by Stalin and spent more than two hours at the meeting¹³¹. On April 9, 1935, he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the State Bank¹³². Then, on April 26, at Politburo meeting No. 29, the "Matter of A. S. Svanidze¹³³" was discussed. Unfortunately, we do not possess the minutes of this meeting, so the specific subject remains unknown.

On April 28, 1935, Aleksandre departed for Geneva¹³⁴, where he participated in the 58th session of the League of Nations Financial Committee¹³⁵, held from May 6 to 11. He returned from Geneva on June 16¹³⁶.

On June 17, 1935, he visited Stalin and brought him gifts from his trip abroad. On June 23, the Svanidze family traveled to Stalin's dacha in Zubalovo¹³⁷, and again visited him there on June 22–23¹³⁸.

From **August 29 to September 6, 1935**, Aleksandre participated in the **59th session of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations** in Geneva¹³⁹.

Following this, Alyosha (Aleksandre) once again turned his attention to ancient history. He reached out to **Ivane Javakhishvili**¹⁴⁰, requesting that he begin organizing Georgian scholars to undertake the study of **ancient Eastern languages and history**, in order to gain a deeper understanding of Georgian history.

¹²⁹ This day is described in detail in the diary of Alexander's wife, Maria: Iosif Stalin v obyatiakh sem'i [Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family] (1993), pp. 169–171.

¹³⁰ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/comite-financier-services-de-m-alexandre-svanidze>.

¹³¹ RGASPI, Fond 558, Inventory 11, Files 408–411. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167136>.

¹³² <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/386012>; <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/386014>.

¹³³ RGASPI, Fond 17, Inventory 3, File 962. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/281869>.

¹³⁴ **Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiakh sem'i** (*Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family*), 1993, p. 173.

¹³⁵ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/zett-f7qp-ss23>; <https://archives.ungeneva.org/tdtd-xm3t-nek8>

¹³⁶ **Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiakh sem'i** (*Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family*), 1993, p. 178. Maria Korona's diaries have not been published in full, and unfortunately, at this stage, I have not had the opportunity to consult the original text of the missing sections.

¹³⁷ **Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiakh sem'i** (*Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family*), 1993, p. 178

¹³⁸ **Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiakh sem'i** (*Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family*), 1993, p. 181

¹³⁹ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/c2f7-m33m-5b6y>; <https://archives.ungeneva.org/tdtd-xm3t-nek8>.

¹⁴⁰ On Aleksandre Svanidze's relationship with Ivane Javakhishvili, see: Lomashvili, P. (2016), pp. 299–345; Javakhishvili, N. (2025).

Four letters from **A. Svanidze** to **Mr. Ivane Javakhishvili** are known¹⁴¹. These letters are preserved in the **Manuscript Institute**, in the **Ivane Javakhishvili Archive**.

In connection with this topic, **two letters** written by **Ivane Javakhishvili** to **Varlam Dondua** should also be mentioned¹⁴²:

II. Letter from Ivane Javakhishvili – October 19, 1935¹⁴³:

III. Letter No. 1577 [2220] – October 29, 1935, Moscow to Tbilisi¹⁴⁴

November 8, 1935 — Stalin's Dacha at Zubalovo

On **November 8, 1935**, **Aleksandre Svanidze** and his wife were at **Stalin's dacha** in **Zubalovo**.

Maria Svanidze recalls this day in her diary¹⁴⁵:

November 14, 1935 — Svanidze's Birthday Celebration

On **November 14**, the Svanidzes celebrated **Aleksandre Svanidze's birthday** in a small private gathering¹⁴⁶.

December 1, 1935 — Letter from Aleksandre Svanidze to Ivane Javakhishvili

Noteworthy Meetings with Stalin

To ensure no key dates are overlooked, it's important to highlight **two meetings** Svanidze had with **Stalin**:

- **November 9, 1935** (16:15–17:45) — with **Litvinov** and others.
- **November 13, 1935** (18:15–19:40)¹⁴⁷

The **topics discussed** at these meetings remain **unknown**.

Further Travels and Political Engagements

- **November 30, 1935** — Svanidze again visited **Stalin**.
- **December 4, 1935** — Svanidze **departed for Berlin**, and from there traveled to **Geneva**¹⁴⁸.
- **December 9–14, 1935** — He participated in the **60th session of the League of Nations' Financial Committee**¹⁴⁹.
- **December 21, 1935** — Aleksandre Svanidze attended **Stalin's birthday celebration** at his dacha.

¹⁴¹ Description of Ivane Javakhishvili's Personal Archive, Tbilisi, 1976, p. 242.

¹⁴² Dondua, V. (1968), pp. 134–163.

¹⁴³ Dondua, V. (1968), pp. 136.

¹⁴⁴ A shortened version of this letter is cited by S. Jorbenadze in his book, although he erroneously gives the letter's date as 29 November 1935: Jorbenadze, S. (1984), pp. 537–538.

¹⁴⁵ Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiyakh sem'i (Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family), 1993, p. 183.

¹⁴⁶ Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiyakh sem'i (Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family), 1993, p. 184.

¹⁴⁷ RGASPI, Fond 558, Inventory 11, Files 408–411. Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167136>.

¹⁴⁸ Iosif Stalin v ob'yatiyakh sem'i (Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family), 1993, p. 185.

¹⁴⁹ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/tdtd-xm3t-nek8>

Also in attendance were Voroshilovs, Kaganovich, Kosior, Postyshev, Beria, Mikoyan, Molotov, and Ordzhonikidze¹⁵⁰.

- **New Year's 1936** — Svanidze once again spent the occasion with Stalin¹⁵¹.

Undated Letter (1935) — No. 1579 [2222] – From Moscow to Tbilisi

By 1935, Svanidze had already completed his manuscript titled *Materials on the History of the Alarodian Tribes* (*Материалы по истории Алародийских племён*), which he sent to Mr. Ivane (Javakhishvili) for review. The work was published in 1937 by the university press in Russian. However, due to Svanidze's subsequent arrest, the entire print run was destroyed.

It appears this publication was preceded by the establishment of the **Georgian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1935**. As a result, the existing **Institute of Caucasian Studies** was absorbed into the newly created branch and restructured as the **Institute of Language, History, and Material Culture** (abbreviated as ENIMKI). Based on the correspondence cited above, **Ivane Javakhishvili** was appointed as a **permanent academic consultant** of this institute on **January 28, 1936**, evidently through the initiative of A. Svanidze.

It is also noteworthy that in 1935, a history textbook commissioned by the government in 1934 was published, in which A. Svanidze is listed as one of the co-authors¹⁵²: **Kovalev S.I., Mishulin A.V., Nikolsky N.M., Svanidze A.S. (1935), *History of the Ancient World. A Textbook for Lower and Secondary Schools*, Part 1, Moscow.**

On **January 11, 1936**, a copy of a letter—marked "*Top Secret*"—was sent to Stalin by Aleksandre in his capacity as **Deputy Chairman of the State Bank**, concerning the **purchase of industrial facilities in the United States**¹⁵³:

On **January 27, 1936**, the **Central Committee** and the **Council of People's Commissars of the USSR** adopted a resolution on the revision and improvement of history textbooks, including, in exceptional cases, their complete rewriting. For this purpose, a **commission** was established under the chairmanship of **Andrei Zhdanov**, which included **A. Svanidze** among its members¹⁵⁴.

On **February 7, 1936**, **Aleksandre Svanidze** had a **private audience with Stalin**¹⁵⁵, which lasted an hour and a half. However, the content of their discussion remains unknown. It is possible that the meeting was once again related to the issue of history textbooks.

¹⁵⁰ An interesting detail: Aleksandre brought Stalin a gift from Geneva — a pineapple and fine cognac. Stalin told Aleksandre, "If it weren't for you, I would have completely forgotten my birthday." See Maria Svanidze's diaries: Iosif Stalin v ob'yat'yakh sem'i (1993), p. 185.

¹⁵¹ Iosif Stalin v ob'yat'yakh sem'i (*Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of His Family*), 1993, p. 186.

¹⁵² RGASPI, Fond 558, Inventory 3, File 96. For a detailed discussion of the textbook, see:

<https://rodina-history.ru/2016/09/13/rodina-uchebniki-istorii.html>;

<https://rodina-history.ru/2024/04/16/v-riade-uchebnikov-net-ni-nachala-ni-konca.html>.

¹⁵³ AVP RF, Fond 05, Inventory 16, Case 114, File 2, Sheet 237. Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/197656>.

¹⁵⁴ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/400124>

¹⁵⁵ RGASPI, Fond 558, Inventory 11, Files 408–411. Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167137>.

On **March 3, 1936**, a **government resolution**, signed by Stalin, was issued regarding the organization of a **competition to produce the best history textbook for primary school**, with monetary prizes promised to the winners¹⁵⁶.

On **March 21, 1936**, Aleksandre was relieved of his position as Chairman of the Board of the Foreign Trade Bank and appointed Deputy Chairman of the State Bank of the USSR¹⁵⁷.

From **April 29 to May 6, 1936**, Aleksandre participated in the **61st session of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations in Geneva**¹⁵⁸. On **April 30**, he delivered a speech before the Financial Committee¹⁵⁹. Below is the translation of that speech:

On **May 11, 1936**, Svanidze, Kandelaki, and Baryshnikov sent a **"top secret"** letter to Berlin concerning the receipt of funds from the Poles to settle promissory notes¹⁶⁰.

On **June 13, 1936**, Aleksandre again visited Stalin, spending an hour and a half with him. We do not know the content of their discussion, but it is presumed that the meeting dealt with financial matters¹⁶¹. One month later, on **July 14, 1936**, Aleksandre was appointed, along with N. Berezin, as **Deputy Chairman of the Board of the USSR State Bank**¹⁶².

It appears that while working at the bank, Aleksandre still found time to pursue scholarly work. In Tbilisi, his book on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was published: **"The Historical and Geographical Foundations of Shota Rustaveli's Poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*"** (1936), A.S., Tiflis: State Publishing House¹⁶³.

He also published two academic articles in Tbilisi:

- *Introduction to the History of the Alarodian Tribes*, *TSU Works*, Vol. III (1936), pp. 271–309
- And in Moscow: *Rustaveli and His Poem*, *New World*, No. 9 (1936), pp. 252–272

In 1933, a Russian translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by poet Konstantin Balmont was published in Paris. As Balmont was living in exile, his edition was not initially planned for publication in the Soviet Union. However, since there had been no prior Russian translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, and due to the poem's significance and importance for popularization, Aleksandre took it upon himself to have it published in the USSR. Indeed, it was released in Moscow in 1936, with Aleksandre Svanidze listed as **editor** (as noted in the book), and he also wrote the **extensive preface** (pp. V–XVIII).

¹⁵⁶ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/400257>.

¹⁵⁷ Krotov N. (2014). Available at: https://wiki.letopis.ru/index.php?title=Сванидзе_Александр_Семёнович.

¹⁵⁸ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/khgg-xq2h-5px5>.

¹⁵⁹ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/0000765093-d0058>.

¹⁶⁰ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/97747>.

¹⁶¹ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), f. 558, op. 11, d. 408–411, <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167137>; <https://archives.ungeneva.org/tdtd-xm3t-nek8>.

¹⁶² **Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI)**, fond 17, opis' 3, file 983, folios 3 and 89–92; accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents: *"On the Appointment of Comrade S. L. Kruglikov as Chairman of the Board of the State Bank of the USSR..."* (14 July 1936), node 386442 ; docs.historyrussia.org ; *"On the Approval of the Composition of the Council under the People's Commissar of Finance of the USSR..."* (31 December 1936), node 402025 (if applicable); also available via sovdoc.rusarchives.ru, card 93114.

¹⁶³ Rustaveli, Shota. *The Knight in the Panther's Skin: A Georgian Poem*. Translated from Georgian by K. D. Balmont. Moscow: Academia, 1936.

From **September 14–19, 1935**, Aleksandre participated in the **62nd session of the League of Nations Financial Committee** in Geneva¹⁶⁴.

On **November 25, 1936**, Aleksandre took part in the **Extraordinary Congress of the Soviet Union**, held in Moscow¹⁶⁵.

In 1936, Aleksandre, who was personally acquainted and in correspondence with various European Assyriologists, invited **Lehmann-Haupt** to Georgia, where the scholar worked for several months at the Georgian State Museum and delivered a **university lecture course on Chaldean studies**¹⁶⁶.

Also in 1936, at the **invitation of USSR People's Commissar for Education Bubnov and A. Svanidze** (naturally, Svanidze was the one who arranged it, though he was not in a position to issue the official invitation himself due to his status as Deputy Chairman of the State Bank), the **renowned Hittitologist Professor Bedřich Hrozný** visited the Soviet Union¹⁶⁷. During **1936–1937**, he gave lectures on the Hittites in various Soviet cities:

- **Moscow** (Nov 17, 20, 1936; Nov 20, 1937)
- **Leningrad** (Nov 21, 23, 1937)
- **Baku** (Nov 30, 1937)
- **Tbilisi** (Dec 2, 4, 1937)
- **Yerevan** (Dec 7, 8, 1937)
- **Kyiv** (Dec 14, 15, 1937)

Subsequently, Professor Hrozný was **invited to Tbilisi State University** for an entire semester to teach the Hittite language, with a particular focus on **Khattic and Hurrian**. Unfortunately, this did not materialize, most likely due to **A. Svanidze's arrest**.

Later, when the first issue of the journal *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (*Journal of Ancient History*) appeared in 1937, Aleksandre translated and published **Hrozný's article and travel memoirs** from *Archiv Orientalni*¹⁶⁸.

From **December 4–10, 1936**, Aleksandre participated in the **63rd session of the League of Nations Financial Committee** in Geneva¹⁶⁹. However, he only traveled to Geneva on **December 6**, as he had first been invited by the French government to visit **Paris**, a fact reported in the press¹⁷⁰.

On **December 21, 1936**, Aleksandre once again took part in Stalin's **birthday celebration**, and also celebrated the **New Year of 1937** with him.

XII. 1937–1941: Prague Academy – *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* – *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* – Arrest – Exile – Execution

¹⁶⁴ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/tdtd-xm3t-nek8>.

¹⁶⁵ Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 189.

¹⁶⁶ Megreldze, I. (1962), p. 165.

¹⁶⁷ Hrozný B., (1937), pp. 229-30.

¹⁶⁸ Journal of Ancient History (Vestnik Drevnei Istorii), no. 1 (1937).

¹⁶⁹ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/comite-financier-58eme-session-6-15-mai-1935-dispositions-generales>.

¹⁷⁰ The specific newspaper or publication where the notice was published is not indicated: Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p.190.

On **January 10, 1937**, Aleksandre submitted a **confidential memorandum** via an American bank concerning the sale of gold¹⁷¹:

From **January 21–27, 1937**, Aleksandre participated in the **96th session of the League of Nations Council**, serving as a member of the Financial Committee¹⁷².

On **January 27, 1937**, a meeting of the **Eastern Department of the Prague Oriental Institute** was held in Prague, during which **Prof. Bedřich Hrozný** gave a presentation. He reported that, by invitation of **M.A. Bubnov**, People's Commissar for Education of the USSR, and **Prof. A. Svanidze**, Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Bank, he had delivered **12 lectures** in 1936 at various universities across the Soviet republics on **the Hittite people, their language, and Hittite hieroglyphs**¹⁷³.

The same journal notes that on **March 1, 1937**, at a meeting of the **Prague Oriental Institute**, Prof. A. Svanidze, together with Professors A. Shanidze, V. Struve, I. Meshchaninov, and K. Oragvelidze (then Rector of Tbilisi State University), was elected a **Scientific Corresponding Member** of the Institute¹⁷⁴. This election was clearly the initiative of **Prof. Hrozný**, and a testament to his personal respect and admiration for Aleksandre.

On **April 7, 1937**, Aleksandre and his colleagues presented a **report to the Politburo** on behalf of the State Bank regarding the **restructuring and revitalization of the bank's operations**¹⁷⁵.

On **April 15, 1937**, under the classification "**Top Secret**," Aleksandre prepared a memorandum about the **sale of gold through foreign banks**¹⁷⁶.

Related Developments

According to archival records from **Stalin's reception logs**, on **April 15, 1937, from 18:35 to 18:55**, Aleksandre had a personal audience with Stalin¹⁷⁷—**most likely in connection with this memorandum**.

Following this, on **April 17**, the Politburo issued the following **Strictly Confidential Resolution**¹⁷⁸:

Although Aleksandre was supposed to attend the **64th session of the League of Nations Financial Committee in Geneva (April 26–30, 1937)**, it appears he did not go¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷¹ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 82, opis' 2, file 777, folio 1.

Accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents:

<https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/128992>.

¹⁷² <https://archives.ungeneva.org/nk2a-28nc-28yk>

¹⁷³ *Archiv Orientalní* (1937), Vol. IX, p. 230.

¹⁷⁴ *Archiv Orientalni*, (1937) Vol IX, p. 233.

¹⁷⁵ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 17, opis' 3, file 985. Accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/281892>.

¹⁷⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 82, opis' 2, file 777, folio 68. Accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/128993>.

¹⁷⁷ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 558, opis' 11, file 408–411. Accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167138>.

¹⁷⁸ Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF), fond 3, opis' 66, file 294, folio 52 (copy). Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/83869>.

Alexander was invited to America but did not travel due to lack of a visa; the document contains the note: "Trip of Svanidze canceled. See P49/160. Visas [none]." See also AP RF, fond 3, opis' 66, file 345, folio 17. Available at: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/83868>.

¹⁷⁹ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/comite-financier-64e-session-26-avril-1937-rapport>

On **May 29, 1937 (16:55–17:10)**, he again visited **Stalin**¹⁸⁰.

On **June 1, 1937**, Aleksandre **moved into a new apartment in Moscow**¹⁸¹.

On **July 2**, the Politburo reviewed a letter from **Svanidze** regarding **Poletaev**¹⁸².

On **July 15**, a **fire broke out at his dacha**¹⁸³.

On **July 25** and again on **October 13**, Aleksandre participated in **special meetings of the USSR State Bank**¹⁸⁴.

On **October 31**, Aleksandre sent a letter to the **League of Nations**, stating that due to "assigned obligations," he **was unable to travel to Geneva** and attend the **Financial Committee session**¹⁸⁵.

On **December 1, 1937**, Aleksandre Svanidze **was dismissed** from his post as **Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Bank**¹⁸⁶.

In **November 1937**, he was **formally removed** from his position as a member of the **League of Nations Financial Committee**, and was **replaced by the Swiss delegate M. Blau**¹⁸⁷.

Academic Work in 1937

Despite these political setbacks, **1937 was also a productive year** for Aleksandre's **academic work**, particularly in the study of the **Ancient Near East**, which was his lifelong scholarly interest.

He served as the **founder, editor-in-chief**, and a **contributing author** to the Soviet **academic journal "Vestnik Drevnei Istorii"**¹⁸⁸ (**Herald of Ancient History**), which he **established in 1936**. The journal **continues to be published** and is nearing its **100th anniversary**.

According to testimonies from his colleague **I. Megreliдзе**¹⁸⁹, Aleksandre personally invited him from **Leningrad to Moscow in 1936** to share his vision of launching a **journal dedicated to the study of the Ancient East**. Aleksandre believed the journal should become a **platform for both Soviet and**

¹⁸⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 558, opis' 11, file 408–411. Accessed via the Electronic Library of Historical Documents: <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/167138>.

¹⁸¹ Unfortunately, this excerpt from Maria Svanidze's diary has been omitted and is not published in full: Joseph Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), pp. 191, 193.

¹⁸² Unfortunately, we do not know what was discussed in this letter: Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), fond 17, opis' 3, delo 989. <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/281896>.

¹⁸³ Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 193.

¹⁸⁴ Krotov N. (2014), <https://wiki.letopis.ru/index.php?title=%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%90%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D1%80%D0%A1%D0%B5%D0%BC%D1%91%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87>

¹⁸⁵ <https://archives.ungeneva.org/comite-financier-services-de-m-alexandre-svanidze>.

¹⁸⁶ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/402645>.

¹⁸⁷ The League of Nations Archives preserves the complete documentation of Aleksandre Svanidze's activities in Geneva: <https://archives.ungeneva.org/informationobject/browse?topLod=0&sort=relevance&query=svanidze> ; <https://archives.ungeneva.org/informationobject/browse?topLod=0&sort=relevance&query=swanidze>

¹⁸⁸ <http://vdi.igh.ru/>

¹⁸⁹ **I. Megreliдзе** (1909–1996) worked in Leningrad/Petersburg from 1935 to 1939 as a junior and later senior research fellow at the Institute of Language and Thought of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and in 1936–1937 served as secretary of the first Rustaveli Jubilee, chaired by Aleksandre Svanidze: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/bios/ka/00001151>

international scholars, and asked Megrelidze to involve leading Leningrad-based Orientalists (like Meshchaninov, Struve, Orbeli, and Krachkovsky) in its organization.

From Megrelidze's recollections, it seems that Aleksandre, unable to pursue official academic positions due to various circumstances, **sought to compensate by elevating the journal's academic standards** through collaboration with renowned scholars¹⁹⁰.

The journal's **main concept** focused on exploring the **histories and cultures of the ancestors of the Soviet peoples**, and their **connections with neighboring civilizations**¹⁹¹.

The **first volume** of the journal was published in **November 1937**. It included the **editorial foreword** titled **"Our Tasks"** written by A. Svanidze himself, as well as his articles:

- **"The Names of Ancient Eastern Gods in Georgian Songs"** (*VDI*, 1 (1937), pp. 87–93)
- **A review of Meshchaninov's book: *I.I. Meshchaninov, The Language of Urartian Cuneiform*, *VDI*, 1 (1937), pp. 155–156**

On **February 13, 1937**, the Politburo passed a resolution to allocate **\$4,000** from foreign currency reserves for the publication of a Soviet specialized scholarly journal dedicated to ancient history¹⁹².

The **first issue** of the journal was submitted for printing on **September 2, 1937**, and on **October 2, 1937**, it was formally approved for publication by the editor, **A. Svanidze**. The journal was printed by the **"Sotsekgiz" publishing house**, whose editorial office was located in the building of the **USSR People's Commissariat of Enlightenment**, on **Red Square**¹⁹³.

Before the full print run of the journal had even left the press, **Aleksandre Svanidze was arrested** on **December 23, 1937**. The issue was banned and destroyed. As a result, it was impossible to obtain a copy for many years. However, the **publication of the journal itself was not banned**, and it has continued to be issued **four times a year**, remaining for decades—**and still today—**one of the leading journals on **Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern studies**.

It is deeply regrettable that **Aleksandre Svanidze's pivotal role** in the founding and development of this publication remains **unrecognized to this day**. Nonetheless, the **long-term vision he conceptualized and brought to life** lives on to this day, and it is fair to assume that Svanidze would have found satisfaction in this enduring legacy.

We must also acknowledge **Svanidze's significant and yet underappreciated contribution** to the **organization of Rustaveli's jubilee**, including the **commissioning of translations** and related efforts. His initiative played a **crucial role** in the **subsequent popularization of Shota Rustaveli and his work**.

According to **Iosif Megrelidze**, an eyewitness and direct participant in these events, the **Rustaveli Jubilee Committee** was established in **1935**, with its activities commencing in **1936**. The committee was chaired by **Aleksandre Svanidze**, with **Academician I. Orbeli** as deputy chairman and **Iosif Megrelidze** as secretary. The latter two were working in Leningrad at the time.

The committee's plan included the publication of **scholarly and popular works** on **Rustaveli, his era, and his poem**, including both published and previously unpublished **Rustvelological studies** by **Nikoloz Marr**. All research materials and manuscripts were gathered by Aleksandre Svanidze. Some

¹⁹⁰ Megrelidze, I. (1962), p. 164.

¹⁹¹ Megrelidze, I. (1962), p. 164.

¹⁹² Karpyuk, S. G. (2017), p. 772.

¹⁹³ Pavlovskaya, A. I. (1998), p. 7.

were published in time for the jubilee; the rest, per Svanidze's plan, were intended for publication afterward¹⁹⁴.

The **jubilee session dedicated to Rustaveli** opened on **December 24, 1937**, just **one day after Svanidze's arrest**. The jubilee lasted until **December 30**. The materials that Svanidze had collected for the event were no longer accessible due to his arrest. Any work that was accomplished thereafter was due to the efforts of **I. Orbeli**¹⁹⁵.

In **1937**, Svanidze published several **important books and articles** and **founded a journal**, in which he served as **author of prefaces, editor**, and contributor. Notable works from that year include:

- *Materials on the History of the Alarodian Tribes*, Tbilisi (1937)
- *S.I. Kovalev, A.V. Mishulin, N.M. Nikolsky, A.S. Svanidze. History of the Ancient World: A Textbook for Middle and Secondary Schools, Part I (Draft)*, Moscow (1937)
- *On the Question of the Relationship between the Hittites and Georgian Tribes, Mnatobi*, 1937, No. 4, pp. 125–136
- *Our Tasks, Vestnik Drevnei Istorii (VDI)*, 1937, pp. 5–13
- *Names of Ancient Eastern Gods in Georgian Songs, VDI* 1937, pp. 87–93
- *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii / Chief Editor*, 1937
- *The Song of Arsena*, translated from Georgian by A. Chachikov, with an introduction by A. Svanidze, Tbilisi, "Zarya Vostoka", 1937

Later, after Svanidze's **arrest in the autumn of 1937**, two revised editions of *The Song of Arsena* were published in **Moscow**, in **1938 and 1941**, with new editorial credits:

1. *The Song of Arsena*, translated from Georgian by Aleksandr Chachikov, introduction by Viktor Gol'tsev, illustrations by Tamara Abakelia, Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1938
2. *The Song of Arsena*, translation by A. Chachikov, edited and introduced by V. Gol'tsev, illustrations by Tamara Abakelia, Moscow, 1941

A **Russian translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"** by **Balmont**, accompanied by **Zichy's illustrations**, was also published. Svanidze had written the **foreword**, but after his arrest, the authorship was attributed to the **Editorial Board**¹⁹⁶.

Another **Russian-language edition of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"**, translated by **G. Tsagareli**, was published in **1937**, also featuring a foreword authored by **Aleksandre Svanidze**¹⁹⁷.

In 1937, Aleksandre also wrote a review of I.I. Meshchaninov's book: **I.I. Meshchaninov, *The Language of the Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions, Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (1937), pp. 155–156.**

On **23 December 1937**, Aleksandre Svanidze was arrested along with his wife¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁴ For a detailed account of the committee's work during that period: Megreldze, I. (1962), pp. 165–168.

¹⁹⁵ The Rustaveli Jubilee was covered in Soviet Art, No. 6 (1937), which, in addition to articles on Rustaveli, also describes the plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers of the USSR, Soviet Art, No. 6 (1937).

¹⁹⁶ Machavariani T. (1938) p. 120.

¹⁹⁷ Newspaper Kommunist (1937), 5 November, No. 254, p. 4; Machavariani, T. (1938), p. 120; Gonjilashvili, N. (2011), pp. 32–72; The Knight in the Panther's Skin in Russian, Kommunist, 5 November 1937, No. 254, p. 4.

¹⁹⁸ Krotov N. (2014), <https://wiki.letopis.ru/index.php?title=%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%90%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%B0%D0>

Aleksandre was tried by the **Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR** on charges of "treason against the homeland, sabotage, terrorism, and counterrevolutionary activity" (presiding judge: Voronin, of the Shvartsman group)¹⁹⁹.

An unresolved question remains as to where Aleksandre was held from **1937 to 1941** — whether an investigation was underway, and if he was kept in a prison cell during that time.

Archival documents from the **Russian Historical Archive** dated **13 June 1938** and **9 September 1939**²⁰⁰ reference the case of **David Abashidze**, a member of the "White George" organization who had ties with Georgian émigrés in Berlin and Paris.

According to these reports, Abashidze allegedly entered Svanidze's Moscow apartment with terrorist intent — where he had supposedly been living with Stalin's son²⁰¹. This confirms that Aleksandre was incarcerated at the time.

In 1938, while Aleksandre was already under arrest, his son **Johnrid (Ivane) Svanidze** was taken to **Lubyanka** to testify against his father. At the time, the child was being raised by his nanny, Lydia Trofimovna.

On **29 December 1939**, by a resolution of the **Special Meeting of the NKVD of the USSR**, Aleksandre's wife **Maria Korona-Svanidze** was sentenced to **eight years of imprisonment** for "*concealing her husband's anti-Soviet activity, engaging in anti-Soviet conversations, and expressing terrorist intentions against a Communist Party and Soviet government leader.*"²⁰²

She was exiled to **Dolinskoye, Kazakhstan**, along with Aleksandre's sister, **Mariko Svanidze**.

On **4 December 1940**, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR sentenced **Aleksandre Svanidze to death** on the grounds that²⁰³:

He passed espionage materials on Soviet negotiations with Lloyd George's government, USSR's import plans to Germany, monetary circulation data, loans, and foreign currency operations.

In 1922, Sokolnikov introduced him into the anti-Soviet rightist organization. He allegedly participated in planning terrorist attacks against Party and government leaders, carried out sabotage within the State Bank of the USSR, misused public funds, and disrupted financial plans.

To the detriment of Soviet interests, he financed Iranian and Turkish traders, implemented a budgetary reform in the Mongolian People's Republic, and issued a five-million-ruble loan in Xinjiang.

He was named as a member of the anti-Soviet organization by Ozerov, Chichinadze, Glonti, Lejava, Gogoberidze, Orakhelashvili, Dukhovni, Eliava, Baryshnikova, Sandler, Poteikhin, Frumkin, Shapiro, Shein, Kogan (all of whom were convicted), and Levin (detained)."

From **1 December 1940** to **23 December 1941**, Aleksandre was held in a **death row cell**²⁰⁴.

[%BD%D0%B4%D1%80 %D0%A1%D0%B5%D0%BC%D1%91%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87](#).

¹⁹⁹ Lists of detainees of 6 September 1940, Category 1 (anti-Soviet, members of espionage–conspiratorial organizations whose cases were transferred to the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR): RGASPI, fond 17, opis' 171, delo 421, f. 24, <https://stalin.memo.ru/persons/p45555/#spravka>.

²⁰⁰ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/166562>.

²⁰¹ <https://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/166840>.

²⁰² APRF, fond 3, opis' 24, delo 242, pp. 60–61; <https://timenote.info/ru/Marija-Svanidze> ; Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family (1993), p. 194.

²⁰³ RGASPI, fond 17, opis' 171, delo 421, f. 24, <https://stalin.memo.ru/persons/p45555/#spravka>

²⁰⁴ Krotov N. (2014).

However, on **23 January 1941**, based on a protest filed by **V.V. Ulrikh**, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the sentence was commuted to **15 years of imprisonment**.

Aleksandre was transferred to a labor camp in the **Komi ASSR (Ukhta, Betlolyana)**. According to Article 58-1-a, paragraphs 7 and 11.

Georgian writer **Mose Gvasalia**, who was also exiled in Ukhta, recalled how Aleksandre arrived with sacks full of books and spent all his time reading and working. Unfortunately, none of his manuscripts or books from exile have survived. It remains a mystery what research “one of the most intellectually engaged men of the USSR” was conducting in solitude during exile.

On **20 August 1941**, again due to a protest from **Deputy Chairman Ulrikh**, the **original 4 December 1940 death sentence** was reinstated.

That same day, by order of **Lavrenti Beria**²⁰⁵, the sentence was carried out. Aleksandre Svanidze was executed in exile in the **Komi ASSR, near Ukhta**.

There is speculation that he may have been executed in **Oryol**, during the infamous **Oryol mass executions** (also referred to as the “**Medvedevsky massacre**”), though this remains uncertain²⁰⁶.

Another version suggests he died in exile on **14 November 1942** — if true, his burial place would be in that vicinity. One can only speculate based on known burial sites of mass executions from the period²⁰⁷.

On **3 March 1942**, the **Special Meeting of the NKVD of the USSR** issued an order for **Maria's execution**, which was carried out the same day.

Aleksandre's **younger sister, Mariam (Mariko) Svanidze**, was also executed alongside her²⁰⁸.

Around **1943**, Aleksandre's son **Johnrid (Ivane)** was committed to a psychiatric prison hospital.

On **4 August 1948**, he was exiled to **Kazakhstan**, where he remained until **1956**²⁰⁹.

After returning from exile, between **1957 and 1959**, he married **Svetlana Alliluyeva**, daughter of Joseph Stalin.

He later defended his **Candidate's Dissertation (1964)** and **Doctoral Dissertation (1978)**, and taught at **Moscow State University**²¹⁰.

Ivane Svanidze authored several scholarly works on **African history**:

Scientific Works by Ivane (Johnreed) Svanidze:

- *The Country of Sixty Discriminatory Laws*, // Sovremenny Vostok [Modern East]. 1958. No. 11, pp. 22–23.
- *The Agrarian Policy of the Colonizers in South Africa*, // Pravda Vostoka. 1960. No. 1, pp. 109–117.

²⁰⁵ *Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family* (1993), p. 194; according to Svetlana Alliluyeva's memoirs, Aleksandre was executed in February 1942, though the exact date may be uncertain: Alliluyeva, S. I. (1967), pp. 49–54.

²⁰⁶

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4_%D0%9E%D1%80%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BC_\(1941\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4_%D0%9E%D1%80%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BC_(1941))

²⁰⁷ For detailed information on the burial sites, see: <http://www.president-sovet.ru/files/b5/72/b572093c0a8df8ed29ddabf496287138.pdf>.

²⁰⁸ **Megrelidze I.** (1962) p. 167.

²⁰⁹ *Iosif Stalin in the Embrace of the Family* (1993), p. 194.

²¹⁰ In Memory of Ivan Aleksandrovich Svanidze // NAA (1988), No. 2, p. 215; Ziankovich, M., Zenkovich, N. (2005), p. 407.

- *Agriculture in Northern Rhodesia*. Moscow, 1963.
- *Problems of Agricultural Development in Africa*. Moscow, 1969.
- *Agricultural Workers in the Countries of Asia and Africa*. Moscow, 1969. (Co-editor with G. G. Kotovsky.)
- *Agriculture in Tropical Africa*. Moscow, 1972.
- *Southern Rhodesia*. Moscow, 1977. (Co-authored with T. S. Jandjghava.)
- *Lesotho. Swaziland*. Moscow, 1978.
- *Problems of Raising the Productivity of Agriculture in Africa*. Moscow, 1967.

Rehabilitation and Historical Memory:

Maria Korona was officially rehabilitated on **19 November 1955**. As for Mariko Svanidze, her rehabilitation remains pending — no one has yet taken the initiative to address her case.

On **6 January 1956**, Military Prosecutor V. Zhabin sent a formal letter to A. Mikoyan regarding the rehabilitation of A. Svanidze²¹¹. Following a protest by the Prosecutor General of the USSR, the **Military Collegium of the Supreme Court** of the USSR closed the case due to lack of evidence of any crime. On **19 January 1956**, the **Plenum of the USSR Supreme Court** officially declared Aleksandre Svanidze rehabilitated²¹².

During the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party (CPSU) in 1961, **Nikita Khrushchev**, in his concluding remarks, cited Aleksandre Svanidze as a victim of the so-called "cult of personality"²¹³:

Who Wanted Aleksandre Svanidze Destroyed?

The question of who exactly wished for Aleksandre Svanidze's arrest — and ultimately, his execution — remains speculative. However, we do have valuable testimony from **Ioseb Megrelidze**, a contemporary witness: *"Aleksandre Svanidze was a humble, considerate, and humane person. There were moments when the fate of some Georgian scholars hung by a thread — even that of our great historian Ivane Javakhishvili. We know the vital role A. Svanidze played in protecting them. He was not the kind of man who rejected opposing opinions. I once gave him my unpublished manuscript, 'Refrains of Georgian Songs,' which in some parts contradicted his views. A. Svanidze read it thoroughly and said: 'Let's publish this in the next volume of our Vestnik. The future will decide which of us is right.' He left the manuscript untouched."*

"He never uttered a word about it, but it later became clear that individuals assigned by Beria²¹⁴ were trying to fabricate financial misconduct against him — they manipulated documents, formed commissions, and held interrogations to discredit him as a statesman. When that failed, the same

²¹¹ <http://istmat.info/node/57960>.

²¹² Krotov N. (2014), https://wiki.letopis.ru/index.php?title=%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%B5_%D0%90%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D1%80_%D0%A1%D0%B5%D0%BC%D1%91%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%8Z

²¹³ Megrelidze I. (1962), p. 163.

²¹⁴ On Aleksandre's antipathy toward Beria: Alliluyeva, S. (1967), p. 13.

'provocateur and bandit' — Beria — orchestrated matters so that it appeared as if German intelligence had recruited Svanidze, thereby making him a victim of slander. It is now known why the investigation into A. Svanidze's case lasted two years: how steadfastly and honorably he must have conducted himself in the face of false accusations.²¹⁵

Interesting recollections were shared by Nami Mikoyan, daughter-in-law of A. Mikoyan, who learned about Aleksandre Svanidze's arrest from her father-in-law: *"Until the mid-1930s, life in the Kremlin, in the government, was very different... Back then, Stalin lived with his wife and children on Kommunisticheskaya Street, like everyone else... (M.G. Stalin) forgave no one, and the only punishment was imprisonment. He even ordered the arrest of the beloved brother of his first wife, Ekaterine Svanidze — Alyosha Svanidze — when Beria informed him that Svanidze was working for a foreign intelligence service. Stalin ordered a death sentence to be issued, but not carried out, to be used as a threat to extract a confession. However, Svanidze did not confess. He was executed. When Stalin learned of the execution, he began to cry — either because he had been killed or because he felt betrayed, as he was convinced of Svanidze's guilt. This, according to Mikoyan, is what happened.²¹⁶*

Equally noteworthy are the recollections of Svetlana Alliluyeva²¹⁷: *"Uncle Alyosha Svanidze was a charming Georgian — short, stout, blond, with blue eyes and a small upturned nose... Uncle Alyosha and Aunt Marusia were arrested. ...How could my father have done this? I only know one thing: he could not have come up with it himself. But if he were subtly and cunningly manipulated — if a sly and flattering man (like Beria) whispered to him that 'the people are against him,' that 'compromising materials exist,' that there were 'dangerous connections,' foreign travels, and so on — then my father might have believed it... And when my father was 'convinced by the facts' that someone he had long known was 'bad,' then a psychological metamorphosis took place in him. Perhaps deep down he doubted it, he suffered and reflected... But psychologically, it was impossible for him to back down and accept that the so-called 'enemy' was, in fact, an honest man. His past blurred before his eyes — that was the unyielding and cruel side of his nature. ...It was astonishing how helpless my father was in the face of Beria's intrigues. ...Uncle Alyosha was a strong man. He never 'confessed' to any crime... Around 1942, there was a certain 'wave' during which many people were executed in the camps who had previously only been sentenced to labor, exile, or long prison terms. Whether the war affected this (at that time, there was still no turning point near Stalingrad; the situation was difficult), or whether Beria once again decided to eliminate someone who knew all about his dark dealings and easily convinced my father to do it — I do not know the reason..."*

In the memoirs of repressed writer Galina Serebryakova, her final meetings with the Svanidze family, with whom she was friends, are described²¹⁸:

An interesting detail is that in 1953, a book titled *My Uncle Joseph Stalin* was published in the United States, authored by a certain Budu Svanidze. In it, the author referred to Stalin as his "uncle."

²¹⁵ Megrelidze I. (1962), pp. 167-168.

²¹⁶ Mikoyan N. (1998), p. 114.

²¹⁷ Aliluyeva S. I. (1967), pp. 49-54

²¹⁸ Serebryakova G. I. (1989), pp. 6-10.; <https://vgulage.name/books/n/?highlight=%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%B5>

It is likely that this person adopted the surname *Svanidze*, deliberately linking himself to Aleksandre Svanidze, and claimed — falsely — to have served in the League of Nations in Switzerland²¹⁹.

It is difficult to imagine a person who could change location and position so frequently, be extraordinarily burdened with official duties, and still find time for scientific research and contemplation. I believe Aleksandre was the "icebreaker" of the then-Soviet government — a man who, through his education, intelligence, diplomacy, and composure, managed to establish various types of foreign relations, primarily economic ones. As a result, he was needed everywhere the newly formed Union required support. He had taken on an enormous responsibility and fulfilled it with integrity.

Aleksandre Svanidze's life may be divided into two distinct parts — his public-political and public-academic contributions. These spheres alternated in his life over time, though I am convinced that, had he had the opportunity, his scientific potential would have yielded even greater benefits for society. He was undoubtedly a highly gifted thinker, with a sincere desire to dedicate himself to science. But, as it seems, much of his time and energy was spent in service of his "relative" — the very person who had determined his fate as early as 1906, when he attempted to "lead him down the wrong path."

Sadly, as Aleksandre himself once said, he was never able to fulfill his promise to "free himself from the vileness of human society and the resulting extreme personal degradation of every individual," and to return and settle in his native Baj. In general, it is extremely difficult to break free from a system and the obligations it imposes — obligations that can completely destroy such individuals on a personal level.

On November 1 (14), 2024, 140 years will have passed since the birth of Aleksandre Svanidze. It is hoped that the restoration of his biography will bring to light many new and interesting aspects of early 20th-century history. May his name take its rightful place in Georgian historiography, which would be a matter of great importance to the Georgian academic community.

Bibliography of Aleksandre Svanidze

A. Books Authored:

- *Empiriocriticism*, 1911
- *History of the East: Persia*, Tbilisi, 1922
- *On the Rationalization of Industry*, [Tiflis]: Zakkniga, 1929
- *The Historical-Geographical Basis of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"*, Sakhelgami, 1934
- Kovalev S.I., Mishulin A.V., Nikolsky N.M., Svanidze A.S. *History of the Ancient World: A Textbook for Lower and Secondary Schools. Part 1*, Moscow, 1935
- *Historical-Geographical Foundations of Shota Rustaveli's Poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"*, Tiflis: Gosizdat, 1936
- *Materials on the History of the Alarodian Tribes*, Tbilisi, 1937
- Kovalev S.I., Mishulin A.V., Nikolsky N.M., Svanidze A.S. *History of the Ancient World. Part 1 (Manuscript Mock-up)*, Moscow, 1937

²¹⁹ Svanidze B. (1953), *My Uncle Joseph Stalin*.

B. Articles Authored:

- *Georgian Tribes from Antiquity to the Time of Xenophon* (On Ethnic Terminology), *Ganatileba*, 1912, Issues VII–VIII
- *Georgian Tribes, Xenophon's Records*, *Ganatileba*, 1912, IX
- *Notes on the Prehistory of Georgia*, *Ganatileba*, 1913, No. 2
- *Assyrian Inscriptions about Georgian Tribes*, *Ganatileba*, 1913, Issues VII, IX, X
- *Georgian Gods Anina and Nina (Etymology of the Words)*, *Ganatileba*, 1914, III
- *Strategic Importance of Georgia, Republican Army*, 1919, No. 10
- *Historical Aspects of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" (A Few Notes)*, *Seven Stars*, 1919, No. 2
- *The Issue of Navigation in Georgia*, *Georgian Economist*, 1919, Nos. 7–9
- *Guilds in Ancient Georgia*, *Eroba*, 1920, No. 10
- *On the Issue of Currency*, *Eroba*, 1920, Nos. 13–14
- *Chiatura Manganese Deposits and Their Role in the Global Steel Industry*, *NR N.F.* 6, 5/6 (1929), pp. 15–17
- *Voice of the Working Abkhazia*, Feb. 16–17, 1922
- *Financial Policy in Georgia*, *Communist Banner*, 1922, No. 1
- *On Currency Circulation*, *Communist*, May 18, 1922, No. 111
- *In Memory of Comrade Kamo*, *Communist*, July 18, 1922, No. 162
- *Economic Situation of Europe*, *Communist*, Sept. 12–13, 1922
- *On Red Kartli*, *Communist*, Jan. 28, 1925, No. 22
- *Export Prospects of Chiatura Manganese*, *Communist*, Nov. 23, 1928, No. 271
- *Manganese Export Prospects of the USSR*, *Communist*, Dec. 30, 1928, No. 303
- *Foreign Press on Chiatura Manganese*, *Communist*, Apr. 23, 1929, No. 91
- ([AbeBooks Source](#))
- *Flood Consequences*, *Communist*, July 25, 1931, No. 170
- *Financial Collapse in Germany*, *Communist*, Dec. 5, 1931, No. 278
- *Introduction to the History of the Alarodians*, *TSU Works*, III, 1936
- *Rustaveli and His Poem*, *Novy Mir*, No. 9, 1936
- *On the Question of the Relationship between the Hittites and Georgian Tribes*, *Mnatobi*, 1937, No. 4
- *Our Tasks*, *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* (VDI), 1937
- *Names of Ancient Eastern Gods in Georgian Songs*, *VDI*, 1937

C. Books and Articles Edited by Svanidze:

- Editor of the weekly journal *Army and Nation (Jari da Eri)*, published in 1918, with editorial offices on Palace Street, No. 5
- *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* (Bulletin of Ancient History), 1937, Issue No. 1 — Responsible Editor

D. Author of Forewords

- **M. Javakhishvili** (1936), *Arsen from Marabda*, Moscow — foreword by A. Svanidze.
- *Song of Arsen*, translated from Georgian by A. Chachikova, foreword by A. Svanidze, Tbilisi, *Zarya Vostoka*, 1937.

In the autumn of 1937, as mentioned above, Svanidze was arrested. Subsequently, in 1938 and 1941, *Song of Arsen* was published twice in Moscow with a changed editor and foreword author:

1. *Song of Arsen*, translated from Georgian by Aleksandra Chachikova; foreword by Viktor Goltsev; illustrations by Tamara Abakelia, Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1938.
2. *Song of Arsen*, translated by A. Chachikova; edited and foreword by V. Goltsev; illustrations by Tamara Abakelia, Moscow, 1941.
- A Russian translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Balmont, accompanied by illustrations by Zich, also features a foreword by A. Svanidze.
- Shota Rustaveli (1936), *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, Georgian poem, translated from Georgian by K. D. Balmont, ACADEMIA, Moscow.

E. Criticism and Reviews

- *Outline of the History of Armenia in Connection with the General Course of Events in the Near East. Period I, Ancient History*. Lectures by G. A. Kharatyan (pp. 1–360), *Ganatileba*, 1913, No. 4, pp. 319–320.
- I. I. Meshchaninov, *The Language of the Van Cuneiform Inscriptions*, *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* (VDI), 1937, pp. 155–156.

Aleksandre Svanidze's Pseudonyms

• Bajeli – Svanidze Aleksandre

He used this pseudonym during 1907–1915. It is confirmed in the newspapers *Dro* (1907) and *Akhal Kvli* (1915–1916). This pseudonym is documented in the following literature:

- Mikadze G. (1957), *Dictionary of Georgian Pseudonyms*, G. Leonidze Museum of Literature (manuscript, xerox copy preserved at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia).
- Shengelaia L., *Dictionary of Pseudonyms* (manuscript, preserved at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia).
- Shugliashvili D., *Georgian Pseudonyms* (manuscript, xerox copy preserved at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia).

• A.S. — Svanidze Aleksandre (Alyosha) Simonis dze

Under this pseudonym, Svanidze published the book *The Historical-Geographical Basis of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"*, Sakhelgami (1934). The pseudonym is found in I. Grishashvili's archive:

- *Library-Museum Catalog of Poet-Academic I. Grishashvili* (1979), Vol. 1, Part 2;
- *Georgian Books*, Tbilisi, 231;
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Aleksandre Svanidze's Residential Addresses

- **Tbilisi:** Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani 3 (formerly Freylin Street)
- **Halle (Germany):** Goethestrasse 20IIe; Volksmannstrasse 11 p.
- **Berlin:** [Address not specified]
- **London:** London N 4, 17 Oakfeld Road
- **Geneva:** Hotel Richemond, Rue Adhémar-Fabri 8-10
- **Moscow:**
 - Ul. Ilyina 21
 - Ul. Granovsky No. 3, 5th House of Soviets, Apt. 83
 - Serafimovich Street 2, Bldg. 219 (famous “Government House,” aka “House on the Shore,” built in the 1930s and inhabited by the party elite, including Beria)
 - Ul. Neglinnaya 12 — State Bank address, 1935–1937 (Svanidze’s workplace)
 - Ul. Petrovka 3 — USSR Foreign Trade Bank address, Svanidze’s workplace
- **Kislovodsk:** Kislovodsk “Eagle’s Nest” Ul. Perovskaya No. 39

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